

O.C.G.A. § 44-7-34

GEORGIA CODE
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*** Current through the 2006 Regular Session ***

TITLE 44. PROPERTY
CHAPTER 7. LANDLORD AND TENANT
ARTICLE 2. SECURITY DEPOSITS

O.C.G.A. § 44-7-34 (2006)

§ 44-7-34. Return of security deposit; grounds for retention of part; delivery of statement and sum due to tenant; unclaimed deposit; court determination of disposition of deposit

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this article, within one month after the termination of the residential lease or the surrender and acceptance of the premises, whichever occurs last, a landlord shall return to the tenant the full security deposit which was deposited with the landlord by the tenant. No security deposit shall be retained to cover ordinary wear and tear which occurred as a result of the use of the premises for the purposes for which the premises were intended, provided that there was no negligence, carelessness, accident, or abuse of the premises by the tenant or members of his household or their invitees or guests. In the event that actual cause exists for retaining any portion of the security deposit, the landlord shall provide the tenant with a written statement listing the exact reasons for the retention thereof. If the reason for retention is based on damages to the premises, such damages shall be listed as provided in Code Section 44-7-33. When the statement is delivered, it shall be accompanied by a payment of the difference between any sum deposited and the amount retained. The landlord shall be deemed to have complied with this Code section by mailing the statement and any payment required to the last known address of the tenant via first class mail. If the letter containing the payment is returned to the landlord undelivered and if the landlord is unable to locate the tenant after reasonable effort, the payment shall become the property of the landlord 90 days after the date the payment was mailed. Nothing in this Code section shall preclude the landlord from retaining the security deposit for nonpayment of rent or of fees for late payment, for abandonment of the premises, for nonpayment of utility charges, for repair work or cleaning contracted for by the tenant with third parties, for unpaid pet fees, or for actual damages caused by the tenant's breach, provided the landlord attempts to mitigate the actual damages.

(b) In any court action in which there is a determination that neither the landlord nor the tenant is entitled to all or a portion of a security deposit under this article, the judge or the jury, as the case may be, shall determine what would be an equitable disposition of the security deposit; and the judge shall order the security deposit paid in accordance with such disposition.