



Learn to Speak SF Rental Talk

*Information taken directly from <https://myusf.usfca.edu/student-life/off-campus-housing/housing-culture>

Term	Definition
Common SF Rental Speak	
Room	A single room within an apartment or house (may be advertised as private or shared)
Apartment	Several units on the same floor with one common entrance
Efficiency	Smaller than a studio, kitchen is very small and part of the living room
Flat	An entire floor of an old building with a private entrance
Junior 1BR	Studio apartment with a sleeping alcove
In-Law	Apartment unit added to but separate from a single family home
Studio	An open plan one room unit consisting of combined living and one bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom
SRO (Single Room Occupancy) / Student Shared Living	Single living unit, in which bathroom is typically shared by floor mates
Lease Terminology and Key Information	Most common leases are 12 months long, with rent being due the first day of each month. Here is a list of lease-related terminology commonly used by landlords.
**Month-to-Month	A type of housing contract that is renewed at the end of each month. Under this lease agreement, tenants are allowed to leave after giving a 30 day notice.
Yearly	A housing contract that holds tenants liable to pay rent for an entire year. Breaking a signed, yearly lease agreement will result in a tenant having financial penalties.
Landlord	The person who owns and/or rents the property
Master tenant	Person who moves into the premises under a written or oral contract with the landlord or whoever inherits the apartment after the original master tenant leaves. S/he collects the rent from the subtenants and pays the landlord each month. The master tenant is the only person on the lease.
Subtenant	Tenant who pays the master tenant each month and who is not on a signed lease agreement
Co-Tenant	Person who may have moved into a property after the original lease as signed, but has established a relationship with the landlord, most commonly through payment of rent each month
Rent	Amount paid by the first day of every month to continue living in a property
Lease	Contractual, legal agreement written and signed by the landlord that specifies the property to be rented out for a tenant or tenants during a specific period of time
Deposit	The amount paid to a landlord during the beginning of a lease assignment as a placeholder for any fees that may arise due to damages during a tenant's rental period. All tenants are legally entitled to receive this deposit back at the end of a lease agreement, assuming that obligations have been met and that no damages have occurred.
Penalty Fee:	Amount owed to landlord by the tenant if the tenant breaks any of the rules listed on the lease agreement
Rent Control	(Taken from the San Francisco Tenants Union) "In San Francisco, most tenants are covered by rent control. This means rents can only be raised by certain amounts per year and the tenant can only be evicted for 'just causes.' In addition, some rental units have restrictions on how much the landlord can charge the new tenant due to previous evictions. Tenants who do not have rent control can have their rent increased by any amount at any time with a proper written notice."
Renters Resume	A document that lists past living arrangements, landlord references (if the applicant has any), current employment, and scholarships or revenue intended to verify stability in terms of paying rent in a timely manner. Renter's resumes quite often verify applicants as respectful and responsible people who would be qualified as tenants.

** Please note that it's rare for leases to start out as month-to-month. Usually, landlords will give their tenants the option to switch to month-to-month after the first year lease is up. If you are looking for a housing lease agreement that doesn't hold you accountable to a full year, subletting might be the best option for you.