

Tenant Responsibilities

1. Pay your rent on time. Make sure to get a receipt, particularly if you pay in cash. Keep track of your rent receipts, i.e., cancelled checks, etc.
2. Report problems to your Landlord in writing. Allow a reasonable amount of time for repairs to be made. You must give your Landlord access to the property to make repairs if he/she has given you 24 hours notice. In emergencies, your Landlord does not need to give 24 hours notice. If you change the locks, give your Landlord a key.
3. Report problems with your rental property to L&I by dialing '311'. Ask for a Service Request Number.
4. If you escrow or withhold your rent, you must do the following: Notify your Landlord in writing. Open a separate account; keep your rent current. Give your Landlord a copy of the rent account statement every month.
5. If you move out and want your Landlord to return your security deposit, you must send a letter to your Landlord that includes your forwarding address and a request for the return of your security deposit. The Landlord must return your security deposit within 30 days after you move. If the Landlord does not return your security deposit, you can file a complaint in Municipal Court, which is located at 34 South 11th Street, Room 500.

Landlord Responsibilities

1. Landlords must have a valid rental license from L&I before offering property for rent in the City of Philadelphia.
2. If Landlords do not reside in Philadelphia, they must have a Philadelphia Agent. Give the name, address and phone number of the Agent to the Tenant.
3. No matter what the lease states, Landlords are generally responsible for repairs to the property. There is an implied warranty of habitability in every lease, which extends to the Tenant. Landlords may not pass on the cost of maintenance repairs to the Tenant. Landlords must give Tenants 24 hours notice before entering the property except in emergencies.
4. If the Tenant stays in the property for more than 12 months, Landlords must return to the Tenant any security deposit in excess of one month. Security deposits must be returned to the Tenant within 30 days after he/she vacates the premises.
5. Do not evict or lock your Tenant out of the property without following the legal process. This includes giving the Tenant a written notice to vacate and filing an Eviction complaint in Municipal / Landlord & Tenant Court.



The Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission



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What We Do

The City's Fair Housing Commission (FHC) enforces the Philadelphia Fair Housing Ordinance, Chapter 9-800 of the Philadelphia Code.

The Fair Housing Commission addresses situations in Philadelphia rental properties that affect the health and safety of Tenants, resolves unfair rental practices, and facilitates positive Landlord & Tenant relationships.

What to do if Repairs Are Needed

1. Inform your Landlord about the problems in writing. Keep copies of your letters. Give your Landlord a reasonable amount of time to make repairs.
2. If your Landlord refuses or fails to make repairs, or takes an unreasonable amount of time, report the problems to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) by dialing '311'. Make sure to ask for a Service Request Number and keep a copy of it for your records.
3. A Representative from L&I will call you with a date and time for an inspection.

When to File a Complaint

File a complaint with the Fair Housing Commission (FHC) when:

1. Repairs are needed, you told your Landlord about the problems, and you have reported the problems to L&I or another department or agency of the City, such as the Health Department or the Philadelphia Gas Works; and
2. Your Landlord shut off utilities for which he/she is responsible, and/or;
3. Your Landlord wants you to pay for the maintenance repairs, and/or;
4. Your Landlord is threatening to change your locks, and/or;
5. Your Landlord is asking you to vacate the property. (You must be current in rent – whether paid directly to your landlord, or withheld in a bank or escrow account.)

Bring the following items: with you when you file a complaint with the FHC: a written lease, if you have one; rent receipts; any letters between the Tenant & Landlord regarding the needed repairs; eviction notice; photos, etc.

If a complaint is accepted, a Hearing will be scheduled with both the Tenant & Landlord. You will be notified by mail of the date and time for the hearing.

Hearings

- Hearings are heard by Fair Housing Commissioners. Statements are made under oath and are recorded.
- If you choose, you may bring witnesses or legal counsel.
- Both sides will have a chance to be heard. The Commissioners will listen to the facts of the case and then issue an Order, or a set of instructions, for both parties.
- Not all complaints are resolved at the first hearing and a second hearing may be scheduled.
- You have 30 days to appeal the Commission's Order. You do this by filing a Notice of Appeal with the Court of Common Pleas, Room 280, City Hall.