

Calling 311 about a Housing Quality Issue

A General Guide for Tenants on What to Expect



Department of
Housing Preservation
& Development

1. Issue in your apartment?

Whether heat/hot water, roaches, leaks, or other needed repairs-- contact your landlord first to fix it. If they are unresponsive, contact 311 (call, online, or mobile app) to make a complaint.

Know your rights! Your immigration status does not matter!

2. 311 will send the complaint to the Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).



Keep your service request number so you can check the status of your complaint on HPDOnline or call 311.

3. HPD notifies owner
"Please fix!"

4. HPD calls back tenant
"Did they fix it?"

"Yes!" 😊
"No!" 😞 or no response



Timeframe depends on severity of the issue. More serious, life threatening complaints will be prioritized.

5. HPD sends a Code Inspector The timeframe depends on severity of the case, but should be within 30 days. If the inspector cannot access the unit, they leave a card for the tenant to call and make an appointment within 10 days. If it is a heat complaint, they try to inspect another unit.

Inspectors also check for other safety items, such as smoke detectors. If no inspector arrives after 30 days, you can check the complaint status through HPDOnline or call 311 or the Tenant Info Messaging System at 212-863-8307.

If English is not your primary language, let the inspector know and they can call an interpreter to help!

6. If a violation is found the inspector will issue the owner a Violation and send a notice to fix it. The time frame will depend on the violation class.

7a. If the violation is certified but not corrected, the tenant can challenge as instructed in the letter. HPD also attempts to randomly reinspect certified violations. If re-inspection finds that the condition is not corrected, the case is referred to HPD's **Housing Litigation Division**, which may pursue legal action against the owner.

7b. If audit and re-inspection are successful and condition has been corrected 😊

If unable to re-inspect and there is no tenant response, the violation closes after 70 days.



Hazardous Conditions? Class C Violations are hazardous conditions and require emergency repairs by the owner.

HPD notifies owner
"Fix this NOW!"
(within 24 hours for most Class C violations)

Time's up? HPD calls the tenant. If still not fixed, the violation is sent to HPD's **Emergency Repair Program**. Appointment may be set up with tenant to get a scope for repair.

Fixing! HPD staff visits the apartment to create a scope of work*, contracts a vendor to fix the condition, and bills the owner through the Department of Finance (DOF).

*If HPD is unable to access apartment, inspector leaves a card and sends a letter in the mail. Tenant must call to make an appointment, or else no further action is taken.

7c. If the owner doesn't certify the violation remains OPEN on building record. Tenants can check on HPDOnline to see all open violations or call 311. Tenants should seek legal counsel and initiate a Housing Court Action, and may contact local elected officials for help if conditions are not corrected.

If you are in a rent regulated apartment, you may be able to file for rent reduction with NYS Homes and Community Renewal (NYS HCR) call 718-739-6400.

For information on your tenant rights, visit nyc.gov/tenantsrights

If you suspect corruption or collusion involving a code inspector, please report to the NYC Department of Investigation (DOI) at 212-3-NYC-DOI
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Calling about tenant harassment?

When a tenant calls 311 about harassment, the complaint is routed to different agencies/ groups depending on the type of harassment:

1. **Deliberate construction-related problems** (working after hours, failure to repair plumbing fixtures or stairs, etc.) - to HPD or the Dept. of Buildings (DOB)
2. **Failure to provide necessary repairs or utilities** (turning off heat, etc.) - to HPD
3. **Physical intimidation or lock outs** (abuse, threats, etc.) - call 911 NYPD
4. **Other forms of harassment** (buy outs, not offering leases or lease renewals, not accepting rent checks, racial/ethnic discrimination, etc.) - depending on type, potentially to legal services, NYS Homes and Community Renewal (NYS HCR) if in a rent-stabilized building, or NYC Human Rights Commission, etc.

Tenants can go to Housing Court if any of the above forms of harassment occur.

HPD and DOB will protect tenants facing harassment types 1 and 2 by enforcing building and housing code compliance. Tenants can use the reporting of a complaint and issuance of any subsequent violations to support either a Housing Court or NYS HCR action regarding harassment. For these types, tenants can also email the Tenant Harassment Prevention Task Force (THPT) at thpt@hpd.nyc.gov. THPT was created to investigate and bring enforcement actions - including criminal charges - against landlords who harass tenants by creating unsafe living conditions through illegal construction. Include your contact info, building address, and description of conditions in your email.

Seek Legal Assistance!

311 can help refer you to legal services and provide information on Housing Court support and procedures. Mayor de Blasio has created a program to provide free legal assistance to low-income tenants who are harassed.