

Tenants Have the Right to Clean, Warm Homes

Basic Premise

“Maintenance and Repairs - A Guide for Tenants

Every tenant has the right to a home that is well maintained, in a building that is clean and safe.”

From <https://settlement.org/ontario/housing/rent-a-home/tenant-rights-and-responsibilities/maintenance-and-repairs-a-guide-for-tenants/>

What are my rights as a tenant?

‘A Safe Home: Your home must be safe and in good repair. This is true even if you knew about the problems before you agreed to rent the home.

‘Vital Services: You must have access to heat, hot and cold water, electricity, and fuel (such as natural gas). Your landlord cannot shut-off these services, even if you have not paid your rent. Your landlord may shut-off services for a short time so that they can make repairs. Your landlord might pay for vital services; or you might pay for them.

‘Heat: Your landlord must heat your home from September 1 to June 15. The landlord has to make sure the heat is at 20°C or more. Some cities have a higher heat standard.’

Considerations for Climate Change

Central Air: If your rental unit has central air conditioning, your landlord may be required by your municipality to maintain a maximum temperature of not more than 26°C between June and September.

In consideration of the fact that science projects that in a few years there will probably be many more days when it is unbearably hot, bylaws must take these changes in climate into account to ensure that tenants are protected from illness or even death due to excessive heat.

Cockroaches, mice, or other pests

If you have a problem with cockroaches, bedbugs, mice, or other pests, your landlord must take steps to get rid of them and to stop them from getting in.

Homeowners Have Enormous Privilege

I am a homeowner.

Landlords are homeowners.

Tenants cannot enjoy all the privileges of privacy, spaciousness, etc that homeowners take for granted.

The very least landlords need to ensure is that all of their basic rights are fully respected and supported.

Climate Change is Only One Reason for New Bylaws

Everything changes over time in our society.

Bylaws that govern the ability to enforce tenants' rights to the most basic needs of safe, clean, pest-free apartments with all necessary appliances in good working order at a comfortable living temperature all year are essential to ensure tenants are not subjected to unreasonable suffering and unable to get bylaw officers to assist them in enforcing compliance.

Thank you Hamilton ACORN!

Thanks to Mike Wood and Olivia O'Connor for tireless advocacy.

Thanks to Councillor Whitehead for advancing this motion.

Thanks to Councillor Nann for all her work on these matters.

Thanks to the Mayor and all other councillors for everything you do to ensure Hamiltonians can live safely and well.