



# How to Make a 311 Complaint Against Your Landlord

Has your landlord failed to provide you with heat and hot water?

Has your landlord failed to provide you with other essential services, such as running water?

Has the landlord refused to repair the problems in your apartment, such as a leaking ceiling?

Have you contacted or notified your superintendent, landlord, property manager and/or managing agent and have not yet received any response or an adequate response?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then you can report these problems to the City’s Citizen Service Center at 311

## WHY SHOULD YOU CALL 311?

A complaint with the City means a City agency, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), is now involved in notifying the landlord about the maintenance problem(s) you have reported and monitoring the landlord’s progress in correcting the problem.

In some instances, if the landlord fails to correct problems that are labeled “immediately hazardous conditions” in your apartment, such as a collapsed ceiling or the presence of lead paint in an apartment where a two-year-old child is an occupant, HPD may repair the problem and bill the landlord for the cost of the repair.

A complaint filed with the City about the maintenance problem(s) in your apartment is a record that the landlord has not done what he or she is required by law to do, which is to provide you with safe and habitable housing. Also, this record may come in handy in the future if your landlord takes you to Housing Court.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Pen or pencil and paper
- Telephone number you can be reached at

## WHAT TO DO

1. Dial 311. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is 212-504-4115.
2. You will hear the message “Thank you for calling the City of New York” followed by an opportunity for you to press the number corresponding to the language you speak. For example, Spanish, Chinese-Mandarin, Chinese-Cantonese, and French are just a few of the languages that are now available.

3. You may be placed on hold for a while.
4. When your call is answered, tell the operator you live in a residential building and you want to file a complaint against your landlord or file a housing maintenance complaint.

### **WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED**

1. The operator will ask you if you previously made an attempt to notify your landlord or his or her employee about this problem or if you made an attempt to resolve this problem directly with your landlord or his or her employee. This means, if you called the superintendent or the property manager but did not reach them, you have made an attempt.
2. If you have made an attempt, tell the operator “yes.” The operator will help you file a maintenance complaint. If you have not made an attempt to notify the landlord about the problem, the operator will likely ask you to try to notify your landlord and then call 311 back after you have done that.
3. You will be asked your name, address and a phone number where you can be reached. You may also be required to give this information even if you are calling about a maintenance issue in the building, such as garbage cans blocking the hallways or dark hallways.
4. You will be asked to describe the problems you are encountering in your apartment. If it is an emergency that affects your safety, make sure you tell the operator that. For example, emergency situations may include a collapsed ceiling or bursting water pipes or burned electrical outlet.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

After taking all the information, the operator will give you a complaint number or a tracking number. Make sure you write down this number since you will need it to check on the status of the housing maintenance complaint in the future.

HPD may attempt to contact the landlord to see if the complaint has been corrected. Before HPD sends an inspector to your apartment, HPD may contact you to see if the problem has been corrected. If the problem has not been corrected, an HPD inspector may be sent to the building to verify your complaint and issue any other appropriate violation(s).

If you do not receive any response from HPD, you can check the progress of your complaint at [www.nyc.gov/hpd](http://www.nyc.gov/hpd) You will need both your building’s address and the complaint number for this. If you do not have Internet access, you may call 311 to check on your complaint status.

After an HPD inspector inspects your apartment, he or she should provide you with the following:

1. a summary of the issued violations
  2. a complaint number
  3. the date of the inspection
  4. the inspector’s badge number
- \* Write these things down if they are not already written on a sheet of paper.

If an HPD inspector verifies there are violations in your apartment or building, HPD will send a Notice of Violation to the landlord instructing him or her to repair the condition causing the violation.

**WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?**

If you live in Manhattan, Brooklyn or the Bronx you may call MFY Legal Services, Inc.'s Housing Project on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 212-417-3888.

**DISCLAIMER: This fact sheet gives general information for NYC residents; it is NOT legal advice.**