



When Repairs Are Needed Fact Sheet

If something goes wrong in your rental unit, first figure out if it is something you should fix yourself. Unplugging a toilet or sink, changing light bulbs, or replacing batteries in a smoke detector are things most landlords require residents to handle themselves. If you aren't sure, check your rental agreement or call the landlord.

If it is clearly something that the landlord should fix:

Call the landlord or his/her agent; the name and phone number should be on your rental agreement. Before you call the landlord, gather the information:

- What happened?
- When did you notice it?
- What have you already done about it?
- What do you want done?

Give the landlord the following information:

- What needs repair—be as specific as possible.
- What type of a problem it is causing for you.
- Your name and address.
- Times when it would be convenient for the repairs to be made.

Ask the person who answers your call for his or her name. Ask when you can expect the repair to be made. Make notes on your conversation and keep them until the repair is completed.

If the repair is not made when promised...

Wait two days, and then write a letter to the landlord, repeating the information in your phone message and stating what you were told in the phone conversation, along with the name of the person with whom you talked. Be polite but firm in your letter and other contacts. Keep a copy of the letter. Handout 5 is a sample letter you may work from.

If the landlord has not made the repair after several requests...

Contact one of the resources listed in Renter Resources for advice on what to do next. Depending on the situation, you may be advised to report the problem to the local building inspector, take specific actions with the landlord, find a mediator, or file a complaint with a consumer protection agency.

