

Rent

DO THE CHECK

- The service-charge check

Besides paying basic rent, many tenants also pay monthly service charges. By doing the service-charge check (www.huurcommissie.nl), you can estimate whether or not the amount you pay is reasonable.

The amount that you pay monthly in service charges is an advance. Tenants receive an annual overview of the actual costs from their landlords. This could result in a refund or a surplus charge at year's end.

The service fee includes the cost of electricity, water, the caretaker or the cleaning of the common rooms. The service-charge check provides information about the various service-charge items. By doing this check, you can estimate whether or not the amount you pay is reasonable. This is merely an indication of 'reasonableness', but you cannot derive any rights from it. Want to know more? Call the Huurcommissie [rental commission] on 0800-4887243.

- The rent check

Want to know whether you pay the right rent? Do the rent check at www.huurcommissie.nl.

With the rent check you can calculate the maximum (basic) rent of your accommodation. It will take around 30 minutes to complete the check. One of the things you will need in order to answer the questions, are the dimensions of your accommodation. Based on a checklist, you can determine what measurements you should take or check. You will find a checklist at www.huurcommissie.nl specially compiled for non-self-contained accommodations. Once you have filled in the rent-check form, you will get an indication of the maximum amount of rent for your accommodation.

The rent commission has derived the rent check from the form that determines the number of points for non-self-contained accommodations. Questions? Contact the rent commission. You can reach them on 0800-488 72 45.

- The maintenance check

A blocked drain, leaking roof or broken doorbell?

The maintenance check at www.huurcommissie.nl gives tenants an indication of who is responsible for making repairs – you or the landlord. You should make allowances for the fact that the result of the check is a recommendation, not a binding decision on the part of the rent commission. You cannot derive any rights from it.

If your maintenance problem does not appear on the list or if you have other questions, contact the rent commission on 0800-48872 45.

Objections to the annual rent increase

- Objections to the annual rent increase must be submitted to your landlord before July 1.
- Your landlord will send the objection to the rent commission within six weeks, with the landlord's own standpoint.
- Depending on the objection, an investigator from the rent commission will visit you to have a look around and compile a report.
- You will receive an invitation approximately two weeks before the hearing.
- The decision will be made within six weeks after the hearing.

See www.huurcommissie.nl for the grounds for submitting objections.

Objection procedure for maintenance defects

- You should report maintenance defects to the landlord in writing. You can do this at any time during the year, but separate from an objection to the annual rent increase.
- Your landlord will have six weeks to correct the defects.
- If the landlord does not do so, you should notify the rent commission.
- An investigator from the rent commission will visit you to have a look around and compile a report.
- You will receive an invitation approximately two weeks before the hearing.
- The rent commission will judge the severity of the maintenance defects; it could order a reduction in rent. Note: although the rent commission could reduce the rent, it cannot issue an order to repair the defects.

See www.huurcommissie.nl for a list of maintenance defects.

Should you pay your rent increase?

If you have submitted an objection to the rent increase, you should go ahead and pay the increase. If you have submitted an objection form, it is clear that you oppose the rent increase. If you do not want to pay it, you should reserve the amount of the increase. It could take quite some time before the rent commission renders a decision. If you are judged to be wrong, you will have to pay the rent increase retroactively. In any case, you should continue to pay your pre-increase rent.

STUDENTS AND RENT SUBSIDIES

Are students entitled to rent subsidies? 'No' is almost always the answer. Most students live in non-self-contained accommodations and are therefore not entitled to rent subsidy.

Non-self-contained living accommodations do not have their own entrances, bathrooms, toilets and kitchens. If you do have all these facilities in your accommodation, it is self-contained and you could be eligible for rent subsidy.

UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

EXCEPTIONS

Sometimes, despite the fact that you live in a non-self-contained accommodation, you could be eligible for rent subsidy. Your accommodation must be part of a building 'designated' by the ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and the Environment. This could be the case if your accommodation is part of a building for 'assisted' living or is a non-self-contained accommodation for which the government provided subsidies for construction or improvements prior to 1997.

This refers to building complexes owned by housing (or formerly, student housing) associations. If you like to know whether you live in a designated accommodation, you should contact your landlord.

AND THEN?

If it turns out that you do live in a designated accommodation, you will not automatically receive rent subsidy. You also have to meet certain requirements. Your entitlement to rent subsidy will depend on your age, income, the amount of your rent, any assets you possess and whether you live alone or with others.

If you would like to know what your situation is, visit www.toeslagen.nl and make a trial calculation. You can also download the application form from that website.