



Housing rental disputes?

The Rent Disputes Tribunal (Norwegian abbreviation HTU, for Husleietvistutvalget) was established by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development on 1 March 2001. The HTU solves cases in Oslo and Akershus. At the 20.05.10 it also opens an office in Bergen.

What is the Rent Disputes Tribunal?

The Rent Disputes Tribunal (HTU) resolves disputes between landlords and tenants of residential property. Unlike the Conciliation Court, the HTU employs conflict-solvers who have legal training and special knowledge of rent law. They also have special training and experience in conflict resolution.

Functions of the Rent Disputes Tribunal

The HTU deals with disputes between landlords and tenants of residential accommodation, and can both mediate and take decisions in disputes. However, disputes over the lease of commercial premises fall outside the scheme, as does rental of holiday homes and cabins.

Speed of dispute resolution

The HTU aims that any delay in the process will not be caused by HTU. So far HTU mostly have achieved that goal. By 01.01.09 the average time for cases solved by mediation was 9,5 weeks, and for cases solved by a decision was 12 weeks. That must be considered as a normal time, because of the process. Delays are normally caused for example because the fee is not paid, the complaint is uncompleted, the other person is difficult to find, etc. However the Oslo-office in 2009 got 62 % more cases than the year before. It is still possible to get a mediation within a few weeks, but it has caused that it might take some extra weeks before a case can be decided.

Procedure

Both the landlord or the tenant can bring the case before the HTU via a complaint that describes the issue in dispute. The HTU will send the complaint to the other party, who will be given a short deadline for comment.

After this, both parties are called in to a mediation meeting before the HTU. This is voluntary. A case officer will attempt to help the parties reach agreement on a solution; if they do, a conciliation settlement is made.

If mediation is refused or is unsuccessful, the case officer, together with two other tribunal members appointed by the respective Norwegian landlords' and tenants' associations (*Huseiernes Landsforbund* and *Norges Leieboerforbund*), will make a ruling on the case. The dispute is then adjudicated on a legal basis.

Conciliation and decision have the same legal effect as an enforceable judgment, unless the case is brought before the District Court (*tingrett*) within one month.

Form of the complaint

To be heard, the complaint or petition must include:

- * the names and addresses of the parties
- * the address of the rented accommodation involved in the dispute

- * a short description of the case
- * a description of the results the parties desire (statement of claim)
- * the signature of the complainant
- * a receipt for the fee paid to the HTU.

Copies of any documents in the case that illuminate the dispute should be submitted together with the complaint. It is of particular importance to submit a copy of any contract of lease.

Costs of dispute resolution before the Rent Disputes Tribunal

The party requesting the dispute resolution must pay a fee of NOK 860 (1 x "R") in advance. The court fee ("R") is fixed by the Storting, the Norwegian parliament, once a year.

Other schemes:

The Conciliation Court

If the dispute can be treated of the HTU, it is not possible to bring rental disputes before the Conciliation Court (*forliksrådet*). If the dispute can not be treated by the HTU, it normally must be brought before the Conciliation Court. This is done by means of a conciliation complaint (*forliksklage*). If no conciliation is achieved, the case is then referred to Oslo District Court (*Oslo Tingrett*).

Advice and legal aid

The Norwegian Landlords' Association (*Huseiernes Landsforbund*)

www.huseierne.no, or tel.: 22 47 75 00

The Norwegian Tenants' Association (*Norges Leieboerforbund*)

www.lbf.no, or tel.: 23 15 74 00

Advice on the law and your rights as a tenant can also be obtained by asking a lawyer or the advice desk of the Norwegian Bar Association, see www.jus.no.

Legal advisers and lawyers may also be found through the phone book.

JussBuss – the Oslo law students' free legal aid service

www.jus.uio.no/jussbuss

or tel.: 22 85 18 50

City of Oslo Free Legal Aid (*Oslo kommunes fri rettshjelp*)

Tel.: 22 42 52 60

How to find the Rent Disputes Service

Fr. Nansens vei 19, Majorstuen

Postal address: P.O. Box 5118 Majorstuen, 0302 Oslo

Tel.: 22 59 31 50, Fax: 22 59 31 60

Homepage:

www.husleietvistutvalget.no

www.htu.no

E-mail: firmapost@htu.no