

## **Great Barrington Housing Authority**

### **Abandoned Unit Policy**

When some evidence exists which indicates that a tenant may have abandoned his or her unit, the LHA will take the following steps:

#### **Step 1**

Staff will conduct a thorough investigation and create a written list of evidence which tends to indicate the unit has been abandoned.

Examples:

- tenant stated orally or in writing that they were moving, but never turned in the key*
- tenant told a neighbor that a move was planned for a specific day or weekend*
- tenant told a neighbor that a transfer to a nursing home or other facility was planned*
- unit telephone service or utilities (other than cable) have been disconnected*
- neighbor(s) observed tenant packing up a moving truck*
- neighbors have noticed that all normal apartment activities have ceased*
- letter carrier or postal worker indicates that tenant has filed a change of address*

#### **Step 2**

The Director will contact the Regional Attorney to discuss the list of evidence.

#### **Step 3**

If the Director and Attorney agree that enough pieces of evidence exists to suggest the tenant might have abandoned the property, the director and at least one additional staff member will knock on the tenant's door. If no one responds, LHA staff will open the door.

#### **Step 4**

If the unit appears to be occupied, staff will exit immediately and lock the door.

#### **Step 5**

If the unit appears to have been abandoned, the LHA staff will create a detailed inventory of what they observe in the unit. Findings will be written for the file. Pictures will be taken, especially if there is damage to the unit.

#### **Step 6**

The Director and Regional Attorney will discuss the findings. If most objects still present in the unit reasonably appear to be trash, if there is no food (or food is spoiled), if the clothing, bathroom supplies and beds are gone, and the Director and Attorney agree that the most likely

scenario is that the tenants have permanently left the apartment, the unit will be declared abandoned.

**Step 7**

The Director will draft a memo to the tenant's file (with a copy to the Attorney) listing each and every piece of evidence which tends to show that the unit has been abandoned.

**Step 8**

Staff will immediately order locks changed and otherwise secure the premises.

**Step 9**

If any items of value remain in the unit after locks are changed, the Director will discuss proper disposal with the Regional Attorney.

**Step 10**

If only trash remains in the unit, all items will be placed in the LHA dumpster.

Adopted: August 6, 2019 TDanzy

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