

LANDLORDS AND RENTERS BEWARE!

Dennis Hoy has been a landlord for more than three decades. The retired teacher rents out his summer home on the Gulf Islands, as well as two other residences he owns in the Lower Mainland.

"It's been my way of being an entrepreneur and making extra income," says Hoy. "I've had very few issues with renting out my island home but I've had several with the other two homes."

Hoy tells tales of the renter who skipped out on a month's rent; the one who let his dog run wild, leaving the home with strong pet odours; and another who left the home in such a filthy mess it took Hoy days of professional cleaning services to get it ready for rental again.

So why does Hoy continue to be a landlord?

For Hoy and a lot of homeowners,

having a rental property or a rental suite in their home is the difference between owning a home or being renters themselves.

Over the years, the veteran landlord has learned a thing or two about renting. Hoy says that he does a tour of the premises with the tenant, and videotapes the whole thing, so that if there's ever a dispute about damage, he has proof.

"I always get the tenants in the video too and I also videotape my expectations of them, such as maintaining the home in the condition they found it in, as well as the grounds," he adds.

Most tenant/landlord relationships are good but a few are one hardship after another. Tom Durning, of the Tenant Resource and Advocacy Centre (TRAC), has one piece of advice: "Treat your rental as an active business."

He constantly reminds landlords that if they deal with their rental property as any other business, they will have far more success and fewer headaches.

"I can't tell you how often we need to remind landlords that this isn't a passive business," says Durning. "Like any business, if you don't nurture it, it can get costly."

"I also tell landlords that they can avoid potential rental damage by simply conducting monthly inspections."

In addition, he says, too often landlords don't educate themselves about the provincial laws that govern this type of business transaction.

"A good landlord is an educated one; one who knows the rights of his tenants and his own," says Durning.

In the end, both the prospective renter and landlord need to exercise due diligence before entering into any contract, otherwise it can be a miserable experience for one or both of them.

Where landlords and tenants can go for help:

- A checklist for tenants and landlords.
<http://www.rto.gov.bc.ca/documents/Fact%20Sheets/RTB-133.pdf>
- A brief guide that outlines rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants:
<http://www.rto.gov.bc.ca/documents/Fact%20Sheets/RTB-129.pdf>
- If a landlord or tenant has any questions they can contact the Residential Tenancy Branch. In the Lower Mainland, the number is 604-660-1020.
- For a free copy of TRAC's Tenant Survival Guide, visit
<http://www.tenants.bc.ca/main/?tenantSurvivalGuide>

RENTAL AGREEMENT

I, THIS AGREEMENT MADE this

BETWEEN:

(Name)

called the LESSOR

and Post Office Box where applying

AND

day of

20

(Postal Code)

AGREE THAT:

“ How both can avoid nightmare rentals