

## *"Before Moving In Do a Walk Through"*

### **Before Moving In:**

Before agreeing to rent the residential house, apartment, duplex, etc., try to find out if the property is well managed. You may call the police or Sheriff's substations and ask if there have been any complaints about the property.

Ask other tenants:

- Does the management/owner make repairs promptly?
- Are tenants responsible for any repairs, yard work or utilities?

Look around:

- Are the public areas clean?
- Are there inoperative vehicles in the parking area?
- Is the landscaping maintained?
- If you have children will there be any place for them to play?

Ask about the policies:

- What are the rules regarding children if you have a family?

**NOTE:** Different rules or policies for children (such as pool hours or bicycle riding etc.) and adults may be discriminatory.

- Ask about the rent payment policy (when is it due and is there a late charge?)

**NOTE:** Policies must be applied and enforced equally for all tenants, not changed arbitrarily between tenants.

Once you move in, there may be little you can do about poor management or changing the terms of the agreement.

### **Do a Walk-Through**

Before you move in, or shortly after moving in, insist upon a "walk-through" with the landlord. There should be a written document (it could be titled a "walk through", "check in/check out" or "check in" list) describing the condition of each room. If you are not provided with one create your own. Date it, sign it and give a copy to your landlord/manager. Take your time and look carefully at everything:

- Try out all appliances (i.e. refrigerator and freezer, stove, air conditioner, dishwasher, garbage disposal, and heater, etc).
- Look under the sinks for leaks.
- Flush the toilets.
- Look around the toilets for any leaking.
- Check that all windows and doors lock properly.
- Inspect the carpet and linoleum.
- Inspect the plumbing (showers and tubs).
- Note the condition of the walls.
- Take pictures of the different rooms. If there is a yard, take pictures to show the condition.
- Write down on the walk-through/check-in list any defects, and the condition of the property.
- Get a copy of the list signed by the landlord.

If the landlord refuses to do a walk through with you, do one on your own and send the landlord a copy. A copy of the walk-through/check in, especially if signed by the landlord, can help protect you from being held responsible for damages caused to the property by a prior tenant.