

## How do I get my landlord to carry out repairs?

Private landlords are required to carry out repairs to their properties within reasonable timescales depending on the seriousness of the problem. If repairs are needed in the place where you are living there are a number of steps you can take to ensure that your landlord carries them out:

1. Always report the problem to your landlord, no matter how small, and always give the landlord the opportunity to fix repairs
2. Follow it up in writing, with a date and keep a copy. It may be important that you can prove your landlord was aware of the problem

If you don't know who your landlord is notify the agent. You have a legal right to know the landlord's name and address. If you don't know check all your documents about your tenancy or get advice from your local service centre.

When you report your problem your landlord should tell you who is responsible for the repair, what will be done and how long it will take.

In emergencies (e.g. a gas leak should always be reported on the TRANSCO local gas emergency line 0800 111 999) you may have to call the supplier or emergency services but tell the landlord too.

### **What if the landlord ignores me or takes too long?**

Call the council's Private Sector Housing Group (PSHG) on 020 8430 2000 as soon as possible and they will tell you whether they can assist you with your specific problem. If they can, our officers will provide advice, talk with the landlord, and if necessary take enforcement action. We aim to respond to all complaints within 10 days unless it's an emergency (see below).

Give more detail when you call the PSHG team. For example, where you live, who the landlord is, what the problem is, is there an agent, what are your contact numbers.

### **What else should I do?**

- gather evidence
- take and date photographs
- cost belongings that have been damaged
- keep copies and notes of any letters or emails about repairs
- if someone is injured or is made ill, go to your doctor or hospital; keep a record of treatment, and how long symptoms last
- keep receipts of any money you need to spend
- notify the PSHG team of any changes, if the landlord has done the repairs
- report threat and harassment

### **Can I get compensation for living in bad conditions?**

You may be able to get compensation if the problems have affected your enjoyment of the property. However, the council does **NOT** act on your behalf to obtain compensation. You will have to seek your own legal advice.

### **What if the landlord tries to evict me because of contacting the council?**

There may be a risk with private tenants that the landlord will try to evict you or make life difficult instead of doing repairs. However in most cases a landlord simply cannot throw you out immediately. They will have to give you a period of notice (usually two months but this is depending on the type of tenancy agreement you have; you can check this with an advisor at your local service centre).

If you have received an eviction notice or are being illegally evicted you should speak to the council's housing options centre on 020 8430 2000 or seek specialist legal advice.

Please note that illegal evictions or harassment of tenants are criminal offences and if you feel you are a victim to either of these you should contact the council's housing options centre on 020 8430 2000 or seek specialist legal advice.

### **What can the council do?**

Our private sector housing officers will provide advice, talk with the landlord, and if necessary take enforcement action.

### **Can I stop paying rent?**

No, you do not have the right to stop paying rent even if there is disrepair, the landlord may try to evict you for rent arrears.

However, if you decide to stop paying rent then you should put the amount you would have paid in rent into a separate bank account. This is so you can show in any subsequent legal proceedings your willingness to pay rent and also so you can pay the rent to the landlord when repairs are complete. In any case, before withholding rent always obtain specialist legal advice.

### **Should I do repairs myself?**

Only if you are responsible for the damage and if you are qualified to do so. You should always seek the landlord's permission, but if they are ignoring you contact the council's Private Sector Housing Team first, they have enforcement powers to get landlords to make certain repairs.

### **Emergency repairs?**

In emergencies you should call the electricity or gas supplier or the emergency services where appropriate.

- A gas leak should always be reported on the national gas emergency line: 0800 111 999
- For an electricity cut-off contact your electricity supplier and have the meter number to hand. If you do not know who your supplier is call EDF on 0800 028 0247, who should be able to assist you.
- For serious water leaks and flooding then you should contact London Fire Brigade on 999.
- For water cut offs contact Thames Water on 0845 9200 800 and have the meter number to hand.

**Remember to tell the landlord too.**

### **For further information and advice:**

Visit your local service centre to be referred for advice

[www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)

Tel: 0208 430 2000

### **Private Sector Housing Group**

Housing and Public Protection

Newham Dockside

1000 Dockside Road

Tel: 020 8430 2000

9 am to 5 pm, Mondays to Fridays

Email: [ENVPrivate.SectorHousing@newham.gov.uk](mailto:ENVPrivate.SectorHousing@newham.gov.uk)

### **Shelter**

website: [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

Tel: 0800 800 4444:

Publications online:

- getting repairs done
- harassment and illegal eviction

### **Citizen Advice Bureau**

website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

### **Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)**

website: [www.communities.gov.uk/housing](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing)