

ADVOCATING FOR HEALTHY HOUSING FOR PATIENTS



Health conditions can be caused or worsened by poor housing conditions such as:

- mold, lead, and pest infestations;
- housing insecurity or homelessness; and
- housing that's inaccessible to a patient with a disability.

Healthcare providers play a critical role in identifying unhealthy housing and advocating for improved conditions.

TENANTS' RIGHT TO SAFE HOUSING

A landlord must make repairs to keep an apartment safe, habitable, and up to housing and health codes. This includes taking care of insect and rodent infestations, mold, leaks, peeling paint, and other unsafe conditions. A landlord also must maintain common areas and make sure tenants have access to heat, hot water, electricity, and trash pick-up.

Is your patient's apartment unsafe or in need of repairs? Start by asking the landlord, in writing, to fix the problems (by mail, text, or email). The tenant can scan this QR code to write a letter to the landlord or go to **bit.ly/repairletter**.



ASK FOR AN INSPECTION

A tenant can contact their municipality to send an inspector to determine if there are housing or health code violations – depending on the locality, the inspector may be from housing code enforcement or a health department. Call 211 or city hall to find the department. An inspector should contact the tenant to arrange an inspection at the apartment and can issue a violation notice, followed by fines or a criminal prosecution if violations aren't corrected.



PAYING RENT TO COURT OR USING A FAIR RENT COMMISSION

A protected rent strike (paying rent to the court) may be an option if: (1) a tenant complained to housing code enforcement or the health department AND (2) the landlord doesn't fix things after at least 21 days have passed. The judge can order the landlord to make repairs, and the tenant may get some rent back. Find out more at bit.ly/courtrent

Over 50 cities and towns have Fair Rent Commissions that accept complaints about rental charges, including when rent may be unfair because of unsafe conditions. The Fair Rent Commission can stop or reduce a rent increase, or lower rent until repairs are made. Find out here if a town has a Fair Rent Commission: bit.ly/frclist

LEAD PAINT

A child's blood lead level of 3.5 mg/dL is elevated. The local health department may require an inspection of the home based on a child in the building's blood lead level. Section 8 or public housing may also require an inspection. Assistance may be available from Connecticut Children's Healthy Homes Program: 860-837-6234.

REQUESTING A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Fair housing laws require landlords to make a reasonable accommodation - a change in rules, policies or practices - to make it possible for a person with a mental or physical disability to live in their housing. For example, a tenant with asthma could request a transfer to a unit without a carpet or mold. The tenant may need a letter from a treatment provider explaining that they have a disability (no diagnosis needs to be given) and that the accommodation is necessary.

Tenants can generate a reasonable accommodation request here: bit.ly/letterRA



Connecticut
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CENTER**

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