

# TENANT HANDBOOK



HOW TO LIVE AND CARE FOR THE  
HOME YOU ARE RENTING

[www.1stchoicepm.com](http://www.1stchoicepm.com)

**The Handbook is a General Guide. Some items in the Handbook may or may not pertain to your particular Lease property. Ask your property manager if you have any property specific questions.**

## **IMPORTANT NUMBERS WHEN MOVING IN AND OUT**

1st Choice has partnered with a great company that for FREE will set up all your utility needs. Please contact your property manager for enrollment. Otherwise we have a list of contact numbers that may be helpful below.

### **UTILITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS**

Please be advised that you **MUST** provide us with your account numbers for your utilities. We will not release the keys to the property unless you have this information. Please also note that once we sign your lease, we have contacted the applicable utility companies to cease service on the day that you are to move in. Please call the utility companies to set up your service the day you sign your lease and make the effective date the day we start your lease. This will ensure that the utilities will be transferred accordingly and there will be no additional charges to you as well as making your transition into your new home run smoothly.

**Electric Service.** You may use any Electric provider you want to, other than for those residences that Tri-County services in their Co-OP. Do an internet search for deregulated Texas Electric Companies if your area does not have a CO-OP.

**TriCounty Elec. Co-Op 817-431-1541**

TriCounty serves a large portion of ZIP Codes for 76244 and 76248 inside and outside of Keller. Being a Co-OP, they have exclusive service rights to their area of service.

**Gas Service.** Atmos 800-460-3030

### **Water Departments**

**Aledo 817-441-7016**

**Arlington 817-275-5931**

**Euless 817-685-1470**

**Fort Worth Water 817-392-4477**

**Haltom City 817-222-7717**

**Keller 817-743-4060**

**North Richland Hills 817-427-6200**

**Richland Hills 817-299-1800**

**Saginaw 817-232-4640**

**Sansom Park 817-626-3791**

**Watauga 817-514-5835**

**White Settlement 817-246-4971**

## **LANDLORD'S RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**SMOKING:** All of our properties are NonSmoking inside the home. If you or your guests must smoke, please do so outside and please do not extinguish your smokes on the walls or window sills.

**CHECKS:** All checks must be preprinted with your name. We do not accept temporary checks or checks written on a personal checking account that is not a party to the lease under any circumstance. If you are getting your rent from someone else, take that to your bank and get us a Money Order or Cashier's Check. Any check received that does not meet the above criteria will be returned to you. If this happens, it will be deemed that you have not paid your rent and you will be subject to late fees and/or possible eviction if your rent is not here by the due date shown in your lease.

**VEHICLES:** All vehicles must be operational, have current tags, parked in a designated space, and belong to you or it is subject to being towed. Camping trailers, boats (anything other than cars and pickups without campers) may not be parked without management approval. Do not repair vehicles on the premises or park on walkways or grass.

**BBQ'S:** In the interest of safety, the use of barbecues in any enclosed area or within 10 feet of the building or fence, is prohibited by city fire codes and is subject to fines ranging up to \$2000.

**TRASH:** Do not place trash at the curb until the morning of pickup. If the trash bag has been ripped open, it is your responsibility to clean it up.

**PETS:** Unless you have a Pet Agreement as a part of your Lease Contract, there will be – NO PETS! If your pet is a dog, it cannot have been attack trained nor be of a breed that is known or considered to be vicious. We will not accept Pit Bulls (Staffordshire Terriers), Rottweilers, Mastiff's, or any other breed that is considered to be aggressive. The yard must be picked up at least twice weekly. Fences will be maintained by the tenant to insure the pet remains in the yard. Pets will not be allowed loose outside of your backyard. No dogs will be accepted in a home that does not have a fenced yard.

**HAZARDOUS MATERIAL:** Do not store paint or any other flammables in your home.

**SMOKE ALARMS:** If it is chirping, it needs a new battery replace the battery.

**SATELLITE DISHES:** Resident shall not install, or have installed, a satellite system without the written consent of the landlord. If permitted, the installation company must coordinate the installation with the landlord.

**REPORTING MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS:** Your repair problems are important to us, we will respond as quickly as possible. Unless it is an emergency, all maintenance problems must be

reported in writing.

**SPRING AND SUMMER MAINTENANCE:** Weeds and grass must be kept trimmed and away from the air conditioning unit. Be sure the unit is kept free of grass clippings. Mow with the grass being blown away from the unit. Be sure to spray the outside unit periodically to clean out the dirt and dust from the coils. You also need to keep ant poison around the outside unit to keep the ants from eating the contacts. For the inside air and heating unit, it is necessary to change the filter at least monthly, failure to do so is considered resident negligence, and repairs caused by this negligence shall be the sole responsibility of the resident.

**WINTER MAINTENANCE:** It is your responsibility to insulate outside faucets prior to winter freezing. Failure to do this is considered resident negligence. If pipes freeze, repairs will be your responsibility.

**WATERBEDS:** We do not allow waterbeds in any property.

**INSPECTIONS:** We do an annual walkthru of each property we manage. We are looking at the interior and exterior to insure that we are not deferring any maintenance that materially affects the building itself. You will be notified by mail of our schedule and need not be present. If you wish to be present for the walk thru, you will have to make arrangements to be there to meet our schedule. We also drive by all properties at least twice a month, but do not enter.

## **OUR PERSONAL MESSAGE TO YOU**

Congratulations on the selection of your new home. Welcome to the Fort Worth

area and to your new association with 1ST CHOICE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, (hereinafter called 1ST CHOICE).

Our office is located at:

5750 Rufe Snow Dr., Ste. 160

North Richland Hills, TX 76180

817-281-1300 office

817-281-1918 fax

[www.1stchoicepm.com](http://www.1stchoicepm.com)

We want to make your association with us a pleasant experience and hope you will look to us for your entire RENTAL and REAL ESTATE needs.

If you have a home in another part of the United States, we may be able to locate a Property Manager for you through our association with the National Association of Residential Property Managers (NARPM). NARPM is a large association of professional residential property managers throughout the United States.

Should you decide to purchase a home, call the office and we will help locate a property in the area and the price range you desire. The home you are renting may also be available to purchase. Please contact this office for more information about the home that you are renting.

As Professional Property Managers, we have obligations to both you, as the resident RESIDENT, and to the Owner of the home. This Handbook, which is part of your lease, outlines our responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to us and to the home. Please read each paragraph carefully. A good relationship is possible when both parties understand and fulfill each of their responsibilities and obligations.

Clear communications is the key to a successful Landlord/RESIDENT relationship. We are always ready to answer questions or to discuss problems.

## **I. GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

-A. Part of Your Lease. This RESIDENT Handbook is part of your lease and is legally binding on all parties.

-B. The Property. You have leased a home...think of it as your own. During the term of this lease, you are in possession of the house and yard. Your obligations are similar to those of the Owner, and you are expected to care for and maintain the premises accordingly.

-C. Rental Payments. All rents are due and payable, in advance, on the first day of each month. Monthly bills will not be sent. Payment should be made in a check, money order, certified funds, or they can be made by electronic bank transfer and should be made payable to:

1st Choice Property Management

5750 Rufe Snow Dr., Ste. 160

North Richland Hills, TX 76180

Rent payments are made online at [www.1stchoicepm.com](http://www.1stchoicepm.com) through your tenant portal or at certain retail locations. Rents remaining unpaid beyond the 3rd day of the month are delinquent and are subject to a late fee. Rents remaining unpaid after the 3rd day of the month are considered late and will be cause for Late Fees and Eviction Proceedings to be initiated unless the resident has called ahead and discussed the situation with their Property Manager.

-D. Phone Number. All residents are required to have telephone accessibility and to provide 1ST CHOICE with their home, work, and/or cell phone numbers. Please be sure to notify 1ST CHOICE when you change phone numbers.

-E. Returned Checks. The amount of any insufficient funds checks (NSF), plus the returned check charge of \$25.00 must be paid in certified funds or a money order within 24 hours of notification, or legal action may be taken. After a check is returned to us for insufficient funds, you will be required to pay your rent either with a money order or Cashier's Check from that point forward. If the returned check makes your rent payment late, a late fee is also due. All amounts must be paid in full at the time of notification.

-F. Default of Rental Payment. If the rent is not paid by the designated day stated in your lease, this is your notice that your lease and rental agreement may be cancelled. You will be responsible for all legal and collection fees incurred by management's efforts to collect the rent due. All charges

unpaid by the end of the month in which they are charged may be added as additional rent. All remedies and charges for collecting unpaid rent may be used to collect unpaid charges. If rent is paid while a legal action is in process, acceptance of rent will not necessarily stop the legal action. A separate agreement must be reached if legal action is to be stopped.

-G. Thirty Day Written Notice. A thirty( 30) day written notice must be given to 1ST CHOICE before vacating the premises. THE WRITTEN NOTICE IS REQUIRED EVEN WHEN YOU INTEND TO VACATE AT THE END OF THE LEASE. The notice should state a definite moving date. The lease stipulates the forfeiture of the entire security deposit if a THIRTY(30) day notice is not given. (This ALSO applies to the military clause.)

-H. Breaking Your Lease. In the event that you must break your lease, all rules for vacating the property remain in effect. You must turn in a 30 day's written notice to the office, and also pay the reletting fee which is stated in paragraph 27. B. (4) of your lease. Upon receipt of the reletting fee, we will begin marketing the house for a suitable resident to take over where you left off. Paying the reletting fee for premature cancellation of the tenancy does not excuse you from other obligations of your lease. You must leave the premises clean, undamaged and ready for occupancy. You will receive your security deposit back so long as all provisions of the lease

are met.

-I. Keys and Locks. All locks are rekeyed with each new resident. One set of keys are issued at the time of possession. Alterations or replacement of locks, installation of bolts, knockers, mirrors or other attachments to the interior or exterior of doors requires the approval of 1ST CHOICE. 1ST CHOICE must have keys to each lock on the house. 1ST CHOICE may gain access and rekey if at any time access is denied, and charge the cost to the RESIDENT. Copies of the new keys will be available at the office during posted office hours. All keys are to be returned to 1ST CHOICE upon vacating the premises. If you are locked out of your home, you may borrow a key from the management Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 5:30pm. If it is after normal business hours, we will need to have someone come into our office to get you the spare keys. There will be a charge of \$50.00 (one hour labor). There will be a charge for any borrowed key that is not returned within 24 hours.

-J. Locks: Residents are prohibited from adding, changing, or in any way altering locks installed in the doors of rental properties without the consent of the management. If you do want a lock changed for some reason, please contact us, as it must be done by our locksmith only.

-K. Trash: Garbage and Recycling. All garbage, trash and recyclable materials must be placed in appropriate containers. (1ST CHOICE does not provide these.) Containers are not to be out of the storage area except on pick up days. Any recycling items collected must be properly contained and discreetly stored. A total of no more than two fifty (50) gallon trash bags of recyclable materials may be kept on the premises at one time.

-L. Disturbance: Noise and Nuisances. All residents and guests are expected to conduct themselves in a way that will not offend others. Any excessive noise, traffic or disturbance of any kind is cause for eviction. This includes loud, lewd music, vulgar or profane language. If music or other sound can be heard outside the perimeter of the premises leased, it is considered too loud.

-M. Move In/Move Out Condition Report. Included in your move in Package is a property condition report. 1ST CHOICE provides this form for you to note the condition of the premises, listing all defective items. Please initial as appropriate, sign your name, date it and return it to 1ST CHOICE within 10 days of your taking possession of the property. This same report will be used for the moveout condition comparison when vacating the premises. If this report is not returned as outlined, the property will be assumed to be in acceptable condition and any defects brought to our attention after this date will be considered your responsibility. No exceptions will be made.

-N. Periodic Surveys. As part of our agreement with the Owner of the property, 1ST CHOICE will conduct routine surveys of the condition of the property. You will be notified of any problems, and given fourteen (14) days to remedy them. Remember that this will be your home while you are leasing it. Please take care of it. You must keep the drains free of grease, lint, hair, or food, which can clog them. You can flush them out occasionally with a chemical drain cleaner and avoid costs; the owner will pay only for stoppages that are caused by faulty construction, such as mortar or stones in the sewer lines or by tree roots. If you have an emergency stoppage that you are personally unable to eliminate, call our office at (817)-281-1300 so we can initiate a work order and send the proper contractor to work on the stoppage.



-O. Parking/Vehicles: All vehicles shall be parked in assigned areas (garages, parking lots, driveways, parking pads, etc.) or on the public street where allowed. You are not allowed to park on lawns, sidewalks and other areas not specifically designated for parking. All vehicles must be registered, licensed and operable at all times. No vehicle repair (except minor repairs e.g. changing a tire) is allowed at any time. No oil/fluid stains are allowed on the garage floor, driveway, walkways or any other area on the property. If your vehicle leaks fluids, place a protective covering or pan under the vehicle to catch the leaks.

-P. Guests: Any person or persons staying more than twenty (20) days will be considered RESIDENTS, unless prior written permission is obtained from 1ST CHOICE. Only those persons listed on your rental application have permission to occupy the premises. Any RESIDENT not on your lease will be considered a breach of your lease. You will be responsible for the behavior of your guests. All portions of this agreement also apply to your guests.

-Q. Emergency Maintenance/Repairs: An emergency is when danger is present or property damage has occurred or is about to occur. Do not abuse the emergency system with other types of calls. To report an emergency, call the office phone number and follow the instructions on the voicemail. Be sure to report the specific emergency and include your telephone number in your message. See Emergency/Disaster Procedures for more information. DO NOT CALL ON FRIDAY EVENING FOR WEEKEND REPAIRS! If the emergency involves a fire or similar emergency, notify the proper authorities at 911 before calling our office.

-R. Insurance: It is suggested that you have RESIDENTS' insurance. A copy of your declarations page is to be given to management the first month you move in. Please notify your insurance company that 1ST CHOICE is your Landlord and must be notified of any changes.

-S. Pets: No pets, animals, snakes, birds, etc. of any kind are allowed on the premises unless you have written permission and have paid a pet deposit. If permission is given, you will be required to pay a pet deposit that will be handled as an addition to your security deposit and will be refunded in accordance to the Texas Property Code and your lease. You will be charged for spraying for fleas and/or repair of any damage caused by the pet both inside and outside the home. You are responsible for your animal at ALL times. Having a pet is a privilege and may be revoked at any time without terminating your lease agreement.

-T. Smoking: Your home is a non-smoking residence. If you or your guests must smoke, please take your smoke break outside. If we have to treat the home for damage caused by smoking (nicotine stains on the walls/ceilings, rug or counter burns, or smoke odor) you will be charged the full amount for a complete painting, replacement of flooring or countertop, and ozone treatment.

## II. WHEN YOU FIRST MOVE IN

-A. Get to Know Your Property. When you first move in, locate the breaker box and note the ground fault circuit breaker (some of these are by the sinks and not at the breaker box), where the stove, water heater, and air conditioner breakers are. Also, locate the water shut off for your house. It is usually in the front yard near the curb. Also, locate the water shut off for the water heater, the sinks, and for your sprinkler system. Locating these items now may eliminate damage later. See paragraph III.C below, for more information about circuit breakers.

-B. Put this Handbook Where You Can Find it. Before calling 1ST CHOICE, see if the answer is in this handbook. We love hearing from our RESIDENTS, but need to keep our time free for emergencies and other matters.

### III. IN AND AROUND THE HOUSE

-A. Foundation. You are responsible for watering around the foundation during the summer months. If you see any sign of the ground around the home separating from the foundation, it needs to be watered deep and long.

-B. Heat/Air Conditioning Units. All heat and refrigeration air conditioner filters need to be changed once a month and batteries for smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors should be changed at least twice a year. A good rule of thumb is to change your filter and test your battery each month when you pay your electric bill, and to change the battery in your smoke detector each year when the time changes.

-C. Circuit Breakers. Circuit breakers move slightly when triggered. It may appear to be ON when it has "popped". To reset, flip or push the breaker to the OFF position, then back ON again. The ground fault circuit breaker (GFI) detects even slight voltage changes and cuts the power during fluctuations. They are usually used in the vicinity of bathroom sinks, exterior plugs, garages and some lights. If you lose power to a plug near a water source, it is usually the GFI circuit. Most GFIs are located at the breaker box are marked with a red or yellow button. Many homes have the GFI at the plug in outlet. When these "pop" simply reset the breaker as outlined above, or per the instructions on the outlet cover. Refrigerators, freezers, and automatic sprinkler systems (usually in garages) should not be plugged into these GFI outlets.

-D. Extermination. Your home has been treated since the previous resident moved out, so you may see dead bugs due to this treatment (that simply means that the treatment worked). Any future infestation of any kind is your responsibility with one exception. That exception is wood eating insects, such as termites or carpenter ants, These are the Owner's responsibility. You are responsible for reporting any suspected or known termite infestation. You are not responsible for termite control. 1ST CHOICE assumes no responsibility for the control of roaches, mice, ants, fleas or other pests. Please notify 1ST CHOICE if you suspect any termite or wood destroying insects around the house or grounds. You will be charged for any damage caused by uncontrolled pests (i.e. ants building nests in the air conditioning unit or damaging the unit, or roach infestations). You are responsible for pest control and we do suggest that you set up a quarterly program with a professional company. The name of the company we use can be obtained by calling or emailing us at the office. Moreover, if there is work performed that is due to your negligence or damage and it is deemed that it is your responsibility, such as a plumbing stoppage caused by you the resident, you will be billed for the charges. The bill is due immediately, or by your next rental payment. **IF YOU HAVE A BILL DUE WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR RENTAL PAYMENT, THE BILL IS FIRST SUBTRACTED FROM THE AMOUNT PAID, THE REST IS APPLIED TO RENT. IF THE FULL RENT IS NOT PAID BY THE 5th, LATE CHARGES WILL BE ADDED TO YOUR ACCOUNT!** If you have a problem in paying a bill, please notify your Property Manager as soon as possible. Do not wait until your rent is late and charges start adding up. If the repair of maintenance is due to normal use of the property, it will be paid for by the property owner with

the exception of resident caused problems or any other lease exception. You will be billed for those regardless of the cost. This helps us maintain reasonable rental rates.

-E. Changing Paint, Wallpaper, Etc. The owners do not generally accept changes. However, if you want to change the house in any way, you must put your proposal in writing and submit it to 1ST CHOICE, along with a sample of the paint/wallpaper or drawing (e.g. adding a fence). If approved, you will receive a written confirmation. All tasks must be done in a workmanlike manner by a professional, and inspected and approved by 1ST CHOICE after completion. Any reimbursements agreed to will occur after approval. Please do not ask for the owner to pay for the supplies, and/or propose to do the labor yourself.

F. MAINTENANCE, DAMAGE AND REPAIR You are expected to maintain the home and keep it in as good a condition as when you took possession. Only repairs required because of normal wear will be made by 1ST CHOICE. You will be charged for repairs caused by misuse or neglect.

A. Put Maintenance Requests in Writing. Maintenance Requests are made online at our web site: [www.1stchoicepm.com](http://www.1stchoicepm.com) or you may copy and submit the form that is in APPENDIX D of this document. All routine requests must be in writing as outlined above. Be specific about the problem (e.g. CORRECT the right burner on the stove does not work; INCORRECT the stove isn't working). Write clearly and legibly. If you are not contacted by a repair person within Forty eight (48) hours (not including weekends or holidays) after reporting a problem, please notify 1ST CHOICE, so we can investigate what the problem may be or the work order may be reassigned to another vendor. You may fax your requests to us at 817-281-1918.

DO NOT CALL US ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON FOR WEEKEND REPAIRS not of an emergency in nature (i.e., no heat in the middle of winter, no air in the middle of summer, or flowing water)!

B. Who Does What. All "breakdowns," system failures and structural defects must be reported to 1ST CHOICE immediately. If an urgent repair is needed (e.g. water heater leaking) YOU are responsible for stopping further damage by turning off the water supply. If there is a leak, stop the water source immediately. If the problem is electrical, turn off the breaker serving that appliance or area until the repairman arrives. 1ST CHOICE will make any necessary repairs within a reasonable time. You will not be reimbursed for any unauthorized repairs you make.

Some examples of maintenance you are expected to do at your own expense:

- Replace light bulbs, torn or damaged screens
- Replace or repair cabinet catches, knobs or handles
- Replace heat/air conditioner filters EVERY MONTH.
- Relight gas furnace or water heaters
- Treat for ants and other lawn pests, especially shrub infestations
- Keep flower beds weeded, edged and add fresh bedding to preserve look.
- Replace batteries in smoke detectors (please notify 1ST CHOICE if your smoke detector does not work after you've changed the battery).

Some examples of repairs that management will make at no expense to you:

- Repairs to heat/air conditioner systems from normal use

- Repair heating units for hot water tanks from normal use
- Repair leaks in roof
- Replace or repair any part of plumbing which fails from normal use
- Remove broken electrical components
- Repair/paint rotted wood (please notify management if noted)
- Treat for termites or carpenter ants

Some examples of repairs for which you will be held responsible:

- Replace heating elements/hot water tanks if caused by empty tank
- Any unusual damage or extraordinary wear on any of the floors, walls, ceilings, caused by pets, animals, children, guests, smoking or any unusual or unreasonable use
- Damage to fences, outside walls, shrubbery, trees or plantings

C. Unauthorized Repairs. Please do not make any repairs or authorize any maintenance without written permission from 1ST CHOICE. We must authorize all repairs. Rent cannot be withheld because of needed repairs nor can the cost of needed repairs be deducted from your rent.

D. Lawns and Grounds. You are expected to care for the lawn and grounds, keeping them in as good condition as when you took possession. This care includes regularly cutting the grass; fertilizing the lawn; trimming shrubs; edging all walkways, curbs and driveways; treating fire ant beds; cleaning the roof and gutters of leaves and debris, and keeping vines from growing onto the house. Please keep shrub and tree growth away from the roof, eaves and sides of the house. You are required to report any condition, which can cause damage, permanent or temporary, to the grounds, and to treat for lawn pests. Flowering trees must be pruned at the proper time of the year for their species and all flower beds must be kept free from weeds, grass, etc. Whatever is in the beds as a cover (pine straw, pine bark, etc.) must be maintained by the RESIDENT. Do not leave hoses connected to exterior faucets with the water turned on.

E. Sprinkler Systems. Sprinkler system clocks have batteries that need to be replaced every 6 months. It is your responsibility to keep your sprinkler system up and running. Also make sure to shut down the system and close the main valve to the system during the winter season so that the valve doesn't freeze, otherwise the cost is yours. It is the RESIDENT'S responsibility to keep the system in working order, including resetting the electronic timer and replacing sprinkler heads. It is still your responsibility to water your yard and shrubs even if the system is down. Malibu landscaping lights are not guaranteed to operate.

F. Light Bulbs. At move in, all light fixtures will be equipped with the proper light bulbs. All burned out light bulbs are to be replaced by the RESIDENT during their occupancy, including floodlights. Upon moving out, all lights must be equipped with the proper number and kind of bulbs. For decorative bulbs, all bulbs must match. Light bulbs must be 60 watts unless otherwise specified on lighting fixture. Any bulb over 100 watts in most fixtures is asking for trouble, as most fixtures are rated for 60 watts maximum and many multi bulb fixtures are rated at 40 watts per bulb. Be careful.

G. Plumbing/Septic Systems. You are responsible for keeping all sinks, lavatories and

commodes open. Please do not allow anyone to throw anything into the plumbing system or to use it for any purpose other than what it is designed. Sanitary napkins, diapers, diaper wipes and tampons are not be flushed down any toilet. You will be responsible for any damage or stoppage after five (5) days of occupancy, unless caused by mechanical failure of the plumbing system.

H. Waterbeds. You will be responsible for ANY damage caused by a waterbed and you must have renters insurance if you do have a water bed in the premises.

I. Walls and Ceilings. Please keep the walls of the home clean and unmarred. Do not paint or wallpaper the walls without prior approval of 1ST CHOICE. You are welcome to hang pictures on the walls as long as the walls are clean and unmarred upon vacating. All walls, baseboards and trim must be washed before vacating. All ceilings must be dusted and vacuumed regularly and again prior to vacating. IF YOU ARE A SMOKER, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL SMOKE RESIDUE AND DAMAGE. Remember that all of our homes are nonsmoking and if you or your guests smoke in the residence, you will be held accountable.

J. Vinyl Floor Covering/Hardwood Floors. With normal household use, vinyl and hardwood floors may be washed with a solution of warm water and soap. If unsure of the type of hardwood finish in your home, please call us for cleaning instructions. A thorough cleaning is necessary three or four times a year. Do not use gasoline, benzene, naphtha, turpentine or waxes containing these solvents. Rubber heel marks can be easily removed with the proper product. Do not apply varnish, lacquer or shellac to the floor. When waxing, use water emulsion, selfpolishing types such as Johnson's Vinyl Wax for vinyl and Johnson's Paste Wax for hardwood floors, avoiding any solvent based waxes. You will be responsible for damage to flooring such as broken tiles, torn floor covering or improper cleaning procedures.

K. Carpet Care. Routine carpet care requires a thorough vacuuming at least once a week to remove the soil from the carpet and to keep the pile erect. THE GENERAL RULE OF THUMB IS: YOUR CARPETS SHOULD BE VACUUMED AS MANY TIMES EACH WEEK AS YOU HAVE PEOPLE LIVING IN YOUR HOUSE. In other words, a family of 4 should vacuum their home 4 times a week. Heavy traffic areas require more frequent vacuuming to eliminate the coarse particles that can act as an abrasive on the fiber. You must have a motor driven brush and a beater type vacuum cleaner is required if the home you rent has carpet. Before moving in, the carpets are professionally cleaned. They will be professionally cleaned at your expense when you vacate.

L. Stoves. If the oven or broiler will not operate, check the timer on the stove. Generally, the knob will pop out if the timer is off. Turn the knob until it pops out. Instructions for other types are on the face of the stove. Be careful when cleaning the oven so that oven cleaner does not drip onto the cabinets below or onto the floor. Do not use oven cleaner on self cleaning or continuous cleaning ovens. You will be charged for damage to the appliance caused by improper use or cleaning, or lack of maintenance. In some of our rental properties we have electric self cleaning ovens which, in some cases, have been damaged due to the lack of knowledge of how they work. The ovens lock thermostatically in the self cleaning cycle and can't be opened until they have cooled down sufficiently. In the past, residents have forced the latch open and have damaged the mechanism. Once the oven is cool enough, the latch will release automatically. It is never necessary to force it open.

M. Dishwashers. Use at least once a week. Seals may dry and the motor may be damaged by long periods of not being run. Clean the door and check the bottom of the dishwasher each use for items that may fall from the racks. Check the perimeter of the door for food items falling from the counter. Here is a hint for you, before starting your dish washer, run the hot water at the sink. This will insure that the dishwasher is filled with hot water and do a better job cleaning your dishes.

N. Garbage Disposals. Garbage disposals are not for bones, greasy items, meat or any other similar materials. If the motor buzzes, turn the switch off. Unjam the disposal by turning the blade backwards with a broom handle or a wrench if one is provided. Reset the circuit breaker on the bottom or the side of the disposal (this is usually a small red or yellow button). If the unit turns easily by hand but not with power, call for service. Almost all disposal jams are from what is put into them or misuse. Also, make sure the disposal is run and empty before starting up the dishwasher so that food doesn't back up into the drain hose.

O. Washer/Dryer Hookups. When you install your washer and dryer, it is a good time to check your hoses and washers to eliminate leaks. If you are going to be absent from the property for an extended period of time, turn off the hot and cold water supplies. Check the wall and floor monthly for evidence of a hidden leak.

#### I. CLEANING AND HOW TO'S

We work hard to deliver to you a clean, well maintained and comfortable home with all the mechanical equipment operating properly. Proper cleaning and maintenance will keep the home, and its equipment, safe and usable for you. The key to proper cleaning is to do it often. Set up a weekly schedule. Monitor the work and ensure cleaning is performed as often as needed. A properly maintained home is a team effort involving:

- the OWNER who keeps structural and mechanical maintenance up to date
- the PROPERTY MANAGER who keeps a record of necessary maintenance and places responsible people in the property, and the
- RESIDENT, who keeps the property clean, performs cosmetic maintenance and promptly reports any structural or mechanical failure to Management.

- A. Minimum Cleaning Standards
1. Keep windows and storm doors clean, inside and outside, interior cleaning at least once a month, exterior cleaning every six months. Wash between windows and screens quarterly.
  2. Wash interior doors, doorways and walls in heavily traveled areas every 12 months.
  3. Clean dust, dirt and debris from the upper and lower sliding glass door tracks monthly.
  4. Clean stove, drip pans, under drip pans, oven racks and drawer, broiler pan, hood, filter and vent every other week.
  5. Mop and wax vinyl floors every other week.
  6. Dust baseboards, windowsills, and window grids, tops of windows, ceiling fans, doors, ceilings and corners of the room monthly.
  7. Clean Air Conditioner and Heating air return registers and change filter each month. (A good rule is when you pay your light bill, change your filter.)
  8. Clean and sweep out fireplace. Clean fireplace grate, screen and glass.
  9. Replace burned out light bulbs as needed, cleaning lighting fixtures as needed.
  10. Curtains and blinds, if provided, should be cleaned or washed semiannually.

11. Bathrooms should be cleaned weekly. This includes toilet bowls and base, sink, mirror, floor, bathtub and shower (including walls). Wipe out medicine cabinet, drawers and cabinets. Tilex brand mildew and tile cleaner keeps your grout mildew free.

12. RainX brand window cleaner keeps your shower doors and tile from spotting.

13. Caulk tub if necessary

14. Sweep out garage as needed.

B. Countertops and Cabinets. Always use cutting boards and hot pads when chopping, cutting or placing items on the countertops. Do not use abrasive cleaners on countertops, as they will scratch. All unpainted cabinets need to be cleaned regularly with a wood cleaner (such as Murphy's Oil Soap) and be treated with a wood preserve (such as Scott's Liquid Gold). All cabinets must be vacuumed out and the drawer/door fronts cleaned as above before vacating.

C. Kitchen Appliances. Each kitchen appliance must be cleaned regularly. In particular, the stove hood, the filter in the stove hood, the oven under the burners on the stove and the drip pans. Please do not put aluminum foil on the drip pans. Upon moving out, all drip pans must be new. Please clean under the refrigerator, washer and dryer regularly. Not cleaning all of these items regularly can cause excessive wear and tear, for which you will be responsible.

D. Fireplaces. If there is a fireplace in your home, please do not burn pine or any other "sappy" wood. This causes a buildup of the residue in the chimney and increases the possibility of fire. The fireplace is not a place to burn cardboard, holiday wrapping, pine needles, etc. Chimneys should be professionally cleaned every two years.

## II. MOVING OUT

A. Putting it in Writing. Before notice to vacate is accepted by 1ST CHOICE, it MUST be put in writing. The notice must include the date you anticipate having the property ready for your move out survey and where you are moving (even if you don't have a forwarding address, list the city and state to where you are relocating). Notice must be received by 1ST CHOICE Property Management at least thirty (30) days before you move out.

B. Marketing During the Notice Period. After you have given notice that you intend to vacate, the property may be listed for sale or rent. The most probable showing hours are between 9:00am and 6:00pm, Monday through Saturday. The property must be available and in good condition during the market time. Illness and children's birthday parties are acceptable reasons for rescheduling a showing. Inconvenience, out of town guests, or no one home, are not acceptable reasons to reschedule. You will be called prior to showing. If there is no answer or no answering machine, the call is still considered notice. If permission is given, we call your work number. A call to your place of residence is the usual and customary practice, and will be considered notice. Extra effort on your part is expected in keeping the house and yard neat and clean during marketing. Minimum showing condition:

1. All beds made and rooms neat.
2. Floors are recently vacuumed; clutter free, especially no piles of dirty clothes.
3. Kitchen and baths are clean; sinks are clean and empty.
4. Walls are clean and unmarred.
5. Dogs are out of the way, litter boxes are clean and odor free.
6. TV is off or volume turned low so it is not intrusive.
7. Yard is mowed, trimmed and in good condition.

8. Blinds and or curtains are open and the home is well lit (when possible).

The better a home shows, the more likely it will rent or sell quickly. The faster a new resident is found, the less you will be bothered by showings. A home that shows well benefits everyone!

C. The MoveOut Process. It is your responsibility to schedule the Moveout walkthru

and turnover of the keys and garage remotes. Please call and schedule this as early as possible, especially if you are moving during the last couple of days of the month. Asking for a same day appointment is often impossible for us to accommodate, as the Property Managers already have a full schedule. You may be present, but please DO NOT try to accompany the Property Manager throughout the house. We give you the privilege of completing your initial report without Management looking over your shoulder. Please give us the same consideration.

1. Walkthroughs are made from 9:30am-5: 00pm Monday through Friday. Please do not plan on a walkthru to be made on weekends or holidays. They take from 15 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the size and condition of the house.

2. Walkthroughs are made only after you have completely vacated the premise, the premises are cleaned, the yard is mowed and edged, all trash hauled off, shrubs trimmed, flower beds have fresh bedding and you are ready to turn over the keys.

3. A room by room check will be made, including interior, exterior, grounds, appliances, windows, curtains, blinds, etc.

4. Appendix C provides the cleaning guidelines.

5. You do not have to be present for this walkthrough. But, you must get the keys to us on or before that day.

D. Breaking the Lease. If you should break your lease, you will be responsible for all costs incurred in securing a new resident.

1. We work diligently to reduce your costs should you break your lease. If you find that you must move before the end of your lease, we will market the property promptly, providing that you give us the 30 day written notice and pay us the Reletting Fee with that notice. You must pay a full month's rent for every month until a new RESIDENT is secured. When the new RESIDENT moves in, your obligation ceases.

2. You must follow all procedures for marketing, cleaning and move out.

This will insure that you receive the maximum in your security deposit refund.

3. The following is a list of the most common charges when breaking a lease:

a. A reletting fee.

b. Rent until the new lease takes effect.

c. All required maintenance, as there is no fair wear and tear taken into account unless you have fulfilled your lease term.

d. Lawn maintenance (you need to arrange for that before leaving).

e. Utilities (keep them on in your name until notified of a new RESIDENT).

f. Advertising

E. Return of Security Deposit. THE SECURITY DEPOSIT MAY NOT BE USED AS THE LAST MONTH'S RENT!!!

1. The security deposit will be refunded or accounted for within thirty (30) days of your moveout,



and upon return of the keys and garage door remotes.

2. The following are the requirements for a full refund:

- a. Having given thirty (30) days written notice prior to vacating.
- b. Having left the premises cleaned and undamaged and followed the moveout procedures.
- c. Having left all walls clean and unmarred. (Homes are NOT painted in between each RESIDENT).
- d. Having paid all charges and rent due.
- e. Having removed all debris, rubbish, and discarded items from the premises.
- f. Having provided a forwarding street address and a telephone number. Post office boxes are acceptable as a forwarding address.
- g. Having an acceptable moveout/checkout Condition survey report by the Property Manager.

### III. EMERGENCY/DISASTER PROCEDURES

A. Appendices A and B. These are the procedures, plans and responsibilities for emergency/disaster related situations. Please read each of them carefully and regularly review them, especially during the summer months

B. Make Your Plan Now. The key to safely and properly handling any emergency/disaster is preplanning and staying calm during and after the event. Being prepared is every individual's responsibility. Don't rely only on the authorities. Take charge and plan now so you can be better prepared to take action when the time comes. Advanced planning allows for fewer mistakes and greater safety for you, your family, and the home you're caring for. It is easy to forget even little things in the anxiety, which comes with an emergency. To avoid unnecessary stress, get ready now.

C. Two Types of Emergency.

1. The first type is one that is specific to the property you rent (e.g. a tree falls on the house or the water heater bursts). Appendix A addresses procedures for this type of emergency.
2. The second type of emergency is an area wide disaster (e.g. tornado). Appendix B addresses procedures for this type of emergency.

D. What Should You Do. Everything an Owner would do to protect the property, you are expected to do. The first priority is to stop additional damage. Regularly review Section II.A. We have many thunder and lightning storms, power outages and high winds. An emergency could happen at any time, BE PREPARED.

### IV. SUMMARY

A. This Handbook is for you. In the excitement of moving, we often don't remember all the instructions and requirements of the lease. This handbook was written to be used as a reference for you. Place it where you can easily find it. Before calling the office, look to see if the answer you seek is here. If you find something you think would be helpful to others, but is not included, please notify your Property Manager. We are always looking for additional ways to serve you.

B. Welcome to 1ST CHOICE. Again, welcome to our area and your new home. Please take advantage of the many opportunities to enjoy the beautiful and friendly Fort Worth area. Should

you decide to make this your permanent home, please call our office. We would be happy to help you find that special place just for you. We look forward to a pleasant relationship and a happy rental experience.

THANK YOU FROM THE STAFF AND MANAGEMENT OF  
1st Choice Property Management and Maintenance

#### APPENDIX A NON-DISASTER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Upon discovery of a problem AVOID FURTHER DAMAGE IMMEDIATELY. The following is a summary of what to expect. Please post this note in a visible place. If any of these actions do not occur, notify the office immediately. Keeping everyone on schedule is a corporate effort, and you are part of the team.

##### Resident Responsibility

- Take steps to prevent additional damage immediately
- Turn off the source of water, electricity or gas, as the situation demands
- Notify 1st Choice, if it is after hours, use the emergency line
- If it was caused by Resident negligence, make a claim on Resident's insurance
- Notify 1st Choice. of Resident's insurance coverage, if applicable
- Provide emergency (police, fire, etc) report to 1st Choice within five days of incident
- Provide access for insurance, repair companies, etc. to assess and repair damage
- Notify management of delays, "no show" appointments, problems with repairs 1st Choice

##### Responsibility

- Notifies the Owner, insurance company and repair companies
- Takes pictures of damage for Owner report
- Inspects and takes pictures of finished work
- Handles complaints/conflicts between Resident and repair companies

The insurance company will contact you within forty eight (48) hours. They will assess the damage. Within three to eleven (3 to 11) days, depending on the severity of the damage, the repairs will begin. Please remember that work is performed during normal daytime business hours, Monday through Friday and may require several days to complete. The repair company will set a time with you to work on the house. If you desire, you can be there, but they will have access as necessary to the home. After the repairs are complete, management will view the completed work. If there is a delay, please contact this office at 8172811300.

Sometimes, the repair company is not prompt in scheduling the visit with your Property Manager. Your help is vital to this process. You are responsible for any loss due to Resident negligence. If a current resident or a guest caused the damage, please be aware all charges not covered by insurance will be billed to you.

## APPENDIX B DISASTER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Have an emergency preparedness plan, a checklist and a storm kit.
2. Tune in to the local news media and follow all recommended precautions and instructions.
3. During the storm or before leaving, please be sure to:
  - a. Turn off main breaker to house
  - b. Turn off the main gas line to house (turn off is at the gas meter)
  - c. Turn off the main water supply to the home (at the water meter located either in the driveway or yard close to the street)
  - d. Take all recommended precautions by the local news media
  - e. Secure your pets
  - f. Secure all outside items (e.g. swing sets, small planters, anything that could turn into a flying object during high winds) **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURING THE HOME AGAINST ANY POSSIBLE FURTHER DAMAGE. EVERYTHING A HOMEOWNER SHOULD DO, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO DO.**

## APPENDIX C CLEANING CHECKLIST

To receive a full refund of your security deposit, your account must be paid in full and the following must be accomplished to our satisfaction. If you want to call your Property Manager, they will be happy to provide the name and phone number of the House Cleaning and Carpet Cleaning companies that we use. These companies know what we expect and will insure that the home and carpets are clean to our specifications.

**CARPETS.** Your carpets were either new or had been professionally steam cleaned prior to your move in. We expect that all carpets will be professionally steam cleaned when you move out (a receipt will be required from a professional carpet cleaning company). We do not accept Dry Cleaning (Chem Dry) of the carpets.

### HOUSE AND YARD CLEANING.

- Clean baseboards, door and window frames (including thresholds, inside and out), switch plates and plug covers.
- Empty and clean the fireplace.
- Clean all interior windows and exterior ground floor windows and other glass with a glass cleaning product, including sliding glass doors, storm doors, mirrors, shower doors and oven door glass. Wash all light fixtures inside and out. Clean all ceiling fans. Replace all burned out light bulbs.
- Clean all appliance surfaces and countertops, oven and dishwasher (inside and out), vent hoods and filters, replace burner pans, (remember to pull stove out and clean the sides and

behind it).

- Remove all shelf and drawer liners. Clean out all cabinets and drawers.
- Clean all mini blinds, fans, A/C returns, and outlets. Install a new A/C filter.

Clean all commodes, sinks, bathtubs, and showers (inside and out).

- Remove all trash and debris from your residence (including coat hangers), patio, garage and yard. A minimum charge of \$75 dollars will be assessed if we have to remove any trash at all.
- Patios, walkways, carports and/or garage must be swept and degreased as needed.
- Mow, edge and trim shrubs as necessary.

#### APPENDIX D

#### WORK ORDER REQUEST FORM

#### 1st CHOICE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

You may submit a work order in this format or by going to [www.1stchoicepm.com](http://www.1stchoicepm.com) and complete a Maintenance Request on the tenants page, then find the maintenance tab.