

# RentSense

## Help Us Help You by Providing Contact Information

Your IHFA branch office housing specialist may have already asked you to fill out the HUD-92006 Supplemental and Optional Contact Information form. This form asks you to list the name, address, and telephone number of a family member, friend, or social, health, or advocacy organization caseworker, so that if any issues arise during your tenancy we can contact that person to assist in providing any special care or services you may require. The form provides options to choose the reason you want your contact person to be notified, which include: emergencies, if your housing specialist is unable to contact you, or if they may be contacted to assist with the recertification process.

This information is kept confidential and you may update, remove, or change the information at any time. While you are not required to provide this contact information, if you choose to do so it may help resolve any minor problems that arise!



## What You Should Know About the New Rules for Submitting Social Security Information



As you are probably aware, Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) has required that applicants and participants (including their household members)

disclose their Social Security Number (SSN) as a condition of initial or continuing eligibility for participation in the rental assistance program. In addition to other uses, your SSN is used to verify the benefits you receive from Social Security and Supplemental Security Income, to verify other wage and unemployment income in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System, and to verify your identity.

However, you may not be aware that HUD has made some changes to the rules for obtaining your SSN. Effective January 31, 2010 everyone (with a few exceptions), including children, must disclose their SSN and provide documentation of that number by supplying an original social security card to their housing specialist (if they have not already done so) to be photocopied for their file. In lieu of the social security card individuals may provide an original Social Security Administration (SSA)-issued document or an original document from a local, state, or federal government agency, which lists their name and SSN. This documentation will be obtained by your housing specialist at your next recertification. All the information you give to IHFA is handled so that your privacy is protected. If you provide a document that is not original, can't be read, or appears to be altered or forged, we will reject it and ask that you provide acceptable documentation. According to the new rules, if a household member has never been issued

a SSN or has lost his/her card, a SSA Form SS-5, Application for a social security card, must be completed to request an original or replacement card. The form is available online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), or can be obtained at the local SSA office.

If you add a member to your household and that member is at least six years of age, or is under six and already has an assigned SSN, we will ask for the assigned SSN and have you provide the acceptable documentation. We can't add the new household member until the SSN is provided and documented. However, if that member is under six years of age and has never been assigned a SSN, you will be given some time to provide that documentation to IHFA. If you fail to provide the requested information within the timeframes given your assistance may be jeopardized.





Security deposits are usually refunded within 21 days.

## RentSense for Section 8 Participants

Published annually by the Idaho Housing and Finance Association. Comments are welcome. Please contact IHFA Rental Assistance at 1-800-219-2286. Visit our Web site at [www.ihfa.org](http://www.ihfa.org).

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Simple tips can make spring cleaning easy.

## QuickTips Spring Cleaning Tips

**Start from the top:** Always start at the top of the item you are cleaning. Working your way from top to bottom is the best way to get your home clean.

**Tackle the big projects first:** The bigger the room or cleaning job, the more work you have. Targeting that large space first will make it easier to get to smaller cleaning jobs, like doing dishes.

**Leave no dirt behind:** Clean and organize every drawer, desk, and cupboard. Get into small areas as well. Not only will cleaning every crevice keep out dangerous dust, but you can also rest assured that your air will be cleaner and healthier to breathe.

**Clean out your closets:** Clothes and clutter can make closets disorganized. Use compression storage bags, which use a vacuum to suck out extra air, to make it easy to store more in small spaces. Donate any clothes you haven't worn in six months to charity.

Source: [www.springcleaningtips.org](http://www.springcleaningtips.org)

# LegalSense Understanding Security Deposits

When you sign a lease with your landlord, you may be required to provide a security deposit (IHFA does not provide funds for this purpose). Idaho law defines security deposits as amounts deposited by a tenant with a landlord for any purpose other than the payment of rent. When you terminate your lease or rental agreement, your landlord must return the security deposit to you within 21 days, unless noted otherwise in your lease.

Landlords can retain funds to repair damages to the unit, such as holes in walls, or stains on carpet that were not there when you moved in. If any portion of the security deposit is not refunded, the owner

must provide you with a signed statement itemizing the amounts lawfully retained by the landlord, the purpose for the amounts that were not returned, and a detailed list of expenditures that were made from the security deposit. The deposit may not be retained for normal wear and tear.

If you want to be sure that damages are not reported inaccurately when you move and to ensure the full refund of your security deposit, you should take pictures to document the condition of the unit when you move in, and again when you move out. You may also want to do a walk-through with your landlord present.

# SafetySense

## Remember to Test Your Smoke Alarms Regularly



You can prevent tragedies simply by testing and maintaining your smoke alarms. All smoke alarms should be tested at least once a month to make sure they operate properly. If a smoke alarm is battery operated, replace the batteries at least once a year to make sure the alarm will work when it is needed. It's a good practice to make replacement of batteries a seasonal routine, such as when resetting clocks in the fall or spring. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for testing smoke alarms and replacing the batteries.

If your battery-powered smoke alarm begins to emit a low-power warning, usually a chirping sound, replace the battery immediately with a fresh one. Unless replacing, do not remove the batteries, as this is not only dangerous, but will cause you to fail a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection.

Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms in the home are considered one of the best and least expensive means of providing an early warning of a potentially deadly fire. Smoke alarms save lives, prevent injuries, and minimize property damage by enabling residents to detect fires early in their development. The risk of dying from fires in homes without smoke alarms is twice as high as in homes that have working smoke alarms. Every family should also develop a fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



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