

Unhealthy Housing

Things to Know

PA Implied Warranty of Habitability

- Tenants have a right to a **decent place to live**. This is called the “implied warranty of habitability.”
- Landlords must make sure the **housing is safe, sanitary and secure**.
- Landlords are responsible for things such as:
 - Drinkable water, a sewage system, adequate heat, a working electrical system.
 - A safe structure, lockable doors and windows, a smoke detector.
 - A sanitary home, free from infestation, no water leaks.
- **Exclusions**
 - Cosmetic repairs and damage caused by the tenant/guests are not covered

Before Moving In

- Record damages with landlord/manager.
- If possible, Check with a housing inspector for property history.
- Take photos of any damages.
- Check out the landlord on Good Landlords

Review:

- <https://www.thenarrativejustice.com/good-landlords>.

Handling Landlord Repairs

- **Notify landlord in writing** (letter, email or text) - describe the problem and ask to have it fixed.
- **Allow reasonable response time**. If the problem is urgent (such as no heat in the winter), a reasonable time is 24 hours.
- **Take photos** of the problem.
- **Keep copies** of all communications with your landlord.
- **Keep receipts** for all expenses you incur because of the problem.

Non-Compliance Steps

If a landlord does not fix the problem within a reasonable amount of time, a tenant may:

- **Withhold** rent.
- Make the repair themselves and **deduct the cost** from their rent.
- **File a complaint** with the Health Department.
- **Sue the landlord** and get a court order requiring the problem to be repaired.
- **Move** somewhere else.

For more information visit

<https://www.palawhelp.org>.

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Where to go for legal advice and other support

This information is correct as of March 2024.

1 Community Justice Project

- Support cases where *many tenants* are affected by the same issue (class action litigation)
- Services: fair housing litigation, litigation to protect the rights of subsidized housing tenants, litigation and advocacy to prevent mass displacements, lead paint advocacy and litigation, consumer housing litigation, and other issues
- Contact: 412-434-6002
- Link: <https://www.communityjusticeproject.org/contact/send-us-a-message/>



Community Justice Project
Website QR Code

2 Neighborhood Legal Services

- Services: legal representation (if lockout or eviction filing) or advice
- Populations: adults 18+, low-income individuals and families
- Contact: 412-255-6700
- Link: <https://nlsa.us/request-legal-help/>



Neighborhood Legal Services
Website QR Code

3 ACTION-Housing

- Services: Weatherization Assistance Program, maintenance & repairs
- Populations: adults 18+, home renters, low-income
- Contact: 412-281-2102
- Link: <https://actionhousing.org/our-services/weatherization/>



ACTION-Housing
Website QR Code

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For more info, visit: www.ejgp.org/advocacy-and-organizing-training

