

CHAPTER 83 LANDLORD AND TENANT

PART II

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES

83.40 Short title.--This part shall be known as the "Florida Residential Landlord and Tenant Act."

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330.

83.41 Application.--This part applies to the rental of a dwelling unit.

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330; ss. 2, 20, ch. 82-66.

83.42 Exclusions from application of part.--This part does not apply to:

- (1) Residency or detention in a facility, whether public or private, when residence or detention is incidental to the provision of medical, geriatric, educational, counseling, religious, or similar services.
- (2) Occupancy under a contract of sale of a dwelling unit or the property of which it is a part.
- (3) Transient occupancy in a hotel, condominium, motel, roominghouse, or similar public lodging, or transient occupancy in a mobile home park.
- (4) Occupancy by a holder of a proprietary lease in a cooperative apartment.
- (5) Occupancy by an owner of a condominium unit.

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330.

83.43 Definitions.--As used in this part, the following words and terms shall have the following meanings unless some other meaning is plainly indicated:

- (1) "Building, housing, and health codes" means any law, ordinance, or governmental regulation concerning health, safety, sanitation or fitness for habitation, or the construction, maintenance, operation, occupancy, use, or appearance, of any dwelling unit.
- (2) "Dwelling unit" means:
 - (a) A structure or part of a structure that is rented for use as a home, residence, or sleeping place by one person or by two or more persons who maintain a common household.
 - (b) A mobile home rented by a tenant.
 - (c) A structure or part of a structure that is furnished, with or without rent, as an incident of employment for use as a home, residence, or sleeping place by one or more persons.
- (3) "Landlord" means the owner or lessor of a dwelling unit.
- (4) "Tenant" means any person entitled to occupy a dwelling unit under a rental agreement.
- (5) "Premises" means a dwelling unit and the structure of which it is a part and a mobile home lot and the appurtenant facilities and grounds, areas, facilities, and property held out for the use of tenants generally.

- (6) "Rent" means the periodic payments due the landlord from the tenant for occupancy under a rental agreement and any other payments due the landlord from the tenant as may be designated as rent in a written rental agreement.
- (7) "Rental agreement" means any written agreement, or oral agreement if for less duration than 1 year, providing for use and occupancy of premises.
- (8) "Good faith" means honesty in fact in the conduct or transaction concerned.
- (9) "Advance rent" means moneys paid to the landlord to be applied to future rent payment periods, but does not include rent paid in advance for a current rent payment period.
- (10) "Transient occupancy" means occupancy when it is the intention of the parties that the occupancy will be temporary.
- (11) "Deposit money" means any money held by the landlord on behalf of the tenant, including, but not limited to, damage deposits, security deposits, advance rent deposit, pet deposit, or any contractual deposit agreed to between landlord and tenant either in writing or orally.
- (12) "Security deposits" means any moneys held by the landlord as security for the performance of the rental agreement, including, but not limited to, monetary damage to the landlord caused by the tenant's breach of lease prior to the expiration thereof.
- (13) "Legal holiday" means holidays observed by the clerk of the court.
- (14) "Servicemember" shall have the same meaning as provided in s. 250.01.
- (15) "Active duty" shall have the same meaning as provided in s. 250.01.
- (16) "State active duty" shall have the same meaning as provided in s. 250.01.

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330; s. 1, ch. 74-143; s. 1, ch. 81-190; s. 3, ch. 83-151; s. 17, ch. 94-170; s. 2, ch. 2003-72.

83.44 Obligation of good faith.--Every rental agreement or duty within this part imposes an obligation of good faith in its performance or enforcement.

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330.

83.45 Unconscionable rental agreement or provision.--

(1) If the court as a matter of law finds a rental agreement or any provision of a rental agreement to have been unconscionable at the time it was made, the court may refuse to enforce the rental agreement, enforce the remainder of the rental agreement without the unconscionable provision, or so limit the application of any unconscionable provision as to avoid any unconscionable result.

(2) When it is claimed or appears to the court that the rental agreement or any provision thereof may be unconscionable, the parties shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to present evidence as to meaning, relationship of the parties, purpose, and effect to aid the court in making the determination.

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330.

83.46 Rent; duration of tenancies.--

(1) Unless otherwise agreed, rent is payable without demand or notice; periodic rent is payable at the beginning of each rent payment period; and rent is uniformly apportionable from day to day.

(2) If the rental agreement contains no provision as to duration of the tenancy, the duration is determined by the periods for which the rent is payable. If the rent is payable weekly, then the tenancy is from week to week; if payable monthly, tenancy is from month to month; if payable quarterly, tenancy is from quarter to quarter; if payable yearly, tenancy is from year to year.

(3) If the dwelling unit is furnished without rent as an incident of employment and there is no agreement as to the duration of the tenancy, the duration is determined by the periods for which wages are payable. If wages are payable weekly or more frequently, then the tenancy is from week to week; and if wages are payable monthly or no wages are payable, then the tenancy is from month to month. In the event that the employee ceases employment, the employer shall be entitled to rent for the period from the day after the employee ceases employment until the day that the dwelling unit is vacated at a rate equivalent to the rate charged for similarly situated residences in the area. This subsection shall not apply to an employee or a resident manager of an apartment house or an apartment complex when there is a written agreement to the contrary.

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330; s. 2, ch. 81-190; s. 2, ch. 87-195; s. 2, ch. 90-133; s. 1, ch. 93-255.

83.47 Prohibited provisions in rental agreements.--

(1) A provision in a rental agreement is void and unenforceable to the extent that it:

(a) Purports to waive or preclude the rights, remedies, or requirements set forth in this part.

(b) Purports to limit or preclude any liability of the landlord to the tenant or of the tenant to the landlord, arising under law.

(2) If such a void and unenforceable provision is included in a rental agreement entered into, extended, or renewed after the effective date of this part and either party suffers actual damages as a result of the inclusion, the aggrieved party may recover those damages sustained after the effective date of this part.

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330.

83.48 Attorney's fees.--In any civil action brought to enforce the provisions of the rental agreement or this part, the party in whose favor a judgment or decree has been rendered may recover reasonable court costs, including attorney's fees, from the nonprevailing party.

History.--s. 2, ch. 73-330; s. 4, ch. 83-151.

83.49 Deposit money or advance rent; duty of landlord and tenant.--

(1) Whenever money is deposited or advanced by a tenant on a rental agreement as security for performance of the rental agreement or as advance rent for other than the next immediate rental period, the landlord or the landlord's agent shall either:

(a) Hold the total amount of such money in a separate non-interest-bearing account in a Florida banking institution for the benefit of the tenant or tenants. The landlord shall not commingle such moneys with any other funds of the landlord or hypothecate, pledge, or in any other way make use of such moneys until such moneys are actually due the landlord;

(b) Hold the total amount of such money in a separate interest-bearing account in a Florida banking institution for the benefit of the tenant or tenants, in which case the tenant shall receive and collect interest in an amount of at least 75 percent of the annualized average interest rate payable on such account or interest at the rate of 5 percent per year, simple interest, whichever the landlord elects. The landlord shall not commingle such moneys with any other funds of the landlord or hypothecate, pledge, or in any other way make use of such moneys until such moneys are actually due the landlord; or