



# Tips for Tenants

*Being a tenant in New York City is not easy. As you may know, tenants often find themselves in a difficult or unclear situation. Please follow these simple tips that will help you if you have a problem with your landlord. And if you do have a problem or a question, call MELS! (212-815-1111)*

## **File it**

Keep copies of checks, money orders, and receipts for rent payments and your security deposit, as well as your first lease, renewal leases, and letters to and from the landlord. Maintain a file of all these records. They may come in handy someday!

## **Put it in writing**

If you have a complaint or need repairs, call your landlord – but also send a letter and keep a copy. You need to have a record.

## **Open the mail**

Don't be in the dark about what your landlord may be doing. Open and read your mail every day. Pick up certified mail at the post office. Always accept delivery of legal papers. Otherwise you may not find out about a lawsuit or eviction until it is too late.

## **Do what is required**

If you live in a NYCHA apartment or have Section 8 or another subsidy, be sure that you recertify your eligibility as required and provide necessary documents.

## **Get a receipt**

Whenever you provide documents to a government agency, when you give documents to your landlord, or when you pay rent with cash or money orders, make sure to get a receipt.

## **Don't go it alone: Call MELS**

MELS is here to help. We will represent you in any court case that could lead to your eviction. We also provide advice over the phone about housing questions that don't involve a court case. You need a lawyer on your side fighting to protect your rights. Thanks to DC 37, you can have a lawyer. **Call MELS at 212-815-1111.**

