



Dispute Resolution Services

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Residential Tenancy Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

DECISION

Dispute Codes MNSDS-DR

Introduction

This matter proceeded by way of an *ex parte* Direct Request Proceeding, pursuant to section 38.1 of the *Residential Tenancy Act* (the *Act*), and dealt with an Application for Dispute Resolution by the tenant for a Monetary Order seeking the return of her security deposit.

The tenant submitted a signed “Proof of Service of the Tenant’s Notice of Direct Request Proceeding” form which declares that on September 17, 2020, the tenant served the landlord’s agent “DS” with the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding, along with copies of supporting documents, by way of personal service via hand-delivery. The personal service was confirmed as the landlord’s agent “DS” acknowledged receipt of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding by signing the Proof of Service form.

Based on the written submissions of the tenant, and in accordance with section 89 of the *Act*, I find that the landlord has been duly served with the Direct Request Proceeding documents on September 17, 2020.

Issue(s) to be Decided

Is the tenant entitled to a monetary award for the return of all or a portion of her security deposit pursuant to section 38 of the *Act*? If so, should it be doubled?

Background and Evidence

I have reviewed all written submissions and evidence before me; however, only the evidence and submissions relevant to the issues and findings in this matter are described in this decision.

On the tenant's Application for Dispute Resolution by Direct Request (the "application"), the tenant has requested a Monetary Order seeking the return of her security deposit in the amount of \$1,262.00.

On the application, the tenant attested that the tenancy ended on July 31, 2020, the date on which the tenant vacated the rental unit subsequent to a tenant's notice to end the tenancy.

The tenant submitted, in part, the following evidentiary material:

- A copy of a residential tenancy agreement which was signed by the landlord and the tenant, indicating a monthly rent of \$1,600.00, due on the first day of each month for a tenancy commencing on October 15, 2010. The tenancy agreement depicts that the tenant was required to pay a security deposit in the amount of \$800.00, by October 03, 2019;
- A copy of a Tenant's Monetary Order Worksheet for an Expedited Return of Security Deposit and/or Pet Damage Deposit (the Monetary Order Worksheet) showing the amount of the security deposit paid by the tenant and the amount sought in return by the tenant. The tenant asserts that she did not agree to any authorized deduction from the security deposit, and also states that there is no authorized deduction previously granted by an arbitrator permitting the landlord to retain any amount of the security deposit. The tenant attested that she is not aware of any monetary order made against the security deposit or any monetary order for the tenant to pay an amount to the landlord that remains unpaid. The tenant stated that the landlord returned a partial amount of the security deposit, in the amount of \$338.00. The tenant seeks the return of the security deposit, with applicable doubling provisions permitted under the Act, minus the partial amount of \$338.00 returned by the landlord, which yields a total amount of \$1,262.00 sought by the tenant.

On the Monetary Order Worksheet, the tenant provided that she and the landlord participated in both a move-in condition inspection and a move-out condition inspection. The tenant asserted that she was provided a copy of the condition inspection report subsequent to both the move-in condition inspection and the move-out condition inspection. The tenant submitted copies of both the move-in condition inspection report and move-out condition inspection report as evidence.

The tenant attested that she provided her forwarding address in writing to the landlord during the move-out condition inspection held on July 31, 2020. The tenant stated that

on July 31, 2020, her forwarding address was provided to the landlord by having it written on the move-out condition inspection report, dated July 31, 2020, during the move-out condition inspection. The move-out condition inspection report depicts that the tenant's forwarding address is written on the report, which is signed by both the tenant and the landlord's agent.

Analysis

I have reviewed all documentary evidence provided by the tenant. I find that in accordance with section 88 of the *Act* the landlord was duly served with the tenant's forwarding address on July 31, 2020, the date on which the tenant provided her forwarding address to the landlord by having it written on the condition inspection report during the move-out condition inspection conducted on July 31, 2020.

I accept the following declarations made by the tenant on the Monetary Order Worksheet:

- The tenant has not provided consent for the landlord to keep all or part of the deposit;
- There are no outstanding Monetary Orders against the tenant for this tenancy; and
- The tenant has not extinguished her right to the security deposit in accordance with sections 24(1) and 36(1) of the *Act*.

Based on the declarations provided by the tenant, I find that the landlord did not have the tenant's written consent to retain any portion of the security deposit.

I have reviewed all documentary evidence and I find that the tenant paid a security deposit in the amount of \$800.00 as indicated in the tenancy agreement.

I accept the tenant's statement on the Monetary Order Worksheet that the tenancy ended on July 31, 2020, the date on which the tenant vacated the rental unit.

The security deposit is held in trust for the tenant by the landlord. At no time does the landlord have the ability to simply keep the security deposit because they feel they are entitled to it or are justified to keep it. The landlord may only keep all or a portion of the security deposit or pet damage deposit through the authority of the *Act*, such as an order from an arbitrator, or the written agreement of the tenant.

Section 38(1) of the Act requires the landlord to either return a tenant's security deposit and/or pet damage deposit in full or file for dispute resolution for authorization to retain the deposit(s) 15 days after the *later* of the end of a tenancy, or upon receipt of the tenant's forwarding address in writing.

If that does not occur, the landlord is required to pay a monetary award, pursuant to section 38(6)(b) of the Act, equivalent to double the value of the security deposit and/or the pet damage deposit. There are exceptions to this outlined in sections 38(2) to 38(4) of the Act. A landlord may also under sections 38(3) and 38(4) retain a tenant's security or pet deposit if an order to do so has been issued by an arbitrator or if the tenant agrees in writing that the landlord may retain the amount to pay a liability or obligation of the tenant.

Based on the declarations provided by the tenant, I find that the rights of the tenant to seek the return of her security deposit have not been extinguished.

I find that the landlord did not adhere to the requirements of section 38(1) of the Act, as the landlord did not return the security deposit in full, as requested by the tenant, within 15 days of July 31, 2020 (the date on which the landlord received the tenant's forwarding address and the date on which the tenancy ended). I find that the landlord returned only \$338.00 from the security deposit and retained the balance of the security deposit without the tenant's authorization.

There is no evidence before me to show that the landlord applied for dispute resolution claiming against the security deposit within 15 days following the conclusion of the tenancy or after receiving the tenant's forwarding address.

I find that there is no evidence before me to demonstrate that the landlord received the tenant's written authorization to retain all, or a portion of the security deposit to offset damages or losses arising out of the tenancy as per section 38(4)(a) of the Act, nor did the landlord receive an order from an Arbitrator enabling it to do so.

Section 38(6) of the Act sets out what is to occur in the event that a landlord fails to return or claim the security deposit within the specified timeframe:

- (6) If a landlord does not comply with subsection (1), the landlord
 - (a) may not make a claim against the security deposit or any pet damage deposit, and

(b) must pay the tenant double the amount of the security deposit, pet damage deposit, or both, as applicable.

Pursuant to section 38(6)(b) of the Act, a landlord is required to pay a monetary award equivalent to double the value of the security deposit if a landlord does not comply with the provisions of section 38 of the Act. I find that the landlord failed to adhere to section 38(1) of the Act.

The language of section 38(6)(b) is mandatory. As the landlord has failed to comply with section 38(1), I must order that the landlord pay the tenant double the amount of the security deposit.

Residential Tenancy Policy Guideline 17 states that “unless the tenant has specifically waived the doubling of the deposit, either on an application for the return of the deposit or at the hearing, the arbitrator will order the return of double the deposit.” However, the tenant has not provided any such waiver; therefore the provisions of section 38(6)(b) must be applied.

The tenant is therefore entitled to a monetary award in the amount of \$1,262.00, representing a doubling of the tenant’s security deposit, less the \$338.00 already returned by the landlord [$(\$800.00 \times 2) - \338.00].

Conclusion

Pursuant to sections 38, 67, and 72 of the Act , I issue a Monetary Order in the tenant’s favour in the amount of \$1,262.00 against the landlord, calculated as follows:

Item	Amount
Doubling of Security Deposit ($\$800.00 \times 2$)	\$1,600.00
Minus amount of security deposit already returned by landlord to tenant	\$338.00
Total Monetary Award to Tenant	\$1,262.00

The tenant is provided with a Monetary Order in the above terms and the landlord must be served with this Order as soon as possible. Should the landlord(s) fail to comply with this Order, this Order may be filed in the Small Claims Division of the Provincial Court and enforced as an Order of that Court.

This decision is made on authority delegated to me by the Director of the Residential Tenancy Branch under Section 9.1(1) of the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

Dated: September 23, 2020

Residential Tenancy Branch