
**The Charleston Property
Company**
TENANT HANDBOOK



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Disclaimer: This Handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute a portion of your rental agreement (lease). Please review your rental agreement carefully, familiarize yourself with its contents and do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or any additional information you need. The intention of this Handbook is to help clarify the tenancy process and provide general information.

WELCOME LETTER

Dear New Tenant,

As your new property management team we would like to welcome you into your new home and thank you for choosing to work with us. The purpose of this handbook is to assist you with caring for your home and also will answer the most common questions you will have while working with a property management company.

Please take a moment to take a look through this packet, it will give you all the basic information you will need to get started and settled into your new home. If after looking through, you still have some questions, feel free to call one of our offices or come in and someone will be happy to answer any questions you might have and help you in any way we can.

The Charleston Property Company is committed to providing friendly and helpful service to all of our owners and tenants. Our team members play specific roles to best service your needs. Any time you have a question or something you would like to discuss, someone from our team will always be willing to help.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The Management Team

PAYING RENT

When is rent due:

- Rent is due on the 1st of each month and is considered late at Noon (12:00 PM) on the 5th. Please note this timeline includes weekends and holidays.
Variations may exist for this policy by location. so please consult your rental agreement terms.

How to pay rent:

- Rent can be paid online by logging into your portal at www.Charelstonpc.com.
- Rent can be paid by money order or cashier's check payable to The Charleston Property Company. Please no cash.
- Rent can be paid by mail, with a cashier's check or money order, but it must be physically received in the office by Noon (12:00 PM) on the 5th. Please address mail to: The Charleston Property Company, P.O. Box 22632, Charleston, SC 29413.
- Rent can be paid in person during normal business hours. Be sure the envelope is properly labeled with your address.

Important notes:

- Place your name and property address on the check or money order to ensure that you are properly credited with rental payment.
- Review your check or money order and ensure it has the names of payer and payee.
- Leaving cash or an incomplete check or money order on the premises is not the management company's responsibility.
- Operational hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
- If a rent check is returned for insufficient funds (NSF), all charges including NSF, late and posting fees will be charged to you.

THE BASICS

Important policies:

- **Rental agreement:** The duration of your rental agreement is fixed and specified in the document. Any early termination or extension must be discussed with the Property Manager.
- **Security deposits:** Your security deposit can not be used to pay last month's rent or any other month's rent.
- **Pets:** Animals are only allowed with prior approval of the management company. Each animal must be 30 pounds or less and older than 18 months old. A maximum of two pets are allowed. Each pet requires a \$250 non-refundable pet fee. Upon move-out, the property must be professionally treated for odor and pests.
- **Keys:** If you lose or lock yourself out of your home during office hours there is a \$25 dollar charge to make a copy of our back-up set of keys. After office hours (later than 5:00 PM during the weekday or weekends), there is a minimum \$80 dollar fee for an emergency maintenance response.
- **Yard & Grounds Maintenance:** If you are responsible for maintaining your yard, upkeep of flower beds, lawn care and maintain other parts of the yard is expected. Additional care should be taken to keep the grounds clean. Please consult the rental agreement for more details.
- **Vehicle Parking:** Only approved and operational vehicles in designated areas are allowed. Please consult the rental agreement for more details.
- **Guests:** A guest (s) staying longer than 14 days will require approval by the management company. Consult your rental agreement for more details.
- **Noise:** You are subject to all laws pertaining to noise and your rental agreement.
- **Routine maintenance:** As you become more settled in your new home it is important to manage routine maintenance items. Here are **some examples** of maintenance items you are responsible for:
 - Replacement of light bulbs
 - Cleaning or replacement of furnace filters (if applicable)
 - Regular yard and lawn maintenance (if applicable)
 - Replacement of batteries in smoke detectors and CO₂ detectors

Submitting a maintenance request:

- If a maintenance issue should arise, please complete a maintenance request by submitting a work order online at www.Charlestonpc.com.
- We ask that you submit maintenance requests online to avoid confusion and to ensure that we have a clear record of your request. When making a request, be as specific as possible about the problem.
- When preparing your work order please remember to complete the section on how to enter the property. If you need to be present, remember that the maintenance department schedules appointments Monday – Friday, from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- Tenants are responsible for securing any pets that may be encountered on the visit to the property.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the case of a medical, fire, or other emergency situation that could involve immediate peril to you or someone surrounding you always call your local emergency number or 911.

Maintenance emergency procedures: If you experience an emergency situation, please follow the steps outlined below. As a note, if the problem occurs in the middle of the night it is very unlikely we will be able to dispatch a contractor to the property until the morning, so please try and contain the emergency as best as possible.

- The specific definition of a maintenance emergency is: an issue that is dangerous, hazardous, or if not addressed immediately could cause damage to the property or your personal well-being (e.g., flooding, no heat in the winter, or gas leak).
- An emergency is not an annoying sound, air conditioning failure, appliance malfunction, drain stoppage and the like, while inconvenient, these are not considered emergencies and will be handled by our office on the following business day.
- If the situation is considered a maintenance emergency and occurs normal business hours, please call our office, then follow-up with a work order request.
- If the situation occurs after business hours please call our main office line and listen for directions on how to reach our emergency extension. Remember to leave your name, phone number, address, and the type of emergency.

Emergency failure check steps (prior to contacting Property Manager):

Electric Heat

- Check the thermostat to see that the controls are set properly
- Check all the fuses and circuit breakers
- Check the access panel to the blower compartment to ensure the panel is securely closed
- Check the filter and ensure has been replaced in the last six months

Gas Heat

- Check the thermostat to see that the controls are set properly
 - Check all the fuses and circuit breakers
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- Check the access panel to the blower compartment to ensure the panel is securely closed
- Test any other gas appliances to determine if service has been interrupted

Oil Heat

- Make sure the emergency shut off switch is in the “on” position
- Check oil level in the fuel tank
- Check thermostat, fuses, circuit breakers and blower compartment panel to ensure normal operation (see above)

In all cases, slightly open an indoor faucet and allow it to drip to prevent freezing until the heating system is operational.

Water related issues: If water is running onto floors from any appliance, fixture or pipe, close the shut-off valve for the appliance / fixture or shut-off the main valve for the property. If you reside in a location that has on-site management, contact them and this office immediately.

MAINTAINING FIXTURES and APPLIANCES

Furnace and wall heaters:

- All tenants are responsible for cleaning or replacing the furnace filter at the beginning of the fall heating season. Problems caused by failure to clean / replace the filter will be the tenant’s responsibility.
- Dust can accumulate at furnace vents as well as at fan vents. A small broom brushed across the vent openings will clear away any dust and help the furnace or fan operate efficiently.
- Remember, heat pumps usually do not circulate warm air like gas furnaces do, unless they are run on the “Emergency Heat” setting which activates the resistance heat mechanism.

Gas wall heaters:

- If your residence has a gas wall heater, it is important to turn off the heater when it is not needed. On any gas appliance, new or old, if the pilot light goes out you may detect a gas odor, which should dissipate in a few minutes after airing out the room. If the odor persists call the gas company immediately.

Humidifier:

- Ensure that the water supply valve is open and set the control to your comfort level. Set it to the “off” position during the cooling season and shut off the water supply valve.
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Central air conditioning:

- Air conditioning can only lower the inside temperature 10 or 15 degrees lower than the outside temperature. Clean air filters at a minimum twice a year.

Window air conditioning:

- These machines should be used sparingly as they are susceptible to icing, especially at lower fan speeds.

Power

- If the power goes out in your unit or house, first check to see if the whole area is without power. If it is out in the area, report outage to the local power authority.
- If the power is only out in your house / unit, check the circuit breaker panel. One or more circuits may be tripped and you may see the switches in the off position. If no switch is off turn each switch off then on to reset the circuits. If this doesn't solve the problem, report a maintenance emergency.

Drains:

- AVOID letting food and hair get down the drains. Clogged drains caused by hair, grease are the tenant's responsibility. Some dishwashers will clog from food left on the dishes when put in the machine.
- An excellent drain cleaning / clearing solution recipe is: 1 cup salt, 1 cup baking soda, 1 cup vinegar, followed by 8 cups boiling water. We recommend performing this treatment monthly to avoid build-up.
- Hardware stores carry "hair catchers" to place in sink and tub drains that significantly help keep drains free of hair.

Garbage disposals:

- ALWAYS run water while the disposal is operating to avoid damage to the unit. Let the water run long enough to grind all the material in the disposal. Then let the water run for 10-15 seconds after turning off the disposal. Learn to recognize the sound the machine makes when completely free of garbage.
- Disposals are designed to grind up organic items only. Exceptions include: banana peels, artichoke leaves, celery stalks, flower stems, coffee grounds, potato peelings, bones, or any item that is particularly tough. NEVER put paper, plastic, glass, aluminum foil or grease in the disposal.
- If the unit becomes inoperable, ALWAYS be sure to check the power switch first (usually under the sink), then try the reset button (somewhere on the machine), and remove all contents before calling for maintenance. Problems caused by users are the tenant's responsibility.

Refrigerator coils and drip pans:

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- Keep reasonably clean behind and underneath the refrigerator. Coils and drip pans will require cleaning. If drip pans are not kept clean, the pans can start to develop a strong odor. Please take the time to get acquainted with the appliances in your unit.

Fireplaces:

- Please burn only hardwoods in the fireplaces and woodstoves to minimize to buildup of creosote, etc. in the chimney. Creosote build-up is a fire hazard.
- Be sure a fireplace screen is in place when a fire is burning to prevent hot ashes from escaping and burning floor coverings.

Stove or oven:

- Be aware of the various bake, broil, time bake, and self-clean controls. To operate the self-cleaning features, please follow the instructions of the appliance. For continuous cleaning ovens use soap and water to clean, please never use oven cleaners or abrasives as this will ruin the finish.

Plumbing fixtures:

- NEVER use abrasives on brass or gold fixtures, and it is best to wipe fixtures clean after each use.
- If brass needs to be polished, use a product specifically designed for brass.
- Many homes and apartments have low-flow toilets. Low-flow toilets tend to clog or back up if too much paper, etc. is flushed. You may need to continue and hold down the handle when flushing to avoid clogs. Tenants must be prepared to plunge the toilet to clear clogs and avoid damage from over-flows.

Water damage:

- Tenants must take care to avoid water damage caused by allowing water to sit on counters and floors.
- Care must be taken to ensure that shower curtains are inside the tub, and that shower doors are completely closed when taking a shower. Water on tile floors can seep through the grout and cause dry rot on the underlayment and discolor the vinyl. Water can also seep around the edges of linoleum and damage the flooring below. We recommend putting a mat, towel or rug on the floor to step on when exiting the tub or shower. Please be aware that the rubber backed mats can discolor vinyl floors, and the tenant could be charged to replace the floor at move-out.

Sliding glass doors, screen doors and shower tracks:

- It is imperative that dirt and debris regularly be cleaned out of sliding door tracks. Opening and closing doors over debris that frequently accumulates in the tracks

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can damage the wheels on sliding doors, especially the heavy glass sliders. Please make it part of your cleaning routine to clear the tracks.

- Please do not use oil or WD40 to lubricate slider doors or screens. They only attract dirt and gum up the wheel mechanisms.
- In order to slow the growth of mold in the tracks and at the bottom of shower doors, keep the tracks clean. Use an old toothbrush and do a regular monthly cleaning, it's much easier than doing one major cleaning at move-out.

Mold:

- Please refer to the Mold Addendum provided during lease signing.

House Plants:

- Be sure plant saucers are kept under all potted plants. Water run-off will stain or damage most surfaces.

Kitchen Counters:

- To avoid costly damage from nicks and cuts in counter tops, please use a cutting board at all times.

Ceramic tile – Tub and Shower Walls:

- Dilute 1 part white vinegar in 5 parts water for cleaning all ceramic tiles and fiberglass tub surrounds.
- NEVER use scrubbing cleansers like Comet or AJAX on fiberglass tub surrounds, as these products will permanently scratch the surfaces.

Mini Blinds:

- Do not soak mini blinds. Spray them with a mild soap and water solution and wipe them down.

Smoke and CO₂ Detectors:

- Tenants are responsible for changing batteries in smoke and CO₂ detectors. We recommend changing batteries at the beginning and end of daylight savings time. Batteries are changed upon move-in.
- Note that AC/DC powered detectors will usually require Duracell MN 1604 9 Volt batteries and each detector will need to be tested to stop beeping.

Wood decks and porches:

- Potted plants and flowers add beauty and appeal to a property. Please put “feet” or saucers under them to prevent water run-off from rotting or discoloring the deck.

Hardwood Floors:

- For cleaning or applying oil to hardwood floors only use a soft cloth. It is best to sweep and dust regularly.
- Kitchen areas only: once every 3 months clean floors with a small amount of vinegar in water.
- Use throw rugs in front of the sink and the stove to protect these areas from water and grease.

Marble and granite:

- Never use any acidic or abrasive cleaning products including vinegar. It is best to use warm water and a sponge with a small amount of dishwashing liquid such as Dawn or Joy.
- Marble is a porous material. Be careful that water run-off from plants is not left standing on the surface. It will permanently stain the marble.

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Interior:

Furnace

- Clean or replace the air filter regularly. All tenants are responsible for cleaning or replacing the furnace filter at the beginning of the fall heating season. Problems caused by failure to clean / replace the filter will be the tenant's responsibility.
- Set the thermostat to an appropriate heat level for winter and cool level for summer. Note that you will be held liable for any damage incurred due to turning off the heat when leaving on vacation during the winter.
- Inspect all supply and return vents for cleanliness and obstructions.
- For radiant heat systems, inspect for leaking valves or radiators.

Fireplace

- When not using the fireplace, ensure that the damper is in good operating condition and closed.
- Inspect the flue and chimney and ensure it is unobstructed. Periodic inspection and cleaning are strongly recommended; however, this is typically a tenant expense.

Smoke and CO₂ Detectors

- Test all smoke detectors on a regular basis. Battery operated models will begin to make an intermittent beep when the battery is running low. Replace batteries in the fall and spring.
- Note that AC/DC powered detectors will usually require Duracell MN 1604 9 Volt batteries and each detector will need to be tested to stop beeping.

Exterior:

Lawn and Shrubbery

- Maintain the lawn and shrubs surrounding your unit. Remove leaves and branches in the fall.

Gutters

- Inspect that all gutters are free and clear of debris. They should drain freely away from the foundation

Winterization: Faucets and Outlets

- Wrap all outside facets. If possible, close the isolation valve and open the outdoor faucet. Remember during the spring to close the faucet before opening the shut-off valve.
- Cap all outside electrical outlets or disconnect the appropriate fuse or circuit breakers.

VACATING CHECKLIST

We understand that moving can be a stressful and busy time. However, there are some important items to consider when moving, which if done properly will save you time and money in the long run. There is a level of cleaning that is required to return the unit in the condition you received it. If you have any questions, please contact your property manager and be sure to reference the **checklist provided in your rental agreement.**

General

- Provide a written notice of your intent to vacate a MINIMUM of thirty days prior to the end of the month. This written notice must be RECEIVED in the office and signed by all tenants on the lease within this thirty day timeframe.
- Complete change of address cards for the Post Office and provide our office with a forwarding address.
- All utilities must remain on, but it is your responsibility to cancel any garbage, cable, phone, etc. services.
- If vacating in the winter, set the thermostat no lower than 55 degrees to prevent freezing of pipes. Tenant will be responsible if heater is turned off or is below 55 degrees.

Refrigerator:

- Defrost freezer if needed. **DO NOT** use sharp tools to pry ice off.
- Wash inside of refrigerator with warm water and baking soda. Clean door gasket.
- Take out refrigerator shelves and drawers and wash in warm water, dry and replace. Clean under lower drawers.
- Wash and dry outside of refrigerator and vacuum back and lower grills.
- Move refrigerator from wall and clean underneath. **DO NOT TURN OFF!**
- Sweep down cobwebs on walls and ceiling.
- Replace light with an appliance bulb, if necessary.

Stove:

- Remove racks and broiler pan; soak in hot water and clean, dry well.
- Clean inside of oven, top of stove, knobs, under elements, under burner pans and drawer.
- Wash and dry outside of stove.
- Replace oven light with appliance bulb if burned out.
- Replace burner pans.
- Move stove out and clean wall and floor.

Cabinets and Drawers:

- Wash cupboards inside and out.
- Wipe out drawers with damp rag.
- Clean sink, baskets and counter tops well.
- Make sure garbage disposal is empty and clean.

Miscellaneous In and Near Kitchen:

- Wash all light fixtures in warm water and soap. Clean switch plates.
- Clean inside and out of dishwasher; include inside seal.
- Wash range hood and clean filter. Change appliance bulb, if necessary.
- Wash windows, blinds, screens and clean sills and tracks.
- Scrub kitchen floor, including under movable appliances and baseboards.

Living Room:

- Wash windows, sills and clean tracks.
- Clean light fixtures and switch plates.
- Sweep down cobwebs.
- Clean out fireplace (s).
- Vacuum carpet and clean baseboards.
- Clean drapes / blinds.
- Clean out fireplace; wash screen and doors.

Bedrooms:

- Sweep down cobs.
- Wash light fixtures and switch plates.
- Wash windows, clean sills and tracks.
- Vacuum carpet and clean baseboards.

Bathrooms:

- Clean bathtub, tile around tub, sink, door and fixtures.
- Clean inside and outside of toilet. These should be free of soap scum.
- Scrub floor, baseboards and behind toilet.
- Clean inside of medicine cabinet.
- Wash mirror.
- Clean windows, sills and tracks.
- Clean fan.
- Clean vanity inside and out, including drawers.