

PROPERTY OWNERS, LANDLORDS AND TENANTS:

The Pennsylvania law known as “Act 54 of 1993” on utility service for apartments or mobile home parks has some provisions you should know about.

If you’re an owner of an apartment building or mobile home park where the tenants are responsible for the utility bill, the law requires that each apartment has its own separate meter, and the meter must register the usage exclusively for that unit. If the meter also records usage for something outside the apartment (hall, lighting, furnace fan, etc.) or for another apartment, you must notify the utilities (electric, gas, water, steam or sewage). Under the law, the utilities are required and authorized to place the account in the owner’s name effective the date they become aware of this situation. The owner then becomes responsible for the electric service and the account must remain in the owner’s name until the situation is corrected.

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

If you have questions about “Act 54 of 1993” call 570-524-2231. You can obtain a copy of the law by writing to Pennsylvania House Document Room, Room B-5, Main Capital Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120.