



Successful housing is all about successful communication. Here are some tips and tricks for communicating with your landlord, both during the housing search process, and during your tenancy.

During the Housing Search

When you see an ad for an apartment or room you like, phone or email the landlord/lease holder. REMEMBER, this first contact is your first impression. There are usually a lot of people contacting the landlord, so you want to make a good first impression to stand out.

Here are some sample scripts you can use:



PHONE

Hello, my name is [your name] and I saw your place listed on [website]. Is it still available? When can I come to see it?

NOTE: The landlord might have questions about your income and references. Be prepared to answer!



EMAIL

Dear [landlord's name],

My name is [your name] and I saw your posting on [website]. I am wondering when I can come see it?

Sincerely,
[your name]

Landlords will likely ask you these questions before you even see the unit:

- How many people will be living in the unit?
- What is your source of income?
- What is your credit score?
- Do you have references?

Think about your answers ahead of time to be prepared. You do not need to have a perfect answer to every question. If you don't have one of the things a landlord is asking for, think about how you can market yourself creatively as being a good tenant regardless. Here is an example of a potential phone conversation:

Landlord: *What is your credit score?*

Tenant: *I do not have a credit score available because I don't have a credit card, but I DO have 3 references and a steady source of income from my job at Pizza Pizza.*

Even though you do not need to have a job to rent an apartment, landlords often favour people with jobs over those who are receiving OW or ODSP. Think of how you will answer the question when a landlord asks about your source of income. Here is an example of what you could say to market yourself as a good tenant:

Landlord: *What is your job?*

Tenant: *Right now, I am receiving OW. However, OW provides me enough income for this room rental, and I can provide you with a landlord reference from my last room rental.*



Before you Agree to Rent

Make sure your landlord has provided you with a proper tenancy agreement. Tenancy agreements (aka leases) are standardized in Ontario. You can find copies of this document here:

<http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH&ENV=WWE&TIT=2229E&NO=047-2229E>

Make sure you read it carefully and that you agree with all the rules your landlord has written. For example, if your lease says that you are responsible for paying hydro, then you **MUST** pay the hydro for your apartment.

During Your Tenancy

Communicating effectively with your landlord can help to ensure you have a peaceful and good time living in your unit.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH LANDLORDS:

Get it in writing. Do you have a leaky toilet? Email your landlord about it. Did your landlord tell you verbally you can park in the driveway? Follow up with an email confirming that you are allowed. Did your landlord tell you it's okay to pay your rent late this month? **SEND AN EMAIL** to confirm.

Emails create permanent documentation that can help you prove yourself if you should ever need to take up an issue with the Landlord and Tenant Board (a tribunal that provides dispute resolution in Ontario).

REMEMBER: Cheque and e-transfer are the best ways to pay rent because it automatically creates a record of payment. If you must use cash, ALWAYS get a receipt from your landlord.

Sometimes, your unit will need repairs. Always send a request in writing to your landlord. While texts are okay, emails are considered more formal and are recommended. Here is an example:

Dear [your landlord's name],

On April 10th, our toilet began leaking around the base. It is making the floor wet in our bathroom. Can you please let us know when it will be fixed?

Thanks,

[your name]

If you are having difficulties communicating with your landlord, you can phone:

Tenant Hotline

Monday- Friday, 8:30am-6pm | 416-921-9494

Landlord & Tenant Board

Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5pm | 416-645-8080