

RENTAL REPAIRS GUIDE FOR TENANTS

While this information may be helpful to both landlords and tenants, it is not a substitute for professional legal advice. In Georgia, there is not a government agency that can intervene in a landlord-tenant dispute or force the landlord or tenant to behave a particular way. Landlords or tenants who cannot resolve a dispute need to use the courts, either directly or through a lawyer, to enforce their legal rights.

THE DAY YOU MOVE IN

- Request a move-in inspection for the actual unit you will live in
- During the inspection, if you see that a repair is needed, you should get the landlord to agree to the repair in writing.
- In general, the landlord will not be responsible to repair problems with your unit that were obvious during the move-in inspection unless the problems make the unit unsafe or unsanitary to live in.

REQUESTING REPAIRS

- You are responsible for giving immediate written notice to your landlord of any problems needing repair.
- Make sure the written notice follows the requirements as stated in your lease so that your landlord is aware of the problems.
- Get everything in writing and keep records of all communications with your landlord.
- Take good photos of the issues or damages that need to be repaired.
- Store your photos and records somewhere safe where you can access them easily.

IF YOUR LANDLORD HASN'T MADE REPAIRS IN A REASONABLE TIME

Keep paying your rent

- Even if your landlord fails to make repairs, you generally must continue to pay your rent.
- If you do not pay your rent, the landlord can begin the eviction process.

Explore your options

File a lawsuit. Tenants can file a lawsuit against landlords in certain instances to recover costs or injuries resulting from repairs not being made. Tenants should consult with an attorney.

Repair and deduct. Tenants may pursue repairs on their own and deduct the cost from future rent payments. Tenants should:

- First notify the landlord in writing before arranging a repair.
- Get estimates from multiple vendors that detail the work to be done and costs of repairs.
- Keep copies of all receipts and details of the repair work.
- Proceed with caution. The landlord may not agree the repair was necessary or that the cost is reasonable.

Information on this page is taken from the *Landlord-Tenant Handbook* (Feb. 2021 Revised Version) produced by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. A digital copy of the handbook is available at accgov.com/landlord or by scanning the QR code with a smartphone.



PROPERTY MAINTENANCE & CODE ENFORCEMENT INFO

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WHAT IS CODE ENFORCEMENT?

The ACC Code Enforcement Division is a division of the ACC Building Permits and Inspections Department. It is responsible for code compliance and enforcement.

Common Property Maintenance Code Violations:

1. Toilet not working or leaking
2. Lavatory or sink not draining
3. Plumbing fixtures with no hot water
4. Roof leaking
5. Electrical outlets or light fixtures not working
6. Smoke detectors not installed or not working
7. Sewer leaking/not draining or septic system not functioning properly
8. Windows missing or broken
9. Doors not working or broken
10. Decks, stairways, landings, or railings unstable or failing
11. Infestation of pests in common or public areas (pest control inside a dwelling unit is generally the responsibility of the tenant)
12. Kitchen appliances not working properly or broken (applies only to appliances supplied by the owner/landlord)
13. Exterior or bathroom door locks missing or not working
14. Heating system not working or unable to heat habitable rooms to at least 65 degrees Fahrenheit

Landlords are generally responsible for making these repairs.
This list represents only a portion of what is covered by the Property Maintenance Code.

WHEN DO I CALL CODE ENFORCEMENT?

Call the Code Enforcement Division If you have:

1. Identified a problem with your rental unit and requested a repair to your landlord in writing
2. and your landlord has not corrected the problem in a reasonable amount of time.

Contact Code Enforcement at 706-613-3790 or codeenforcement@accgov.com. Visit accgov.com/codeenforcement for additional information.

Code Enforcement Housing Complaint Process

1. Code Enforcement receives the complaint
2. The case is assigned to a Code Enforcement officer
3. The officer conducts an inspection or contacts the property manager in coordination with the tenant/complainant
4. If there is a code violation, an official notice is given to the landlord/owner. This notice includes a time frame for bringing the issue into compliance.
5. The officer conducts a second inspection at the end of the compliance period
6. If the issue has been properly addressed, the case is closed and no additional action is taken.
7. If the issue has not been properly addressed, the officer will issue a citation to the landlord or owner.
8. Municipal Court will then hear the case and render a decision. If court finds in favor of Athens-Clarke County, then the landlord will be required to bring the issue into compliance.
9. An officer will re-inspect to verify compliance.