

How to complete a Standard Lease Agreement in New York

Fixed-term residential lease with rent, deposit, term and standard tenant/landlord clauses.

What this form is for

This form establishes a legally binding rental agreement between a landlord (property owner) and tenant for a residential property in New York. Small-business owners use it when leasing commercial space for mixed-use properties or when rental income from investment properties factors into their loan applications.

Before you start

- Property address with unit number, county, and complete legal description if available
- Lease term dates (start date and end date for the fixed period)
- Monthly rent amount and due date, plus any annual escalation percentages
- Security deposit amount (New York limits this to one month's rent for most residential leases)
- Names, addresses, and contact information for all tenants and the landlord or property management company
- Bank account details for rent payment and deposit holding (New York requires security deposits be held in approved accounts)

Step-by-step

1. Fill in the lease date at the top and the full legal names of all parties. Include every adult who will occupy the property as a tenant.
2. Enter the complete property address and describe the premises (apartment number, parking spaces, storage units included).
3. Specify the lease term with exact start and end dates. New York defaults to month-to-month if you leave the end date blank, so be precise for fixed-term agreements.
4. State the monthly rent amount in numbers and words, the due date each month (typically the 1st), acceptable payment methods, and the grace period if any. Note any late fees, which New York caps at 5 percent or fifty dollars.
5. Record the security deposit amount. Confirm it does not exceed one month's rent and specify the bank where it will be held, as required by New York law for buildings with six or more units.
6. Complete the utilities section, clearly marking which services the landlord covers and which the tenant pays directly.
7. Review and initial all standard clauses covering maintenance responsibilities, subletting restrictions (New York allows subletting with conditions), pet policies, and alterations.

8. Add any property-specific riders or addenda for lead paint disclosure (pre-1978 buildings), bedbug history (required in New York), or other mandated state disclosures.

9. Both parties sign and date in the presence of witnesses if your lender requires notarization for loan documentation purposes.

What lenders look for

- Banks verify rental income by requiring fully executed leases showing realistic market-rate rents, so avoid inflated amounts that won't match comparable properties in your appraisal.
- Missing New York-required disclosures (lead paint, bedbug addendum, window guard notices) creates legal liability that underwriters flag as risk, potentially delaying approval.
- Keep signed originals and proof of security deposit placement in separate, interest-bearing accounts as New York mandates, since lenders audit compliance during portfolio reviews.