

Renting in a Pro-Tenant State

Being a landlord in Massachusetts can be tough. With many pro-tenant laws it is important to understand your responsibilities and rights. One of the most important laws to abide by as a landlord is the Consumer Protection Statute, Chapter 93A. Violations of Chapter 93A can expose landlords to TRIPLE damages and require them to pay the cost of their tenant's attorney fees.

A landlord violates Chapter 93A by committing an unfair or deceptive act or practice against a tenant. How do you know if your act or practice is unfair or deceptive? The Attorney General has created regulations to help determine if an act or practice is unfair or deceptive, in violation of Chapter 93A. Here are a few ways landlords can avoid liability:

- A landlord must give their tenant an executed copy of the rental agreement within 30 days of the tenant signing it.
- The tenant must receive notice of the bank and account number where the security deposit is being held.
- A landlord cannot impose a penalty for late payment of rent UNLESS the payment is 30 days overdue.
- A landlord cannot retaliate against a tenant for exercising any of their legal rights. It will be presumed that a landlord is retaliating and therefore in violation of 93A if they terminate the tenancy or increase rent within 6 months after a tenant has exercised such rights.

Being a successful landlord in Massachusetts comes down to knowing and complying with the numerous laws regarding the management of rental properties. You can save yourself a lot of time, money and frustration by planning and following the law!