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My Landlord Won't Make Repairs. What Should I do? - HELP4TN Blog

If you live in Tennessee, and your landlord won't make repairs, what should you do?

Safe and Clean Housing

If the repair is for a necessity, such as **heat, gas, lights, water, sewage, plumbing**, or for something that makes your apartment unsafe or unhealthy, like **bugs or rats, or rotten wood** then you should let your landlord know in writing. They are required to fix it. Even if your landlord does not make these repairs, **keep paying your rent**.

Other Repairs

Don't forget to check your lease! Does it say who should make repairs? If your lease says your landlord must make repairs for the broken item, tell your landlord. For minor items in your home, if it doesn't say who should make repairs, you probably need to pay to repair it yourself.

How to Ask Your Landlord

Ask your landlord for the repair in writing, email, or text message and keep a copy for yourself. [This form provides an easy, official way](#) to ask for repairs.

What if the landlord won't fix it?

If it is the landlord's responsibility, you'll first need to ask your landlord for the repair in writing, for example. Write an email, letter, or text message that shows the date you asked for the repair. If your landlord doesn't repair the broken item for 2 weeks after you first told them, you can take steps to make them repair it.

You may be able to spend your own money to repair it yourself and then deduct that amount from your rent. DO NOT do this without the help of a lawyer.

You may be able to sue your landlord. This can pressure your landlord into repairing it or can get you money for your harms. Check with your nearest legal aid center first—you may qualify for a free lawyer.

Need more help?

If you have questions about your housing rights, you can get help:

[Tennessee Fair Housing](#) – 615-874-2344

Private, non-profit advocacy organization for housing discrimination in Davidson County.

[Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands](#) – 1-800-238-1443

Offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge, and Tullahoma

[Legal Aid Society of East Tennessee](#) – 1-865-637-0484

Offices in Knoxville, Johnson City, Chattanooga, and Cleveland

[West Tennessee Legal Services](#) – 1-800-372-8346

Offices in Jackson, Dyersburg, Huntingdon, and Selmer

[Memphis Area Legal Services](#) – 1-888-207-6386

Offices in Memphis and Covington

These non-profit legal aid centers will help you make a plan.

For free and quick answers to any other questions for renters, check out [Renter Defender](#). This automated service gives you information about your legal questions right away.

To read more information on your rights as a renter, check out these guides:

[Click here for the renter's rights guide](#) if you live in one of these Tennessee counties: Anderson, Blount, Bradley, Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, Madison, Maury, Montgomery, Rutherford, Sevier, Shelby, Sullivan, Sumner, Washington, Williamson or Wilson.

If you live in a different Tennessee county than the ones listed above, [click here for your renter's rights guide](#).

Always remember your basic rights as a renter! Unless you have been formally evicted by a court order:

- Your landlord cannot lock you out to make you move.
- Your landlord cannot shut off electricity or water to make you move.
- Your landlord cannot discriminate against you based on your sex, race, disability, or religion.

This blog is not legal advice, but it is legal information to help you learn about your rights. Need more help? HELP4TN free legal helpline has attorneys ready to answer your questions. Give us a call at 844-435-7486.

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[Renters/ Homeowners](#)

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