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HOUSING TODAY, HOUSING TOMORROW:

Tips for Renting an Apartment

VADEMECUM



CITTADINI SI DIVENTA

Il contributo degli immigrati alla progettazione delle politiche locali
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Tips for Renting an Apartment

VADEMECUM

A cura di

FONDACA - Fondazione per la Cittadinanza Attiva
e TAVOLA DELLA PACE E DELLA COOPERAZIONE

Dicembre 2020

**HOUSING TODAY,
HOUSING TOMORROW:**

Tips for Renting an Apartment

VADEMECUM

VADEMECUM PRESENTATION

Pietro Pertici - *Legal Coordinator Representative of “Tavola della Pace e della Cooperazione Onlus” (Table for Peace and Cooperation onlus)*

One of the results - “novelty” obtained with this project is the “Vademecum”, which immigrant citizens can use when they decide to ask for a house to rent.

This is an important tool that each person or family requesting or driving a rented house should have at their disposal, as it provides valuable “advice” for the research phase, for the phase preceding the signing of the contract, for checking the contract text and for the practical and legal effects of the signature.

The Vademecum contains suggestions and warnings on how to behave in the running of the house and on the interventions due for “ordinary” maintenance.

Finally, it provides a detailed list of the different types of intervention, distinguishing the cases that are the responsibility of the tenant from those that are the responsibility of the owner.

As you can see it is a very useful document for any person or family, regardless of whether they are immigrant or native, because, especially during the search phase, the position of the person asking for the house for rent is generally weaker than that of the owner. However, for several well-known reasons, the position of the immigrant applicant remains even weaker than that of the indigenous applicant.

But, beyond the practical utility, it is very important to note that:

- 1) the realisation of the Vademecum is the result of the participatory process that characterised the project;
- 2) its usefulness will go well beyond the conclusion of the project itself.

Sonia Luca - *Assessora Municipality of Pontedera*

Delegations: housing policies, public housing and social housing, personnel, information systems and digital agenda development, livability of housing intensive areas

As an Administration we want to start from the assumption that the house is a primary asset for everyone. The housing situation, especially in urban areas, represents a decisive component of the health and socio-economic well-being of the population.

For these reasons, the topic “home” tends to deviate more and more from the typical themes of living - those linked to the individual dimension - to place itself in an essentially public dimension, where the quality of our homes and the environment that surrounds them also has great repercussions in terms of the community, permanently influencing the living conditions common to a given group of people.

The “Vademecum” represents, therefore, a fundamental instrument of information that we hope will be able to orient personal choices and habits in order to adapt them to the needs of interaction with the social context of reference.

The practical indications contained in the Vademecum are the result of a social and political analysis carried out together with the people who daily deal with issues related to living, as well as the direct stakeholders who have participated in the various opportunities for discussion. Respect for other people’s life context and the right to freely express one’s individuality within the private dimension of the home also passes through the good practices that this Vademecum intends to suggest, as well as through the observance of rules valid for everyone since they are aimed at ensuring peaceful and serene living together.

Linda Vanni - *Deputy Mayor of Montopoli in the Arno Valley*

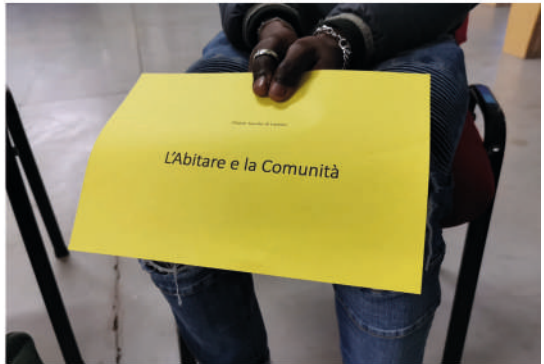
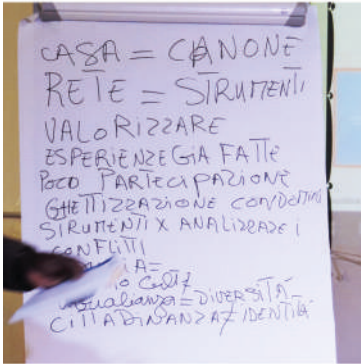
With delegated powers: Social and health policies; Youth policies; Relations with the Health Society; Housing policies, Equal opportunities and legality.

Home is an essential right of the person, but unfortunately it is a right that is increasingly difficult to enforce. Housing deprivation continues to affect a wide segment of the population, affecting citizens with low incomes, young people, unemployed people, families with average incomes who suffer a progressive impoverishment (e.g. the Covid-19 case) and foreign citizens.

Searching for a house is never an easy task, especially for foreign nationals. We have read, listened to many stories of property owners who refuse foreign tenants or who rent dilapidated houses. Often the refusal depends on a distrust of their solvency or prejudices and often private individuals ask for different and more onerous requirements than those required of Italian citizens.

Housing unease therefore takes on particular importance also in more general terms as it involves integration policies, labour and social relations

Alongside the work we do as public bodies, thanks to the project “Cittadini si diventa” (Citizens Become Citizens) we have decided to involve those who work around the world of living and we have been confronted with the obstacles that foreign citizens encounter. From this first confrontation the vademecum was born. It will be a useful and practical tool, but it is only a starting point of advice to accompany individuals and families less autonomous towards the realization of their housing project.



CITTADINI SI DIVENTA

The path of the project

1

The “Cittadini si diventa” project was inspired by the principles of participation and active citizenship, putting together a series of subjects - migrants’ associations, other associations, local institutions - with the aim of identifying some local policy themes on which to try to experiment improvement actions.

Through the tool of the Direction Booth, the project partners have carried out a continuous action of reflection, comparison and planning of interventions. This operating mode was also carried out during the period of the health emergency, with periodic meetings held remotely.

The survey of the most felt needs of the immigrant population was carried out through about 300 interviews with questionnaire, carried out by migrant associations in the territory of Valdera and Lower Valdarno and the results were discussed in a public initiative.

2

The results of the cognitive survey were discussed in the Co-design Tables, which met twice in each territory, bringing together the project partners and local institutions. Here the theme of access to the home was chosen, with all the related issues, such as the one on which to experiment.

During the Co- projecting Tables, the participation was extended to various stakeholders with specific competences on the chosen theme.

3

The last phase of the project was that of experimentation. Three were identified:

- 1) The creation of a path to train facilitators to “good living”. People identified by migrant associations who will provide their skills to support and advise those in difficult situations and to play a role of mediator in cases of conflict;
- 2) The Vademecum you are about to read;
- 3) The drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding with all the subjects, associations and institutions that have participated in the project. The memorandum of understanding will serve not only to consolidate, through discussion and participation, a network that has been set up with this project, but also to ensure that the action begun takes on a character of continuity over time and has positive effects on the territory and people.

Edited by

Casa Insieme - Agency for social housing

accredited with D.D. Regione Toscana n. 13314

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**Have you decided
to rent a house?
I suggest you...**



DURING THE HOUSE SEARCH...

Renting a house is an important choice that requires calm and lucidity. This small guide is intended to help you in your search, choice and stay in the house.



It may happen that inexperience or haste make you choose a house that turns out to be unsuitable for your needs or that problems emerge that you initially underestimated.

REMEMBER: putting your signature in a rental contract involves very precise responsibilities, because by signing you accept all the conditions written in the contract.

First of all it means taking on the commitment to pay a **fee** every month by the day established in the contract, so before starting the research it is important to understand what is the maximum cost you can pay for the fee taking into account all other expenses (food, electricity, gas-water bills, telephone/internet utilities, maintenance, condominium expenses if any).

REMEMBER: the cost of a rented house should not exceed 30% of the family income, which must be demonstrated to the owner with pay slips from a permanent job and/or with the guarantee of a family member/friend.



You can decide whether to look for the house on your own, reading ads from private individuals, or you can rely on a **real estate agency**. In this case, remember that the mediation of the agency usually costs one month's rent with the addition of VAT, but it provides you with assistance that begins with the search for the house and ends with the conclusion of the contract.



Do not pay anything in advance.

In case you want to “stop” a house you like you will have to sign a proposal and give a **deposit** (a sum which is often equal to one month’s rent) as a commitment on your part to take the house for rent.

If the owner accepts the proposal but you subsequently change your mind, the deposit will not be returned.



The Rental Contract

CONTRATTO DI LOCAZIONE AD USO ABITATIVO

Locatore _____

Conduttore _____

Scadenza il _____

Rinnovo il _____

Osservazioni _____



BEFORE SIGNING THE CONTRACT....

Reading the contract is fundamental. By signing the contract, you declare that you agree with everything written in the document. It is best to have the draft contract sent to you in advance and read it carefully, taking time and consulting with friends and acquaintances who can explain what you do not understand.



You should know that there are different **types of contracts** and that they vary according to your needs. You can choose between them:

- ordinary contract with free fee, 4 years + 4 years automatic renewal;
- transitional contract, duration not less than one month and not more than 18 months;
- 3-year rental contract or fixed rent, 3 years + 2 years of automatic renewal;
- transitional contract for students, duration between 6 and 36 months;
- contract for tourist use, maximum duration 3 months.

A **security deposit** - equal to two months' rent, maximum three months' rent - is required in the rental contract and is required by law to protect the owner.

REMEMBER: the security deposit can be used to cover any damage you may have caused to the flat. The possibility that the entire deposit will be returned to you at the end of the contract is an incentive to pay attention to maintenance during your stay in the house.

If they are foreseen, also the condominium expenses (concierge, stair cleaning, waste tax, lift) must be reported on the contract as "accessory charges".

REMEMBER: never agree with the owner or the agency only in words or on the basis of photos or videos.

Another important thing before signing is to **visit the** house to know exactly where the house is located, the condition of the flat and the building. Entering the house allows you to understand the condition of the walls, possible water infiltration and consequent humidity problems, the actual size of the rooms, the presence or absence of furniture.

If you can, let yourself be accompanied by a person you trust who has some experience in the real estate field and who knows how to give you the best advice.

It is good to check:

- that the radiators, the various taps and the hot water are working;
- that any appliances that may be present, such as washing machines, refrigerators and dishwashers, are in working order;
- that there is a boiler booklet to make sure that the boiler has been serviced, i.e. that it is up to standard and functioning;
- that there is internet coverage;
- that the systems are in compliance (certificates of conformity of the electrical and gas system must be attached to the contract, as well as the energy performance certificate - APE, which reveals the energy class of the building).



TO THE SIGNING OF THE CONTRACT...

The **contract** must contain all the necessary information, must be in writing, duly signed by the owner and tenant and registered with the Revenue Office.



The experts recommend that you sign all the pages of the contract (one copy for you, one for the owner) so that it is not possible to change its content.

REMEMBER: any verbal agreement has no value and can never be proven at a later date. Only what is written in the contract has legal value.

Very important for the protection of everyone is that together with the contract a **delivery note** is written and signed by the owner and tenant stating the state of the property and where any problems such as mould, water leaks, dents, as well as any other kind of problem that may have emerged during the visit of the house.

It is also advisable to accompany the delivery report with a list and photos of any furniture in the flat. The report should be attached to the contract.

REMEMBER: when you sign the contract, accept the property as it is and you will be responsible for it.

AFTER SIGNING THE CONTRACT...

As soon as you sign, get a **copy** to remind you immediately of the amount of the rent and the conditions for payment and all the useful information for a good stay in the house.

Every time you pay the fee you have to get a regular **receipt**.

Make the **turns** immediately and name the users. After moving into your new home, remember to contact the registry office of the municipality to submit the **declaration of residence** (if you come from another municipality) **or the change of address** (if you stay in the same municipality) of your household. If you are going to live together with people who are not part of your family, remember to specify this immediately to the registry office to avoid being considered a single family unit.

If your flat is part of a property that has more than 10 flats ask for a copy of the **condominium regulations**.

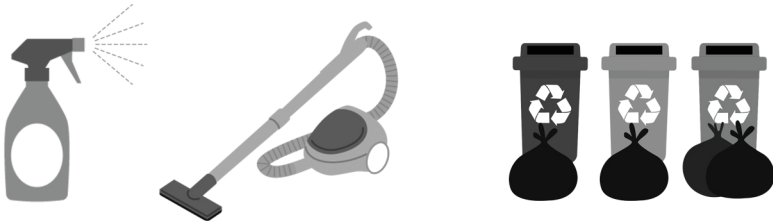
REMEMBER: you cannot cancel a contract before it expires. The law allows cancellation only in the presence of serious reasons that you must specify in a letter of notice to be sent to the owner by registered letter with return receipt, at least six months before you intend to leave the house.

At Home



WHEN YOU ARE AT HOME....

At home you can do a lot of things to improve your well-being, for example a whole series of actions for the good management of your home...



1. Open the windows wide at least once a day by matching them to prevent the development of mould and odours.
2. The extractor hood must always be switched on when the cooker is used to prevent moisture problems, mould and unpleasant odours.
3. Putting curtains or furniture in front of radiators or using radiators as laundry dryers disperses heat and is a source of waste.
4. Boiler maintenance and flue gas checks are mandatory by law and those who do not comply with the law will incur penalties. The frequency depends on the type of boiler and age and can only be carried out by specialised technicians..
5. The gas pipe of the kitchen must be replaced periodically following the expiry date printed on the pipe.
6. Do not flush cotton, nappies, ear cleaning sticks in the toilet because they can clog the drain.

7. Throwing food leftovers into the sink can clog the drain and worsens the operation of the degreasing wells by requiring frequent emptying; using a grill filter in the kitchen sink drain helps keep it clean
8. Respect separate waste collection and separate waste (organic, glass, plastic, aluminium, paper, used batteries, fried oil, expired medicines and printer cartridges) as indicated by the waste management company in your municipality.
9. Bleach-based detergents diluted in hot water cause toxic vapours.
10. Using electrical appliances in wet environments or with wet hands and feet is very dangerous.
11. Synthetic fibres are highly flammable and must be kept away from flames.
12. For dusting it is better to use a damp cloth than aggressive detergents.
13. Keep medicines, detergents and insecticides out of reach of children.
14. Making children play in the kitchen when cooking food is very dangerous.
15. In the presence of elderly people, obstructing the passage with carpets can cause dangerous falls.
16. Children can only play on the balconies in the presence of adults
17. In the two-storey flats it is a good idea to install a small gate on the landing to prevent small children from falling down the stairs.

AND TO LIMIT CONSUMPTION BY ELIMINATING WASTE...



WATER:

- 8 litres of water flow out of an open tap at an average rate of 8 litres per minute, so remember not to let the water flow unnecessarily;
- the more water consumed, the more it increases its cost per cubic metre;
- tap water is drinkable, it costs less than bottled water and does not produce pollution; just run it a little bit, fill a bottle or a jug and put it in the fridge to drink it without smelling of chlorine;
- the flow reducers that are applied to the taps reduce consumption by 60%.



ELECTRICITY:

- electrical appliances in stand-by continue to consume power; use a multiple socket with a switch so that they can be switched off completely when not in use;
- turn off the light when you leave a room;
- sets the water heater to a temperature of 45°;
- when charging is complete, remove the battery charger from the socket.



GAS:

- in the house the average recommended temperature ranges from 18 to 20 degrees Celsius, every 2 degrees over 20° increase consumption by 12%; setting the thermostat to 24° causes an increase in the bill of about 25%;
- in winter, when the sun goes down and the temperature drops, it is best to close the shutters or blinds to reduce heat loss; in summer it is better to keep them closed during the middle of the day.

Maintenance Operations



AND TO CONCLUDE....

All **maintenance operations**, ordinary (which are the tenant's responsibility) or extraordinary (which are the owner's), are classic reasons for a clash between owner and tenant.

The following list may be useful to understand whether a certain maintenance is the responsibility of the owner or tenant.

Table of accessory charges agreed between Confedilizia and Sunia-Sicet-Uniat (registered at the Agenzia Entrate, Ufficio territoriale Roma 2 on 30 April 2014, no. 8455/3).

LIFT	
Routine maintenance and minor repairs	Tenant
Installation and extraordinary maintenance of the	Owner
Adaptation to the new legal provisions	Owner
Consumption of electricity by motive power and lighting	Tenant
Inspections and tests	Tenant
AUTOCLAVE	
Installation and complete replacement of the system or primary components (pump, tank, rotating element, electrical winding, etc.).	Owner
Ordinary maintenance	Tenant
Planting taxes and duties	Owner
Driving force	Tenant
Recharge tank pressure	Tenant
Inspections, testing and meter reading	Tenant

LIGHTING, VIDEO INTERCOM AND OTHER SPECIAL INSTALLATIONS	
Installation and replacement of the common lighting system	Owner
Routine maintenance of the common lighting system	Tenant
Installation and replacement of ringer and alarm systems	Owner
Routine maintenance of ringer and alarm systems	Tenant
Installation and replacement of door phones and video door phones	Owner
Routine maintenance of door phones and video door phones	Tenant
Installation and replacement of special alarm, security and similar systems	Owner
Routine maintenance of special alarm, security and similar systems	Tenant

HEATING, AIR CONDITIONING, HOT WATER PRODUCTION, SOFTENING SYSTEMS	
Installation and replacement of systems	Owner
Adaptation of systems to laws and regulations	Owner
Routine plant maintenance, including refractory coating	Tenant
Annual cleaning of the systems and filters and seasonal set-aside	Tenant
Meter reading	Tenant
Fuel purchase, motive power consumption, electricity and water consumption	Tenant

TELEVISION SYSTEM

Installation, replacement or upgrading of the centralised television system	Owner
Ordinary maintenance of the centralised television system	Tenant

COMMON PARTS

Replacement of gutters, siphons and drain columns	Owner
Routine maintenance gutters, siphons and drain columns	Tenant
Extraordinary maintenance of roofs and solar panels	Owner
Routine maintenance of roofs and solar panels	Tenant
Extraordinary maintenance of the sewer network	Owner
Routine maintenance of the sewerage network, including de-blocking of ducts and manholes	Tenant
Replacement of marble, handrails, railings	Owner
Routine maintenance of walls, handrails, stair railings and common rooms	Tenant
Water and electricity consumption for common parts	Tenant
Installation and replacement of locks	Owner
Maintenance of green areas, including repair of tools used	Tenant
Installation of equipment such as P.O. boxes, signage signs, bins, meter cabinets, doormats, carpets, guides and other furnishing materials	Owner
Routine maintenance of equipment such as mailboxes, signalling panels, bins, meter cabinets, doormats, carpets, guides and other furnishing materials	Tenant

INTERNAL PARTS OF THE RENTED FLAT

Complete replacement of floor and wall coverings	Owner
Routine maintenance of floors and walls	Tenant
Routine maintenance of windows and shutters, heating and sanitary installations	Tenant
Renovation of keys and locks	Tenant
Painting of walls	Tenant
Glass replacement	Tenant
Routine maintenance of equipment and electricity and cable and of the intercom and video door phone system	Tenant
Painting of wood and metal works	Tenant
Extraordinary maintenance of the heating system	Owner

CLEANING

Cleaning material	Tenant
Purchase and replacement of cleaning machinery	Owner
Routine maintenance of cleaning machinery	Tenant
Deraterization and disinfestation of garbage collection premises	Tenant
Disinfestation of waste bins and containers	Tenant
Waste fee or replacement fee	Tenant
Purchase of bins, perches and containers	Owner
Waste pre-collection bags	Tenant
Snow clearance, including materials of use	Tenant

CITTADINI SI DIVENTA

Presentation of the subjects involved

Tavola della Pace e della Cooperazione Onlus

It is a local partner of the project. It is an association of public bodies and civil society organizations that promote the culture of human rights, solidarity and peace.

Teranga Association

Founded in 2015, based in Montopoli in Val d'Arno, with the aim of supporting the inclusion of foreign citizens residing in the territory, not only Senegalese but of all nationalities and religious denominations.

Association LA PACE Onlus

. It proposes cultural, artistic, recreational and socialization activities, also with a view to cultural and religious pluralism, as a moment of mutual integration between different cultures.

Senegal Solidarity Association

Pursues the improvement of the living conditions of immigrants living in the Valdera, beyond their origin and the improvement of the relationship between the Italian community and that of immigrants.

Associazione 2G Senegalesi di seconda generazione

Purpose: to realize an idea of inclusion and active citizenship for new Italians. To this end it supports young people in their studies and promotes connections with training and research institutions.

Association for Senegalese Women

Purpose: to contribute to the improvement of conditions for Senegalese women. It carries out cultural and social activities for women

Association Casa Insieme

Association of Social Promotion registered in the regional list of Social Housing Agencies. It supports, in the exercise of the right to housing, those who cannot find an answer in the housing market.

Arturo Association

Collaborator of the project. Association of social promotion based in Santa Croce sull'Arno that deals with immigration, inter-culture, citizenship rights. It promotes active citizenship practices.

Porta Aperta (Open Door)

Arci Valdera's project for the mediation and social caretaker for the community of the Pontedera station district. The counter, open every day, is located inside the Coop tunnel in the station area.

SUNIA

(National Unitary Union of Tenants and Assignees)

It is the main organization of private tenants and public building assignees. Its purpose is the recognition of the right to housing for every citizen.

UPPI (Small Property Owners Union)

Protects and represents property owners as users and consumers of properties and related services in order to improve their usability and enjoyment.

TAVOLA DELLA PACE E DELLA COOPERAZIONE is an Association of Public Bodies (i.e. Municipalities), non-profit organisations (in the fields of culture, trade union, sports, migrations, voluntarism, environment, solidarity, recreational activities), and Third Sector, that is the civil society network in Valdera area (northern part of the province of Pisa).



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