



Lawyers fighting for students' rights since 1974

STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES OFFICE
922 Campus Center
Amherst MA 01003

OFFICE HOURS:
Monday—Friday
9:00am-5:00pm

PHONE:
413-545-1995

FAX:
413-545-2373

EMAIL:
slso@stuaf.umass.edu

WEBSITE:
www.umass.edu/rso/slso
www.facebook.com/umassSLSO



STUDENTS RIGHTS ADVOCATE

Published by: UMass Student Legal Services Office

FALL 2011

SECURITY DEPOSITS, A-Z

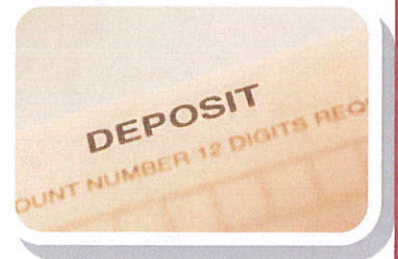
By: Carol Booth, Esq., Senior Staff Attorney of Student Legal Services Office

“First Month’s Rent, Last Month’s Rent, and Security Deposit Required.” How often have you seen this phrase in rental advertisements and applications? When you hand over a security deposit to your landlord, do you know what you are paying for and what you need to do to get it back? Do you know what your landlord is required to do with it? Since the security deposit is usually equal to one month’s rent, it is a significant amount to lose, and without knowing your rights, you may risk your landlord keeping the security deposit when s/he is not entitled to it. Taking a few easy precautions can ensure that you will get it back with interest.

WHEN YOU PAY A SECURITY DEPOSIT...

I. **Be sure your landlord deposits it in an escrow account.**

Your security deposit does not become your landlord’s property when you pay it to him/her. The security deposit is **your money** and the landlord can only hold on to it if s/he puts it in an interest bearing escrow account and follows other legal requirements. ‘Escrow’ is a special kind of account that indicates that the landlord is holding someone else’s money. The landlord is required to give you a receipt within 30 days that provides you with the name of the bank and the account number where your money is being kept. If your landlord does not properly deposit your security deposit, s/he forfeits his/her right to keep it, and you may be entitled to three times your deposit back!



(continued on page 2)