

Tenant Association COMMITTEES

The Tenant Association By-Laws require that all buildings have an executive committee, a repair and maintenance committee. A tenant selection committee should be formed as needed. Many associations form additional committees to address issues like security, rent collection, finances, by-laws or house rules. If your building doesn't have functioning committees, set them up as soon as possible so that you don't get in the habit of letting the officers do everything.

Forming committees

Follow these steps to set up any committee:

- 1. Put it on the agenda for the next general association meeting.**
- 2. Advertise the creation of the committee—go door to door and discuss it with tenants. Put up notices in the building and flyers under each door.**
- 3. At the meeting, review Article VII of the By-laws regarding committees.**
- 4. Ask for volunteers and set up the first committee meeting. Try to get tenants who have special skills or who are really interested in participating.**
- 5. Generally, there should be no fewer than three people on a committee and no more than nine.**
- 6. One officer must be on each committee (two on repair and maintenance), but they should not chair the committee since this prevents other tenants from having a chance to hold important positions.**
- 7. The officer on the committee is responsible for organizing, advertising and chairing the first meeting until a chairperson is elected.**

Tips for All Committees

1. Committees should have 3-9 members, with at least one officer (two on maintenance and repair). Any member who owes more than two months' rent is automatically removed from the committee until the situation is resolved. Try to elect a non-officer as the chairperson; this spreads out important positions to as many tenants as possible.
2. Meet as often as necessary, at least every two months.
3. Write down the duties and powers of the committee, i.e., **what** you do. You should also write down the procedures the committee uses to carry out its duties, i.e., **how** you do it. Draft any policies that affect your committee, like amendments to the house rules. All of these written policies should be presented to the association and TIL for approval before adding them to the by-laws.
4. Elect a secretary to maintain a file with the records of all discussions, decisions and actions of the committee.
5. Avoid conflict of interest. Don't volunteer to work on an issue that affects you or a family member of yours personally. For example, don't serve on the tenant selection committee if your daughter is planning to apply for an apartment.
6. Divide up tasks among all committee members and delegate a second person to follow-up each

assignment. For instance, "Ms. Smith will call the plumber, and Ms. Rivera will check with her on Monday to make sure everything is going OK."

7. Make sure minutes are taken at each meeting and approved at the next. If possible, copies should be distributed to all tenants and sent to TIL and UHAB. Be sure to report the activities of the committee to each monthly association meeting.

The First Meeting

The agenda for any committee's first meeting should include:

1. Call to order
2. Review of what the by-laws say about this committee
3. Discuss responsibilities of chairperson and secretary
4. Election of chairperson and secretary
5. Review and write down the powers and duties of committee—change or create if necessary. Answer the questions, "What does this committee do," and "How will it do it?"
This committee description must be brought to the association for approval.
6. Schedule a regular day for the committee to meet (like the first and third Tuesday of every month). Decide on a regular meeting time and place.
7. Discuss other business
8. Assign tasks to be completed before the next meeting

**** Don't forget: the secretary should begin taking minutes as soon as elected! A copy should be distributed to all tenants, officers and TIL.**