What does CT law about say repairs?

The law says your landlord must

- give you an apartment that is clean, safe, and fit to live in when you move in;
- make sure your apartment can get electricity, heat, and hot/running water; and
- keep the apartment in good condition while you live there.

Your landlord must fix problems like peeling paint or broken windows; plumbing, electrical, or heating systems that don't work properly; rats, roaches, bedbugs, and other pests; and a broken or missing smoke detector.

Even if your apartment needs repairs, you must **pay your rent on time** or the landlord can evict you.

Do I have to pay rent if the landlord ignores me or takes a long time to make repairs?

Yes, you must keep paying your rent unless a judge says you can stop. You can ask the landlord for permission to make the repairs yourself and subtract the cost from your rent, but get the landlord's permission in writing first.

Can my landlord evict me if I file a lawsuit?

Your landlord cannot evict you for nonpayment of rent if you are paying your rent to the court as required. However, a landlord may still try to evict you for other reasons. If your landlord tries to evict you after you start your case, or within six months after you first complained to the code enforcement office about the conditions, then you may have a good defense against eviction based on retaliation. See www.CTLaw.help/evictions.

For more detailed info, go to:

www.CTLaw.Help/repairs

March 2026

Need help?

Statewide Legal Services

www.slsct.org

1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380

SLS provides free advice to low-income people who have legal problems in Connecticut. For some legal problems, they may send you to another legal aid program or to a volunteer attorney.

eviction HELP CT

Got a housing problem?

1-800-559-1565

www.EvictionHelpCT.org

How to contact your local legal aid office:

New Haven Legal Assistance Association

203-946-4811

Greater Hartford Legal Aid

860-541-5000

Connecticut Legal Services

Bridgeport

203-336-3851

New Britain

860-225-8678

New London

860-447-0323

Stamford

203-348-9216

Waterbury

203-756-8074

Willimantic

860-456-1761

This booklet was produced by Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut. It is not intended as legal advice. For advice on your situation, call Statewide Legal Services or contact a lawyer.

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Tenants' Rights: Repairs



March 2026

Statewide Legal Services

1-800-453-3320

What if my landlord won't make repairs?

STEP 1: Ask your landlord to make repairs.

If the repairs are urgent, call the landlord and tell them right away. Ask when they are coming to make these urgent repairs. Some examples of urgent repairs are flooding or a broken window.

It's best to also ask in writing for repairs to be made. Keep copies of any letters, emails, or text messages that you send. If you see the landlord, ask about the status of your request and make a note in your calendar about what the landlord told you. If your landlord does not make repairs when you ask, go to Step 2.

STEP 2: Make a complaint to your city or town's code enforcement office or health department.

Call 2-1-1 or go to www.211ct.org to get the phone number for your town's code enforcement office. Call and tell them you want to file a complaint, and ask to have someone inspect your apartment. Note when you called and who you spoke to.

Make every effort to be home for the inspection.

- Write down the inspector's name.
- Show them everything that needs to be fixed.
- Ask when you can get a copy of their report.

If you have not heard from the landlord about making the repairs in 21 days, go to Step 3.

STEP 3: Start a lawsuit in court.

You can start a lawsuit if your landlord doesn't fix the problems within 21 days after you filed the complaint with the code enforcement office or health department. Remember: You cannot start a court case without first completing step 2.

If you think your landlord may try to evict you, start your case **before** you get eviction papers.

Need legal help? Call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 or visit EvictionHelpCT.org.

Starting a Lawsuit

1. Fill out the court forms. Staff at the Court Service Center can give you the forms and help you fill them out. Get detailed information about filing a lawsuit at www.CTLaw.help/repairs.

2. Bring the forms to the court. Sign them in front of the court clerk, a notary, or a lawyer and file them with the Housing Court clerk. If you can't afford to pay the filing fee, ask the clerk for an *Application for Waiver of Fees*.

3. Go to court on your hearing date and tell the judge what happened. If you have a copy of the inspection report, bring it with you to court.

Should I keep paying rent to my landlord?

Once you start your lawsuit, you will pay rent to the court instead of to your landlord until the judge decides your case. If you don't pay your rent to the court, the court can throw out your case without deciding about the repairs.

What happens next?

The court will send the lawsuit papers to your landlord by certified mail. If your landlord doesn't accept or pick up the certified letter, you will have to pay a marshal to deliver the papers.

The clerk should schedule a court hearing to be held after your landlord gets the papers. The inspector is required by law to bring a copy of the inspection report to the hearing. To protect yourself, ask the court to have the inspector come to court with the inspection report.

How do I get ready for the court hearing?

- Make a list of the needed repairs. Note how the problems in your home hurt or caused problems for you or your family.
- Take photos of the problems in your home and bring copies with you to court.
- If you have a copy of the inspection report written by your city or town's code enforcement office or health department, bring it with you.
- You can bring witnesses to court. The landlord might have their own witnesses at the hearing. Listen closely to what those witnesses tell the judge.
- The landlord might have their own witnesses at the hearing. Listen closely to what those witnesses tell the judge. The judge will want to hear both sides before they make an order about the case. Remember to be respectful and do not interrupt the judge.

Will the inspector go to court?

Not necessarily. As soon as the clerk tells you the date of your hearing, ask the clerk for subpoena papers. The subpoena papers tell the inspector to come to court with the inspection report.

Will my trial start right away?

You and your landlord will speak to a housing mediator first. The mediator will help you try to make an agreement instead of having a trial. If you can make an agreement, then you, the landlord, and the judge will sign it. You will each get a signed copy.

You can also make an agreement with the landlord on your own, but talk to the housing mediator before you sign it.

Warning: Don't sign an agreement if you can't do what it says or you don't fully understand it.

What if the landlord and I cannot make an agreement?

You will have a trial and a judge will decide your case. When it is your turn to speak, tell the judge about the repairs needed in your apartment and the date(s) you asked for the repairs to be made. You may ask the inspector to tell the judge what's wrong with your apartment and to give the judge the inspection report. You can ask the judge to order your landlord to make the repairs, give you back the rent you paid for the time that your landlord did not fix the problems, and pay you for damage to your things or your health. The judge may ask you and the landlord to go back to court to report on the repairs. Ask the clerk if you have another court date.