

Four Steps to Take When a Tenant Won't Pay Rent - Tenant Screening Blog

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Even if you're making a concerted effort to engage in tenant screening, all landlords, at some point in their careers, will likely face tenants who avoid paying rent. While there are many reasons this can occur (some legit and others not so much), when you know the proper steps to take, you'll be able to get the situation resolved in a prompt and efficient manner so you can put it behind you. Here are five steps to take when a tenant is refusing to pay rent.

Step 1: Talk to the tenant about the issue.

The first step when a tenant isn't willing to pay rent is to speak to them about the reasons. While some will have financial issues, others may be withholding rent for reasons such as their roof is leaking or their toilet needs to be fixed. There may also be a problem with a roommate moving out, so the renter can only make a partial payment.

Whatever the reason you're given, it's up to you as to what actions you want to take next. If someone doesn't wish to pay because they want something fixed first, you can let them know the repair date and show them it's on the calendar.

Step 2: Find out your state laws.

Each state is different in how they handle tenants who don't pay their rent. The more knowledge you have about landlord rights in your state, the more prepared you'll be when you approach a tenant who isn't paying. You'll also be better equipped to handle any legal threats they make towards you because you'll already be aware of your rights.

Step 3: Decide if legal action is required.

If a resolution isn't happening between you and the tenant, the next step is to decide if it's time to bring in your lawyer. He or she will be able to offer guidance, as well as a solution for closure in this situation.

Step 4: Protect yourself with a plan.

Even though you try to weed out these individuals in your tenant screening process, people still exist who try to get out of paying the bill. The best action you can take as a landlord is to have a proactive plan in place, ideally before you're even faced with this situation. While each tenant is unique and can be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, it's still going to be crucial that you know exactly what steps to take when faced with an unpaid bill. Knowing the laws of your state and involving your lawyer at the right time will help prevent past due months, as well as give you peace of mind that you'll be ready when it does happen.

No matter how the tenant acts, be sure that you remain calm and professional throughout the entire process. It's important that you keep a cool head, so you can make smart decisions during this time. In some cases, your tenant will react in a positive way to your professionalism, and you'll be able to resolve the issues in a single conversation because they were treated with respect.

Thankfully, these issues are becoming more and more rare thanks to the tenant screening solutions that Tenant Background Search offers, starting at just \$19.95