

# Who to call... when repairs are not getting done

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## Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB) (204) 945-2476

In most cases, when the landlord is not doing anything about repairs, it is the RTB that most often becomes involved. If the required repairs are of a more urgent matter (i.e. lack of water, heat, electricity, etc.) then other enforcement agencies should also get involved.

A tenant should ask the landlord, **in writing**, to do the repairs that are needed. It is the landlord's duty to keep your unit in a good state of repair.

Examples: problems with windows, doors, locks, plumbing issues, laundry services, cracks in counters and flooring, and water damage.

If you are not getting a response from the landlord, then you should contact RTB and complete RTB repair forms. Send a copy to the landlord and one to the RTB. The RTB will get in touch with the landlord about the repairs and may inspect the rental unit. If the repairs are not completed by the landlord then the RTB can redirect rent. Once enough money is received, RTB can hire a contractor to do the work.

**Always put your complaints in writing;** keep records of all communication; take photos if you can (with date-stamps); try and show a timeline of events.

A tenant must show that the repair is necessary and that they are not the cause of the problem. A tenant must repair damage they cause or damage caused by anyone the tenant allows in the unit.

Compensation to the tenant can be awarded if it is determined that there was unreasonable delay in making repairs. Contact the RTB for more information.

**Never withhold rent** in the hope that the landlord will respond. A landlord can evict for nonpayment of rent and will most likely win the order at the RTB.

## By-law Enforcement— call 311

Tenants should call 311 in cases where the repair issue is more problematic in regards to health and safety concerns.

When a major problem occurs, the landlord should immediately be contacted. If the landlord does not immediately respond then it may be necessary to get the City of Winnipeg's By-law Enforcement Officers involved — call 311.

The City's By-law office enforces the Livability By-laws which includes the following:

- Major plumbing issues,
- Lack of heat
- No electricity
- Broken window(s), screens
- Pests (rodents and bugs)

They can also deal with issues such as garbage, derelict vehicles, fire pits, exterior maintenance, and illegal dumping.

Non-compliance with By-law Enforcement orders can result in fines.

**If there is an immediate health concern**, i.e. sewer gas, black mold, etc. then By-law Enforcement may get Public Health Inspectors involved.

## Other Agencies

**Public Health Inspectors:** A health officer will usually get involved at the request of By-law Enforcement (311).

Where sanitary conditions are deemed critical, an order may be issued. A rental unit can also be declared "unfit for human habitation" and the occupants ordered to vacate the building or a portion of it.

**Fire Department:** Your landlord must ensure that your smoke alarm is always working. Your landlord must also test the smoke alarm whenever a new tenant moves in.

Tell your landlord immediately if your smoke alarm isn't working. Be sure to write down the date and time you reported it. Call the Fire Prevention Branch at 3-1-1 if your landlord doesn't repair or replace your smoke alarm within 24-hours!

You must never tamper with a smoke alarm. It is against the law and you can be charged and/or fined. You can also be evicted if you are caught tampering with a smoke alarm.