

# Tenant Handbook



Congratulations on the selection of your new home. Welcome to the Gulf Coast area and to your new association with Barrons Property Managers.

We want to make your time with our firm a pleasant experience and hope you will look to us for all your rental needs.

As Professional Property Managers, we have obligations to both you, as the resident tenant, 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 communication is the key** to a successful Landlord/Tenant relationship. We are always ready to answer questions or to discuss problems. Call us at (850) 934-2588 or visit us at [www.BarronsPropertyManagers.com](http://www.BarronsPropertyManagers.com)

## GENERAL RULES & REGULATIONS

**Part of Your Lease**- This Tenant Handbook is part of your lease and is legally binding.

**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.

**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 in a check, money order or certified funds and made payable to: **Barrons Property Managers, 913 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Suite 12, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561**. You may also pay online through your tenant portal after moving into the property.



if the answer to your question is in this handbook. We love hearing from our Tenants, but need to keep our time free for emergencies and urgent matters.

## IN AND AROUND THE HOUSE

We live in a warm, moist climate. It is important to keep the vents on the crawl space open, especially in wet weather. Closed vents may cause excessive damage to floor joists and other areas underneath a house. Watch for puddles of water that do not go away around the perimeter of the house. These are often a sign of a water problem underneath. For slab homes, be careful that grass, dirt, flowerbeds or other coverings do not grow up over the level of the slab. Keep the perimeter of the house clear of all matter. Stack wood away from the exterior walls and off any wooden deck or flooring. Report to BPM any suspected water problems.

**Heat/AC Units-** All Heat/AC filters are to be changed once a month, and batteries for smoke 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 twice each year when the time changes.

Many homes have heat pumps for heating and air conditioning. The air coming from the vents will not be warm in the winter nor cool in the summer. Heat pumps are designed for the temperature to be set and then to leave the control alone. The air runs over the heating or cooling element, then gradually warms or cools to the desired temperature. During periods of extreme hot or cold temperatures, the heat pump may not keep the house as comfortable as you desire.

When the heat index is high the heat pump may not lower the inside temperature more than about 10 degrees below the outside temperature. Close the window coverings, keep the doors closed, do not run hot appliances (oven, etc.) and take all other precautions given by public authorities. **Do not set the thermostat at a low temperature when the outside temperature is over 95 degrees.** Poor cooling may also be due to a clogged filter. Check and change the filters monthly.

If water drips from the inside unit, it is usually due to a clogged condensation drain line. Some drains are easy to clean with a vacuum cleaner. **If the line becomes clogged, turn off the unit and clear the drain line.** If you do not know how, call a heat/AC repair company to get instructions, or call BPM.

**Circuit Breakers-** Circuit breakers move slightly when triggered. It may appear to be ON when it has "tripped". To reset, turn the breaker in the OFF position, then back ON again. The ground fault circuit (GFCI) breaker detects even slight voltage changes and cuts the power during fluctuations. They are usually used for bathrooms, sinks, exterior plugs, garages and some lights. If you lose power to a plug near a water source, it is usually the GFCI circuit. Most GFCI's located at the breaker box are marked with a red or yellow button. Many homes have the GFCI at the plugin outlet. When these "trip", simply reset the breaker as outlined above, or per the instructions on the outlet cover.

**Extermination**- Please report any pest problem within three (3) days of possession. If not reported in writing, it is agreed that the premises have no infestation of any kind. **Any future infestation of any kind, less termites, shall be your responsibility.** You are responsible for reporting any suspected or known termite infestation. **You are not responsible for termite control.** BPM assumes no responsibility for the control of roaches, mice, ants, fleas or other pests. Please notify BPM 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 (e.g. ants building nests in the air conditioning unit and damaging the unit.)

**Changing Paint, Wallpaper, Etc.** - If you want to change the house in any way, please put your proposal in writing and submit it to BPM 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, and must be inspected and approved by BPM after completion.

## **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 BPM. You will be charged for repairs caused by misuse or neglect.

**Put Maintenance Requests in Writing**- Maintenance Request Forms are online at [www.BarronsPropertyManagers.com](http://www.BarronsPropertyManagers.com) through your tenant portal. Put all routine requests in writing, using these forms. Be specific about the problem (e.g. RIGHT-the right burner on the stove does not work; WRONG-the stove isn't working). If you are not contacted by a repairperson within 48 hours (not including weekends or holidays) after reporting a problem, please notify BPM so the call can be reassigned.

**Who Does What** - All "breakdowns," system failures and structural defects must be reported to BPM immediately. If an urgent repair is needed (i.e. hot water heater leaking) **YOU are responsible** for stopping further damage from occurring, if possible. 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. BPM 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/ac filters EVERY MONTH
- Relight gas furnace or hot water heaters
- Treat for fire ants and other lawn pests
- Keep flower beds weeded and edged and add fresh bedding once a year

- Replace batteries in smoke detectors (please notify Barrons Property Managers if smoke detector does not work)
- Replace toilet seats
- Phone jacks

**Examples of repairs management will make at no expense to you:**

- Repairs to heat/AC systems from normal use
- Replace 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

**Examples of repairs for which you will be held responsible:**

- Replace heating elements/hot water tanks if caused by empty tank
- Repairing burst water pipes when caused by freezing weather
- If toilet is clogged due to abuse by tenant
- If garbage disposal is broke due to abuse by tenant
- 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

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

**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, debris, and pine needles 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 flowerbeds must be kept free of weeds, grass, etc. Whatever is in the beds as a cover (pine straw, pine bark, etc.) must be maintained by the Tenant. Do not leave hoses connected to exterior faucets with the water turned on.

**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 during the Tenant's occupancy (including floodlights). Upon moving out, all lights must be equipped with the proper number and kind of bulbs. For decorative bulbs, all must match.

**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 for what it is designed—**You will be responsible for any damage or stoppage after five (5) days of occupancy unless it was caused by mechanical failure** of the plumbing system.

**No Waterbeds and No Above Ground Pools are to be at residence.**

**Walls and Ceilings** - Please keep the walls of the home clean and unmarred. Do not paint or wallpaper the walls without prior approval of BPM. You are welcome to hang pictures on the walls as long as the walls are clean and unmarred when you move out. All walls, baseboards and trim must be washed before vacating. All ceilings must be dusted/vacuumed regularly and before vacating. **NO SMOKING IS ALLOWED IN ANY PROPERTY AT ANY TIME.**

**Vinyl Floor Coverings/Hardwood Floors**- With normal household use, vinyl and hardwood floors may be washed with a solution of warm water and soap. A thorough cleaning is necessary three or four times a year. Do not use gas, benzene, naphtha, turpentine or waxes containing these solvents. Rubber heel marks can easily be removed with the proper product. Do not apply varnish, lacquer or shellac to the floor. When waxing, use a water-emulsion, self-polishing types of wax such as Johnson's Vinyl Wax for vinyl and Johnson's Paste Wax for hardwood floors. Do not use any solvent based waxes. You will be responsible for damage done by using improper cleaning materials. (You are also responsible for damage to flooring such as broken tiles or torn floor covering or improper cleaning procedures.)

**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. 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-beater type vacuum cleaner if the home you rent has carpet. Shampooing is usually required about once a year and is your responsibility. Before moving in, the carpets are professionally cleaned and **you must have them professionally cleaned upon vacating**. A copy of the cleaning company's bill is required at the time of move-out. Please check with BPM before moving out for recommended carpet cleaning companies.

**Stoves**- If the oven or broiler will not operate check the timer on the stove. Instructions for other types are on the face of the stove. Be careful when cleaning the oven 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 an appliance caused by improper use or cleaning, or by lack of maintenance.

**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.

**Garbage Disposals**- Garbage disposals are not for bones, greasy items, meat or any other similar materials. If the motor buzzes, turn the switch off, and unplug. 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), and plug back in. If the unit turns easily by hand but not with power, call BPM. Almost all disposal jams are from what is put into them or misuse.

**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 supply. Check the wall and floor monthly for evidence of a hidden leak.

## **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 that 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 Tenant who keeps the property clean, performs cosmetic maintenance and promptly reports any structural or mechanical failure to Management.

### **Minimum Cleaning Standards-**

- 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. Wash interior doors, doorways and walls in heavily traveled areas every 1-2 months.
- Clean dust, dirt and debris from the upper and lower sliding glass door tracks monthly.
- Clean stove, drip pans, under drip pans, oven racks and drawer, broiler pan, hood, filter and vent biweekly.
- Mop and wax vinyl floors biweekly.
- Dust baseboards, window sills, window grids, tops of windows, ceiling fans, doors, ceilings and corners of the room monthly.
- Clean AC/Heat air return grate and change filter each month. (A good rule is when you pay your light bill-change your filter)
- Clean and sweep out fireplace. Clean fireplace grate, screen and glass.
- Replace burned-out light bulbs as needed, clean lighting fixtures as needed.
- Curtains and blinds, if provided, should be cleaned or washed semiannually.
- 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.
- Sweep out garage as needed.

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

**Kitchen Appliances-** Each kitchen appliance must be cleaned regularly. In particular, the stove hoods, 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 these items regularly can cause excessive wear and tear, for which you will be responsible.

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

## MOVING OUT

**Put It in Writing-** Before notice to vacate is accepted by BPM, it MUST be put in writing. (Form supplied on [www.BarronsPropertyManagers.com](http://www.BarronsPropertyManagers.com)) The notice must include the date you anticipate having the property ready for your move-out survey and where you are moving to (even if you don't have a forwarding address, list the city and state where you will be relocating) Notice must be received by BPM at least 30 days prior to your move out.

**Marketing During the Notice Period-** After you have given notice that you intend to move, the property may be listed for sale or rent. The property must be available and in good condition during the market time.

Inconvenience, out of town guests, and no one home are not acceptable reasons to reschedule. You will be called prior to showing. If there is no answer or no answering system, the call is still considered notice. Extra effort on your part is expected in keeping the house and yard neat and clean during marketing.

Minimum showing condition:

- All beds made and rooms neat
- Floors are recently vacuumed; clutter free, especially no piles of dirty clothes
- Kitchen and baths are clean - sinks are clean and empty
- Walls are clean and unmarred
- Dogs are out of the way; litter boxes are clean and odor free
- TV is off or volume turned low so as not to be intrusive
- Yard is mowed, trimmed and in good condition
- Blinds/curtains are open and home is well lit (when possible)

The better a home shows, the more likely it will rent quickly. The faster a new resident is found, the less you will be bothered by showings.

**The Final Move-Out Inspection-** All utilities are to be left on for **three business days** after all keys/remotes are returned to BPM office.

Final Inspections are made only after you have completely vacated the premise, the premises cleaned, carpets professionally cleaned and dry (receipt required), the yard is mowed and edged,



all trash hauled off, shrubs trimmed, flower beds have fresh bedding, and **you have returned the keys to BPM office.**

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

**Breaking the Lease-** If you should break your lease you will be responsible for all costs incurred in securing a new Tenant. We work diligently to reduce your costs should you break your lease. You must continue to pay rent every month until a new Tenant is secured and begins paying rent. When the new Tenant moves in, your obligation ceases. Forfeiture of your security deposit does not excuse you from other obligations of the lease. You must follow all procedures for marketing, cleaning and move-out.

Following is a list of the most common charges for breaking a lease. These are some, but not all of the possible charges:

- A re-leasing and/or breaking lease fee
- Rent until the new lease takes effect.
- Lawn maintenance (you need to arrange for that before leaving)
- Utilities (keep them on in your name until notified of a new Tenant)

**Return of the Security Deposit-** **THE SECURITY DEPOSIT MAY NOT BE USED AS THE LAST MONTH'S RENT!!!!** The security deposit will be refunded within 30 days of your final move-out inspection.

Following are some of the requirements for a full refund

- Have given thirty (30) days (1 full calendar month) written notice prior to vacating.
- Have left the premises clean and undamaged and followed the checkout procedures.
- Have left all walls clean and unmarred.
- Have paid all charges and rents due.
- Have removed all debris, rubbish, and discarded all items from the premises.
- Have provided a forwarding street address and a telephone number.

## **EMERGENCY DISASTER PROCEDURES**

The following 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. Since a Hurricane is the natural disaster most likely to happen in our area, special emphasis has been placed on hurricane preparedness.

**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 property.

**Two Types of Emergency-** The first type is one that is specific to the property you rent (i.e. a tree falls on this house, or the hot water heater bursts). Appendix A addresses this Non-Disaster Emergency.

The second type of emergency is an area wide disaster (i.e. a hurricane or tornado) Appendix B addresses this type of emergency procedure.

Because we get advance warning for a hurricane, many people choose to leave town. If you leave, you still must secure the property prior to leaving. Then complete Appendix C, email or bring it to the office before leaving. If the disaster does occur, please call before coming back to the property.

**What You Do-** Everything an Owner would do to protect the property- you are expected to do. The first priority is to stop additional damage. Review Section IIA regularly. We have many thunder and lightning storms, power outages and high winds. An emergency could happen at any time. Be prepared.

## SUMMARY

**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. 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.

### APPENDIX A

## NON-DISASTER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

(

I.e. Kitchen fire, hot water burst, burst water pipe, tree on house, etc.)

**Upon first occurrence or discovery of problem, secure from further damage immediately.**

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 cooperative effort, and you are part of the team.

### **Resident Responsibility**

- Take steps to prevent additional damage immediately

- Turn off the source of water or electricity or gas, as the situation demands Notify BPM
- Make claim on Resident's insurance
- Provide emergency (police, fire, etc.) report to BPM within 5 days of the incident
- Provide access for insurance, repair people, etc. to assess and repair damage

### **Barrons Property Managers Responsibility**

- Notify the Owner, insurance company and repair companies
- Take pictures of damage for Owner report

The insurance company will contact you. They will assess the damage. When repairs 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.

After the repairs are complete, management will re-inspect. If there is a delay, please contact the office. Your help is vital to this process.

You are responsible for any loss to the Owner due to Resident negligence, if the damage was caused by a current resident or a guest, 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. Upon first notification that a disaster emergency may occur, and you plan on leaving the property, please call the office and leave us a message on the voicemail, or email BPM with an additional contact for you.
3. Stay tuned to the local news media and follow all recommended precautions and instructions. The Pensacola Area local governments have a thorough Disaster Plan, and the news media will keep us all informed.
4. During the storm or before leaving, please be sure to:
  - Turn off main breaker to house
  - Turn off main gas line to house (Call power company for instructions)
  - Turn off main water supply to house

- Take all recommended precautions by the local news media and storm bulletins and publications.
- Secure your pets, inside. If it is not safe for you outside, it is not safe for your pets either!
- Secure all outside items:
  - Bring in swings sets, play houses, small planters, anything that could turn into a flying object during high winds.
- Secure house against damage:
  - Follow all recommendations by the local news and the emergency preparedness teams for your county

3. Make sure management has a key for your house (have you changed locks lately?)

If you are leaving town, call the office before leaving and before returning to verify that the house is safe to return to.

**YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURING THE HOME AGAINST POSSIBLE DAMAGE. EVERYTHING A HOMEOWNER SHOULD DO, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO DO.**