

Tenants Know Your Rights



You have the right to live in a safe, clean, decent home.

Landlords are legally required to keep apartments in a state of “good repair” -- which includes making sure your apartment is clean and that you have access to essential services. Your apartment’s electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, and ventilating systems should be functioning and appliances that the landlord installed (such as refrigerators and stoves) should be in good and safe working order. This is your right.

You do NOT have to accept living with rats, mice, roaches, bedbugs, or other pests and rodents. Your landlord is responsible for extermination in the case of an infestation.

Remember: if your landlord is failing to provide an essential service or refusing to make a repair, it’s within your rights as a tenant to demand that they do so. You can start by asking them directly. If your landlord does not respond to your request, call 311 or [follow our escalation guide](#).



You have the right to heat and hot water.

Every year, Heat Season starts on October 1st and ends after May 31st. During Heat Season, landlords must keep the inside temperature at specific levels.

Required Temperatures: The required temperature inside a rental apartment depends on the time of day and the outside temperature:

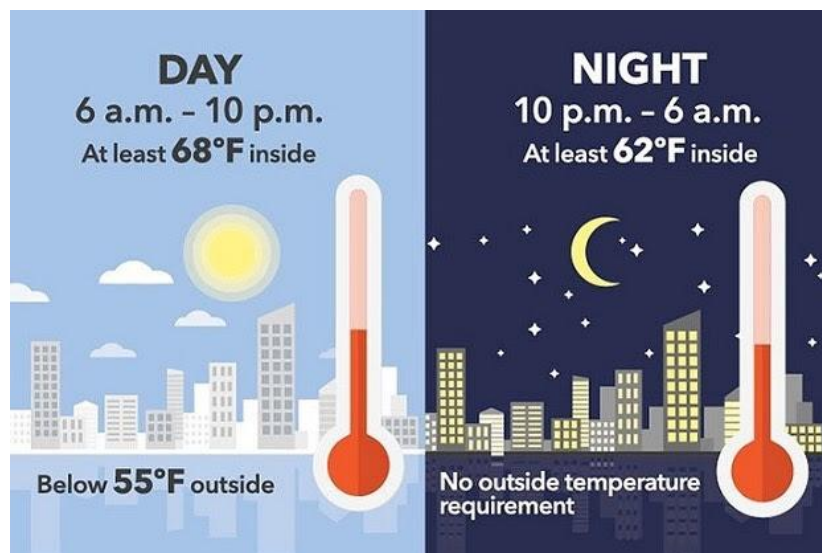
From 6 AM - 10 PM

If the outside temperature falls below 55°F, then the inside temperature must be at least 68°F everywhere in your apartment and in your building.

From 10 PM - 6 AM

Regardless of the outside temperature, the inside temperature must be at least 62°F everywhere in your apartment and building.

Remember. Heat is your right!



Excessive Heat? On rare occasions, HPD will place a violation for excessive heat in an apartment. HPD will likely only place an excessive heat violation outside of Heat Season (June 1–September 30). If you believe your apartment is too hot, first contact your landlord. If your landlord doesn't address the issue, you can call 311 to ask for a City inspection.

Despite legal protections, thousands of tenants are left without access to heat and hot water every year. If your landlord is refusing to provide heat and hot water (hot water must be at a minimum of 120° F year round), you must take action. In most cases, you'll have to contact 311 —and then call again, and again — to report lack of heat. Click here for the next steps.

You are protected from landlord harassment by law

A landlord is prohibited from any action intended to force a tenant out of an apartment or to compel a tenant to give up any rights granted the tenant by law. This includes changing the locks to your apartment (illegal eviction), interfering with your privacy as a tenant, and disturbing your general peace, quiet, & enjoyment of your apartment. Harassment in the form of physical or verbal threats, denial of services, misrepresentation of the law, disruptive construction or renovation projects that interfere with health and safety are considered harassment and are therefore illegal.

You do NOT have to accept landlord harassment. If your landlord is preventing you from accessing your apartment or accessing essential services, you have the right to [file an HP action against them](#).

You have the right to stay in your apartment

If you have been in your apartment for longer than 30 years (yes, even if you owe rent), you are legally entitled to stay in your apartment unless your landlord takes you to court and the court orders an eviction. Do not self-evict yourself! You should only move out if you are told to do so by a judge.

If you are rent stabilized, you have even more protections from eviction. [Click here](#) to learn more about your rights as a rent stabilized tenant.



You have the right to organize!

You have the right to form, join, and participate in a Tenant Association to protect your rights as a tenant. If you form a tenant association, landlords cannot interfere with your right to use the common areas of your building to meet with your neighbors. This includes the lobby of your building, if a community room is not available. Access to the lobby should be free of any charge for meetings. Your landlord is forbidden by law to harass you for tenant-organizing activities -- but that won't stop them from doing so

NYC landlords are particularly negligent, corrupt, and well-connected to the real estate industry that values profit over people. Building people power is the best way we can protect ourselves from harassment, eviction, and neighborhood displacement. Nobody should go through any of this alone. Form a tenant association and join SWBTU Tenant Union today!

These are just a few of the rights we have as tenants. If you are rent stabilized, you have even more protections. [Click here to learn more!](#)

Join our monthly meetings to learn more about tenant rights

Join the movement to #HouseNY to strengthen tenants rights and depend public investment in housing across the state.

