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OSPIRG offers advice to renters

By Daralyn Trappe
Emerald Associate Editor

Something's broken in your apartment and your landlord hasn't fixed it yet. What do you legally have the right to expect as a tenant? You moved six months ago and still haven't gotten your deposit back. So what options do you have?

When in doubt, ask the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

OSPIRG, located in EMU Suite 1, has a Consumer Hotline set up for such questions. The Hotline, at 346-4357, is staffed by student volunteers who offer answers and advise to renters with housing problems. The service is free to Eugene-Springfield area residents.

Questions are often answered by OSPIRG's Renter's Handbook, a manual that summarizes Oregon's Residential Landlord and Tenant Act and "puts it in easy terms, makes it easy to find, easy to access. It has the various outlets and things you can do," said Derek Top of OSPIRG.

"If it's a problem that's difficult to answer right away, we'll take their number and call them back and research it going through that publication and using other resources that we have," he said.

The questions most often

raised regard cleaning deposit refunds and eviction notices, he said.

If rent is not paid within seven days of the due date, landlords have the right to give a tenant a 72-hour eviction notice, Top said.

"If you pay that rent within those 72 hours then you can stay," Top said.

Eviction notices can be given for specific reasons, such as excessive noise or not living up to the agreed terms of a lease or monthly agreement.

But a 30 day notice can be given for no stated reason to a tenant renting monthly. The landlord is not required to state a reason in such instances, but is prohibited from taking such action for discriminatory or retaliatory reasons.

By law, deposits must be returned within 30 days after tenancy has ended. In addition, the landlord must deliver a written statement of the amounts and reasons for any deductions.

Along with the responsibilities, the Renter's Handbook outlines rights.

Any serious problem with essential services — heat, water, electricity — must be taken care of by the landlord within a week.

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Rents not likely to lower soon

By Dennis Fitzgerald
Emerald Reporter

You've got a problem. You've got all these great ideas for a housewarming party, but you're living in your car.

And if you're looking for a place in Eugene in late September, you may not have many options.

Local property managers are divided on whether there is more housing available this year than last. Kent Jennings, owner of Jennings and Company Property Management, says there is a slight increase in the number of rental units near campus.

"The housing market overall today is still a good healthy market," said Jennings. "It's one in which anyone who wants to rent a unit can find one at just about any price range," he said.

There are more rental units available in the campus area this year than last, Jennings says, partly because

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