

Repairs & Maintenance



TENANT RESOURCE & ADVISORY CENTRE

Unit #150-900 Howe St
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2M4

1-800-665-1185
tenants.bc.ca

Who is responsible for repair and maintenance issues?¹

It is the landlord's responsibility to do repairs and maintenance. They must fix services or appliances that were included in your agreement or were in working order at the start of the tenancy. Landlords will often argue that a repair or maintenance issue is the tenant's fault to avoid paying the cost.²

Tenants should **NOT** have to pay for repairs or maintenance unless they cause, directly or through neglect, damage to the unit **beyond reasonable wear and tear**.

Landlord responsibilities

- Heating, plumbing, and electricity
- Appliances such as washer/dryer, refrigerator, stove, etc.
- Elevators
- Locks & keys
- Pest infestations, such as bed bugs
- Serious mold issues
- Doors and cabinets

Tenant responsibilities

- Steam cleaning or shampooing carpets
- Cleaning inside windows and tracks
- Cleaning dust and dirt from baseboards
- Removing garbage
- Replacing light bulbs and fuses



What if my landlord is refusing to make repairs?

1. Document the issue: take photos, videos and written notes.
2. Send your landlord a formal written request for repairs. Consider asking other tenants in your building to sign onto the letter for added pressure.³
3. If your landlord does not respond, apply to the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) for a repair order.
4. When filing for a repair order, you can request monetary compensation and/or a rent reduction until the work is completed.

If the repair meets the criteria, you can apply for an "emergency repair order", which is prioritized above applications for standard repair orders. See other side.



I have an **“emergency repair.”** What do I do next?

1. Ensure it meets

ALL THREE criteria:⁴

- Urgent;
- Necessary for the health or safety of people or property; and
- Made for the purpose of repairing one of the following:
 - Major leaks in pipes or the roof
 - Damaged or blocked water or sewer pipes or plumbing fixtures
 - The primary heating system
 - Damaged or defective locks that give access to a rental unit
 - The electrical systems

2. Document the repair issue

Take photos, videos, and written notes, and keep records of all communications with your landlord.

3. Call twice

Call your landlord at least twice, with reasonable time in between, at their emergency contact number provided.

Option 1

Emergency Repair Order:

If it can wait, apply to the RTB for an emergency repair order. These hearings are given priority scheduling.



If you're unsure about whether your issue is an emergency repair or whether you've followed the correct steps, **call TRAC.**

Option 2

Reimbursement: If it cannot wait and your landlord does not answer after calling twice, you can pay for the repair and ask your landlord to reimburse you for the expenses or apply for monetary compensation at the RTB if they refuse.

HOWEVER, you may lose your right to reimbursement if you are not able to prove your **two** failed attempts to call the landlord and whether you researched and paid a fair price for the repair.⁵

For More Information

- See RTB Policy Guideline 1 for a full list of tenant and landlord responsibilities.
- "Standards of Maintenance" bylaws go into more detail on the landlord's responsibility to maintain or repair the property. See TRAC's page on "Repairs and Maintenance" for a list of cities with these bylaws.
- Consider using TRAC's "Repairs and Maintenance" template letter.
- See Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) Section 33 for more information on "Emergency Repairs".
- See TRAC's template letter, "Reimbursement for Emergency Repairs".

TRAC receives ongoing support from:

English



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada

This is general information that applies to British Columbia, Canada. TRAC cannot guarantee that it is current or complete. This fact sheet is not meant as legal advice for specific legal problems. Use at your own risk and consult a lawyer if you need legal advice. V1 July, 2025.