

 LEGAL AID
JUSTICE CENTER

Need Repairs?

Virginia landlords are required to maintain their properties. In addition, Federal program housing must provide “decent, safe and sanitary” housing for low-income families. This means a dwelling must be adequate structurally and outfitted with essential facilities and services.

If your apartment is unfit for living, you may force your landlord to fix it.

Unless you have a written agreement with your landlord that you are responsible for repairs, you should NOT fix anything.

Notify your landlord immediately.



Do NOT Resort to Self-Help:

- You may not withhold rent
- You may not order repairs and bill the landlord or deduct the cost from your rent
- You may not move out without paying rent

How to get your apartment fixed:

FIRST: Notify your landlord in writing about the problem and request it be fixed. Date the letter and include photographs, if possible. **KEEP A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.**

- The landlord has a “reasonable” amount of time to make the repairs. Emergencies, like no heat, must be fixed immediately.
- **REMEMBER YOU MUST CONTINUE TO PAY RENT DURING THIS TIME.**

SECOND: If your landlord fails to fix the problem within a reasonable amount of time, you can:

- File a Tenant’s Assertion with the general district court (form online).
 - You must prove the landlord was notified of the problem (i.e. the letters and pictures) and pay a filing fee.
 - You must pay your full rent to the court, where it is held in an escrow account.
- There will be a court hearing, at which the court may order repairs, end your lease, and/or divide the rent in escrow as the court sees fit.