

ELEVATEFLORIDA

TENANT GUIDE

A stylized house icon composed of a triangle and a rectangle, with a vertical line extending downwards from the base of the rectangle. It is positioned behind the main title text.

South Florida Renter's Handbook

Everything You Need to Rent With Confidence

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SECTION 01

Understanding the Rental Market

South Florida is one of the most competitive rental markets in the country. Knowing how it works gives you a serious advantage before you ever walk into a showing.

- Inventory moves fast — most quality units are rented within 48–72 hours of listing
- Peak season runs October through April when snowbirds drive up demand
- Expect to pay first month, last month, and a security deposit upfront
- Most landlords require proof of income equal to 3x the monthly rent

Have your documents ready before you start looking — not after you find a place.

SECTION 02

Documents You Need Ready

Being prepared separates serious renters from those who lose units to someone else. Have these ready before your first showing.

- Government-issued photo ID (driver's license or passport)
- Last 2 pay stubs or proof of income
- Last 2 months of bank statements
- Social Security Number for credit and background check
- Reference letters from previous landlords (if available)
- If self-employed: 2 years of tax returns or a CPA letter

Create a rental application folder — digital and physical — so you can submit instantly.

SECTION 03

Reading Your Lease

A lease is a legal contract. Most people sign without reading it. Don't be most people.

- Check the lease start and end dates carefully
- Understand what utilities are included vs. your responsibility
- Look for early termination clauses and what they cost
- Know the rules on guests, pets, parking, and noise
- Confirm what repairs the landlord is responsible for
- Check renewal terms — does it auto-renew or go month-to-month?

Never sign a lease you haven't fully read. Ask questions before you sign.

SECTION 04

Protecting Your Security Deposit

Florida law gives landlords 15–30 days to return your deposit. Here's how to protect it from day one.

- Do a thorough walkthrough before moving in — document everything
- Take timestamped photos and video of every room, every wall, every appliance
- Submit a written move-in condition report to your landlord
- Get the landlord's signature acknowledging existing damage
- Keep copies of all maintenance requests and communications
- Do the same walkthrough when you move out

Your photos are your proof. No documentation = no protection.

SECTION 05

Your Rights as a Florida Tenant

Florida law protects you. Know what you're entitled to before you need it.

- Landlords must give at least 12 hours notice before entering your unit (except emergencies)
- You have the right to a habitable home — working plumbing, heat, no pests
- Landlords cannot shut off utilities to force you out — that is illegal

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- If repairs are ignored, you may have the right to withhold rent (consult an attorney)
- You have 7 days to pay or vacate after a non-payment notice before eviction can start
- Retaliation by a landlord for reporting issues is illegal in Florida

Keep every communication in writing. Texts and emails are admissible.

For questions or guidance, visit elevateflorida.rent or follow [@elevateflorida](https://twitter.com/elevateflorida)