

HOW CAN I GET MY LANDLORD TO MAKE REPAIRS?



Legal Requirements

You have the right to a safe and clean apartment. The law requires your landlord to keep your unit in reasonable condition while you are living there.

What does my landlord have to do to make sure my place is in reasonable condition?

Under California law, your landlord must:

- Fix your roof if it leaks
- Fix your windows and window screens if they are broken
- Make sure your doors and locks work
- Fix your plumbing (toilet, sink, and pipes) if they are broken
- Make sure you have hot and cold running water
- Make sure your lights and electricity work
- Keep your building and yard free of trash, rats, mice, roaches and pests
- Make sure there is no mold
- Make sure your floors, cupboards, walls, windows are in good condition
- Make sure you have heating
- Make sure there are working trash cans to hold all the garbage

How much time does my landlord have to fix things?

Serious repairs must be fixed right away. The landlord does not have to let you know before entering your apartment to make a serious repair.

Minor repairs must be made in a reasonable time—usually within two weeks. The landlord must make the repairs during normal business hours and tell you, in writing, 24 hours before they enter your apartment (unless you both agree otherwise).

Examples of serious repairs:

- *Broken locks on door*
- *No heat in the winter*
- *No electricity*
- *No working toilet*

Examples of minor repairs:

- *A faucet with low water pressure*
- *A cracked window*
- *A doorbell that does not work*

You should not try to make it difficult for your landlord to make repairs. If you do not let your landlord into your apartment to do repairs, the landlord can use that as a reason to evict you.

Does the landlord have to replace my old carpet or paint my unit when I have been in the apartment for a long time?

The landlord does not have to paint or put in new carpet unless it is dangerous to your health. If you think your paint or carpet is dangerous, you can call a health inspector at (888) 700-9995.

How to Request Repairs

How do I ask my landlord to make repairs?

Step 1: Write a short letter to the apartment manager or owner with a list of what needs to be fixed.

Remember:

- Always write it down, even if the manager is nice or the manager lives in your building
- Put the date on the letter
- Keep a copy of the letter for yourself

There is an example letter on the last page that you can use if you like.

Step 2: Take pictures of the problem. Write down what the problems are. Ask others who do not live in the home to look at the problem and write a description, so that you have witnesses if you need them.

Step 3: Give your landlord time to fix the problem.

Step 4: Get help if the landlord does not fix the problems within a reasonable time. If your landlord has not fixed serious repairs in 1-2 days, you can schedule an inspection.

If you live in Los Angeles County and you have problems with mice, bedbugs, roaches or mold, call the Los Angeles Department of Public Health at (888) 700-9995.

If you live in LA County and you have other problems, call the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety at (888) 524-2845.

If the city you live in has a housing department, you can also call them for help.

Additional Steps for Serious Repairs

If you have told the landlord in writing about a serious repair and your landlord does not repair the problem after 1-2 days, you also have these 4 options. Keep in mind that options (2) and (3) are very risky because your landlord can try to evict you if you do not pay all of your rent.

You can:

1. Move out. You may end your lease or rental agreement by moving out. You must tell your landlord in writing that you are moving out because of the serious repairs that are needed. Remember, you must give your landlord enough time to respond.

2. Repair the problem yourself and subtract the cost from your rent ("repair and deduct"): You may repair the problem yourself or pay a professional. Keep all your receipts and make copies for your landlord. You can subtract the cost from your rent, but you cannot subtract more than 1 month's rent. You can only use "repair and deduct" once each year.

3. Stop paying some of your rent: You may stop paying some of your rent because of the serious repairs that are needed. You should try to solve the problem in other ways first. If you stop paying rent, your landlord may try to evict you. If you choose to stop paying rent, you should save the rent money just in case a judge tells you to pay it to your landlord.

4. Sue your landlord: Sometimes it makes sense to sue your landlord, which you can do in small claims court. In this type of lawsuit, you ask the judge to decide that your unit is not worth the rent you have paid for it because of the serious repairs that are needed.

What if my landlord gets upset and tries to evict me for complaining?

The law does not allow landlords to evict for this reason. To protect yourself, you should keep a copy of your communication with your landlord. That way you can prove what happened if the landlord tries to evict you.

If you have questions, never be afraid to reach out for additional help!

Notice of Needed Repairs

Date

Name of landlord or manager

Landlord or manager's address

City, state, and zip code

Dear _____

I request these problems to be fixed:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heat | <input type="checkbox"/> Roaches, mice, or bedbugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom sink |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity | <input type="checkbox"/> Cracks, hole, or leaks in walls | <input type="checkbox"/> Shower or tub |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke alarm | <input type="checkbox"/> Broken windows | <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen sink |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mold | <input type="checkbox"/> Locks on doors | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hot water | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | |

Here is a description of the problems that need to be fixed:

All of the problems I listed are dangerous and/or unhealthy. I have not caused these problems. If you do not fix these problems within a reasonable time as California law requires, I may be forced to take other legal action to ensure that the repairs get done.

Sincerely,

Sign your name: _____

Print your name: _____

Your address: _____

I have made a copy of this letter for my records.