

Pennsylvania 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/pennsylvania-security-deposit-laws>

Pennsylvania caps deposits at two months of rent in the first year and one month after that. Landlords have 30 days after move out to send a written list of damages, and deposits held longer than two years can earn interest for the tenant.

Key points

- During the first year of a lease the deposit may not exceed two months of rent, and from the second year or a renewal on, one month. After five years, a rent increase cannot be used to raise the deposit.
- Within 30 days after the lease ends or the tenant surrenders the unit, the landlord must return the deposit or send a written list of damages with the balance.
- A landlord who misses the 30 day written list loses the right to keep any part of the deposit and to sue for damages; the tenant must give a forwarding address in writing.
- After the second anniversary, a deposit over 100 dollars earns interest for the tenant, paid yearly, less a 1 percent administrative fee the landlord may keep.
- A landlord who fails to pay back the difference within 30 days owes double the amount by which the deposit exceeds actual damages.

Pennsylvania at a glance

Rule	Pennsylvania	Law
Deposit limit	During the first year of a lease the deposit may not exceed two months of rent, and from the second year or a renewal on, one month. After five years, a rent increase cannot be used to raise the deposit.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 511.1
Deadline to return the deposit	Within 30 days after the lease ends or the tenant surrenders the unit, the landlord must return the deposit or send a written list of damages with the balance.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 512
Itemized deductions	A landlord who misses the 30 day written list loses the right to keep any part of the deposit and to sue for damages; the tenant must give a forwarding address in writing.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 512

Rule	Pennsylvania	Law
Interest on deposits	After the second anniversary, a deposit over 100 dollars earns interest for the tenant, paid yearly, less a 1 percent administrative fee the landlord may keep.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 511.2
Penalty for wrongful withholding	A landlord who fails to pay back the difference within 30 days owes double the amount by which the deposit exceeds actual damages.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 512

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:

- Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 511.1
- Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 512
- Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 511.2
- Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951

Official sources:

- Pennsylvania General Assembly: Unconsolidated Statutes, Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/US/HTM/1951/0/0020..HTM>
- Pennsylvania General Assembly: Consolidated Statutes: <https://www.palegis.us/statutes/consolidated>
- Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: rules: <https://www.pacourts.us/>

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