Ohio Security Deposit Laws: Limits, Deductions and Deadlines

Summary for landlords and property managers. Last reviewed October 29, 2026. Full guide: https://www.generationadvisory.com/laws/ohio-security-deposit-laws

Ohio does not cap deposits, but it gives landlords 30 days to return them with a written list of deductions. Large deposits held for six months or more also earn interest for the tenant under Revised Code 5321.16.

Key points

- State law does not limit the amount of a security deposit.
- The landlord has 30 days after the lease ends and the tenant gives back possession to return the deposit or send a written list of deductions with any balance.
- Every deduction must be itemized in a written notice, and the tenant should give a forwarding address in writing to keep the right to damages.
- When a tenant stays six months or more, the landlord pays 5 percent yearly interest on the part of the deposit above one month's rent or 50 dollars, whichever is greater.
- A landlord who wrongfully keeps deposit money owes the amount withheld plus an equal amount in damages and reasonable attorney fees.

Ohio at a glance

Rule	Ohio	Law
Deposit limit	State law does not limit the amount of a security deposit.	Revised Code section 5321.16
Deadline to return the deposit	The landlord has 30 days after the lease ends and the tenant gives back possession to return the deposit or send a written list of deductions with any balance.	Revised Code section 5321.16
Itemized deductions	Every deduction must be itemized in a written notice, and the tenant should give a forwarding address in writing to keep the right to damages.	Revised Code section 5321.16
Interest on deposits	When a tenant stays six months or more, the landlord pays 5 percent yearly interest on the part of the deposit above one month's rent or 50 dollars, whichever is greater.	Revised Code section 5321.16

Rule	Ohio	Law
Penalty for wrongful withholding	A landlord who wrongfully keeps deposit money owes the amount withheld plus an equal amount in damages and reasonable attorney fees.	Revised Code section 5321.16

Mistakes to avoid

- Skipping a dated move-in condition report with photos, then having nothing to compare against at move out.
- Charging for normal wear and tear.
- Missing the return deadline, even by a few days.
- Not asking for a forwarding address before the tenant leaves.
- Losing track of deposit money by mixing it with operating funds without a ledger.

Verify current law

Laws named in this summary:

- Revised Code section 5321.16

Official sources:

- Ohio Revised Code (Ohio Laws and Administrative Rules, LAWriter): https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code
- Supreme Court of Ohio: courts and rules: https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/

> General information, not legal advice. Check current law and talk to a Ohio attorney before you act. Last reviewed October 29, 2026.