THE KEYS SERIES / BOOK 04

THE SPARE KEY

FOR LANDLORDS



Fair tenancies and sound rental operations

CHUKWU UZORUO

SIRLUCKHOMES REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE

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THE KEYS SERIES / BOOK 4

THE SPARE KEY

A Guide for Landlords

Fair tenancies and sound rental operations

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SirLuckHomes Real Estate Brokerage
Ontario, Canada

SirLuckHomes
REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE

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The Spare Key: A Guide for Landlords

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Contents

Where You Are on the Journey 5

How to Use This Book 5

Cold Open: Two Kinds of Landlords 6

1 The Spare Key Mindset 8

2 The Watchdogs, The Clubs, The Board - and the One That Runs Your Life 13

3 The Money Talk: Leasing Services for a Landlord 17

4 The Rules of the Game: RTA 101 20

5 Setting the Rent & Doing the Math Nobody Wants to Do 26

6 Marketing the Unit & Screening the Human 31

7 The Lease & The Documents: Your Paper Arsenal 36

8 The Tenant Lifecycle: From Keys Handed Over to Keys Handed Back 41

9 When Things Go Wrong 45

10 Selling With Tenants In Place 49

11 The Money Side: Taxes, Insurance, and the Equity You Built 53

12 Condo Landlording: Two Rulebooks, One Landlord 58

13 Life Happens: Divorce, Death, Burnout, and the Exit 61

14 The SirLuckHomes Way: Landlording With a Team Behind You 65

Your Next Key 69

Glossary: Landlord Terms, Translated 70

Checklists 72

About SirLuckHomes Real Estate Brokerage 74

Sources and Edition Notes 75

Your Next Conversation 77

Where You Are on the Journey

Six keys. One journey. Here's the map - and where you're standing.

Key	Book	One Line
1 - THE FIRST KEY: A GUIDE FOR RENTERS	Renting Smart in the GTA	You learned the tenant's playbook: your rights, your lease, your exit.
2 - THE FRONT DOOR KEY: A GUIDE FOR HOME BUYERS	Buying Your Home in Ontario	You stopped paying a landlord and started paying yourself.
3 - THE HANDOVER KEY: A GUIDE FOR HOME SELLERS	Selling Your Home	You sold well and kept every dollar you earned.
4 - THE SPARE KEY: A GUIDE FOR LANDLORDS (YOU ARE HERE)	Becoming a Landlord	You kept a property - or you're about to buy one - and now other people pay *you*.
5 - THE BLUEPRINT KEY: A GUIDE FOR PRE-CONSTRUCTION BUYERS	Pre-Construction Decoded	Next: buying a home that only exists on paper.
6 - THE MASTER KEY: A GUIDE FOR REAL ESTATE INVESTORS	Real Estate Investing	The finish line: one property becomes a portfolio.

How to Use This Book

Read it cover to cover if you're new to this. Keep it on the shelf if you're already collecting rent - the checklists at the back are built to be pulled out and used.

A few things you'll meet on every page:

- **REAL TALK boxes.** The insider truths nobody puts in the brochure.
- **THE RECEIPTS boxes.** Real numbers with real sources, labelled by their research period.
- **KEY TAKEAWAY lists.** The three-to-five things to tattoo on your memory from each chapter.

Cold Open: Two Kinds of Landlords

Every landlord I've ever worked with came in through one of two doors.

Door one: the planner. This is Andre - thirty-six, IT project manager, bought his first place, and somewhere around the second mortgage renewal started asking a dangerous question: *what if the basement paid for itself?* He found a side-split in Scarborough, ran the numbers six ways, moved upstairs, rented the lower unit, and became a landlord on purpose. Colour-coded spreadsheet. Alarm set for rent day.

Door two: the one life hands you. This is Miss Joyce. Sixty-three, Jamaican, forty-one years in the same Brampton detached - the house that raised three kids and hosted more Sunday dinners than a church basement. In Book 3, we walked through selling it. But here's the road not taken: what if Miss Joyce moved in with her daughter in Milton - and *kept* the house? No sale. No land transfer tax on a new purchase she doesn't need. Just a decision, made over tea, that the old house still had one more job to do.

Nobody plans to become an accidental landlord. You keep the condo when you move in together. You inherit your uncle's house with tenants already in it. One day you're a regular homeowner; the next day a stranger is calling because the furnace is making a noise like a steel drum with an attitude.

Here's the truth that matters: **both doors lead to the same room** - the identical law, the identical math, the identical tenants. The planner's advantage is preparation; this book hands it to everyone else.

Being a landlord in Ontario is not passive income. It's a part-time job with legal obligations, real risk, and - done right - real wealth. Done wrong, it's a second mortgage on your peace of mind. Let's do it right.

Turn the page. First, the mindset. Then the money. Then the law. Then everything that can go sideways and exactly how to stand it back up.

Welcome to the spare key.

Reading the Examples

All dollar examples use Canadian dollars. An example, historical rate or quoted planning range is not a current offer or a prediction. Confirm the price, fee, tax,

program eligibility and contract term on the date of your own decision. A no-pressure introduction does not remove the need to agree representation and its terms before the relevant services begin.

CHAPTER 1

The Spare Key Mindset

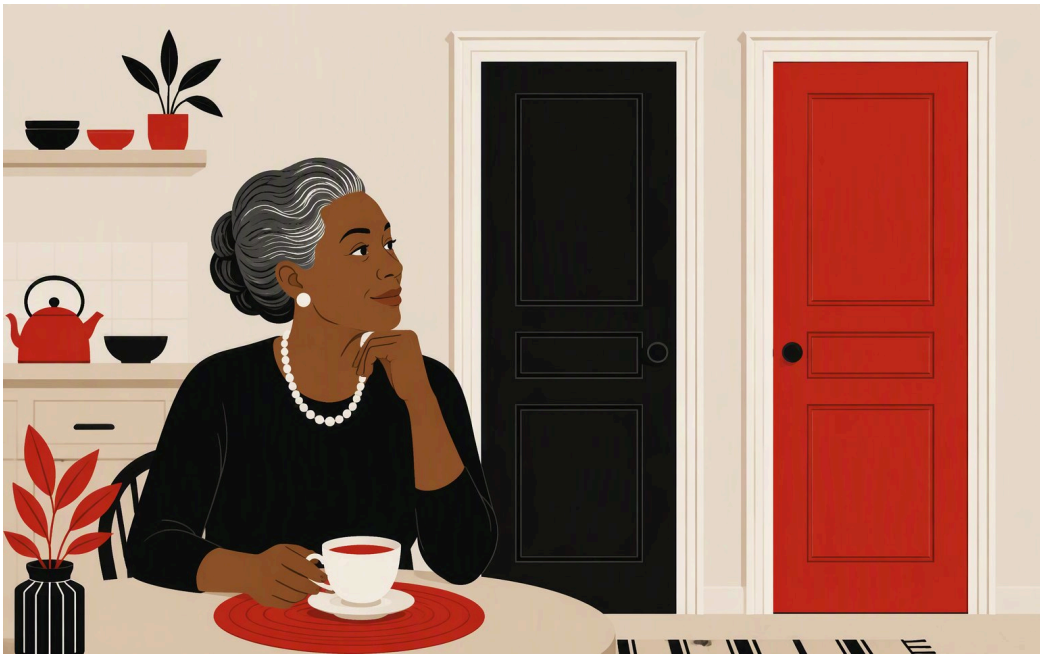
Miss Joyce sat at her daughter's kitchen table in Milton with a cup of tea going cold and a decision getting hot.

The Brampton house was paid off. Forty-one years of mortgage payments, done. Her daughter's place had a main-floor suite that fit her like a glove - she'd have grandkids underfoot and nobody shovelling her driveway. Selling the old house was the obvious move. Book 3 territory. Call the REALTOR®, stage the kitchen, count the proceeds.

But Miss Joyce had been doing arithmetic in her head for weeks, the way our mothers and aunties do - quietly, privately, and more accurately than any spreadsheet. The house would rent for around $3,200 a month. Even after property tax, insurance, and a repair fund, she'd keep maybe $2,000 a month in income. That's $24,000 a year, indexed to the market, from an asset that also tends to grow in value over the long run. Her pension plus CPP plus the house: that's not retirement, that's *peace*.

Sell it, and she'd have a big number in the bank once. Keep it, and she'd have a smaller number every month forever, plus the asset, plus the option to sell later.

She kept it. And just like that, without filling out a single form or asking anyone's permission, Miss Joyce became a landlord. The paperwork, the law, and the learning curve came after - which is exactly the order most people do it in, and exactly backwards. This book fixes the order.



Property as Pension - Without the Preachiness

Let's talk plainly about why this matters so much in our community.

A lot of us grew up watching parents and grandparents do everything right - work hard, pay the mortgage, send money home, raise kids who did better - and still arrive at sixty-five with the house as the only real asset. No company pension. RRSPs that got raided for somebody's tuition or somebody's emergency back in Jamaica, Ghana, Nigeria, Trinidad. The house wasn't an investment strategy. The house was the whole plan.

Here's what nobody told that generation: the house can keep working after you stop. A paid-off GTA home that rents for $3,000–$3,500 a month is functionally a private pension that also happens to be a building. For families who've historically been locked out of generous workplace pensions and investment access, that's not a hustle. That's structural repair - one household at a time.

I'm not selling prosperity gospel, and you shouldn't trust anyone who is. What I'm telling you is sturdier: **a well-run rental is one of the few wealth machines legally available to ordinary people - and Ontario regulates it heavily, so run it like the business it is.**

> **REAL TALK:** The difference between "landlord" and "person who owns a building and is always stressed" is one thing: treating it as a business from day one. Separate bank account. Reserve fund. Written criteria for tenants. Paper trail for everything. The tenants can't tell the difference - but the Landlord and Tenant Board, the CRA, and your blood pressure absolutely can.

The Honest Ledger: What This Job Actually Is

Cross out the phrase "passive income." Write this instead:

Landlord = part-time job + legal obligations + capital at risk, in exchange for income + long-term appreciation.

Here's the honest ledger, both columns, no filter.

What you get:

- Monthly rent - income that generally rises with the market over time (vacancy decontrol resets between tenants; increases during a tenancy are capped for most units - Chapter 4).
- Appreciation - GTA prices historically rise over long horizons, though 2022-2026 proved nothing goes up in a straight line.
- Mortgage paydown - if there's a mortgage, every rent cheque is partly your tenant building *your* equity.
- Tax deductions - mortgage interest, property tax, insurance, fees, repairs (Chapter 11).
- Optionality - sell later, move back in later (with proper process), pass it to your kids.

What you owe:

- Time. Showings, screening, maintenance calls, bookkeeping, rent increases on schedule, the occasional 9 p.m. "the toilet is doing something creative" text.
- Legal compliance. The Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) governs almost everything you do. Ignorance is not a defence, and fines for offences were just **doubled to $100,000 for individuals and $500,000 for corporations as of July 1, 2026**.
- Money held in reserve. Vacancies, repairs, a tenant who stops paying - these aren't edge cases, they're line items. Budget for them or they will humble you.

- Emotional discipline. You will be tempted to cut corners on screening because someone "seems nice" or "goes to my church." You will be tempted to overreact when things go wrong. Both temptations are expensive.

> **REAL TALK:** The landlords who lose money don't usually lose it to bad tenants. They lose it to their own shortcuts - skipping the credit check, "helping out" with a handshake lease, ignoring a small repair until it's a $14,000 repair. The system actually forgives a lot. Laziness, it does not forgive.

The Two Paths In

Path one: Andre's way - deliberate. Andre bought a house built to carry a tenant from day one: house-hacking. He lives upstairs, rents the self-contained basement, and the rent kills a serious chunk of his mortgage - his tenant is his co-buyer. One legal nuance: because the tenant shares no kitchen or bathroom with him, the RTA fully applies. If they *did* share one - kitchen or bathroom shared with the owner or the owner's spouse, child, or parent - the tenancy would fall outside the RTA entirely - no rent control, but also no LTB process and no standard notices; disputes go to Small Claims Court. Know which world you're in before you hand over keys.

Path two: Miss Joyce's way - accidental. The kept condo. The inherited house. The job transfer. Accidental landlords have one extra decision to make that planners skip: *is keeping this property actually the right move?* Sometimes it is - Miss Joyce's paid-off house cash-flows beautifully. Sometimes it isn't - a 2021-purchased condo with a big mortgage at today's rates might bleed $700 a month, every month, for the privilege of landlording (Chapter 5 shows that math in full, and it isn't pretty). Accidental landlords need Chapter 5 more than anyone. Run the numbers before you run the ad.

What Winning Looks Like

Winning isn't a tenant who never calls. Winning is:

- A property that at least carries itself, or that you can afford to carry because the long-term math justifies it.
- A tenant found through legal, rigorous screening who pays on time and stays for years.

- A paper trail so clean that if you ever stand in front of an LTB adjudicator, you're bored because the outcome is obvious.
- Reserves that turn emergencies into line items.
- A five-year answer to the question: *what is this property for?*

Miss Joyce has her answer: income for her, stability for the family, and a house the grandkids already call theirs. Andre has his: get the mortgage killed early, then repeat the trick - but that's Book 6, and he's getting ahead of himself.

What's yours?

KEY TAKEAWAY

- There are two doors into landlording - deliberate and accidental - and both lead to the same law, same math, same obligations.
- A well-run rental is a wealth machine for households without pensions, but it is a part-time business, not passive income.
- If your tenant shares a kitchen or bathroom with you or your spouse, child, or parent, the RTA does not apply - a completely different legal world. Know which one you're in.
- Budget for vacancy, repairs, and arrears as line items, not surprises.
- Decide what the property is *for* before you list it: income, appreciation, or a bridge to something bigger.

CHAPTER 2

The Watchdogs, The Clubs, The Board - and the One That Runs Your Life

Before we talk money or law, you need to know who's who. As a landlord you'll deal with two entirely separate worlds: the real estate industry (which helps you find and manage the deal) and the tenancy system (which governs the deal for as long as your tenant lives there). Different acronyms, different powers, different complaint departments. Confusing them is like calling the city because your condo board annoyed you - wrong building, wrong desk, no result.

Let's break it down.

The Real Estate Side: Four Bodies

RECO - the Real Estate Council of Ontario. The regulator with teeth. Every real estate agent and brokerage in Ontario must be registered with RECO, which administers the Trust in Real Estate Services Act (TRESA) - the law governing how agents treat you. RECO handles licensing, complaints, discipline, fines, and the mandatory insurance programs that protect consumers, including deposit insurance of up to $200,000 per claim. SirLuckHomes is registered with RECO , as is every agent who'll ever work on your rental. **If you ever have a problem with an agent's conduct - not a tenant, an agent - RECO is where the complaint goes.** Nobody else on this list can discipline anyone.

OREA - the Ontario Real Estate Association. The forms people. A voluntary provincial association whose gift to your life is the standardized paperwork: the Rental Application, the Agreement to Lease, the representation agreements you'll meet in Chapter 7. OREA doesn't regulate anyone; it advocates for the industry and maintains the forms that keep a thousand different agents from inventing a thousand different contracts.

CREA - the Canadian Real Estate Association. The trademark owners. National association. Owns the MLS® and REALTOR® marks - which is why only members can call themselves REALTORS® (with the ®, always), and why your rental listing on MLS® shows up on REALTOR.ca, where the tenants actually are.

TRREB - the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board. The local machine. Canada's largest board, roughly 70,000 members, running the GTA's MLS® System and publishing the market statistics this book cites. TRREB serves its members; you experience it through your agent's access to MLS® and the rental comparables that tell you what your unit is actually worth.

Here's the practical chain: your agent is licensed by RECO, works for a brokerage, lists through TRREB's MLS®, uses OREA forms, and wears the REALTOR® badge from CREA. Four bodies, one listing, zero excuses for confusion.

The Tenancy Side: Where Landlord Law Actually Lives

Now the other world - the one that governs your relationship with your tenant for years after the agent's job is done.

The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA) is the law of your landlording life. Rent, deposits, entry, maintenance, rent increases, eviction - nearly everything between you and a residential tenant in Ontario flows through this statute. It applies to houses, apartments, condo units, basement apartments, and rooming houses. Chapter 4 is your RTA crash course; for now, just file away two facts. First: lease terms that conflict with the RTA are **void even if the tenant signed them** - you cannot contract out of this law. Second: the big exception - if your tenant must share a kitchen or bathroom with you or your spouse, child, or parent, the RTA doesn't apply at all.

The Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) is the tribunal that enforces the RTA. Think of it as the courthouse of landlord-tenant Ontario - except it isn't a court, it's a specialized tribunal with its own forms, its own processes, and its own timelines. Almost nothing in a residential tenancy ends or changes by private action: eviction orders, above-guideline rent increases, tenant claims for compensation - all of it runs through an LTB application and (usually) a hearing. Most hearings are held by videoconference these days, and most landlords at the LTB are represented by licensed paralegals, not lawyers.

THE RECEIPTS: The LTB has been digging out of a historic backlog. It peaked at 53,057 open applications in December 2023, fell to 41,465 by March 2025, and sat around 36,700 by September 2025. As of mid-2026, arrears (L1) applications are being scheduled in roughly 3 months; most other application types run 5-7 months, with contested cases longer. Orders typically issue within 30 days of the hearing - and since July 1, 2026, either side has only **15 days** (down from 30) to request a review of an order. (Source: Tribunals Ontario 2024-25 Annual Report; Tribunals Ontario operational update, 2026.)

Those timelines matter to your wallet. A tenant who stops paying rent on the 1st of the month will not be standing in front of an adjudicator next week. Plan your reserves around months, not weeks - Chapter 9 walks the full process.

One more watchdog, quieter but important: the **Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC)** and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. Screening tenants is legal; screening *discriminately* is a Code violation with real damages. Our community knows discrimination from the tenant's side - the unit that's suddenly "gone," the extra months demanded of nobody else. As landlord, you now hold that power. Chapter 6 teaches lawful screening precisely: getting it wrong hurts people and costs money; getting it right is moral *and* profitable.

> **REAL TALK:** The single most common rookie mistake is treating the LTB like it's on the landlord's side or the tenant's side. It's on the *process's* side. The party with the correct forms, correct dates, and correct documentation wins - and the other party pays for the lesson. Paper beats passion every single time.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- RECO regulates agents and brokerages; complaints about agent conduct go there. OREA makes the forms, CREA owns the REALTOR®/MLS® marks, TRREB runs the GTA's MLS®.
- Landlord-tenant law lives in the RTA, enforced by the LTB - not by RECO, not by your agent, and definitely not by a strongly worded text message.
- RTA terms can't be contracted out of, even with a signature. Shared-kitchen/bathroom tenancies with the owner fall outside the RTA entirely.
- LTB timelines as of mid-2026: ~3 months for arrears applications, 5-7 months for most others. Budget your reserves accordingly.

- The OHRC governs how you screen. Discrimination isn't just wrong - it's a damages award waiting to happen.

CHAPTER 3

The Money Talk: Leasing Services for a Landlord

Miss Joyce has a house to rent. She can do the work herself, hire a leasing brokerage, or agree a narrower service. The right comparison is not simply the fee against zero. It is the fee against the tasks, time, responsibility and vacancy cost she will otherwise carry.

Agree the Work and the Fee

There is no standard Ontario leasing commission. An agreement can define marketing, enquiries, showings, application handling, consent-based checks, negotiation and document coordination. Ask what is included, who does it and which tasks remain yours.

The agreement should explain the fee, applicable tax, payment triggers, any amount for a tenant's brokerage, termination and holdover. Some landlords agree to fund both sides' brokerage fees; that does not establish a rule that every tenant owes nothing under their separate agreement.

One Illustration, Not a Rate Card

Suppose Miss Joyce agrees to a $3,200 leasing fee plus 13% HST. The total is $3,616. If the agreement provides a share to a tenant's brokerage, that share comes from the arrangement documented by the brokerages and parties. The split is not automatically half, and it should not be invented after an offer arrives.

A month's vacancy at a $3,200 rent is $3,200 of uncollected scheduled rent before costs. Filling the home two weeks sooner might save about $1,600; it does **not** by itself repay the entire $3,616 fee. Compare realistic timing and service benefits rather than an exaggerated payback claim.

What a Useful Leasing Service Delivers

- A rental-price analysis using relevant comparable units and current competition.
- Accurate marketing and agreed channels, with safe access arrangements.
- Consistent application handling and checks performed with proper consent.
- Recommendations that respect human rights and privacy.

- A clearly documented offer, lease, deposit and handover process.
- A record of what was checked and the information used in your decision.

An agent cannot guarantee a tenant's future payment or conduct. A polished application remains evidence to verify, not insurance. You remain responsible for your obligations as a landlord after the leasing work ends.

DIY and Reduced-Scope Options

Doing it yourself can work if you have the time, knowledge and systems. A reduced-scope service can cover selected tasks while leaving others to you. Price the tasks you retain: enquiries, verification, notices, documents, access, privacy and record keeping. Be honest about the work you will actually do when your regular job gets busy.

Do not choose applicants by protected characteristics or assumptions about a group. Use consistent, lawful criteria and verify relevant facts. A screening service does not transfer your human-rights responsibilities to somebody else.

What Representation Means for You

Your representative owes you the client duties explained in the RECO Information Guide, including loyalty, care, confidentiality and disclosure, subject to the agreed representation model. The guide must be provided before services or assistance.

Ask whether your brokerage uses designated representation and what happens if a tenant is represented by another agent in the same brokerage. Multiple representation can reduce the advice available and requires informed written consent. Different designated representatives do not automatically create the same situation.

If a tenant is self-represented, your agent works for you. Permitted assistance does not turn that person into your agent's second client. Required disclosures and clear boundaries protect everyone. A person can also seek their own lawyer, paralegal or brokerage where appropriate.

Leasing Is Not Ongoing Management

Signing a tenant does not necessarily include collecting rent, coordinating repairs, preparing notices or attending the LTB. A property-management agreement is a

separate service scope. Ask about payment collection, expense authority, emergency work, records, trust arrangements where applicable, renewal fees and how the relationship ends.

> **REAL TALK:** A handover is part of the job. At the end of a leasing engagement, you should know where the lease, application consents, deposit record, keys and move-in condition record are stored. “The agent has it somewhere” is not a filing system.

KEY TAKEAWAY

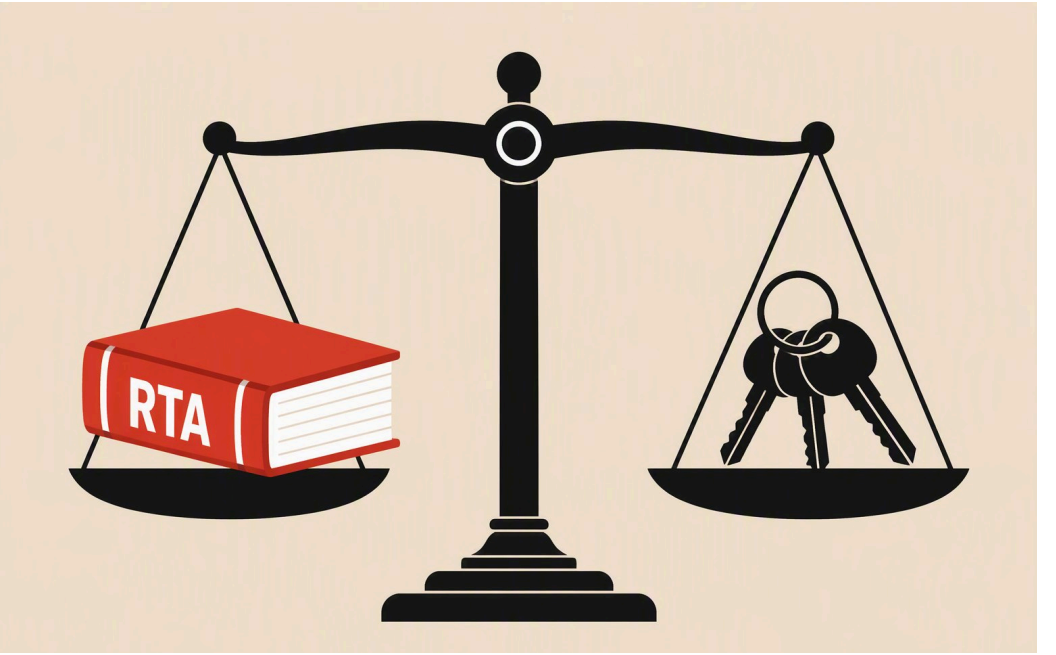
- Negotiate the scope, fee, tax and payment triggers.
- Vacancy savings can offset a fee; calculate them honestly.
- Representation does not guarantee tenant performance or remove your legal duties.
- Define the handover and distinguish leasing from ongoing management.

CHAPTER 4

The Rules of the Game: RTA 101

Here's the thing about the Residential Tenancies Act: it is not interested in your intentions. The RTA doesn't grade on effort; it grades on compliance. Learn the machinery before you collect a dollar of rent - it operates whether you know about it or not.

This edition incorporates the July and September 2026 tenancy updates. Match each notice and application to its service or filing date, and use current LTB instructions.



The Standard Lease: One Form to Rule Them All

Since **April 30, 2018**, nearly every new residential tenancy in Ontario must be documented on the **Ontario Standard Lease** (the government's mandatory form - not something you draft, not a template you found online at 1 a.m.). House, condo, basement apartment - same form.

Three rules to internalize:

First, the RTA outranks the lease, always. Any term that conflicts with the Act is void - even if the tenant signed it in blue ink with a witness and a choir. No-pets

clause? Void (mostly - more below). "Tenant pays all repairs"? Void. "$500 lease-break fee"? Void. You can add terms in the "Additional Terms" section, but they only survive if the RTA allows them. Chapter 7 shows you what actually holds.

Second, failure to provide it has teeth. If you don't give your tenant the standard lease, the tenant can demand it in writing. If you still haven't delivered within 21 days of the demand, the tenant may **withhold one month's rent**. If it's still not provided 30 days after that withholding starts, the tenant **keeps the money**. Read that again. The penalty for skipping a free government form is a free month of rent - for the other guy.

Third, a tenancy exists with or without paper. No written lease doesn't mean no tenancy - it means a tenancy with full RTA rights and none of your protections documented. Handshakes don't hold hearings.

Deposits: What You May Collect (and What Will Get You in Trouble)

Ontario's deposit rules are the strictest in the country, and newcomers from other provinces get burned here constantly. Memorize this list:

- **ALLOWED:** First month's rent, plus a **rent deposit of up to one month** - the famous "first and last." The last month's deposit can only ever be applied to the final rental period. Never damage. Never cleaning. Never arrears mid-tenancy.
- **ALLOWED:** A **key/fob deposit**, refundable, capped at the **actual replacement cost** of the keys or fobs. Condo fob costs $75 to replace? Your deposit is $75.
- **ILLEGAL:** Damage deposits. Security deposits. Pet deposits. Cleaning deposits. Application fees. Credit-check fees charged to the applicant. Move-in fees. All illegal under the RTA, full stop.
- **ALSO REQUIRED:** You owe your tenant **annual interest** on the last month's deposit at the rent-increase guideline rate. Small money, real obligation.
- **AND:** Rent receipts, free of charge, on request - even to a *former* tenant, for up to 12 months after they move out.

Two more payment rules that surprise people: you **cannot require** post-dated cheques or pre-authorized debit - the tenant may offer, you may not demand. And if a cheque bounces, you may recover your actual bank charges plus an administration fee **capped at $20**. That's it. The $150 "NSF penalty" in your cousin's old lease template? Fiction.

Rent Control: The Two Ontarios

Ontario rent control depends on one question: **when was the unit first occupied for residential purposes?** Not when you bought it. Not when you renovated it. When the *unit* was first lived in.

Units first occupied ON OR BEFORE November 15, 2018 - rent-controlled. You may raise the rent once every 12 months, with at least 90 days' written notice on Form N1, and the increase is capped at the annual guideline.

Units first occupied AFTER November 15, 2018 - exempt from the cap. You may raise by any amount - but still only once every 12 months, still with 90 days' notice on Form N1. Miss Joyce's 1984 Brampton house: controlled. A brand-new 2024 condo: exempt. Andre's basement apartment inside his 1979 side-split? The house was first occupied decades ago - controlled. (That exemption question trips up even experienced agents. When in doubt, verify.)

> **THE RECEIPTS:** The 2026 rent increase guideline is **2.1%** - the lowest in four years (2025 was 2.5%) - applying to increases taking effect January 1 to December 31, 2026. The 2027 guideline is **1.9%**. The guideline is inflation-based and statutorily capped at 2.5%. (Source: Ontario Newsroom announcement; SingleKey, 2026.)

Two subtleties: use the guideline for the year the increase **takes effect**, not the year you serve notice. And botch the process - wrong form, short notice, twice in 11 months - and the increase is invalid, the overpayment clawable via a T1 within 12 months.

Above-guideline increases (AGI) exist via an LTB application (Form L5) - major capital expenditures, extraordinary tax jumps, new security services - capped at 3% above guideline per year. Tenants can fight it at a hearing; for a one-unit landlord it's rarely worth the paperwork.

Vacancy decontrol is the pressure valve: **no rent control between tenancies** - at turnover you may set any rent the market bears. This is why long-term tenants often pay below market: the tenancy is the cage; turnover opens the door. Warning: the rules follow the *tenancy*, not the paperwork - re-signing a sitting tenant to "reset" rent resets nothing, and the difference is recoverable.

One rule flows the other way: if your **property taxes drop more than 2.49%** year over year, tenants get an automatic rent reduction - Toronto mails the notices; you don't pocket it quietly.

Your Duties That Never Sleep: Repairs and Vital Services

RTA section 20, translated: **the repair duty is yours, always.** The unit and the property must be kept in a good state of repair, fit for habitation, compliant with health and safety standards - regardless of the rent, regardless of whether the tenant knew about the problem when they moved in, regardless of what your lease says. "You break it, you fix it" applies to the tenant's *damage*; everything structural, mechanical, and wear-and-tear is yours.

Vital services - heat (in season), hot and cold water, fuel, electricity, gas - can never be withheld or deliberately interfered with. Not for unpaid rent. Not for damage. Not ever, until an eviction order is executed by the Sheriff. Here's the part landlords miss: if you're responsible for a utility account, don't pay it, and service gets cut, the law **deems you to have withheld it** - an offence, not an oversight. Heat minimums: 20°C provincially (Sept 1–June 15); 21°C in Toronto (Oct 1–May 15).

New as of July 1, 2026 (Bill 97): tenants may install window or portable AC where the landlord doesn't supply it - with safety rules and a permitted seasonal rent adjustment where the landlord supplies the electricity. If you supply AC in Toronto, it must run June 1 to September 30. If you have no AC strategy, get one before the next heat dome.

Entry: Their Castle, Your Keys

You own the building. The tenant owns the occupancy. Entry requires **24 hours' written notice** stating the reason, the date, and a time between **8 a.m. and 8 p.m.** - for repairs, inspections, or showings. The tenant need not be home and cannot unreasonably block lawful entry - but your notice must be proper: a text alone is unreliable; email only with prior written consent. Exceptions: genuine emergency, the tenant's consent at the time, or reasonable-efforts notice when showing near tenancy's end. Enter improperly and you've gifted your tenant a T2 application.

People, Pets, and Plants

Guests and partners: Your tenant may have guests, move in a partner, add a roommate. Clauses restricting guests are unenforceable, and you may not raise the

rent or charge a fee because an occupant was added. The named tenant answers for their conduct.

Pets: RTA section 14 voids "no pets" clauses - no eviction simply for having one. The edges: you may refuse *applicants* with pets before signing; condo pet restrictions bind tenants via the Condominium Act (Chapter 12); eviction is possible for substantial interference, allergic reaction, danger, or major damage; service animals must be accommodated; pet deposits and "pet rent" are illegal.

Smoking and cannabis: A no-smoking clause is a valid contract term, but breaching it isn't automatic eviction grounds - you'd need to prove substantial interference, damage, or illegality at the LTB. Condo corporation smoke-free rules carry more weight. Set expectations in the lease; know enforcement is slower.

Assignment and Subletting

Assignment permanently transfers a tenancy; a sublet is a temporary arrangement with a return. Consent and refusal rules differ. A landlord may refuse assignment generally, which can give the tenant a statutory route to terminate; refusal of a specific assignee after general permission cannot be arbitrary or unreasonable. Unauthorized transfers raise separate issues. Read the current LTB guidance and act on the actual facts rather than assuming every refusal is unlawful.

The 2026 Transition, In One Box

The July and September 2026 tenancy changes are now in force. The N4 period is 7 days for notices given on or after September 21. The N12 compensation exception at 120 days concerns a landlord's own use, not purchaser use. Hearing preparation, late-payment and return-after-renovation rules also changed. Chapter 9 and the linked LTB update explain the points to check.

> **REAL TALK:** Landlords love asking "what am I allowed to do?" Wrong question. The RTA answers "what must happen, in what order, on what form, with what notice." The landlords who thrive aren't the ones who know their rights - they're the ones who know their *procedures*. Rights you can look up in a crisis. Procedures you have to get right in advance, because the consequences arrive months later, in a hearing, with interest.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Use the Ontario Standard Lease for every tenancy; terms that conflict with the RTA are void even if signed; failing to deliver the lease can cost you a month's rent.
- Lawful deposits: first month + last month + actual-cost key deposit. Everything else is illegal. Last month's deposit earns the tenant annual interest.
- Rent control turns on first occupancy before/after November 15, 2018: 2026 guideline 2.1% (2027: 1.9%), 90 days' N1 notice, once per 12 months. No cap between tenancies.
- Repairs and vital services are always your duty. Never withhold heat, water, or power - an unpaid account on your side is deemed withholding.
- Entry needs 24 hours' written notice, 8 a.m.–8 p.m. Guests and added occupants are free. Pet bans are mostly void; assignment/sublet consent can't be unreasonably withheld.
- Use the rule in force for the relevant service or filing date; the July and September 2026 changes are already in effect.

CHAPTER 5

Setting the Rent & Doing the Math Nobody Wants to Do

Every landlord's journey has a moment of truth, and it isn't the first tenant or the first repair. It's the spreadsheet.

Miss Joyce's moment came on a Sunday. Andre's came before he even bought. Yours comes now, in this chapter, with real mid-2026 numbers and no motivational garnish.

Step One: Find the Real Market Rent

Your rent is not what you need it to be. It's what comparable units are actually leasing for, in your pocket, right now.

The process: pull the last 90 days of *leased* comparables - not listings, **leases** - for your unit type in a tight radius. An agent does this off MLS® in twenty minutes; DIY, triangulate from asking prices on the big rental sites and **discount** - asking prices are wishes. Then adjust: parking, laundry, utilities, outdoor space, basement vs. above grade. A Scarborough basement apartment is not competing with a King West condo, and neither with a Brampton detached.

Context for your expectations, as of mid-2026: the rental market has **softened**. Nationally, asking rents fell about 5.7% year over year, and Toronto's purpose-built vacancy rate hit roughly 3.0% - the first time above 3% since the pandemic. More than 59,000 condo units were completed across the GTA in 2024-25 alone, and a lot of those keys are in investors' hands, competing with yours for tenants. Landlords who price off 2022 memories sit empty. Price off this month's leases.

Step Two: The Full Carrying-Cost Ledger

Now the part that separates landlords from optimists. List every monthly cost, all-in:

Line item	What to budget
Mortgage (principal + interest)	Actual payment
Property tax	Annual bill ÷ 12

Line item	What to budget
Insurance - **landlord policy**	Not your homeowner policy (Chapter 11)
Condo fees (if applicable)	Full monthly amount
Utilities you cover	Whatever the lease assigns to you
Maintenance reserve	~1% of property value per year, ÷ 12
Vacancy allowance	3-5% of annual rent (some lenders assume ~10%)
Licensing/admin (where applicable)	e.g., Brampton's residential rental licence

The maintenance reserve is the line everyone skips and everyone regrets. A furnace is $5,000–$7,000. A roof is $8,000–$15,000. A 1%-of-value annual reserve on an $800,000 house is $667 a month - and in the years you don't spend it, it compounds into the fund that saves you when you do.

Let's walk one full ledger, line by line, so you can see the skeleton before the numbers. Take Miss Joyce's Brampton house - mortgage-free, so the scariest line is already zero - and watch what's left:

Line item	Monthly	Where the number comes from
Mortgage	$0	Paid off - the whole reason this file works
Property tax	$460	~$5,500 annual bill ÷ 12
Landlord insurance	$190	Rental-dwelling policy, not her old homeowner policy (Chapter 11)
Maintenance reserve	$800	1% of ~$960K value per year ÷ 12
Vacancy allowance	$130	~4% of the $3,200 rent
Total carrying cost	**$1,580**	

Against $3,200 rent: **+$1,620 a month.** Now delete the "mortgage $0" line and drop in a $2,500 payment and the same house flips to −$880. Same walls, same tenant, same rent - the financing decides whether you're running an income property or a charity with a lawn. That's why this chapter exists: the ledger, not the listing, tells you what you own.

The licensing line, because municipalities have entered the chat. Depending on where the property sits, there's a permit cost most spreadsheets forget. Toronto's RentSafeTO program covers apartment buildings (three or more storeys, ten or more units) with registration and evaluation fees - a single-family rental house isn't in it, but a multiplex might be. Brampton went further: a **residential rental licensing pilot covering additional residential units citywide since January 1, 2026** - licence fee, inspection, the works. Mississauga licenses second units. The fees aren't crippling - usually a few hundred dollars a year - but operating unlicensed where a licence is required is a bylaw offence, and Chapter 11 showed you what CRA now does to non-compliant short-term operators. Check your municipality's rules before you price, and put the number in the ledger where it belongs.

Vacancy-cost math - the line that doesn't show up until it hurts. A vacancy allowance feels abstract, so make it concrete. One empty month on a $3,200 unit is 8.3% of your gross annual rent - gone. Two months, and you've donated more than the annual property tax bill. This is why the allowance exists *while the unit is occupied*: you pre-pay the inevitable. It's also why pricing decisions are vacancy decisions. Suppose Miss Joyce lists at $3,200 and leases in three weeks, versus listing at $3,350 and sitting for seven weeks while the market negotiates her down in silence. The higher ask *costs* her a month of rent ($3,200) to chase $150 a month ($1,800 a year, if the tenant even materializes at that number). Fill fast at the honest price; let the tenancy, not the listing, do the earning.

Step Three: The Verdict - Three Worked Examples

Miss Joyce (paid-off Brampton detached). Market rent: $3,200. Costs: property tax $460 + landlord insurance $190 + maintenance reserve $800 (1% of ~$960K value) + vacancy allowance $130 = **$1,580**. Cash flow: **+$1,620/month**. This is what a paid-off GTA house does. Her "return" is rent plus long-run appreciation on an asset she already owns outright - and her honest question is opportunity cost (what would the equity earn if sold?), which is a Chapter 13 conversation, not a Chapter 5 one.

Andre (house-hack, big mortgage). Andre's math is different: he's not measuring "profit," he's measuring **offset**. His basement tenant pays $1,750 against a total house carrying cost of about $4,100. Net cost of housing his family: $2,350/month - versus $4,100 with no tenant. He's "cash-flow negative" on paper

and laughing, because the tenant is buying him the building. House-hacking is the one configuration where negative monthly math can still be a clear win.

An illustrative rental budget. A $600,000 condo with 20% down has a $480,000 mortgage. At 4% nominal fixed, compounded semi-annually over 25 years, the monthly payment is $2,525. Add $715 condo fees, $325 property tax and $80 insurance, against an assumed $2,500 monthly rent: the shortfall is about $1,145 before vacancy, management and extra capital reserves. These are assumptions, not a claimed median result or an insured-investor rate quote.

> **REAL TALK:** A shortfall from a historic model is not your property's cash flow. Use the signed rent, a current lender quote, current bills, vacancy and capital reserves. Keep the assumption sheet with the result so you can update the model when any input changes.

> **REAL TALK:** A negative-cash-flow rental isn't automatically a bad investment - appreciation and mortgage paydown can still carry the file - but it IS automatically a bill. $1,145 a month is nearly $14,000 a year, every year, out of your chequing account, while you also absorb every repair, every vacancy, and every special assessment. If you can't comfortably fund the shortfall for five years, the property doesn't have a cash-flow problem. You have an affordability problem. Know the difference before you're living it.

Step Four: Pricing Strategy - Speed vs. Stretch

Two pricing philosophies, and the math is not close.

The stretch: price 5-10% above market, "test it." In a soft market this buys you vacancy. Miss Joyce's house at $3,500 instead of $3,200: if it sits one extra month, the stretch *cost* her $3,200 to earn an extra $300/month - which takes 11 months of tenancy just to break even, assuming the tenant ever appears.

The attract: price at or a whisker under market, generate multiple strong applicants fast, and **buy yourself choice**. Here's the insight rookies miss: the rent number matters far less than the tenant quality. $50/month is $600 a year. A bad tenant is five figures and a year at the LTB. Pricing slightly sharply to widen your applicant pool isn't leaving money on the table - it's buying the best tenant in the market for pocket change.

Also note the calendar: GTA rental demand peaks late spring through early fall (students, families timing the school year, job relocations). A unit that comes available in December prices softer than the same unit in June. If you can control your availability date, control it.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Set rent from actual leased comparables in your pocket, not asking prices, not your mortgage, not 2022 memories. The 2026 rental market is soft: Toronto vacancy ~3%, asking rents down nationally.
- The full ledger: mortgage, tax, landlord insurance, condo fees, utilities you cover, ~1%-of-value annual maintenance reserve, and a vacancy allowance. Skip nothing.
- A mortgage-free property still has operating costs and capital needs. A financed property needs enough income and reserves to meet both building and debt costs; calculate the actual shortfall rather than applying a market-wide average.
- House-hacking changes the frame: the tenant's rent is an offset to your own housing cost, and "negative on paper" can still mean winning.
- Price sharply to fill fast and widen your applicant pool. One month of vacancy costs more than a year of modest underpricing.

CHAPTER 6

Marketing the Unit & Screening the Human

Miss Joyce's first applicant arrived twenty minutes late, apologized beautifully, and offered six months of rent up front in cash.

Her second applicant was a young couple - good jobs, glowing references, a credit report so clean it squeaked. They reminded her of her own kids, twenty-five years ago, hunting for their first place with a new baby on the way. Marlon and Keisha types. The kind of tenants landlords tell stories about for the right reasons.

Guess which file the rest of this chapter teaches you to pick. (If you guessed the cash, we need to talk. Actually, the chapter needs to talk. Keep reading.)



Part One: Marketing That Earns Good Applicants

Quality tenants choose carefully - which means your listing is your first screening tool. A dark, blurry, eleven-word ad ("2 bed bsmnt apt, avail now, serious inquiries only") attracts exactly the applicants who don't read anything carefully. You want readers.

Photos: bright, wide, honest - daytime, lights on, blinds open, decluttered. Ten to fifteen shots: every room, entrance, laundry, parking. Vacant? Consider light or virtual staging - empty rooms photograph small and cold, and good tenants scroll past small and cold.

Description: specific beats poetic. What it is (self-contained 2-bedroom basement apartment, separate entrance), what's included (one parking spot, ensuite laundry, water/heat included - hydro tenant's), the rent, the availability date, the neighbourhood logic (transit, schools, parks), and your process ("applications through our REALTOR®, credit and reference checks required with consent"). That last line is deliberate: stating your process in the ad pre-filters for tenants who expect to be screened. The ones who flinch at process are announcing themselves.

Where: MLS®/REALTOR.ca reaches every represented tenant in the GTA; the big rental platforms widen the net. And describe the *unit*, never the tenant you imagine: "perfect for a young professional" is a family-status problem in a nice hat; "great for a single person" tells families they're unwelcome - discrimination before you've met anyone. Advertise features, not demographics.

Part Two: Screening - The Legal Frame

Now the heart of this chapter, and I'll be direct about why I'm writing it carefully: our community carries the scars of rental discrimination from the applicant side. Many of us have been told a unit was "just taken" while it sat on the market. Many of us have been asked for deposits and guarantees nobody else was asked for. So when you step to the landlord's side of the desk, you hold power you once felt from below. The Ontario Human Rights Code governs how you use it - and honestly, your own memory of how it felt should too.

What you MAY consider (applied identically to every applicant):

- **Income and its verification** - pay stubs, employment letter, Notice of Assessment, bank statements. You're confirming the rent can be paid.
- **Credit history** - with **explicit written consent** (build it into the application form; running a check without consent violates privacy law). Remember: no credit history is not bad credit history - newcomers and young people often have thin files, not bad files.
- **Rental history and references** - previous landlords, and yes, actually call them.

- **Employment information** - for verification, not as an absolute requirement.

What you may NOT do - the OHRC's bright lines:

- **No screening on the source of income.** Receipt of social assistance, ODSP, pension income, housing benefits - protected. "I don't take people on assistance" is a Code violation, not a preference.
- **No income-ratio rules.** The old "rent must be under 30% of income" formula is explicitly disallowed. You can assess ability to pay; you can't impose ratio cutoffs.
- **No SIN.** A Social Insurance Number is not required for renting, and you cannot demand one.
- **No questions touching protected grounds:** race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, family status (including pregnancy or plans for children), disability, receipt of public assistance. Not in the application, not in "friendly conversation" at the showing. "So, are you two planning kids?" is not small talk - it's evidence.
- **No application fees or credit-check fees.** Illegal under the RTA, as you learned in Chapter 4.

Guarantors: lawful only when required of **all applicants in similar objective circumstances** - never targeted at newcomers, young people, or Code-protected groups. "Everyone with less than two years of Canadian credit history provides a guarantor" applied uniformly is defensible policy. "You seem new here, bring a guarantor" is a complaint.

Violations don't just sting morally: HRTO discrimination awards - for injury to dignity alone - can run into the thousands of dollars, plus lost-housing costs, plus your name in a public decision that lives online forever. Screen hard, screen uniformly, screen on paper.

Three questions landlords always ask, answered fast. *Can I pick the strongest applicant?* Yes - that's the whole point, provided "strongest" is measured against your written criteria and nothing else. *Can I decline someone who just feels off?* Your gut is not a criterion; document the file-based reason or don't decline. *Can I ask how many people will live there?* Occupancy, yes - a one-bedroom can't sleep seven - but family composition questions are the trap: "how many occupants" is logistics, "are those your kids" is a Code problem.

Part Three: The Screening Stack, Step by Step

Here's the process we run - the same sequence whether it's Miss Joyce's house or Andre's basement:

1. Set written criteria before anyone applies. One page: what income documentation you'll accept, how you'll weigh credit (thin file vs. bad file), reference requirements, occupancy limits. Identical for everyone. This page is your shield at the HRTO and your discipline at the showing when somebody's charming.

2. Pre-screen by phone or message. Five minutes: confirm the availability date works, the rent works, the occupants count, pets (relevant for condo rules), and when they need to move. You're screening logistics, not impressions.

3. Show, then hand out the full application. Names of all occupants, current and previous addresses, employment details, income information, previous-landlord references, and the credit-consent clause. Every applicant completes the identical form.

4. Verify like a sceptic. Call the employer on a number you look up yourself, not the one on the application. Call the previous landlord - and the one before that, because the current landlord sometimes praises a tenant they're desperate to lose. Cross-check pay stubs against bank deposits if anything feels off.

5. Run the consented credit check. Read it as a story: patterns matter more than scores. A 640 score with a clean two-year payment history and an old cellphone collections fight can be a better bet than a 720 with fresh delinquencies.

6. Decide on the written criteria, document the decision, respond to everyone. A polite, prompt decline costs nothing and protects everything.

Part Four: Red Flags That Should Slow You Down

Not disqualifications - **slow-downs**, each requiring verification:

- **Fake paperwork.** Doctored pay stubs and employment letters are an industry in 2026. Fonts that don't match, employers that don't answer, "HR departments" that are Gmail accounts. Verify independently or walk.
- **Pressure to skip process.** "I'll take it right now, no application needed." Process is exactly what they're avoiding.

- **Big cash up front.** Miss Joyce's six-months-cash offer sounds like a blessing; it's often someone purchasing a no-questions window. (Also: you can't legally *require* more than first and last - but a voluntary offer isn't the legal problem. The *screening bypass* is the problem.) Money that buys silence usually buys silence about something.
- **References that don't track.** Every reference is a friend; the "previous landlord" knows nothing about the building.
- **A story that moves.** The move-out date changes, the occupants change, the employer changes. Small inconsistencies are human. A migrating story is a pattern.

> **REAL TALK:** The professional problem tenant's best tool isn't a fake pay stub - it's your sympathy and your hurry. They study the RTA harder than most landlords do, and they know that once they're in, with possession and procedural protections, removing them takes months you haven't budgeted. There is exactly one vaccine, and you administer it in the two weeks *before* signing: rigorous, uniform, documented screening. Every shortcut is a bet with terrible odds.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Your listing is your first filter: professional photos, specific description, process stated up front. Advertise the unit's features, never the imagined tenant's demographics.
- Legal screening = income verification, rental history, references, and consented credit checks - applied identically to everyone, with written criteria set before anyone applies.
- Bright lines: no source-of-income screening, no income-ratio cutoffs, no SIN demands, no protected-ground questions, no application fees, no targeted guarantor requirements.
- Verify everything independently - employers and landlords on numbers you look up yourself. The current landlord may be motivated to praise a problem away.
- Red flags mean slow down, not slam the door: fake paperwork, process-skipping pressure, big cash up front, untrackable references, migrating stories.
- HRTO discrimination awards are real, public, and expensive. Screen hard *and* lawfully - the two are not in tension.

CHAPTER 7

The Lease & The Documents: Your Paper Arsenal

A tenancy, legally speaking, is a stack of paper. The lease is the spine, the notices are the levers, and the applications are what you file when the levers need an adjudicator's hand on them. Landlords who know their documents win quietly for years. Landlords who don't, meet the ones who do - at hearings.

Let's build your arsenal, document by document.



The Ontario Standard Lease - Section by Section

The government's mandatory form runs through fixed sections. Here's what each one is doing and what to check before anyone signs:

Parties and unit. Legal names of all tenants (every adult who'll be responsible for rent goes on the lease - all tenants on the lease are jointly and severally liable, meaning you can pursue any one of them for the full amount), the exact unit address, and whether it's a fixed term or month-to-month. First-time landlords: start with a one-year fixed term. It stabilizes both sides, and when it ends without renewal

it **automatically converts to month-to-month on the same terms** - you cannot refuse "renewal" or force a new lease.

Rent and payment. The rent, the rental period, what's included (utilities, parking, laundry, internet), and payment method. Remember from Chapter 4: you may *accept* post-dated cheques or pre-authorized debit if the tenant volunteers; you may not *require* them. Say so nowhere; write it nowhere.

Deposits. First and last, plus any actual-cost key deposit. Nothing else. If your template has a damage deposit line, delete it before it deletes your credibility.

Smoking. There's a standard section for smoking rules - complete it honestly and specifically. As Chapter 4 covered, the clause is a valid contract term; enforcement still runs through the LTB's substantial-interference test.

Additional Terms. The only place your customization lives - and the graveyard of landlord creativity. What **holds**: tenant obtains liability insurance (a clause requiring tenant liability insurance stands on solid ground; mandating contents coverage is shakier); snow removal/lawn care assigned *for a single-family house the tenant fully occupies*; no-smoking specifics; utilities split; move-in/out scheduling for condos; key-fob inventory with actual replacement costs. What **does not hold**, even signed: no-pets clauses (void by s.14 - condo rules aside), damage/security deposits, lease-break penalties, "landlord may enter without notice," guest bans, rent increases above the rules, "tenant responsible for all repairs," late fees beyond the NSF rules. The test for any additional term is one question: *does the RTA allow it?* Not "is it reasonable," not "did they sign it."

Signatures. Everyone signs, everyone initials the additional terms, and the tenant receives a signed copy **within 21 days**. Diarize it.

The Pre-Lease Documents (The OREA Suite)

Before the Standard Lease, the deal itself gets papered. When you work with an agent, two forms from the OREA standard forms library do the early lifting:

The Rental Application (OREA Form 410, Rental Application - Residential). The screening instrument from Chapter 6, in standard form: occupants, addresses, employment, income, references, and the credit-consent clause. One per applicant group, identical for everyone.

The Agreement to Lease - Residential (OREA Form 400). The offer document. The tenant (usually through their agent) submits proposed terms: rent, start date, term length, deposits, what's included, any conditions (commonly: satisfactory reference and credit verification by a deadline). You accept, counter, or decline. Once it's firm, it binds - and then the **Standard Lease is still mandatory** for the tenancy itself. The Agreement to Lease gets you to yes; the Standard Lease governs the marriage. Don't confuse the engagement ring for the certificate.

If the tenant brought their own agent, their brokerage's paperwork travels with the deal. Yours is the listing side: the representation agreement setting scope and your negotiated commission - read it, negotiate it, initial it.

The Rent Receipt Habit

On request, you owe receipts - free - for rent, deposits, arrears, any payment, and for up to 12 months after the tenancy ends. The winning habit: issue receipts for *everything* automatically, every month, and file them. Costs nothing, builds your paper trail, and signals that you run a documented shop. Tenants behave differently for landlords with visible systems.

The N-Forms: Your Notice Library

When something needs to change - rent, behaviour, the tenancy itself - it happens on a government N-form, served correctly, or it doesn't happen at all. The library (all available at tribunalsontario.ca):

Form	What it does	Rule to check for your notice or agreement
N1	Rent increase	90 days' notice; once per 12 months; guideline unless exempt
N4	Non-payment of rent	7 days for notices given on or after September 21, 2026
N5	Interference, damage, overcrowding	20 days; first notice voids if corrected within 7 days
N7	Specified serious conduct or safety grounds	Do not confuse it with an N6 for illegal acts; use the form matching the facts

Form	What it does	Rule to check for your notice or agreement
N8	Persistent late payment	60 days, ending on the last day of a rental period
N11	Mutual agreement to end	Voluntary; the cash-for-keys vehicle (Chapter 9)
N12	Landlord or purchaser use	Compensation rules differ: the 120-day landlord-own-use exception does not extend to purchaser use
N13	Demolition, conversion, major reno	120 days + compensation + tenant's right of first refusal

Chapter 9 runs the misconduct and exit plays in full. For now, the meta-rules: a notice is **not** an eviction - it's the opening move of a process only the LTB can complete; dates and service methods are audited at hearings to the day; and serving the wrong form wastes months, because you'll be starting over.

The LTB Applications: When It Goes to the Board

The other half of the alphabet - filed at the LTB when a notice doesn't resolve things:

- **L1** - Eviction for non-payment (filed after an N4 runs its course).
- **L2** - Eviction for most other notices (N5, N12, N13, etc.).
- **L5** - Above-guideline rent increase.
- **T1** - Tenant's claim (e.g., illegal charges or rent collected).
- **T2** - Tenant's rights claim (harassment, illegal entry, withheld services).
- **T5** - Tenant's bad-faith claim after an N12/N13 (up to 12 months' rent).
- **T6** - Tenant's maintenance claim.
- **A2** - Application about subletting/assignment disputes.

You'll notice the T-forms are the *tenant's* instruments. Read them as your risk map: every T-form corresponds to a landlord behaviour you control. Illegal entry → T2. Botched N12 → T5. Deferred maintenance → T6. The T-forms are the reason this book keeps saying *process*.

The Record-Keeping Doctrine

Close with the habit that wins hearings: **if it isn't written down, it didn't happen.** One folder per tenancy (digital is fine): application and consent, credit report, references, Agreement to Lease, signed Standard Lease, deposit records, monthly receipts, every notice *with proof of service*, every repair request and your response, inspection photos, and a dated log of significant conversations. Adjudicators decide on evidence, and evidence is this folder. The landlord with the folder looks credible before they speak; the one with "trust me, they said -" does not.

> **REAL TALK:** Every experienced landlord has the same scar: a form served one day late, or by the wrong method, that cost them three months and a restart. Serving documents has its own rules - methods, timing, proof. When your first real notice comes due, spend a few hundred dollars on a licensed paralegal to check your service before you file anything. It's the cheapest tuition in the entire landlord curriculum.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- The Standard Lease is mandatory and governs; the Agreement to Lease (Form 400) is the offer stage; the Rental Application (Form 410) is the screening stage. Signed copy to the tenant within 21 days.
- Additional terms hold only if the RTA allows them. Holds: tenant liability insurance, utilities splits, house-maintenance assignment, smoking specifics, condo logistics. Voids: pet bans, damage deposits, lease-break fees, entry waivers, guest bans.
- Issue receipts automatically for everything, forever. Free for you, priceless as evidence.
- N-forms change things (N1 rent, N4 arrears, N5 conduct, N12/N13 exits); L/T/A applications escalate them to the LTB. A notice is never an eviction.
- Keep one folder per tenancy with every document and a dated conversation log. Paper beats passion.
- First time serving a real notice? Have a paralegal check the service. Cheap tuition.

CHAPTER 8

The Tenant Lifecycle: From Keys Handed Over to Keys Handed Back

Marlon and Keisha moved into Miss Joyce's house on the first of September with a borrowed cargo van, a bassinet, and the cautious optimism of people who've rented before.

Miss Joyce was ready for them. And because she was ready - inspection done, photos taken, welcome folder waiting on the counter - the tenancy started the way good ones do: boring. This chapter is about keeping it that way, from day one to day one-thousand.

Move-In: The Day That Decides the Next Three Years

The inspection report. Before the tenant's first box crosses the threshold, walk the entire unit with a written condition report. Walls, floors, appliances, fixtures, windows, smoke and CO alarms (test them, in front of them - carbon monoxide alarms near sleeping areas are mandatory province-wide since January 1, 2026), furnace filter, every scratch already in existence. Photograph everything, date-stamped, and video a slow walk-through. Both parties sign the report; everyone keeps a copy. This document ends 90% of move-out disputes before they begin, because "that stain was already there" stops being an argument and becomes a lookup.

Keys, fobs, and access. Count them, list them, charge only the actual-cost deposit you documented in the lease. Change or re-key locks between tenancies - it's cheap, and the previous tenant's cousin doesn't need access to your new tenant's life.

The utilities handoff. Whatever the lease assigns to the tenant should be transferred *into the tenant's name on day one* - hydro especially. A utility left in your name "for convenience" is a bill in your future, and remember Chapter 4: an unpaid landlord-side account that cuts service is legally deemed withholding. Set a reminder to confirm the transfer happened.

The welcome package. One page, laminated pride: how to pay rent and when, how to report repairs (and what counts as urgent), where the water shut-off and breaker panel are, garbage day, condo rules if applicable, and your contact with

response expectations. Every answer you put on this page is a panicked text you never receive.

During the Tenancy: The Rhythm of a Well-Run Unit

Maintenance response standards. The law (RTA s.20) says you must keep the unit in a good state of repair, full stop. The practical standard that keeps you safe and keeps good tenants: **urgent issues same day** (no heat in winter, water actively leaking, sewage, security issues, failed fridge with a baby in the house - use judgment, err fast), **important issues within days** (appliance failures, leaks contained, broken locks), **routine items scheduled within a couple of weeks** (caulking, dripping taps, cosmetic wear). Every request gets a written acknowledgment - even a two-line text: "Got it, plumber booked for Thursday." Respond to everything. A landlord who goes quiet teaches the tenant two things: to escalate to a T6 application, or to stop caring about a property that isn't theirs. Both endings are expensive.

Inspections with notice. Once or twice a year, exercise your entry right properly - 24 hours' written notice, 8 a.m.–8 p.m. window, stated reason - and walk the unit. You're checking what tenants don't report: the slow leak under the sink, the furnace filter that's now a carpet, the unauthorized occupant, the smoke alarm someone "temporarily" disabled in 2024. Document with photos, note anything needing repair, fix it. Twenty minutes, twice a year, and small problems die small.

Rent increases on schedule. Put the anniversary in your calendar the day the lease signs. For rent-controlled units, that's the guideline increase (2.1% in 2026, 1.9% in 2027), once per 12 months, on a proper N1 with 90 days' notice. Landlords skip increases out of niceness and then try to "catch up" later - you can't. Missed years don't bank. A tenant paying $2,800 whose market value drifted to $3,300 represents a widening gap you will *never* close within the tenancy. Take the lawful increase every year, politely, with proper notice. Good tenants understand; the math of moving costs them far more than 2.1%.

The renewal dance. The fixed term ends; the tenancy rolls month-to-month on identical terms - you cannot force a new lease or use re-papering to reset rent. That shouldn't unsettle you: month-to-month on a good tenant is a subscription that renews itself. Stability comes from the relationship and the property, not the paper term.

Relationship Management: Professional, Documented, Human

The model isn't "friend" and it isn't "adversary." It's a good property manager crossed with a decent neighbour: warm in tone, precise in practice.

Pay rent day attention. If the 1st passes quietly, send the friendly nudge on the 2nd - in writing - before the 5th. Patterns set early: the tenant who learns rent is flexible on week one will test flexibility forever. Praise the good ("appreciate you flagging that leak early - saved us both a headache"). Address the small immediately, in writing, without theatre. And keep every substantive conversation in a channel that saves: text or email, summarized after any phone call in two lines.

Miss Joyce runs her house this way. When the furnace died on a Sunday in January, Marlon texted at 8 a.m.; her furnace guy was there by 1 p.m., and she called the next day to check the house was warm. Cost her a weekend callout fee. Bought her a tenant who treats the house like his own and emails her photos of the garden he planted in the spring. That's not luck. That's the lifecycle run properly.

The Retention Math - Why Good Tenants Are Gold

A turnover costs you: vacancy (two to four weeks minimum - $800–$1,600 on Miss Joyce's house), cleaning and paint ($500–$1,500), listing or leasing commission (example: one month's rent plus HST), your time, and the risk reset of a new unknown tenant. Call it $5,000–$7,000, conservatively.

A tenant who stays five years instead of eighteen months saves you two full turnovers - ten-plus thousand dollars - *plus* compounds as someone who reports problems early and treats the asset well. This is why Chapter 5 said price to attract quality, why this chapter says respond fast, and why the pros would rather keep a good tenant at $50 under market than chase $50 more into a vacancy. Tenancy length is the quietest profit line in the business.

> **REAL TALK:** Most landlord-tenant relationships don't break over big things. They erode over unanswered texts. The tenant reports a small leak, hears nothing, reports it again, hears nothing, and stops reporting - and two years later you're buying a subfloor and they're filing a T6 asking for rent abatement backdated to the first ignored message. Every unanswered repair request is a small loan you're borrowing against your own property, with interest payable at the LTB.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Move-in: signed condition report with date-stamped photos/video, tested alarms (CO alarms mandatory since Jan 1, 2026), documented keys/fobs, utilities into the tenant's name day one, and a one-page welcome sheet.
- Maintenance: urgent same day, important within days, routine within weeks - acknowledge every request in writing.
- Inspect once or twice a year with proper 24-hour written notice. Small problems die small.
- Take the lawful rent increase every year, on time, on an N1. Missed years don't bank.
- Fixed terms convert to month-to-month automatically - embrace it. Stability comes from the relationship, not the paper.
- A turnover costs roughly $5,000–$7,000 all-in. Retention of a good tenant is the quietest profit line you have.

CHAPTER 9

When Things Go Wrong

The rent is late. A neighbour reports damage. You need the home back. Each problem has a lawful route, and each route begins with evidence rather than a threat. An occupied rental is somebody's home as well as your asset.

First, Establish What Happened

Keep a dated rent ledger, save messages, inspect lawfully and photograph relevant conditions. Separate unpaid rent from disputed charges. A late payment, a damaged door and a noise complaint are different facts; they need different notices. Never change locks, remove belongings or interrupt essential services to force a move.

A calm written reminder may resolve a missed payment. If it does not, have the current form and service requirements checked before using a notice. An incorrect termination date can undo work you thought was complete.

Unpaid Rent: Notice, Application, Evidence

For an N4 served on or after September 21, 2026, the notice period is 7 days. The form explains how payment can void the notice. If the problem continues, an L1 application may follow. A notice alone does not authorize physical eviction.

Bring the lease, a clear ledger, the notice and proof of service. Record payments received after filing and update the amount claimed. Obtain advice on a realistic payment arrangement and its enforcement terms. A written arrangement needs dates, amounts and a clear account of what happens if a payment is missed.

The September 2026 rules add requirements for tenants wishing to raise other issues at a rent-arrears hearing, including a payment of half the claimed arrears at least seven days before the hearing. Your representative should apply the current rules to the filing date and evidence. A procedural change does not excuse ignoring repairs or tenant-rights complaints.

Do not budget from a guaranteed hearing date. Maintain reserves for vacancies, arrears, repairs, representation and enforcement delays. If an eviction order is obtained and enforced, physical eviction is carried out by the Court Enforcement Office, not by the landlord.

Conduct, Damage and Late Payment

Use the correct notice for the actual reason. N5, N6, N7 and N8 cover different situations. A first N5 can allow a correction period; serious-conduct notices have different tests. Police involvement does not by itself prove every allegation before the LTB.

Document incidents with dates and detail. Respect other residents' privacy, avoid retaliatory messages and continue meeting maintenance obligations. Ask a licensed paralegal to assess the notice, evidence and available remedy instead of choosing the form with the shortest deadline.

N12: Distinguish Your Use from a Purchaser's Use

An own-use claim requires a qualifying person and genuine residential intent. It does not let you replace a tenant with a higher-paying tenant. For purchaser use, the property and purchaser must meet the statutory requirements; do not promise vacant possession merely because a sale is signed.

For a landlord's own-use N12 served on or after September 21, 2026, at least 120 days' notice can remove the requirement to pay compensation or offer another acceptable unit. The existing compensation rules apply on the shorter notice path. **The 120-day exception does not apply to purchaser-use N12 notices.** This distinction belongs in the sale plan and the closing calendar.

The September update also says the intended occupant in a landlord's own-use case must normally move in within 60 days of the stated termination date; failure can create a rebuttable bad-faith presumption. The required genuine period of occupation still matters. Corporate ownership is not a way to claim an individual's own-use rights.

N13: Major Work and the Tenant's Right to Return

An N13 for major repairs is not a renovation permit, and a permit is not an eviction order. Check the work, vacant-possession requirement, notice, compensation and municipal requirements together. A tenant who properly preserves a right to return after repairs does not automatically become a new-market-rent tenant.

For return notices covered by the September 2026 changes, landlords must provide completion information and updates, notify the tenant when the unit is ready, and give the required 60-day opportunity to reoccupy. The LTB update also extends the

application deadline for certain failures to honour that right. Keep a communication file through the renovation and the return.

Toronto's Rental Renovation Licence is a separate municipal requirement. It applies to covered N13 repairs and renovations, subject to exemptions; do not assume a small building is exempt because it has fewer than five units. The City requires a timely application, supporting documents and tenant accommodation or compensation arrangements. Use the current City fee schedule and requirements rather than an old flat-dollar allowance.

A Voluntary Agreement to End the Tenancy

A genuine negotiated agreement can be documented on an N11 with carefully drafted payment and possession terms. Give the tenant time and access to independent advice. An agreement reached through harassment or misleading statements creates problems rather than certainty.

Compare the full costs of each lawful option, including advice, arrears, moving arrangements and the possibility that the agreement is challenged. A payment does not buy zero risk. Have your representative explain how money and possession will be exchanged and what remedy applies if either side does not perform.

Abandonment, Death and Belongings

An unanswered message is not proof of abandonment. Retaking possession and disposing of belongings can engage different rules depending on how the tenancy ended, including special rules after a tenant's death. Photograph and inventory property, preserve documents and obtain advice before disposal.

Screen Fairly; Manage Consistently

Fraud exists, but a tenant in arrears is not a category of person. Verify applications consistently, with consent and without discrimination. After move-in, assess conduct and evidence. Good records and humane, timely communication are useful in ordinary files and difficult ones alike.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Match the notice to the facts and use the current form and service rules.

- An N4 is a notice, not a lockout authority. A landlord cannot physically enforce an eviction.
- The 120-day compensation exception concerns landlord own use; purchaser use has different obligations.
- Renovations require a plan for permits, lawful possession and any tenant return right.
- A negotiated exit must be voluntary and properly documented. Budget for uncertainty.

CHAPTER 10

Selling With Tenants In Place

Five years into her landlording life, Miss Joyce got the call from her accountant that every landlord eventually gets: the math had changed. The market had run up, her knees had opinions about being a landlord into her seventies, and it might be time to convert the house back into capital.

One problem, on paper: Marlon and Keisha, two kids now, three years of perfect rent receipts. What happens to a sale when someone's *home* is the inventory?

Here's the answer, and it rearranges most sellers' assumptions: **selling a property does not end the tenancy.** Your tenant's rights ride through the sale like a covenant on the land. The buyer purchases the property *and* the tenancy, on the same lease, same rent, same rules. You are never selling just a building; you're selling a building plus a legal relationship. Price, market, and negotiate accordingly.

Path One: Sell It Tenanted

The cleanest version. Your tenant stays, the buyer steps into your shoes, and on closing day nothing changes for the people living there except where the rent goes.

Who buys tenanted property? Investors - and they buy it *because* it's tenanted. A good tenant at a known rent with a documented payment history is an income stream with zero vacancy cost and zero leasing commission on day one. In investor math, a proven tenant is an asset. Your job is to present them as one: the rent ledger, the lease, the payment history, the inspection reports. This is where your Chapter 7 folder turns into money - a tenanted listing with a clean documentation package sells to investors at full value. A tenanted listing with "the tenant is great, trust me" sells at a discount sized to the buyer's imagination.

The trade-off: your buyer pool shrinks. End-users inherit a process (below), and anything that narrows demand narrows price. Tenanted homes also show worse: someone else's furniture, schedule, and cooperation.

Showings With Tenants: Law and Diplomacy

The law first, because it's strict: every single showing requires **24 hours' written notice**, entry only between **8 a.m. and 8 p.m.**, and - note this - a text message

alone is not reliable notice. Your tenant cannot unreasonably block lawful showings, but you cannot flood them either; excessive entries become harassment (a T2 risk with damages attached).

Now the diplomacy, worth thousands: tell the tenant **before** the sign hits the lawn. Explain the plan, the timeline, what showings will look like - and make cooperation worth their while with lawful goodwill: showing windows clustered into agreed blocks, a cleaning service before photos, a rent gesture, or written certainty that their lease continues. Miss Joyce sat Marlon and Keisha at the kitchen table, laid out the plan, arranged Saturday-block showings plus a professional clean. The house showed beautifully; the tenants felt respected; everyone got paid in the currency they value.

What you may *not* do is pressure them out to make the sale easier. That's harassment with a damages schedule.

Path Two: Vacant Possession - The N12 for Purchaser's Use

If your buyer (or their spouse, child, or parent) genuinely intends to move in, the tenancy can be ended for **purchaser's own use** - but the machinery is exact:

- A **firm Agreement of Purchase and Sale must exist first.** An N12 served without one is invalid. The buyer can serve it, or you can serve it on their behalf.
- Only available for a property with **three units or fewer, or a condo unit.** Bigger complexes: this path doesn't exist.
- **60 days' notice**, ending on the last day of a rental period (during a fixed term, possession can't precede the lease's end).
- **Purchaser-use compensation remains required under the applicable N12 rules.** The 120-day landlord-own-use compensation exception does not apply to purchaser use.
- The tenant doesn't have to take the notice at face value. They can wait for the L2 hearing and make the purchaser prove good faith - and if the "purchaser's daughter" never actually moves in, the T5 bad-faith claim (up to 12 months' rent) follows the *landlord*, and a seller who served on the buyer's behalf can be standing in that blast radius.

The vacant-possession math. A buyer who needs the unit empty will price the risk: 60 days minimum, plus months more if the tenant contests (a contested N12 from notice to Sheriff can run 6-10 months in 2026 conditions). End-user buyers

discount for that uncertainty - or walk entirely. If your listing promises vacant possession on a specific closing date and the tenant digs in, *you* own the gap between promise and reality. Build buffer time into the closing, condition nothing you can't deliver, and never, ever promise a date the LTB hasn't confirmed.

Choosing the Path - A Decision Table

Your situation	Usually the right play
Good tenant, strong rent, investor-friendly property (condo, duplex)	Sell tenanted, market to investors, document the tenancy
End-user property (family detached in a family neighbourhood)	Weigh vacant-possession pricing vs. the discount; consider timing the sale around a natural tenancy end
Tenant already leaving / on month-to-month and cooperative	Negotiate an N11 with terms that make the timeline certain for everyone
Tenant in arrears or hostile	Solve that first (Chapter 9) - a distressed tenancy is a distressed listing

Notice what's *not* in the table: "serve an N12 and hope." Hope is not a strategy; it's a T5 with a waiting period.

> **REAL TALK:** The most expensive sentence in tenanted sales is "the tenant will definitely be out by closing." Sellers say it, buyers price it, lawyers condition on it - and then the tenant, entirely within their rights, waits for their hearing. Every week of delay now costs the seller carrying costs and the deal its certainty. The pros sell tenanted listings with honest timelines, long closings, and buffer clauses - and they treat the tenant as a stakeholder in the sale, because legally, that's exactly what the tenant is.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Selling never ends a tenancy. The buyer inherits the lease, the rent, and every RTA obligation.
- Tenanted sales suit investor buyers: your documentation folder (ledger, lease, payment history) converts directly into price.
- Showings need 24 hours' written notice, 8 a.m.–8 p.m., every time. Cooperation is bought with respect and lawful goodwill, never pressure.

- A purchaser-use N12 has its own statutory requirements, including compensation; do not apply the landlord-own-use 120-day exception to a purchaser.
- Buyers discount uncertainty. Build buffer closings, never promise possession you don't control, and choose your path - tenanted vs. vacant - before the sign goes up.

CHAPTER 11

The Money Side: Taxes, Insurance, and the Equity You Built

The CRA does not care that you're a small landlord with one unit and good intentions. Rental income is income, rental expenses are deductions, and the line between the two is a form called the T776. Meanwhile your insurer cares very much who sleeps in the building, and your bank cares how the equity performs. Three institutions, one chapter. Let's keep all three happy.



The T776: Your Annual Reckoning

Rental income goes on **Form T776 (Statement of Real Estate Rentals)**, filed with your personal T1 return by April 30. You report gross rent, then deduct eligible expenses, and pay tax on the **net** at your marginal rate. The deduction list is generous and specific:

- **Mortgage interest** - deductible. **Mortgage principal** - never deductible (it's capital repayment, not a cost). Your annual mortgage statement splits the two; your accountant will love you for keeping them.

- **Property taxes** on the rental.
- **Insurance** premiums (the landlord policy below).
- **Condo fees**, if applicable.
- **Advertising and leasing costs** - including the leasing commission you negotiated in Chapter 3.
- **Professional fees** - accountant, paralegal, property management.
- **Repairs and maintenance** - the leaky tap, the furnace service, the paint between tenants.
- **Utilities you cover**, office and admin costs, reasonable travel for management.

Repairs versus capital improvements. Classification depends on the nature of the work, what is being replaced, the enduring benefit and the relevant tax rules. A replacement furnace or kitchen is not automatically a current deduction or automatically capital simply because of its label. Keep invoices and the scope of work so your accountant can classify the actual expense.

The CCA Trap: Free Money That Sends a Bill Later

Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) is an optional deduction for eligible depreciable property, not the land. Class and rate depend on the asset and applicable rules. A later disposition can produce recapture and a capital gain, calculated separately. Whether claiming CCA helps depends on your tax rates, holding period, cash needs and eventual sale. Model that choice with your accountant rather than treating CCA as either free money or always a mistake. Non-compliant short-term rentals can also face deduction restrictions.

Keep routine tax records for the applicable CRA retention period, generally at least six years from the end of the relevant tax year. Acquisition, improvement, ownership and change-of-use records may need to be kept much longer because they support a later disposition calculation. Do not destroy the purchase cost-base evidence six years after buying a property you still own.

The gain, eventually. A rental sale can create a capital gain and CCA recapture. Principal-residence designations, prior use and valid change-of-use elections can affect some files. Have your accountant determine the treatment from the ownership and use history rather than assuming every rental period has the same result.

Insurance: The Policy That Matches the Occupant

Landlord insurance is not optional and not the same thing as your homeowner policy. A standard homeowner policy assumes you live there. The moment a tenant occupies the property, most homeowner policies won't respond to a claim - a fire in a tenanted house on an owner-occupied policy is a five-alarm financial catastrophe with no payout. A proper landlord/rental dwelling policy covers the building, **liability** (the tenant's guest slips on the walkway - this is the coverage that stands between that moment and your personal assets), and **loss of rental income** (the unit becomes uninhabitable mid-claim - the policy keeps paying you rent while repairs run). Budget it in the Chapter 5 ledger; it's typically modest against the risk.

Require tenant insurance. Your policy covers your building, not the tenant's contents - and critically, the tenant's **liability** (their overflowing bathtub damaging your unit, their kitchen fire). A lease clause requiring tenant liability insurance stands on solid legal ground; make it standard in your additional terms, ask for proof annually, and explain it to tenants honestly: it's typically a modest monthly cost - on the order of $20–$35, depending on the unit and coverage - protecting them too.

Refinancing: Turning the Equity Into the Next Move

Now the fun part - the equity you've been building can work while you keep the property.

The rules of access (mid-2026): a rental-property refinance is capped at **80% loan-to-value** of appraised value, it's a full requalification (the **OSFI stress test** applies - you must qualify at the greater of your contract rate plus 2% or 5.25%), and lenders treat rental income inconsistently: big banks commonly offset **50%** of gross rent against the property's costs, some lenders use add-back methods counting 50-100%, and some deduct a ~10% vacancy factor. The lender you choose changes what you qualify for - a mortgage broker who knows investor files is worth their (lender-paid) commission here.

THE RECEIPTS: Rate backdrop as of July 2026: Bank of Canada overnight rate **2.25%** (held six consecutive decisions), prime **4.45%**, best 5-year fixed rates ~3.94-3.99% insured, investor/uninsured files pricing higher, and HELOCs around prime + 0.50% (≈4.95%). Obtain a fresh lender quote when planning your transaction. (Source: Bank of Canada, July 2026; WOWA/ratehub, July 2026.)

Worked example: Miss Joyce's house, appraised at $960,000, mortgage-free. An 80% refinance releases up to **$768,000** - money that could buy two more properties outright, gift down payments to the grandkids, or fund renovations, while the house keeps earning rent. She took a smaller HELOC instead (standalone HELOCs cap at 65% LTV), because Miss Joyce's risk appetite is a cup of tea, not a shot of rum. Both choices were correct, because both were *chosen*, with math, in advance.

Andre's version: rent plus salary qualified him to pull equity toward a duplex down payment - Book 6's opening chapter, and he's already underlining it. One warning: refinanced interest is deductible *only* when the borrowed money funds investment - pull equity for a vacation and it's just debt with a bill.

Incorporation Lite: Should a Company Own Your Rental?

A corporation changes tax, administration, liability and financing. Personal guarantees and corporate debts can still affect borrowing capacity. There is no automatic threshold at three to five properties; compare the actual costs and consequences with your accountant, lawyer and lender.

> **REAL TALK:** Two institutions audit your landlording life: the CRA and your insurer. Both operate on the same principle - *disclose the truth up front or discover the consequences at the worst moment.* Tell CRA every dollar of rent and claim every dollar of legitimate expense. Tell your insurer exactly who lives in the building. The landlords who get destroyed aren't the aggressive ones; they're the quiet ones who figured nobody would check. Everybody checks - eventually, and retroactively.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- File the T776 by April 30: deduct mortgage interest (never principal), property tax, insurance, condo fees, advertising/leasing costs, professional fees, repairs, landlord-paid utilities.
- Repairs deduct now; improvements capitalize. CCA (Class 1, 4%) is optional and recaptures as taxable income at sale - model before claiming; CRA can deny expenses on non-compliant short-term rentals.
- Get a true landlord policy (building + liability + loss of rents); your homeowner policy won't respond to a tenant-occupied claim. Require tenant liability insurance in every lease.

- Rental refi caps at 80% LTV with full stress-test requalification; rental income counts differently by lender - use an investor-savvy mortgage broker. Investment-purpose borrowing keeps interest deductible.
- Incorporation is a Book 6 conversation: a decision based on individual tax, financing and risk factors, with real costs - and corporate ownership generally prevents an individual landlord-own-use N12; purchaser-use rules need separate assessment.
- Keep six years of records. Everybody checks, eventually, retroactively.

CHAPTER 12

Condo Landlording: Two Rulebooks, One Landlord

If your rental is a condo unit, you signed up for a second government. The condo corporation has its own declaration, by-laws, and rules - and here's the part that surprises every first-time condo landlord: **your tenant is bound by all of them, and you're the one who answers when they break them.**

Welcome to condo landlording, where you manage a tenant, satisfy a board, and keep the RTA happy - simultaneously.

The Tenant You Answer For

Under the Condominium Act, 1998, every *occupier* of a unit is bound by the corporation's declaration, by-laws, and rules - your tenant never signed a word of it and is bound anyway. And the Act makes **you**, the owner, responsible for taking "all reasonable steps" to ensure your occupiers and their visitors comply.

Translation: the no-pet building's rules apply to your tenant's new puppy (the big exception to the RTA's void no-pet clause). Smoke-free rules apply to their balcony habits. Amenity bookings, noise rules, move-in elevator deposits - all of it lands on your tenant, and when it doesn't land, the corporation's lawyer writes to *you*, with compliance costs chargeable to your unit. A board **cannot** evict your tenant - only you can, through the LTB - but a motivated board can make non-compliance very expensive for you, which is very persuasive between you and your tenant.

Your counter-moves: give the tenant the governing documents with the lease (the Standard Lease has a condo section - tick the box, attach the rules), walk them through the building's quirks before move-in, and treat the first board complaint like the fire alarm it is.

The Paperwork Nobody Tells You About

Notice of lease. Condo Act section 83: you must notify the corporation when you lease your unit - within **10 days** of a new lease, 10 days of a renewal, 10 days of a termination without renewal. Diarize it alongside the receipts habit. Property managers enforce this, and "I didn't know" reads the same as "I didn't bother."

Fees and bookings. Many buildings charge move-in/move-out fees and require elevator bookings with deposits. Check your declaration - and remember Chapter 4: what the *corporation* charges is their business with you, but what *you* charge the tenant is capped by the RTA. Don't pass illegal deposits through to the tenant and expect them to hold up.

Keep the condo fees current. Unpaid common expenses become a **lien** on your unit that ranks *ahead of your mortgage*. A tenant who stops paying you rent does not pause your condo fees. Evergreen rule of condo landlording: the corporation gets paid, first and always.

Read the Declaration Before You Buy (or Lease)

Some declarations and rules restrict leasing itself: minimum lease terms (six or twelve months), tenant registration requirements, short-term rental bans, and - rarely - leasing restrictions or caps. These bind you completely and they will ruin an investment plan that ignored them. The instrument for checking is the **status certificate**: $100 by regulated maximum, delivered within 10 days, orderable by anyone. It discloses the rules, the corporation's financials, arrears, reserve fund health, and pending **special assessments**. Buying an investment condo without reading the status certificate for *leasing restrictions first* is malpractice against yourself. And on the day you eventually sell, a fresh status certificate (stale after ~30 days) is part of your listing package - with a useful protection: corporations are generally barred from collecting amounts they failed to disclose on the certificate.

Special assessments deserve their own sentence: when the reserve fund can't cover major work, owners get billed - sometimes five figures. Your tenant doesn't pay it; you do, immediately, on top of Chapter 5's ledger. The status certificate is your early-warning system. Read the engineering-report tea leaves every time.

Short-Term Rentals: Toronto's Hard Line

Thinking of running the unit as an Airbnb? In the City of Toronto, short-term rentals (under 28 consecutive days) are **principal-residence only**: one registration per person, verified as the home you actually live in, entire-home rentals capped at **180 nights per year**, mandatory city registration displayed on every listing, and licensed platforms collecting the Municipal Accommodation Tax (8.5% through July 31, 2026, then back to 6%). **An investment property you don't live in cannot legally operate as an STR in Toronto** - fines reach six figures, platforms verify

registrations against the city's system, and since 2024 CRA can deny your rental expenses entirely if the operation breaches local rules. Add condo STR bans on top (many declarations prohibit them outright), plus the RTA's grip on anything 28 days or longer, and the conclusion writes itself: an investment condo is a long-term rental play or it is a regulatory roulette wheel.

One building-era footnote: if the unit was built or plumbed between roughly 1995 and 2007, ask about **Kitec** - the failure-prone orange-and-blue plumbing that insurers surcharge and corporations eventually replace at owner cost (roughly $5,000–$12,000 a unit, sometimes billed through the building). Check the electrical-panel sticker, ask the property manager, and price the answer into your offer, not your surprise.

> **REAL TALK:** Freehold landlords have one boss: the RTA. Condo landlords have two - the RTA and the board - and the board meets monthly and reads the minutes. The condo landlords who thrive treat the property manager as a colleague: they read the rules before buying, file their s.83 notices on time, keep fees current, and handle board complaints within days. The ones who struggle treat the corporation as background noise - until the noise arrives as a lawyer's letter with their unit number in the subject line.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Your tenant is bound by the condo declaration, by-laws, and rules - and you must take all reasonable steps to ensure they comply. Condo pet and smoking restrictions are enforceable where RTA clauses are void.
- File notice of lease with the corporation within 10 days of a new lease, renewal, or termination (Condo Act s.83). Keep condo fees current - arrears become a lien ahead of your mortgage.
- Read the status certificate ($100, ~10 days) for leasing restrictions, reserve fund health, and special assessments before you buy; refresh it when you sell.
- Toronto STRs are principal-residence only, 180 nights/year cap, registered - investment condos are legally long-term rentals, and CRA denies expenses on non-compliant STRs.
- 1995-2007 buildings: check for Kitec plumbing and price it before it prices you.

CHAPTER 13

Life Happens: Divorce, Death, Burnout, and the Exit

This chapter comes with a different register. Until now we've joked around the edges of this business - the paperwork, the fob deposits, the furnace with personality. The pages ahead are about divorce, death, and depletion. We do not joke about those. We prepare for them, because every long-enough landlording life meets at least one.

Divorce With a Rental Property

When a marriage ends, Ontario doesn't split assets down the middle - it **equalizes Net Family Property**: each spouse totals what they own at separation (minus debts, minus what they brought in, with specific exclusions), and the spouse with the higher total pays half the difference. Your rental property lives inside that calculation at full market value.

Two distinctions matter. First, the **matrimonial home** - the property the family ordinarily occupied - carries special rules: equal possession rights regardless of title, no sale or mortgage without the other spouse's written consent or a court order, no date-of-marriage deduction. A pure investment property that never housed the family is treated like any other asset. The trap: a property can be *both* - live in it, rent the basement, move out, rent it all; the matrimonial character can stick, and there can be more than one matrimonial home. If you hold rentals and your marriage is ending, the sequencing is legal strategy, not admin - family lawyer first, real estate decisions second.

One practical bridge: the **spousal buyout** - insured programs letting the keeping spouse finance up to **95% of appraised value** to buy out the other (versus the usual 80% refinance cap), treated as a purchase and requiring a signed separation agreement. One qualifier that matters here: these programs are built for an **owner-occupied principal residence** - they settle who keeps the *family home*, not a pure rental. But for a landlord couple unwinding two properties, that still shapes the whole chessboard: if the buyout saves the matrimonial home at 95% financing, the rental's equity and refi capacity become the negotiating chips - and that mechanism often decides whether the rental survives the divorce.

And a note from the lease side, for completeness: separation doesn't unwind a lease either. Co-tenants who split remain jointly liable to their landlord unless the landlord agrees otherwise - and a tenant experiencing domestic or sexual violence can end a tenancy on **28 days' notice (Form N15)** with a confidential statement, no co-tenant or landlord consent needed. If you're the landlord receiving an N15: honour it, honour the confidentiality duties that come with it, and do not insert yourself into something the law has already handled with care.

Inheriting a Tenanted Property: The Estate and the Tenancy

Miss Joyce's brother Ezekiel passed in the spring - a heart attack, sudden, the kind that leaves a family standing in a hospital hallway recalibrating the future. He left a will, a modest estate, and a semi in Malton with a tenant of six years in the basement apartment.

What the family learned, in order:

The tenancy survives the landlord. Just as a sale doesn't end a tenancy, neither does a death. Ezekiel's tenant kept every right - the estate stepped into the landlord's shoes, bound by the same lease and the same RTA.

The estate must be constituted before it can act. The executor needed the **Certificate of Appointment of Estate Trustee** (probate) to deal with the property - which meant **Estate Administration Tax**: nothing on the first $50,000 of estate value, then **1.5%** on the rest, with the property valued at date of death. Probate at the Brampton courthouse was running **4-8 months** in 2026. An estate can list and even accept an offer before the certificate issues - drafted conditional on probate - but it generally cannot close without it. One grace note: property passing directly to a beneficiary through a will carries **no Ontario land transfer tax**.

The executor's duties are fiduciary, and personal. Secure and insure the property, keep rent flowing to the estate account, maintain it, keep immaculate records, treat beneficiaries even-handedly, and take reasonable steps to fair market value if selling - an executor who undersells risks *personal* liability. Miss Joyce, as co-executor, ran Ezekiel's rental for eleven months exactly as this book teaches: receipts, repairs, N1 on schedule. The tenant barely felt the transition - the goal.

(The mirror-image rule, from Chapter 4's research, for when it's the *tenant* who passes: a sole tenant's tenancy is deemed terminated 30 days after death; the estate owes rent to that date; the landlord must preserve belongings and give the family

reasonable access for those 30 days; and the estate can claim property or sale proceeds for up to 6 months. Handle those weeks with particular grace - you're managing a stranger's grief inside your asset.)

Landlord Burnout and the Accidental Exit

No statute covers this one, but every veteran knows it: the year the tenant churned twice, the furnace died, the insurance climbed, the condo board assessed, and the joy left the building. Burnout is a real investment risk, and the honest responses are three:

Buy back your time. A property manager (typically a percentage of monthly rent, negotiable) converts the job into an investment. Run the math in your Chapter 5 ledger - if management fees erase the cash flow but the appreciation thesis holds, that may still be right for you. Or it may be the moment the ledger votes *sell*.

Fix the actual problem. Sometimes burnout is a symptom: underpriced rent, deferred maintenance creating constant emergencies, a tenant relationship gone sour. Diagnose before you exit - a solved problem often revives the asset *and* the owner.

Exit deliberately. Sell tenanted to an investor (Chapter 10), time the sale around a natural vacancy, or use the vacant-possession paths lawfully and patiently. What burnout must never produce is the shortcut: the retaliatory notice, the "renovation" that isn't, the pressure campaign. The RTA reads desperation as clearly as adjudicators read ledgers, and the fines we keep mentioning were doubled for a reason.

Moving Back Into Your Own Rental

Miss Joyce's contingency plan, and maybe yours: life turns, and you want your house back. The lawful route is the N12 - your own use - with every element from Chapter 9: 60 days' notice ending on a rental-period boundary, one month's compensation paid before the termination date (or the 120-day no-compensation path from September 21, 2026), genuine intent to live there at least 12 months, and the humility that the tenant can test your good faith at the LTB. Plan a year ahead if you can. Serve it exactly. Mean it completely. Move in, and stay the year - the T5 clock watches what you do after.

When Keeping It Stops Making Sense

The decision framework, compressed: keep the property while (a) the five-year math - cash flow plus appreciation plus mortgage paydown - beats what the equity earns elsewhere, (b) the reserves can absorb the bad year, and (c) the job still fits your life. Sell when those stop being true, and sell *on the math, not the mood*. Miss Joyce's accountant called that conversation "the annual reckoning" - one page, every January: rent in, costs out, equity position, energy level. The house stayed until the page said go. That's the whole discipline.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Divorce: rentals enter Net Family Property equalization at full value; a home the family occupied triggers matrimonial-home protections; spousal buyout programs can finance up to 95% for the keeping spouse - on an owner-occupied home, not a pure rental. Family lawyer before real estate decisions.
- An N15 lets a tenant fleeing violence end a tenancy in 28 days, confidentially. Honour it completely.
- Death doesn't end a tenancy - the estate inherits the lease. Probate (EAT 1.5% over $50K; 4-8 months in Brampton in 2026) precedes any sale; beneficiary transfers carry no LTT; executors carry personal liability for undervalue sales.
- A sole tenant's death ends the tenancy 30 days later; preserve belongings, allow estate access, six-month property claim window.
- Burnout: buy back your time, fix the actual problem, or exit deliberately through Chapter 10's paths - never through shortcuts.
- Moving back in is an N12 with full ceremony. Plan a year ahead, serve exactly, mean it.

CHAPTER 14

The SirLuckHomes Way: Landlording With a Team Behind You

Full disclosure, happily given: this is the chapter where I tell you how we do it at my brokerage. You've read thirteen chapters of law and math; here's the philosophy that wrapped around it - and how a landlord plugs into it whether they ever hire us or not.



Who We Are

SirLuckHomes Real Estate Brokerage is an independent Ontario brokerage - Black-owned, GTA-built, and structured for how people actually live now. We run a **virtual office** for speed and cost, and we meet you in person for the moments that deserve a table, a coffee, and a signature. No mahogany overhead baked into your commission; the savings show up in what we can offer and how fast we move.

We serve the whole arc of your real estate life - renting, buying, selling, landlording, investing - because that's how families actually move through property: one key

opening the next door. The work has earned us client feedback, and we protect it the way we earned it: one straight answer at a time.

Leasing, the SLH Way

When a landlord lists with us, here's the machinery that turns on:

Pricing with data, not hunches. We pull the leased comparables for your exact pocket and give you a number with evidence attached - and a vacancy-cost analysis, so the "let's try $200 higher" conversation happens with the math on the table.

Marketing that earns quality applicants. Professional photos, a specific description, MLS® exposure through TRREB's system to every tenant agent in the GTA, plus the rental platforms where unrepresented tenants search. Your listing states the screening process up front - because, as Chapter 6 taught you, the ad itself is the first filter.

The screening stack. Written criteria set before anyone applies. Full applications identical for every candidate. Employment verified on numbers we source ourselves. Previous landlords called - including the one before the current one. Credit checks run only with written consent, read as stories rather than scores. And every step inside the OHRC lines, because fair screening isn't a constraint on finding great tenants - it's the method.

Paperwork that would survive a hearing. Agreement to Lease, Standard Lease with additional terms that actually hold, deposit handling by the book, and a document folder you'd be proud to show an adjudicator. We build files like someone will audit them, because someone eventually does.

The Rule of 2's - Yes, for Landlords Too

Our internal service standard is the **Rule of 2's**: inquiries answered, updates delivered, problems acknowledged inside tight windows - not next Tuesday. For landlords: showings handled, applicants processed while they're still warm, questions answered by a human who knows your file. Tenants feel it too - and remember Chapter 8: responsiveness is retention, and retention is money.

Here's what that looks like with mud on its boots. A few winters back, one of our landlord clients - a first-timer with a semi in Malton, the ink barely dry on her first lease - texted the client group at 9:40 on a Sunday night: *furnace is out, tenant has a newborn, what do I do.* Panic is understandable. It's also billable. Within the hour

she'd been walked through the actual legal standard (heat is a vital service; the clock matters, not the panic), connected to the HVAC contractor on our bench who picks up on weekends, and coached on what to put in writing to the tenant that same night - not because anyone demanded a letter, but because Chapter 7's doctrine applies at 9:40 p.m. exactly as it does at noon: if it isn't written down, it didn't happen. The furnace was running before Monday's lunch. The repair note, the contractor invoice, and the tenant update all landed in her tenancy folder.

The point isn't that we're heroes - the point is the sequence. Acknowledge fast, advise straight, fix through vetted hands, document everything. That's the Rule of 2's doing landlording. Most landlord horror stories you'll hear at a barbecue aren't furnace stories; they're *silence* stories - a landlord or an agent who went quiet while a small, cheap problem grew teeth. Speed is the cheapest insurance in this business, and it's the standard we hold ourselves to whether the file is a $900,000 listing or somebody's first basement tenant with a dead furnace and a newborn upstairs.

The Table Around Your Rental

No landlord should build their professional bench from a search engine at 11 p.m. Our clients get the referral network we've spent years vetting: **licensed paralegals** who live at the LTB (your first N4, your first contested N12 - hire expertise, it's cheaper than tuition); **landlord insurance brokers** who write proper rental-dwelling policies; **mortgage brokers** who actually understand rental-income treatment across lenders; **accountants** who know what a T776 is before you explain it; and **contractors** - the plumbers, electricians, and furnace people who answer on weekends, because the furnace never fails on a Tuesday at noon. The network is a lifetime-access thing. Clients from years ago still text for a roofer. That's not a service package; that's just how a community brokerage should work.

From One Rental to the Next Key

Watch Andre for a minute. He came to us house-hacking a side-split - one tenant, one spreadsheet. The screening stack found him a tenant who never missed. The refinance conversation (Chapter 11) pulled equity into a duplex down payment. Now he's asking about pre-con assignments and garden suites, and we're having the Book 5 and Book 6 conversations in the same WhatsApp thread where we once debated his basement's listing photos.

That's the actual product: not one lease, but the *pathway*. Your first rental teaches you tenants and cash flow. The equity it builds funds the next door. The team that leased your basement is the team that sells your next investment, decodes your pre-con contract, and - someday - negotiates the sale of the whole portfolio you accidentally built one sensible year at a time.

Our standing promise applies to landlords too: **no contracts until you're 100% ready. We don't do high-pressure techniques.** If the right move this year is to not lease, not buy, not expand - we'll say so, and we'll still be here when the math changes.

> **REAL TALK:** Judge any brokerage - including mine - by one question: *do they tell you things that cost them money?* We tell landlords when a unit won't cash-flow, when a "great tenant" doesn't verify, when DIY leasing makes sense, when the honest answer is "wait." If your advisor's counsel always points at a transaction, you don't have an advisor. You have a vending machine with a business card.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- SirLuckHomes is an independent, RECO-registered (Nov 2025) brokerage with a virtual office - low overhead, high access.
- The SLH leasing stack: data-backed pricing, MLS® plus platform marketing, uniform OHRC-safe screening, hearing-proof paperwork.
- The Rule of 2's applies to landlords: speed is service, and service is retention.
- Tap the vetted bench: LTB paralegals, landlord insurance brokers, investor-savvy mortgage brokers, accountants, weekend-answering contractors.
- The pathway matters more than the lease: first rental → equity → next property → portfolio. We build for the decade, not the deal.

Your Next Key

You did it. You know the RTA's machinery, the real math of 2026 cash flow, the screening fortress, the notice library, the LTB's clocks, and the money side from T776 to HELOC. You own - or you're about to own - a building that pays you back.

So here's the question the spare key always asks next: *if tenants and cash flow make sense to you now… what about a property that doesn't exist yet?*

Somewhere in the GTA right now there's a crane over a hole in the ground with a price list attached. Pre-construction - buying from floor plans, years before keys - is a different game: 10-day cooling-off, deposits protected in trust, Tarion warranties, interim occupancy fees, assignment sales, HST rebates with rules that shifted twice this decade, and a 2026 market asking hard questions the brochures don't answer.

That's **Book 5 - THE BLUEPRINT KEY: A GUIDE FOR PRE-CONSTRUCTION BUYERS: Pre-Construction Decoded.** Andre's already reading his copy with a highlighter. Miss Joyce is reading hers because the grandkids are going to need homes someday, and she intends to understand the game before they play it.

You've mastered the property that is. Next: the property that will be.

Every key opens the next door.

Glossary: Landlord Terms, Translated

Agreement to Lease (Form 400) - The rental offer document; binds the deal before the Standard Lease is signed.
Assignment / Sublet - A permanent transfer vs. a temporary one; both need landlord consent, not unreasonably withheld.
Bad-faith eviction (T5 claim) - A tenant's claim (up to 12 months' rent) when an N12/N13 was served without genuine intent.
Cap rate - Net operating income ÷ property value; the yield before any mortgage.
Cash for keys - A voluntary, negotiated payment for a tenant to leave, documented on Form N11.
CCA (Capital Cost Allowance) - Optional depreciation deduction on the building; recaptured as income at sale.
Condo corporation - The legal body governing a condominium; its rules bind your tenant - and you.
First & last month's rent - The only lawful deposits in Ontario. Damage/security deposits do not exist here.
Guarantor - A lease co-signer; lawful only when required uniformly in similar circumstances.
L1 / L2 / L5 - LTB landlord applications: non-payment; most other notices; above-guideline increases.
LTB (Landlord and Tenant Board) - The tribunal adjudicating Ontario residential tenancy disputes.
Matrimonial home - The family residence under the Family Law Act; special possession and consent rules on separation.
N1 / N4 / N5 / N7 / N8 - Notices: rent increase, non-payment, conduct/damage, serious acts, persistent late payment.
N11 / N12 / N13 / N15 - Notices: mutual termination, own use, demolition/reno, tenant's violence-survivor exit (28 days).
OHRC - Ontario Human Rights Commission; its Code governs how you may screen.
Power of sale - Ontario's main lender-enforcement process on mortgage default (distinct from foreclosure: the lender sells, you keep surplus equity but can be pursued for shortfall).
Principal residence exemption (PRE) - The tax-free-gain shelter for your own home; never covers pure rental periods.
Recapture - CCA you've deducted coming back as taxable income at sale.

RECO Information Guide - The regulator's mandatory pre-service document; your brokerage must provide and explain it before working for you.
Rent deposit - Last month's rent, held, owing annual interest at the guideline rate, applicable only to the final period.
Rent increase guideline - Ontario's annual cap for controlled units (2.1% for 2026; 1.9% for 2027).
RTA (Residential Tenancies Act, 2006) - The statute governing nearly every Ontario residential tenancy.
Sheriff (Court Enforcement Office) - The only authority that can physically execute an eviction order.
SRP (Self-Represented Party) - Anyone in a trade with no representation; agents cannot give an SRP services, opinions, or advice.
Standard Lease - Ontario's mandatory government lease form since April 30, 2018.
Status certificate - The $100 disclosure on a condo corporation's rules, finances, and assessments.
T1 / T2 / T5 / T6 - Tenant-side LTB applications: illegal charges, rights violations, bad-faith N12/N13, maintenance.
T776 - The CRA form reporting rental income and expenses with your T1 return.
Vacancy decontrol - No rent cap between tenancies; rent resets at turnover.

Checklists

Checklist 1: Tenant Screening (use for every applicant, identically)

- ☐ Written criteria page completed before listing
- ☐ Pre-screen call: date, rent, occupants, move timeline
- ☐ Full rental application from every adult applicant
- ☐ Government ID sighted (never copied without need)
- ☐ Income verified: pay stubs / employment letter / NOA / bank statements
- ☐ Employer called on an independently sourced number
- ☐ Previous landlord called - and the one before that
- ☐ Written credit consent obtained before any credit check
- ☐ No SIN requested; no source-of-income judgment; no protected-ground questions
- ☐ Decision made against the written criteria; documented
- ☐ Prompt, polite response to every applicant, yes or no

Checklist 2: Move-In / Move-Out Inspection

- ☐ Written condition report walked through with the tenant
- ☐ Date-stamped photos and slow video of every room
- ☐ Walls, floors, appliances, fixtures, windows documented
- ☐ Smoke and CO alarms tested in front of the tenant (CO alarms mandatory since Jan 1, 2026)
- ☐ Furnace filter condition noted
- ☐ Keys/fobs inventoried; actual-cost deposit documented
- ☐ Utilities confirmed transferred to tenant's name (move-in) / back (move-out)
- ☐ Water shut-off and breaker panel locations shown
- ☐ Welcome sheet delivered: rent process, repair reporting, garbage day, condo rules
- ☐ Both parties sign; both keep copies

Checklist 3: The Annual Landlord Reckoning

- ☐ Rent increase reviewed: anniversary date, current guideline, N1 served 90 days ahead
- ☐ Property inspection completed (24h written notice, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.)
- ☐ Maintenance reserve topped up (~1% of property value per year)
- ☐ Insurance reviewed: landlord policy current; tenant's liability insurance proof refreshed
- ☐ Condo landlords: s.83 lease notices filed; status certificate rules re-read
- ☐ Municipal licence current where required (e.g., Brampton - citywide since Jan 1, 2026)
- ☐ T776 prep: receipts organized, mortgage interest statement filed, accountant booked
- ☐ Deposit interest paid on the last month's rent deposit
- ☐ Reserve fund vs. worst-case model: 3 months' carrying + one major repair
- ☐ The one-page reckoning: rent in, costs out, equity position, energy level - keep or sell?

About SirLuckHomes Real Estate Brokerage

SirLuckHomes Real Estate Brokerage is an independent, Black-owned brokerage registered with RECO (November 2025), serving the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. We operate a virtual office - built for speed, transparency, and straight answers at every stage of your real estate journey: renting, buying, selling, landlording, pre-construction, and investing.

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Serving the GTA, Durham, York, Peel, Halton, Niagara, Waterloo, Dufferin & Simcoe

"No contracts until you're 100% ready to buy or sell. We don't do high pressure techniques."

THE SPARE KEY: A GUIDE FOR LANDLORDS is Book 4 of The Keys Series by Chukwu Uzoruo. Watch for Book 5 - THE BLUEPRINT KEY: A GUIDE FOR PRE-CONSTRUCTION BUYERS: Pre-Construction Decoded.

Sources and Edition Notes

Revised October 14, 2026. Use these primary sources for the current rule or program. Earlier market examples in the chapters are historical context, not a forecast or a quoted service price.

- RECO guide: https://www.reco.on.ca/consumers/things-you-need-to-know/reco-information-guide/
- RECO deposit insurance: https://www.reco.on.ca/consumers/consumer-deposit-insurance/
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- RECO remuneration: https://www.reco.on.ca/agents-and-brokerages/reco-bulletins/reco-bulletin-6-2-remuneration-clause-in-an-agreement-of-purchase-and-sale/
- RECO self-representation: https://www.reco.on.ca/agents-and-brokerages/reco-bulletins/reco-bulletin-2-4-dealing-with-a-self-represented-party/
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- Toronto renovation licensing: https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/permits-licences-bylaws/renovictions-bylaw-development/information-for-landlords/
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- FSRA mortgage professionals: https://www.fsrao.ca/consumers/mortgage-brokering/working-mortgage-professional
- OSFI straight switches: https://www.osfi-bsif.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounder-minimum-qualifying-rate-mqr
- CRA Home Buyers Plan: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/rrsps-related-plans/what-home-buyers-plan/participate-home-buyers-plan.html
- CRA FHSA: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/first-home-savings-account.html
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- CRA rental rebate: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/businesses/topics/gst-hst-businesses/gst-hst-rebates/housing-rebates/ontario-enhanced-new-residential-rental-property-rebate/what-rebate.html
- Tarion deposit protection: https://www.tarion.com/homeowners/pre-possession-coverage
- New freehold cooling-off regulation: https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/260290
- TRREB Market Watch archive: https://trreb.ca/market-watch-archive/
- CRA Underused Housing Tax: https://www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/excise-taxes-duties-and-levies/underused-housing-tax.html
- Ontario Mortgages Act: https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m40
- Ontario land transfer tax: https://www.ontario.ca/document/land-transfer-tax/calculating-land-transfer-tax
- CRA rental income: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/t4036/rental-income.html
- CRA assignment sales: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/rc4052/rc4052-gst-hst-information-home-construction-industry.html
- CRA tax on death: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/life-events/doing-taxes-someone-died/prepare-returns/report-income/capital-gains.html
- Tarion warranty coverage: https://www.tarion.com/post-possession-coverage
  ### Before You Make the Next Decision

Write down your objective, the document or numbers you are relying on, the assumptions that could change, and the next question for the appropriate professional. Keep their answer with your transaction records.

Your Next Conversation

A good next step begins with a clear question. Tell us where you are in the journey and what decision you need to make.

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