

# RENTERS - DOES YOUR HOME NEED REPAIRS?

**You have a right to a safe and healthy home.  
Here are some tips for working with your landlord when repairs are needed.**

## WHAT KIND OF PROBLEM IS IT?

Some housing problems are more urgent than others. An urgent (emergency or ongoing) problem that affects your health or safety may be handled differently from a less urgent issue.

## STEP 1: CALL YOUR LANDLORD

- Call, text or email your landlord or property manager
- Note how and when to contact you
- Take a picture -send it to landlord
- Keep all pictures, calls, texts, emails, and letters

### **Urgent Problems**

1. Describe the problem
2. Say problem is urgent
3. Ask for the repair within a day

### **Less-Urgent Problems**

1. Describe the problem
2. Ask when the repair will be done
3. Repair should be done in 1 or 2 weeks
4. If no response, send a certified letter

## STEP 2: CALL A CITY INSPECTOR

- Call 311 (ask for your Neighborhood Service Center)
- Be sure to leave your contact information

### **Urgent Problems**

1. Say there is a "major health and safety" problem
2. Say when you contacted your landlord
3. If urgent, the inspector will come within a day
4. The city will send your landlord a "notice and order" with a deadline
5. In some cases, the city can make urgent repairs and then bill the property owner

### **Less-Urgent Problems**

1. Describe the problem
2. The inspector will call your landlord
3. The inspector may visit the unit
4. Meet the inspector to show them the problem
5. The city will send your landlord a "notice and order"
6. The "notice and order" will give a deadline for repair

## STEP 3: GET LEGAL HELP

- For free legal help contact [tenantdefenseproject.org](http://tenantdefenseproject.org) (585) 504-6195
- DO NOT stop paying rent unless a lawyer helps you.

## IMPORTANT TIPS FOR RENTERS

For a limited time there are federally funded programs to help cover overdue rent for households who were economically impacted by COVID. Call 2-1-1 to apply for rental assistance.

Some landlords may try to evict their tenants for requesting repairs. THIS IS ILLEGAL, even if you do not have a written lease. Call The Housing Council hotline for help.

The City program to repair hazards and bill landlords is currently limited to buildings with two or more apartments that have immediate health and safety hazards. Talk with the city inspector to find out more. (See Step 2 on previous page)

Sometimes tenants withhold rent when landlords fail to make repairs. Get legal advice before you do this (call Legal Aid Society or LAWNY). For general advice about withholding rent money call The Housing Council.

Smoke detectors save lives. You should NEVER be without a working smoke detector. Call 3-1-1 and Rochester Fire Department will bring you one for free.

## LOCAL RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND HELP

Legal Assistance of Western New York ([www.lawny.org](http://www.lawny.org)) (585) 325-2520

Legal Aid Society of Rochester, NY ([www.lasroc.org](http://www.lasroc.org)) (585) 232-4090

Monroe County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service (585) 546-2130

The Housing Council ([thehousingcouncil.org](http://thehousingcouncil.org)) (585) 546-3700

Call "2-1-1" to ask for other resources or services ([www.211helpline.org](http://www.211helpline.org))

Tenant Defense Project ([www.tenantdefense.org](http://www.tenantdefense.org)) (585) 504-6195

Find Rochester code enforcement information here:

<https://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589936012>



**Environmental Health Sciences Center**  
**Community Engagement Core**  
**NIEHS Grant P30 ES001247**  
**Last Updated March 2021**