



BE AN INFORMED TENANT

Withholding Rent for Repairs

There are three types of maintenance problems:

- Emergencies require action within 24 hours and pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of the occupant(s) – gas leak, flooding, defective furnace, major roof damage.
- Major Problems affect the quality of the residential environment, but not to the degree that the life of the occupant(s) is immediately endangered – defective water heater, clogged drain, heating problem in part of the house.
- Minor problems fall in the nuisance category – defective lighting and/or locks, dripping faucets, household pests, peeling paint and wallpaper.

What to do if your landlord fails to make necessary repairs:

If you have a maintenance problem:

- Notify your landlord and allow a reasonable time for repair. Start with a phone call and follow up with a letter or email to ensure that documentation exists.

If your landlord fails to make necessary repairs you have 2 choices:

- Pay for the repair yourself and deduct the cost from the rent, OR
- Withhold rent. To do so legally you must:
 - Have your rent paid up to date.
 - Inform your landlord in writing of your plan to withhold rent. See letter samples in [A Practical Guide to Tenants & Landlords, pp. 43-45.](#)
 - Open an escrow account at a bank.
 - Pay rent into the account when it is normally due.
 - After repairs are made, forward the rent to the landlord.
 - If repairs are not made, submit a complaint to the City of Holland Housing Inspector at submit.cityofholland.com or call 616-355-1330 or email cns@cityofholland.com.