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Handbook of good living



To ensure a peaceful co-residency between tenants of different origins (Italians and immigrants) is especially important to give the correct information to the new arrivals on rights, duties, codes of conduct, habits that are inherent to the condition of tenants in a condominium.

Knowing the rules of good neighborhood and being properly informed on how to ensure safe accommodation, is the best condition for mutual respect and overcoming distrust and stereotypes, which alone can guarantee a peaceful co-residency of population.

This handbook offers immigrant landlords, but not limited to, some basic information .

1. The rules of good-neighborly

The **good manners** and **mutual respect** are the basis for establishing good relations with the neighbors.

If you live in a condominium is important to read and follow the **condominium regulations**.

It is useful to know that ...

If you live in a condo, you should contact immediately the administrator of the condominium, which will be a useful reference for any questions on condominium regulations, the expenses, what to do in case of failures or problems, as well as on any matter on the common areas (courtyard, parking, etc).

Inside the building

- * Avoid loud and annoying noises, especially during the sleeping hours between 10pm to 8am and 2pm to 4pm.
- * Do not shake the tablecloths and carpets off the windows.
- * Do not hang out the laundry in the windows or at a height above the carpet of the balcony, particularly on the main facade, ask your neighbors or administrator if there is a space in the building when it is allowed to roll out the sheets.
- * It is important to place securely the plants and vases of flowers and use of saucers to prevent water from dripping. Usually, the plants are watered at night, trying not to flood the balconies below.

- * Generally antennas or satellite dishes are NOT placed on balconies, walls or facades of the building, but on the roof. In any case, you should first ask the administrator of the building.
- * If you have dogs or cats, be careful not disturb the neighbors with noise and not dirty the common areas (such as stairs, courtyard, elevator and plants) not even on your balcony. Attention to bad smells !
- * Never use the elevator for the transportaion of goods, furniture or other heavy objects.
- * Do not place furniture or other bulky items on the landing or in public areas.

It is useful to know that...

You must keep down the volume on the radio, music and TV. It is good for our ears and also to our relations with the neighborhood !

The children : playing in safety, while respecting the rules of good manners

- * Children of all nationalities are often very bright and lively. For this, family members must vigilant the kids to ensure that they don't get hurt or they don't damage the building or the common areas.
- * It is important to teach the children to speak softly, do not say bad words, and avoid climbing and bending and throwing objects, particularly from windows and balconies or in common areas such as stairs or yard.
- * If there are common areas for children to play, it's important to respect the schedules and hours.
- * Not always games with the ball are allowed in the courtyards: ask the administrator or neighbors. Never let the kids to play football at home or on the balcony.

Out of condominium

- * The entrance of the building must always be left free.
- * Always close the gates and doors, for security reasons.
- * The garages may NOT be used as warehouses, dormitories, laboratories.
- * It is forbidden to park in garages, cars powered by LPG.
- * Respect the assigned parking space and do not park your car in the other condominium parking or other common areas.
- * Do not wash your car in the courtyard of the condominium.

It is useful to know that...

In some cases, in the building regulation is mentioned that a low fee should be paid to use the parking lot in the courtyard.

Traditions and rules for a good social relations

- * Keeping the house decently clean and organized is fundamental to our health, as well as for a peaceful integration.
- * Many people complain of immigrants cooking odor. Every culture has its own traditions, but some strong and spicy odors can disturb the neighbors.
- * When preparing foods, it is useful to close the kitchen door and open the window to prevent odors that can spread on the stairs of the building.
- * When you organize a party or dinner with family and friends, if you plan to stay up late with music and sounds, you should first notify the neighbors.
- * Nothing prohibits hosting friends and relatives for a few nights: however, the neighbors would get disturbed and would complain if this becomes a habit, with a steady stream of strangers in the building.

It is useful to know that...

In some Regions of Italy is a custom to give neighbors a little taste of sweets or foods cooked in the traditional holidays and occasions. It is a good gesture of friendliness which is willing to be accepted with a smile. If your health and religion does not allow you to accept certain foods or drinks, just say it, accompanying explanation and appreciation (" thanks anyway for your kind thoughts ") and a beautiful smile !

It can be a good idea to reciprocate the gesture of courtesy, giving neighbors a little taste of foods and sweets from your country, on a small plate covered with a towel or a paper plate.

2. The safe house

It is important " living the home " in a safe manner : this is possible if knowing some aspects of your home and respecting few simple rules and safety standards.

A good **maintenance** is certainly a fundamental aspect of the house to ensure the maximum safety.

Plaster and old or damaged fixtures may fall, causing damage and injuries, while the utilities (gas, electricity, etc) without a proper maintenance can cause serious accidents. Many domestic accidents occur during the normal activities at home : especially in the kitchen or bathroom. Some simple precautions can help avoid serious dangers.

Maintenance

Ordinary maintenance, day to day, with scheduled inspections, as well as avoiding dangers, is more economical and effective than emergency operation. If you are perfect and don't know the job and the trade-specific safety standards, do not perform repairs by your own on the utilities system.

- * It is important to check the status of the **exterior parts of the building** (plaster, balconies, eaves, windows, terrace, ecc).
- * Particularly, when you rent a home you should make sure that those parts are in good condition and have been scheduled periodic maintenance. In case of problems, (for example : **cracks** in the plaster, **rusty** gutters, etc,) you should notify immediately the landlord and possibly also the administration of the condominium. If no response, you may want to urge action by sending a message to the owner of the house, with certified mail (keep a copy of the letter and the return receipt of the certified mail).
- * **Humidity and water leaks** are among the main causes of damage to the buildings (damage to facilities with mold and odors, but also mechanical damages). Any water leaks in the building or common areas should be reported to the landlord and possibly to the administrator of the condominium. In the apartments, the humidity can be fought and carefully avoid water leaking with a good plumbing, even exposing the rooms to the sun and air exchange. Keeping doors and windows in good conditions helps to prevent damages from rain or external moisture. In case of premises with high humidity may be useful to use de- humidifiers.
- * **Maintenance of the utilities** (gas, electricity, elevator, etc) both inside the building and in the common areas must be checked regularly according to the **laws** and always by the authorized technicians.

It is useful to know that...

Italian law prohibits the exposure to **asbestos**, however there are still situations (roofs, sheds, decking of stoves and boilers, etc.) where the asbestos is present (cement + asbestos). In these cases, you should contact The Local Health Authority (ASL) because the materials must be removed only through a specific process of **reclamation**, as small particles of asbestos can penetrate the lungs and cause serious damages.

A warm and safe house

Heat a flat is important for our health, however, be aware that heating system must comply with **safety standards** and be used so as not to cause danger and damage to persons and property.

- * Regular **maintenance** of the hot-water heating ensures a safe and efficient operation and also helps to reduce fuel consumption and air pollution.
- * **Stoves and heaters** can be useful in an economic way to heat a cold environment, but must be used carefully : use only the equipments in good conditions, make sure that the electrical cables are healthy and never leave in function a heater in your absence or when you sleep. The heaters should always be placed away from curtains, beds and furniture, in order to avoid fires.
- * **Fireplaces** and **braziers** can be a deadly danger, causing fires and carbon monoxide poisoning ! Always use them carefully ! Careful maintenance is needed, especially if the chimney produces smoke and soot.

Domestic dangers

Apart from hot-water heating, domestic dangers arise in different rooms of the house.

Electricity :

- * The **electrical system** should be put **as by law**, with a **ground wire instalation** : specially when you rent an apartment, you must ensure that the installation system is " in a workmanlike " , with a Declaration of Conformity.
- * Avoid using extention cords and power strips. In any way, buy always products with **safety certification** and respect the ruls of use.
- * Do not use electrical appliances with wet hands or while bathing or showering.
- * Protect children from the dangers of electricity and explain to the more grown- ups children how to avoid risks.

Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home, but is also one of the most dangerous environments. Ovens, stoves, gas and electrical appliances hide dangers for children and adults. A good **maintenance** and the respect for the **rules of use** of equipment and appliances would avoid many dangers.

- * . Keep the children away from where you cook and never allow them to play with the objects and equipment.
- * . Avoid wearing loose clothing when you cook, specially if they are artificial tissues.
- * . Always make sure that the pots are placed securely and safely on the stove, if there are children at home, and put the pots on the inside flames of the stove, to prevent them from falling.

- * Do not let the boiling water, to come out from the pots, because the flame might goes out and the gas continues to scape.
- * Keep foods in a safe and clean place, using always refrigeratore for perishable foods (meat, chicken, milk, etc).
- * Always observe the expiration dates of foods and pay attention to the conservation condition: if there is mold, gases or odors, it's better not to eat to avoid food poisoning.

Bathroom

Along with the kitchen, the bathroom is one of the most dangerous places in the home. The main risks are related to electricity and also to falls and slips.

- * Make sure that the bathroom **floor** is always dry and clean, to avoid slipping.
- * Use **rubber bath mats** in the bathroom and showers, to avoid dangerous falls.
- * Never use **electrical appliances** (hair dryers, razors, etc) with wet hands or near a bathtub full of water.
- * Ensure that the discharge of the **washing machine** is made safe : boiling water can cause severe burns !
- * Keep **detergents and medicines** in a safe place away from the reach of the children and repeatedly tell them that they are poisonous and must not touch or ingest !

Windows and balconies : leaning is prohibited !

Windows, terraces and balconies are important elements of an apartment, but you must use them carefully, especially if there are children at home.

- * Do not climb for no reason and never lean over the railing of windows and balconies : a dizziness can be fatal for an adult also !

- * Never let the children play alone on the balcony or near an open window. Do not leave chairs or furniture under windows, to prevent children climbing and falling down. Repeatedly explain your children that it is dangerous leaning from windows, balconies and railings.

A safe rest

Facilities made pursuant to the safety rules, assure our rest, along with a few precautions :

- * Before going to bed, it's a good habit to check that the water taps are properly closed, that the stove, heater, television and other electrical appliances are **off** (excepte the refrigerator !).
- * **Close and Lock the doors** and windows to keep out intruders.
- * If you use electric blankets, compliance with the condition of use.
- * **Do not smoke** in bed or on the couch as well as damaging your health, cigarettes can cause fire!

The safety of the children

The places wher children reside must be kept safe and clean. In addition to general rules, it is good to protect children by ensuring their safety and teaching them to behave responsibly.

- * Falling out of **bed** can be very dangerous for a child : use side rails or appropriate tools to avoid them.
- * Attach to the wall **furniture, bookcases** and **shelves** and place securely and safelt the **TV**, to prevent children to climb them and make them fall on their heads.
- * Never leave a kid alone in the house or garden.

- * Never leave around medicines, detergents, paints, scissors, vacuum cleaners, blenders and other work tools that can cause a **danger** to your children.
- * In the street, in garages and parking lots, always keep an eye on the children to avoid being **invested** during the maneuvers of the vehicle. As soon as possible teach your children the **road safety** rules and don't leave them alone in the street before they are big kids and responsible.
- * Keep children at safe when you carry out the **work** at home or elsewhere.
- * Do not entrust a young kid to his more grown-up sister or brother : children should be entrusted only to **reliable and responsible adults**.

It is useful to know that...

It is very important to teach your children to be wary of **strangers**, never accept without your consent, toys and sweets from anybody, **always** ask permission to follow a person in the car or anywhere. Teach them to tell you always everything they do in your absence : so you can follow them better and avoid any problem or danger.