



Dispute Resolution Services

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Residential Tenancy Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

DECISION

Dispute Codes MNSDP-DR, FFT

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 tenants to obtain monetary compensation for the return of double the pet damage deposit (the deposit) and to recover the filing fee paid for the application.

This decision is written based on the Application for Dispute Resolution, evidence, and submissions provided by the tenants on July 27, 2021.

The tenants submitted a signed Proof of Service Tenant's Notice of Direct Request Proceeding which declares that on August 12, 2021, the tenants sent the landlord the Notice of Dispute Resolution Proceeding - Direct Request by registered mail. The tenants provided a copy of the Canada Post receipt containing the tracking number to confirm this mailing in fact took place on August 13, 2021.

Based on the written submissions of the tenants and in accordance with sections 89 and 90 of the *Act*, I find that the Direct Request Proceeding documents were served on August 13, 2021 and are deemed to have been received by the landlord on August 18, 2021, the fifth day after their registered mailing.

Issue(s) to be Decided

Are the tenants entitled to monetary compensation for the return of a pet damage deposit pursuant to sections 38 and 67 of the *Act*?

Are the tenants entitled to recover the filing fee for this application pursuant to section 72 of the *Act*?

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.

The tenants submitted the following relevant evidentiary material:

- A copy of a residential tenancy agreement which was signed by the landlord and the tenants on May 30, 2020, indicating a monthly rent of \$4,000.00, a security deposit of \$2,000.00, and a pet damage deposit of \$2,000.00, for a tenancy commencing on June 15, 2020
- A copy of an e-mail from the tenants to the landlord dated June 14, 2021, providing the forwarding address, and requesting the return of the deposits
- A copy of a Proof of Service Tenant Forwarding Address for the Return of Security and/or Pet Damage Deposit form (Proof of Service of the Forwarding Address) which indicates that the forwarding address was sent to the landlord by e-mail at 3:29 pm on June 14, 2021
- A copy of an e-mail from the landlord dated July 15, 2021 replying to the tenants' forwarding address e-mail
- A copy of a Tenant's Direct Request Worksheet showing the amount of the deposits paid by the tenants and indicating the tenancy ended on June 15, 2021

Analysis

Section 38(1) of the *Act* states that the landlord has fifteen days from the end of tenancy and the date they received the forwarding address to either return the deposit(s) in full or make an application for dispute resolution claiming against the deposit(s).

Section 38(6) of the *Act* states that if the landlord does not return the deposit(s) or file a claim against them within the fifteen days, the landlord must pay the tenant double the amount of the deposit(s).

I have reviewed all documentary evidence and I find that the tenants paid a pet damage deposit in the amount of \$2,000.00, as per the tenancy agreement.

I accept the following declarations made by the tenants on the Tenant's Direct Request Worksheet:

- The tenants have not provided consent for the landlord to keep all or part of the pet damage deposit

- There are no outstanding Monetary Orders against the tenants for this tenancy; and
- The tenants have not extinguished their right to the deposit in accordance with sections 24(1) and 36(1) of the *Act*

I accept the tenants' statement on the Tenant's Direct Request Worksheet that the tenancy ended on June 15, 2021.

Section 71(2)(c) of the *Act* enables me to make an order that a document not served in accordance with section 88 or 89 is sufficiently given or served for purposes of this *Act*.

I find that the tenants sent their forwarding address to the landlord by e-mail, which is not a method of service permitted under section 88 of the *Act*. However, I am satisfied that the landlord received the tenants' forwarding address on the day the landlord replied to the tenants' e-mail.

For this reason, and in accordance with section 71(2)(c) of the *Act*, I find that the landlord has been served with the forwarding address on June 15, 2021.

I accept the evidence before me that the landlord has failed to return the pet damage deposit to the tenants and has not filed an Application for Dispute Resolution requesting to retain the deposit by June 30, 2021, within the fifteen days granted under section 38(1) of the *Act*.

Based on the foregoing, I find that the landlord must pay the tenants double the amount of the pet damage deposit in accordance sections 38(6) of the *Act*.

Therefore, I find that the tenants are entitled to a monetary award in the amount of \$4,000.00, the amount claimed by the tenants for double the pet damage deposit.

In the details of the monetary claim, the tenants have indicated they are also requesting \$2,000.00 for the doubling provision of the security deposit. However, I find the tenants' online Application for Dispute Resolution by Direct Request only includes the option requesting the return of the pet damage deposit.

As the tenants have not submitted an application specifically to address the security deposit, I find I cannot consider this portion of the tenants' request. The tenants' request for a Monetary Order for the doubled portion of the security deposit is dismissed with leave to reapply.

As the tenants were partially successful in this application, I find that the tenants are entitled to recover the \$100.00 filing fee paid for this application.

Conclusion

Pursuant to sections 67 and 72 of the *Act*, I grant the tenants a Monetary Order in the amount of \$4,100.00 for the return of double the pet damage deposit and for the recovery of the filing fee for this application. The tenants are provided with this Order in the above terms and the landlord must be served with **this Order** as soon as possible. Should the landlord 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.

I dismiss the tenants' request for a Monetary Order for the return of the doubled portion of the security deposit with leave to reapply.

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: August 31, 2021

Residential Tenancy Branch