

FREE CHECKLIST

The 2026 Chicago Landlord Compliance Checklist

A quick, printable run-through of what Chicago landlords need to have squared away for 2026 — the new state and city law changes plus the core RLTO items that trip people up. Check off what's handled, and follow the links for the full detail on anything you're unsure about. NOT LEGAL ADVICE.

Leases & Fees

REVIEW ANNUALLY

- ☐ Remove any blanket "no composting" clause; add reasonable container rules instead (fully enclosed, ¼-inch openings, odor/pest control) — see [Chicago composting rules](#)
- ☐ Strip out application/processing "junk fees" that aren't tied to a documented cost (getting ahead of the proposed PRO)
- ☐ Confirm the late-fee clause is within the RLTO cap (\$10 on the first \$500 of rent, plus 5% above)
- ☐ Attach the RLTO summary and security-deposit interest disclosure to every lease and renewal
- ☐ Scan the lease for other unenforceable terms — see [illegal lease clauses](#)

Security Deposits

PER TENANCY

- ☐ Hold deposits in a separate, interest-bearing account (never commingled)
- ☐ Pay the annual deposit interest on schedule
- ☐ Return within 45 days; deliver an itemized statement with receipts within 30 days
- ☐ Deduct only for damage beyond normal wear and tear

Evictions & Notices

NEW FOR 2026

- ☐ Name **only adult tenants and lease signatories** as defendants — never minors ([HB 3566](#) dismisses the whole case)
- ☐ Use the right notice: 5-day for nonpayment, 10-day for other lease violations

- ☐ Don't bake late fees into a 5-day notice amount
- ☐ Treat a holdover tenant as a tenant (eviction), not a squatter — see [SB 1563](#)
- ☐ Never self-help — no lockouts, no utility shutoffs, ever

Retaliation & Notice Timing

NEW FOR 2026

- ☐ Document a legitimate reason *before* any adverse action — the [Retaliation Act](#) presumes retaliation within one year of protected tenant activity
- ☐ Give correct Fair Notice for non-renewal, termination, or rent increase — 30 / 60 / 120 days by tenancy length
- ☐ Apply rent increases and renewal decisions consistently across tenants

Entry & Habitability

ONGOING

- ☐ Give at least 2 days' notice for non-emergency entry
- ☐ Respond to written repair requests within the required window; keep the unit habitable
- ☐ Maintain functional essential services — heat, plumbing, electrical

Watch List

PROPOSED

- ☐ Track the [Protecting Renters Ordinance](#) — rental registry and just-cause rules would require real changes if it passes (possible January 2027)

DISCLAIMER This checklist is a general starting point for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. It doesn't cover every requirement, and some items depend on your specific property and situation. For a full review, consult a licensed Chicago attorney. The complete breakdown of the 2026 changes is in the [2026 Landlord Law Updates guide](#).