

# RESIDENT HANDBOOK



**Caring for your home like it's your own!**

[www.fortworthpropertymanagement.com](http://www.fortworthpropertymanagement.com)

**The Handbook is a general guide. Some items in the Handbook may or may not pertain to your particular lease property. Ask your property manager if you have any property specific questions.**

**Please be sure you have a current copy of this handbook as it is updated periodically.**

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**Last update-12/21/23**

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS WHEN MOVING IN AND OUT:

1st Choice has partnered with a great company that for FREE will set up all your utility needs. You will have to set up your water. Citizen Home Solutions. If they have not already contacted you, Please visit this link for move in and move out needs: <https://myfreeconnection.com/1stchoice>

**Please also note that once we sign your lease, we have contacted the applicable utility companies to cease service on the day that you are to move in. Please call the utility companies to set up your service or <https://myfreeconnection.com/1stchoice>, the day you sign your lease and make the effective date the day we start your lease. This will ensure that the utilities will be transferred accordingly and there will be no additional charges to you as well as making your transition into your new home run smoothly. You will have to set up your water.**

**Electric Service.** You may use any electric provider you want to, other than for those residences that are in a cooperative. Do an internet search for deregulated Texas Electric Companies if your area does not have a co-op or go to <https://myfreeconnection.com/1stchoice> and they will be happy to assist.

**Gas Service: Atmos Energy 866-322-8667. If you smell gas, call 911!**  
**If you smell something BURNING call 911!**  
**Do NOT call us first.**

### Water Departments

Aledo 817-441-7016  
Arlington 817-469-6600  
Crowley 817-297-2201  
Euless 817-685-1471  
Fort Worth 817-392-4477  
Haltom City 817-222-7717  
Hurst 817-788-7040  
Keller 817-743-4060  
North Richland Hills 817-427-6200  
Richland Hills 817-616-3820  
Roanoke 817-491-2411  
Rhome 817-636-2462  
Saginaw 817-232-4640  
Watauga 817-514-5705

**Weatherford 817-598-4228**  
**White Settlement 817-246-4971**

## **LANDLORD'S RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**Smoking:** All of our properties are NonSmoking inside the home. That includes e-cigarettes and vape devices. If you or your guests must smoke, please do so outside and please do not extinguish your smokes on the walls or window sills. Please do not smoke in the garage.

**Rent Payments:** We prefer all rent payments be made online through the resident portal. [https://firstchoice.appfolio.com/connect/users/sign\\_in](https://firstchoice.appfolio.com/connect/users/sign_in)  
There is an additional fee for all online payments. There is also a **PayNearMe Cash PaySlip** that can be sent to you and you can use the slip with cash to pay at CVS, 7-Eleven, ACE Cash and Walmart. We do not accept personal checks.

If you are late with your rent, it must be dropped off at our office in the form of a money order or cashiers check made out to 1st Choice PM and **PLEASE** put the address to the home on it.

**BBQ'S:** In the interest of safety, the use of barbecues in any enclosed area or within 10 feet of the building or fence, is prohibited by city fire codes and is subject to fines ranging up to \$2000. If the BBQ Grills leave smoke soot on the house, you are responsible to pay to have it fixed.

**Trash:** Do not place trash at the curb until the morning of pickup. If the trash bag has been ripped open, it is your responsibility to clean it up. Please do not leave trash or brush piles laying against the home as it can harbor rodents and other unwanted pests. If you live in an HOA, they usually want all trash cans stored out of sight. HOA violations that result in a fine will be passed down to the resident.

**Pets:** Unless you have a Pet Agreement as a part of your Lease Contract, there will be – NO PETS! The yard must be picked up at least twice weekly. Fences will be maintained by the resident to insure the pet remains in the yard. Pets will not be allowed loose outside of your backyard. No dogs will be accepted in a home that does not have a fenced yard. This pertains to all animals including Service Animals and ESA.

**Hazardous Material:** Do not store any flammables in your home. Touch up paint left in the garage by 1st Choice PM is fine.

**Smoke Alarms:** If it is chirping, please replace the battery asap. It's for your safety. If you are part of our **Resident Benefit Package**, we will come and replace the batteries. Please submit a work order. A good rule of thumb is to test your smoke detector battery each month when you pay your electric bill, and to change the battery in your smoke detector each year when the time changes. Also, check your carbon monoxide detectors.

**Satellite Dishes:** Tenants can have a satellite dish but they need to be installed on a pole/bucket and not attached to the house. Any damages to the house or roof will be billed to the tenant.

**Reporting Maintenance Problems:** Your repair problems are important to us, we will respond as quickly as possible. You must put in the maintenance request online so we can assign it to the appropriate vendor quickly. <https://app.propertymeld.com/tenant/1st-choice-property-management/> Calling or texting the maintenance coordinator or your property manager is not going to guarantee your maintenance request gets put into our system. Or you can call 817-281-1300 and select the prompt for maintenance requests.

Please combine all maintenance requests submitted on the same day on the same Work Order. Our office will modify the work order as necessary.

Be specific about the problem (e.g. CORRECT: the right burner on the stove does not work; INCORRECT: the stove isn't working). If you are not contacted by a repair person within Forty eight (48) hours (not including weekends or holidays) after reporting a problem, please notify 1ST CHOICE so we can investigate what the problem may be or the work order may be reassigned to another vendor. DO NOT CALL US ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON FOR WEEKEND REPAIRS that are not of an emergency in nature (i.e., no heat in the middle of winter, no air in the middle of summer, or flowing water)!

**Spring and Summer HVAC Maintenance:** Weeds and grass must be kept trimmed and away from the air conditioning unit. Be sure the unit is kept free of grass clippings. Mow with the grass being blown away from the unit. Be sure to spray the outside unit periodically to clean out the dirt and dust from the coils. You also need to keep ant poison around the outside unit to keep the ants from causing damage. For the inside air and heating unit, it is necessary to change the filter at least bi-monthly, failure to do so is considered resident negligence, and repairs caused by this negligence shall be the sole responsibility of the resident.

**Winter Maintenance:** It is your responsibility to insulate outside faucets prior to winter freezing. Failure to do this is considered resident negligence. If pipes freeze, repairs will



be your responsibility. Know where your city water shut off is. We usually send out emails and texts to prepare for winter weather.

**Waterbeds:** We do not allow waterbeds in any property.

**Inspections:** We do an annual walkthrough of each property we manage. We are looking at the interior and exterior to ensure that we are not deferring any maintenance that materially affects the building itself. You will be notified by mail and email of our schedule and need not be present. If you wish to be present for the walkthrough, you will have to make arrangements to be there to meet our schedule. (Outside our schedule will result in a trip charge.) We also drive by all properties at least twice a month, but do not enter.

## **OUR PERSONAL MESSAGE TO YOU**

Congratulations on the selection of your new home. Welcome to the Fort Worth area and to your new experience with 1ST CHOICE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

Our office is located at:

5664 Denton Hwy

Fort Worth, TX 76148

817-281-1300 office

817-281-1918 fax

[www.fortworthpropertymanagement.com](http://www.fortworthpropertymanagement.com)

We want to make your relationship with us a pleasant experience and hope you will look to us for your entire RENTAL and REAL ESTATE needs.

Should you decide to purchase a home, call the office and we will help locate a property in the area and the price range you desire. The home you are renting may also be available to purchase. Please contact this office for more information about the home that you are renting.

As Professional Property Managers, we have obligations to both you, as the resident, and to the Owner of the home. This Handbook, which is part of your lease, outlines our responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to us and to the home.

Please read each paragraph carefully. A good relationship is possible when both parties understand and fulfill each of their responsibilities and obligations. Clear

communications is the key to a successful Landlord/Resident relationship.

We are always ready to answer questions or to discuss problems.

## **I. GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**A. Part of Your Lease:** This RESIDENT Handbook is part of your lease and is legally binding on all parties. Properly used, this document will enhance communication between us and make our ongoing relationship stronger and more transparent. The Resident Handbook will be updated annually as we work to keep up with changes in the laws and economics that affect our business practices. This Resident Handbook is a living addendum to the lease contract.

**B. The Property:** You have leased a home...think of it as your own. During the term of this lease, you are in possession of the house and yard. Your obligations are similar to those of the Owner, and you are expected to care for and maintain the premises accordingly.

**C. Phone Number/Email Addresses:** All residents are required to have current contact accessibility and to provide 1ST CHOICE with their home, work, and/or cell phone numbers. This also goes with current email addresses. Please be sure to notify 1ST CHOICE when you change phone numbers or emails.

**D. Returned Online Payments:** The amount of any insufficient funds (NSF), plus the returned NSF charge of \$50.00 must be paid in certified funds or a money order within 24 hours of notification, or legal action may be taken. After an online payment is returned to us for insufficient funds, you will be required to pay your rent either with a money order or Cashier's Check from that point forward. If the returned online payment makes your rent payment late, a late fee is also due. All amounts must be paid in full at the time of notification. If you are on the **Resident Benefit Package**, you get one NSF waived and late fees waived once a year.

**E. Default of Rental Payment.** If the rent is not paid by the designated day stated in your lease, this is your notice that we will start the eviction process. You will be responsible for all legal and collection fees incurred by management's efforts to collect the rent due. If rent is paid while a legal action is in process, acceptance of rent will not

necessarily stop the legal action. A separate agreement must be reached if legal action is to be stopped.

**F. Thirty Day Written Notice:** A thirty (30) day written notice must be given to 1ST CHOICE before vacating the premises. THE WRITTEN NOTICE IS REQUIRED EVEN WHEN YOU INTEND TO VACATE AT THE END OF THE LEASE. The notice should state a definite moving date. The lease stipulates the forfeiture of the entire security deposit if a THIRTY(30) day notice is not given. (This ALSO applies to the military clause).

**G. Breaking Your Lease:** In the event that you must break your lease, all rules for vacating the property remain in effect. You will be required to pay the reletting fee which is stated in paragraph 27 and 28 of your lease. Upon receipt of the reletting fee, we will begin marketing the house for a suitable resident to take over where you left off. Paying the reletting fee for premature cancellation of the tenancy does not excuse you from other obligations of your lease. You must leave the premises clean, undamaged and ready for occupancy. You will still be responsible for rent, utilities and lawn up until the day a new tenant moves in. You will receive your security deposit back so long as all provisions of the lease are met.

Please see our Move Out Package on our website under the residents tab.

**H. Keys and Locks:** All locks are rekeyed with each new resident. One set of keys are issued at the time of possession. Locks can not be changed to your own key. 1ST CHOICE may gain access and rekey if at any time access is denied, and charge the cost to the RESIDENT. Copies of the new keys will be available at the office during posted office hours. All keys are to be returned to 1ST CHOICE upon vacating the premises. If you are locked out of your home, you may borrow a key from 1st Choice. If it is after normal business hours, we will need to have someone come into our office to get you the spare keys. There will be a charge of \$75.00 (one hour labor). There will be a charge for any borrowed key that is not returned within 24 hours. If you go in and out of your garage and the power goes out, we can not access the house either so please leave the keyless deadbolt unlocked.

Residents are prohibited from adding, changing, or in any way altering locks installed in the doors of rental properties without the consent of the management. If you do want a lock changed for some reason, please contact us, as it must be done by our locksmith only and will be a charge to the resident.

**I. Trash:** Garbage and Recycling. All garbage, trash and recyclable materials must be placed in appropriate containers. (1ST CHOICE does not provide these.) Containers are not to be out of the storage area except on pick up days. Any recycling items collected must be properly contained and discreetly stored in the containers provided by the city. Contact your city for trash pick up days or bulk trash schedule.

**J. Disturbance:** Noise and Nuisances. All residents and guests are expected to conduct themselves in a way that will not offend others. Any excessive noise, traffic or disturbance of any kind is cause for eviction. This includes loud, lewd music, vulgar or profane language. If music or other sound can be heard outside the perimeter of the premises leased, it is considered too loud.

**K. Inventory Condition Form:** Included in your move-in package is an inventory condition form. 1ST CHOICE provides this form for you to note the condition of the premises, listing all defective items. Resident initials and signs this form when they sign their lease. We provide a copy to you on the day of move in. Residents have **10 days** to fill out the form and return back to 1ST CHOICE. This same report will be used for the move out condition comparison when vacating the premises. If this report is not returned as outlined, the property will be assumed to be in acceptable condition and any defects brought to our attention after this date will be considered your responsibility. No exceptions will be made.

**L. Parking/Vehicles:** All vehicles shall be parked in assigned areas (garages, parking lots, driveways, parking pads, etc.) or on the public street where allowed. You are not allowed to park on lawns, sidewalks and other areas not specifically designated for parking. All vehicles must be registered, licensed and operable at all times. No vehicle repair (except minor repairs e.g. changing a tire) is allowed at any time. No oil/fluid stains are allowed on the garage floor, driveway, walkways or any other area on the property. If your vehicle leaks fluids, place a protective covering or pan under the vehicle to catch the leaks. Camping trailers, boats (anything other than cars and pickups without campers) may not be parked without management approval.

**M. Guests:** Any person or persons staying more than ten (10) days will be considered RESIDENTS, unless prior written permission is obtained from 1ST CHOICE. Only those persons listed on your rental application have permission to occupy the premises. Any Occupants not on your lease will be considered a breach of your lease. You will be responsible for the behavior of your guests. All portions of this agreement also apply to your guests.

**N. Insurance:** You must have RENTERS insurance. A copy of your declarations page is



to be given to management the first month you move in. Please notify your insurance company that 1ST CHOICE needs to be named as additionally insured and must be notified of any changes.

## **II. WHEN YOU FIRST MOVE IN**

**A. Get to Know Your Property.** When you first move in, locate the breaker box and note the ground fault circuit breaker (some of these are by the sinks and not at the breaker box), where the stove, water heater, and air conditioner breakers are. Also, locate the water shut off for your house, it is usually in the front yard near the curb. Also, locate the water shut off for the water heater, the sinks, and for your sprinkler system. Locating these items now may eliminate damage later. See paragraph III.C below, for more information about circuit breakers.

**B. Handbook.** Before calling 1ST CHOICE, see if the answer is in this handbook. We love hearing from our RESIDENTS, but need to keep our time free for emergencies and other matters. You can find this Handbook at our website in the Tenant's Resources tab.

## **III. IN AND AROUND THE HOUSE**

Please refer to our How To Videos for troubleshooting issues around the house. We will be constantly adding to this: <https://www.fortworthpropertymaintenance.com/maintenance-videos>

This may help you prior to putting in a maintenance request.

**A. Foundation.** You are responsible for watering around the foundation during the summer months. If you see any sign of the ground around the home separating from the foundation, it needs to be watered, see your city's water schedule. You can also set up a soaker hose with a timer.

**B. Heat/Air Conditioning Units.** All HVAC filters need to be changed out bi-monthly. If you are in the Resident Benefit Package, you will receive your filter in the mail.

**C. Circuit Breakers.** Circuit breakers move slightly when triggered. It may appear to be ON when it has "popped". To reset, flip or push the breaker to the OFF position, then back ON again. The ground fault circuit breaker (GFCI) detects even slight voltage changes and cuts the power during fluctuations. If you lose power to a plug near a water source, it is usually the GFCI circuit. Most GFCI's are located in the garage, kitchen and bathrooms are marked with a red or yellow button. Many homes have the GFCI at the

plug in outlet. When these “pop” simply reset the breaker as outlined above, or per the instructions on the outlet cover. GFCI's control multiple outlets.

Refrigerators, freezers, and automatic sprinkler systems (usually in garages) should not be plugged into these GFI outlets.

**D. Extermination.** Your home has been treated since the previous resident moved out, so you may see dead bugs due to this treatment (that simply means that the treatment worked). Any future infestation of any kind is your responsibility with one exception: wood eating insects, such as termites or carpenter ants. These are the Owner's responsibility. You are responsible for reporting any suspected or known termite infestation. You are not responsible for termite control.

1ST CHOICE assumes no responsibility for the control of roaches, mice, ants, fleas, bed bugs or other pests. Please notify 1ST CHOICE if you suspect any termite or wood destroying insects around the house or grounds. You will be charged for any damage caused by uncontrolled pests (i.e. ants building nests in the air conditioning unit or damaging the unit, or roach infestations).

You are responsible for pest control and we do suggest that you set up a quarterly program with a professional company. The name of the company we use can be obtained by calling or emailing us at the office.

**E. Changing Paint, Etc.** The owners do not generally accept changes. However, if you want to change the house in any way, you must put your proposal in writing and submit it to 1ST CHOICE, along with a sample of the paint. If approved, you will receive a written confirmation. All tasks must be done in a workmanlike manner by a professional, and inspected and approved by 1ST CHOICE after completion. Any reimbursements agreed to will occur after approval. Please do not ask for the owner to pay for the supplies, and/or propose to do the labor yourself.

**F. Maintenance, damage and repair:** You are expected to maintain the home and keep it in as good a condition as when you took possession. Only repairs required due to normal wear will be made by 1ST CHOICE. You will be charged for repairs caused by misuse or neglect.

**G. Caring for your Granite/Stone Countertops:** If your property has granite countertops on the cabinets, please be aware you will need to purchase a bottle of Granite/Stone Sealer. Apply the sealer at least twice a year. See our website for instructional video of how to apply the sealer.

**II. Who Does What.** All “breakdowns,” system failures and structural defects must be reported to 1ST CHOICE immediately. If an urgent repair is needed (e.g. water heater leaking) YOU are responsible for stopping further damage by turning off the water supply. If there is a leak, stop the water source immediately. If the problem is electrical, turn off the breaker serving that appliance or area until the repairman arrives. 1ST CHOICE will make any necessary repairs within a reasonable time. You will not be reimbursed for any unauthorized repairs you make.

Some examples of maintenance you are expected to do at your own expense:

- Replace light bulbs, torn or damaged screens.
- Replace or repair cabinet catches, knobs or handles.
- Replace heat/air conditioner filters Bi-Monthly.
- Relight gas furnaces or water heaters.
- Treat for ants and other lawn pests, especially shrub infestation.
- Keep flower beds weeded, edged and add fresh bedding to preserve look.
- Keeping gutters clean.

Some examples of repairs that management will make at no expense to you:

- Repairs to heat/air conditioner systems from normal use.
- Repair heating units for hot water tanks from normal use.
- Repair leaks on roof.
- Replace or repair any part of plumbing which fails from normal use.
- Remove broken electrical components.
- Repair/paint rotted wood (please notify management if noted).
- Treat for termites or carpenter ants.

Some examples of repairs for which you will be held responsible:

- Any unusual damage or extraordinary wear on any of the floors, walls, ceilings, caused by pets, animals, occupants, guests, smoking or any unusual or unreasonable use.
- Damage to fences, outside walls, shrubbery, trees.

If there is work performed that is due to your negligence or damage and it is deemed that it is your responsibility, such as a plumbing stoppage caused by you, the resident, you will be billed for the charges. The bill is due immediately, or by your next rental

payment. IF YOU HAVE A BILL DUE WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR RENTAL PAYMENT, THE BILL IS FIRST SUBTRACTED FROM THE AMOUNT PAID, THE REST IS APPLIED TO RENT. IF THE FULL RENT IS NOT PAID BY THE DUE DATE PER YOUR LEASE, LATE CHARGES WILL BE ADDED TO YOUR ACCOUNT! If you have a problem paying a bill, please notify your Property Manager as soon as possible. Do not wait until your rent is late and charges start adding up.

**III. Unauthorized Repairs.** Please do not make any repairs or authorize any maintenance without written permission from 1ST CHOICE. We must authorize all repairs. Rent cannot be withheld because of needed repairs nor can the cost of needed repairs be deducted from your rent.

**H. Lawns and Grounds.** You are expected to care for the lawn and grounds, keeping them in as good condition as when you took possession. This care includes: regularly cutting the grass, fertilizing the lawn, trimming shrubs, edging all walkways, curbs and driveways, treating fire ant beds, cleaning the roof and gutters of leaves and debris, and keeping vines from growing onto the house and fences. Please keep shrub and tree growth away from the roof, eaves and sides of the house.

**If you live in an HOA,** please make sure your yard, landscaping and trash cans are taken care of weekly. We do not know when they go out to take pictures of yards that are not mowed, weeds and trash cans being left out. If the owner gets a fine, the fine gets passed on to you.

You are required to report any condition which can cause damage, permanent or temporary, to the grounds, and to treat for lawn pests. Flowering trees must be pruned at the proper time of the year for their species and all flower beds must be kept free from weeds, grass, etc. Whatever is in the beds as a cover (pine bark, pine mulch, etc.) must be maintained by the RESIDENT.

**I. Sprinkler Systems.** It is your responsibility to keep your sprinkler system up and running. Also make sure to shut down the system and close the main valve to the system during the winter season so that the valve doesn't freeze, otherwise the cost is yours.

It is the RESIDENT'S responsibility to keep the system in working order, including resetting the electronic timer and replacing broken sprinkler heads. It is still your responsibility to water your yard and shrubs, even if the system is down. Landscaping lights are not guaranteed to operate.



**J. Light Bulbs.** When moving in, all light fixtures will be equipped with the proper light bulbs. All burned out light bulbs are to be replaced by the RESIDENT during their occupancy, including floodlights. Upon moving out, all lights must be equipped with the proper number and kind of bulbs. For decorative bulbs, all bulbs must match. Light bulbs must be 60 watts unless otherwise specified on the lighting fixture. Any bulb over 100 watts in most fixtures is asking for trouble, as most fixtures are rated for 60 watts maximum and many multi bulb fixtures are rated at 40 watts per bulb, **please be careful.**

**K. Plumbing/Septic Systems.** You are responsible for keeping all sinks, lavatories and commodes open. Please do not allow anyone to throw anything into the plumbing system or to use it for any purpose other than what it is designed for. Sanitary napkins, diapers, wipes of any kind and tampons are not to be flushed down any toilet. Flushable wipes can still clog plumbing. You will be responsible for any damage or stoppage after five (5) days of occupancy, unless caused by mechanical failure of the plumbing system.

**L. Walls and Ceilings.** Please keep the walls of the home clean and unmarred. Do not paint or wallpaper the walls without prior approval of 1ST CHOICE. You are welcome to hang pictures on the walls as long as the walls are clean and unmarred upon vacating. Please try to use the proper nails/anchors. Command tape can pull paint off the wall.

All walls, baseboards and trim must be washed before vacating. All ceilings must be dusted and vacuumed regularly and again prior to vacating. IF YOU ARE A SMOKER, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL SMOKE RESIDUE AND DAMAGE. Remember that all of our homes are nonsmoking and if you or your guests smoke in the residence, you will be held accountable.

**M. Vinyl Floor Covering/Hardwood Floors.**

1. Sweep or vacuum the floor regularly to remove loose dirt and debris. This will prevent them from getting ground into the floor surface and causing scratches or stains.
2. Mop the floor with a damp mop using a cleaning solution that is safe for the type of flooring in your unit. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the cleaning solution to avoid damaging the floor.
3. Avoid using excessive water or leaving standing water on the floor, as this can cause damage to the flooring material.

4. If you spill something on the floor, clean it up immediately using a clean, damp cloth or mop. If the spill is not cleaned up promptly, it can cause stains or damage to the floor surface.
5. Avoid using abrasive cleaning tools such as steel wool or scrub brushes, as these can scratch the floor surface.
6. If you have hardwood floors, avoid using harsh cleaning solutions, and instead use a cleaner that is specifically designed for hardwood floors.
7. For tile floors, pay special attention to the grout lines, as these can collect dirt and grime. Use a grout cleaner and a small scrub brush to clean the grout lines periodically.
8. If you notice any damage to the floor surface, such as scratches, stains, or cracks, report it to your property manager as soon as possible. Prompt attention to such issues can help prevent further damage and costly repairs.

By following these floor cleaning procedures, you can help maintain the appearance and condition of the flooring in your rental unit, which can ultimately benefit both you and your landlord.

You will be responsible for damage to flooring such as broken tiles, torn floor covering or improper cleaning procedures.

**N. Carpet Care.** If you have carpet in your unit, vacuum it regularly to remove dirt and debris. Consider having the carpet professionally cleaned periodically to maintain its appearance and extend its lifespan.

Before moving in, the carpets are professionally cleaned. They will be professionally cleaned at your expense when you vacate.

**O. Stoves.** Be careful when cleaning the oven so that the oven cleaner does not drip onto the cabinets below or onto the floor. Do not use oven cleaner on self cleaning or continuous cleaning ovens. Make sure drip pans are kept clean and under the hood of the stove. Excessive grease build up can cause damage to the stove top.

You will be charged for damage to the appliance caused by improper use or cleaning, or lack of maintenance. In some of our rental properties, we have electric self cleaning ovens which, in some cases, have been damaged due to the lack of knowledge of how they work. The ovens lock thermostatically in the self cleaning cycle and can't be opened until they have cooled down sufficiently. In the past, residents have forced the latch open and have damaged the mechanism. Once the oven is cool enough, the latch will release automatically. It is never necessary to force it open.

**P. Dishwashers.** Use at least once a week. Seals may dry and the motor may be

damaged by long periods of not being run. Clean the door and check the bottom of the dishwasher, each use for items that may fall from the racks. Check the perimeter of the door for food items falling from the counter. Here is a hint for you: before starting your dishwasher, run the hot water at the sink. This will ensure that the dishwasher is filled with hot water and will do a better job cleaning your dishes.

**Q. Garbage Disposals.** Garbage disposals are not for bones, greasy items, meat or any other similar materials. If the motor buzzes, turn the switch off and unplug. Unjam the disposal by turning the blade backwards with a broom handle or a wrench if one is provided. Plug it back in, reset the circuit breaker on the bottom or the side of the disposal (this is usually a small red or yellow button). If the unit turns easily by hand but not with power, call for service. Almost all disposal jams are from what is put into them or misuse. Also, make sure the disposal is run and empty before starting up the dishwasher so that food doesn't back up into the drain hose.

**R. Washer/Dryer Hookups.** When you install your washer and dryer, it is a good time to check your hoses and washers to eliminate leaks. If you are going to be absent from the property for an extended period of time, turn off the hot and cold water supplies. Check the wall and floor monthly for evidence of a hidden leak.

**S. Dryer vent cleaning.** If you have lived in the home for a long time and it seems like your dryer is not working well, have your dryer vent cleaned out.

#### **IV. CLEANING AND HOW TO'S**

We work hard to deliver to you a clean, well maintained and comfortable home with all the mechanical equipment operating properly. Proper cleaning and maintenance will keep the home, and its equipment, safe and usable for you.

The key to proper cleaning is to do it often. Set up a weekly schedule. Monitor the work and ensure cleaning is performed as often as needed.

##### **A. Minimum Cleaning Standards:**

- 1) Keep windows and storm doors clean, inside and outside, interior cleaning at least once a month, exterior cleaning every six months. Wash between windows and screens quarterly.
- 2) Wash interior doors, doorways and walls in heavily traveled areas every 12 months.

- 3) Clean dust, dirt and debris from the upper and lower sliding glass door tracks monthly.
- 4) Clean stove, drip pans, under drip pans, oven racks and drawer, broiler pan, hood, filter and vent every other week.
- 5) Mop floors every other week.
- 6) Dust baseboards, windowsills, and window grids, tops of windows, ceiling fans, doors, ceilings and corners of the room monthly.
- 7) Clean Air Conditioner and Heating air return registers and change filter(s) every other month. (A good rule is when you pay your light bill, change your filter.)
- 8) Clean and sweep out the fireplace. Clean fireplace grate, screen and glass.
- 9) Replace burned out light bulbs as needed, cleaning lighting fixtures as needed.
- 10) Curtains and blinds, if provided, should be cleaned or washed semiannually.
- 11) Bathrooms should be cleaned weekly. This includes toilet bowls and base, sink, mirror, floor, bathtub and shower (including walls). Wipe out medicine cabinets, drawers and cabinets. Tilex brand mildew and tile cleaner keeps your grout mildew free.
- 12) RainX or other brands of window cleaner keeps your shower doors and tile from spotting.
- 13) Sweep out the garage as needed.

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**B. Countertops and Cabinets.** Always use cutting boards and hot pads when chopping, cutting or placing items on the countertops. Do not use abrasive cleaners on countertops, as they will scratch. All unpainted cabinets need to be cleaned regularly with a wood cleaner (such as Murphy's Oil Soap) and be treated with a wood preserve (such as Scott's Liquid Gold). All cabinets must be vacuumed out and the drawer/door fronts cleaned as above before vacating.

**C. Kitchen Appliances.** Each kitchen appliance must be cleaned regularly. In particular, the stove hood, the filter in the stove hood, the oven under the burners on the stove and the drip pans. Please do not put aluminum foil on the drip pans. Upon moving out, all drip pans must be new. Please clean under the refrigerator, washer and dryer regularly. Not cleaning all of these items regularly can cause excessive wear and tear, for which you will be responsible.

**D. Fireplaces.** If there is a fireplace in your home, please do not burn pine or any other "sappy" wood. This causes a buildup of the residue in the chimney and increases the possibility of fire. The fireplace is not a place to burn cardboard, holiday wrapping, pine



needles, etc. Chimneys should be professionally cleaned every two years. Do not cook in the fireplace.

## **V. MOVING OUT**

**A. Putting it in Writing.** Before notice to vacate is accepted by 1ST CHOICE, it MUST be put in writing. The notice must include the date you anticipate having the property ready for your move out survey and where you are moving (even if you don't have a forwarding address, list the city and state to where you are relocating).

Notice must be received by 1ST CHOICE Property Management at least thirty (30) days before you move out.

\*Notice can be found on our website under the tenants tab. Or you can go to your tenant portal to submit your 30 day notice.

**B. Marketing During the Notice Period.** After you have given notice that you intend to vacate, the property may be listed for sale or rent. The most probable showing hours are between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Saturday. The property must be available and in good condition during the market time. Illness and children's birthday parties are acceptable reasons for rescheduling a showing. Inconvenience, out of town guests, or no one home, are not acceptable reasons to reschedule. You will be called text or emailed prior to showing. If there is no answer or voicemail set up, the call is still considered notice. Extra effort on your part is expected in keeping the house and yard neat and clean during marketing. Minimum showing condition:

- 1) All beds made and rooms neat.
- 2) Floors are recently vacuumed; clutter free, especially no piles of dirty clothes.
- 3) Kitchen and baths are clean; sinks are clean and empty.
- 4) Walls are clean and unmarred.
- 5) Dogs are out of the way, litter boxes are clean and odor free.
- 6) TV is off or volume turned low so it is not intrusive.
- 7) Yard is mowed, trimmed and in good condition.
- 8) Blinds and or curtains are open and the home is well lit (when possible).

The better a home shows, the more likely it will rent or sell quickly. The faster a new resident is found, the less you will be bothered by showings. A home that shows well benefits everyone!

**C. Breaking the Lease.** If you break your lease per the lease that you signed, you will be responsible for all costs incurred in securing a new resident.

- 1) We work diligently to reduce your costs should you break your lease. If you find that you must move before the end of your lease, we will market the property promptly, providing that you give us the 30 day written notice and pay us the Reletting Fee with that notice. You must pay a full month's rent for every month until a new RESIDENT moves in. When the new RESIDENT moves in, your obligation is over.
- 2) You must follow all procedures for marketing, cleaning and move out, this will ensure that you receive the maximum in your security deposit refund.
- 3) The following is a list of the most common charges when breaking a lease:
  - a) A reletting fee.
  - b) Rent until the new lease takes effect
  - c) Lawn maintenance (you need to arrange for that before leaving).
  - d) Utilities (keep them on in your name until notified of a new RESIDENT).
  - e) Please see Move Out Checklist on our website.

**D. Return of Security Deposit.** THE SECURITY DEPOSIT MAY NOT BE USED AS THE LAST MONTH'S RENT!!!

- 1) The security deposit will be refunded or accounted for within thirty (30) days of your moveout, and upon return of the keys and garage door remotes.
- 2) Please make sure we have your forwarding address.
- 3) Please provide any carpet cleaning or house cleaning bills.
- 4) Please see the Move Out Checklist on our website.

## **VI. EMERGENCY/DISASTER PROCEDURES**

- A. **Appendices A and B.** These are the procedures, plans and responsibilities for emergency/disaster related situations. Please read each of them carefully and regularly review them, especially during the summer months.
- B. **Make Your Plan Now.** The key to safely and properly handling any emergency/disaster is preplanning and staying calm during and after the event. Being prepared is every individual's responsibility. Don't rely only on the authorities.

Take charge and plan now so you can be better prepared to take action when the time comes. Advanced planning allows for fewer mistakes and greater safety for you, your family, and the home you're caring for. It is easy to forget even little things in the anxiety, which comes with an emergency. To avoid unnecessary stress, get ready now.

**C. Two Types of Emergency.**

- a. The first type is one that is specific to the property you rent (e.g. a tree falls on the house or the water heater bursts). Appendix A addresses procedures for this type of emergency.
- b. The second type of emergency is an area wide disaster (e.g. tornado). Appendix B addresses procedures for this type of emergency.

**D. What Should You Do?** Everything an Owner would do to protect the property, you are expected to do. The first priority is to stop additional damage. Regularly review Section II.A. We have many thunder and lightning storms, power outages and high winds. An emergency could happen at any time, BE PREPARED.

**E.** If you lose Power, please contact Oncor or check your breaker box.

**VII. SUMMARY**

- A. This Handbook is for you. In the excitement of moving, we often don't remember all the instructions and requirements of the lease. This handbook was written to be used as a reference for you. Place it where you can easily find it. Before calling the office, look to see if the answer you seek is here. Please check out our website on how to videos as well. If you find something you think would be helpful to others, but is not included, please notify your Property Manager. We are always looking for additional ways to serve you.
- B. Welcome to 1ST CHOICE. Again, welcome to our area and your new home. Please take advantage of the many opportunities to enjoy the beautiful and friendly Fort Worth and surrounding areas. Should you decide to make The Fort Worth area your permanent home, please call our office. We would be happy to help you with your real estate needs. We look forward to a pleasant relationship and a happy rental experience.

THANK YOU FROM THE STAFF AND MANAGEMENT OF  
1st Choice Property Management and Maintenance

## **APPENDIX A: NON-DISASTER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Upon discovery of a problem AVOID FURTHER DAMAGE IMMEDIATELY. The following is a summary of what to expect. Please post this note in a visible place. If any of these actions do not occur, notify the office immediately. Keeping everyone on schedule is a group effort, and you are part of the team.

### **Resident Responsibility**

- Take steps to prevent additional damage immediately
- Turn off the source of water, electricity or gas, as the situation demands
  - Water-Curb or water heater. Sometimes they are closer to the house. Also you can call the water department. Sprinklers have shut offs too.
  - Electricity-Breaker Box
  - Gas-Call Atmos Energy
- Notify 1st Choice, if it is after hours, use the emergency line
- If it was caused by Resident negligence, make a claim on Renters insurance
- Notify 1st Choice. of Renters insurance coverage, if applicable
- Provide emergency (police, fire, etc) report to 1st Choice within five days of incident
- Provide access for insurance, repair companies, etc. to assess and repair damage
- Notify management of delays, “no show” appointments, problems with repairs 1st Choice Responsibility
- Takes pictures of damage for Owner report
- Inspect and takes pictures of finished work

The insurance company will contact you. They will assess the damage. Please remember that work is performed during normal daytime business hours, Monday through Friday and may require several days to complete. The repair company will set a time with you to work on the house. If you desire, you can be there, but they will have access as necessary to the home. After the repairs are complete, management will view the completed work. If there is a delay, please contact this office at 817-281-1300.

Sometimes, the repair company is not prompt in scheduling the visit with your Property Manager. Your help is vital to this process. You are responsible for any loss due to Resident negligence. If a current resident or a guest caused the damage, please be aware all charges not covered by insurance will be billed to you.



## APPENDIX B: DISASTER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 1) Have an emergency preparedness plan, a checklist and a storm kit.
- 2) Tune in to the local news media and follow all recommended precautions and instructions.
- 3) During the storm or before leaving, please be sure to:
  - a) Turn off main breaker to house
  - b) Turn off the main gas line to house (turn off at the gas meter)
  - c) Turn off the main water supply to the home (at the water meter located either in the driveway or yard close to the street)
  - d) Take all recommended precautions by the local news media
  - e) Secure your pets
  - f) Secure all outside items (e.g. swing sets, small planters, anything that could turn into a flying object during high winds)
  - g) If you go in and out of your garage and the power goes out, we can not access the house either so please leave the keyless deadbolt unlocked.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURING THE HOME AGAINST ANY POSSIBLE FURTHER DAMAGE. EVERYTHING A HOMEOWNER SHOULD DO, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO DO.

Tenant Acknowledgement:

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Tenant Acknowledgement:

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Tenant Acknowledgement:

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