



## **DUTY OF OWNERS OF RENTAL PROPERTY**

Landlord Tenant Act 54 of 1993

The Pennsylvania law contained in 66 Pa.C.S.A. § 1529.1 has some provisions that landlords and tenants should be aware of.

If you're an owner of an apartment building or mobile home park where the tenants are responsible for their utility bill, the law requires that each unit must be "individually metered", i.e. the meter must register the usage exclusively for that unit. If the meter also records usage for something outside the unit such as common area lighting, furnace, etc. or for another unit, the unit is considered "not individually metered" and you must notify the electric, gas, water, steam or sewage utilities. This is known as "foreign load".

Under the law, the utilities are authorized and required to place the account in the landlord's name effective the date they become aware of the "foreign load". The landlord then becomes responsible for the utility service and the account must remain in the landlord's name until the "foreign load" situation is corrected.

The law also provides protection for tenants. One provision states that if a landlord fails to pay the utility bill, to avoid possible termination of utility service tenants can pay the bill and deduct that amount from the rent. Another provision protects tenants against landlord retaliation.

If you have questions, please the Citizens' Electric office at 570-524-2231.