

The Act on Residential Leases amended on 1 October 2026 – What changed?

The amendments to the Act on Residential Leases (AHVL), which entered into force at the beginning of October 2026, introduced several changes that apply to both new and existing tenancy agreements. The purpose of the amendments is to clarify the rights and obligations of the parties to a tenancy agreement and to harmonise practices in different situations.

We have compiled below the most important changes that all tenants must comply with going forward.

- **Smoking will be prohibited inside apartments and in private areas belonging to them**

One of the most significant changes is the smoking ban, which will enter into force on 1 October 2026. Going forward, smoking will be prohibited inside apartments and in private areas belonging to the apartment, such as balconies, terraces and private yards. The smoking ban also applies to e-cigarettes and herbal smoking products.

The ban applies to all tenants, including those whose tenancy agreement does not specifically prohibit smoking.

In the most serious cases, violating the smoking ban may lead to termination or cancellation of the tenancy agreement.

A-Kruunu's properties are smoke-free. Smoking is only permitted in separately designated areas. Cigarette butts must always be disposed of properly and must not be thrown on the ground or into stormwater drains.

- **The landlord's right to access the apartment will be clarified**

Visits to the apartment will, as a general rule, still be agreed upon with the tenant in advance. If a suitable time cannot be agreed due to reasons attributable to the tenant, the landlord or an authorised representative may enter the apartment at the time that has been notified in advance.

In urgent situations, such as water damage or a fire, the apartment may be entered without prior notice.

- **New notification obligation for tenants**

Going forward, tenants must inform the landlord who lives in the apartment and on what basis they have the right to reside there (e.g. spouse, child or subtenant). We will provide residents with more detailed information later about the actions required from tenants.

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Until then, changes to the residents of the apartment or the number of people living there can be reported by email to: vuokraus@a-kruunu.fi.

If the information about the residents provided in the housing application and when entering into the tenancy agreement is up to date, no new notification is required.

- **A clear deadline for returning the security deposit**

The rules concerning the processing of rental security deposits will be clarified. Going forward, the landlord must return the security deposit or notify the tenant in writing of any retention of the deposit no later than 14 days after the end of the tenancy or the delayed handover of possession of the apartment.

- **A new ground for cancelling a tenancy agreement**

Going forward, the landlord may also cancel a tenancy agreement on the basis of another exceptionally serious reason.

Such a situation may arise, for example, if the tenant repeatedly breaches their obligations or if several breaches occur simultaneously.

An example of such another exceptionally serious reason could be a violation of the smoking ban or the tenant committing a serious act of violence in the apartment, in common areas or in the immediate vicinity of the building, in a way that endangers the peace and sense of security of neighbours.

- **Clear rules for handling property left in the apartment**

When a tenancy ends, the apartment and any associated spaces, such as storage areas, must be completely emptied.

If belongings are left in the apartment, the landlord will notify the tenant in writing. If the property is not collected within the specified period, ownership of the property will transfer to the landlord.

The tenant is responsible for any costs arising from the storage and possible disposal of the property.

- **Procedure in the event of a tenant's death**

If a tenant who has been living alone dies, the tenancy will in future automatically end two months after the end of the month in which the landlord was informed of the tenant's death.

However, the estate of the deceased tenant has the possibility to notify the landlord that it wishes to continue the tenancy. The Act also contains more detailed provisions on the storage and handing over of property left in the apartment to the estate.

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Other amendments to the Act

- **The parties to a tenancy agreement may agree to use electronic notification**
 - Notices and notifications relating to the tenancy can be delivered electronically (through an electronic communication channel), for example by email, if the landlord and tenant have individually agreed on this in writing.
 - The amendment clarifies electronic notification and expands its scope of use. However, notification by post will remain an available option.

We will provide separate information about the introduction of electronic notification at a later date.

- **Transfer of tenancy rights to a family member**

Going forward, transferring tenancy rights to a family member (spouse, parent or child) will require that the person receiving the tenancy rights has lived in the apartment continuously for at least one year.

- **Temporary transfer of an apartment for another person's use**

Going forward, an apartment may also be temporarily transferred for another person's use for another special reason, unless the landlord has a justified reason to object to the transfer.

Another special reason could, for example, be that the tenant is performing military or voluntary military service, or that the tenant temporarily needs to move to another apartment in order to care for a parent who is ill and requires around-the-clock care.

What do the amendments mean in practice?

Most of the amendments aim to make tenancy arrangements clearer and more predictable. In particular, the smoking ban, the deadline for returning the security deposit and the rules concerning property left in the apartment provide tenants and landlords with clearer procedures than before.

If you have any questions about your tenancy agreement or matters related to your housing, you can contact A-Kruunu by email: vuokraus@a-kruunu.fi