

# When Conditions in Your Apartment are Affecting Your Health

Tenants have a right to a safe and sanitary home. This document contains important information on tenants' rights and the steps tenants can take to address unsafe or unsanitary conditions in their homes.

## **If you believe your housing unit may be unsafe or unsanitary, you have a right to a Sanitary Code inspection.**

The Sanitary Code addresses many things, including: heat, venting, electricity, water supply, sewage, rodent (rats or mice) or other infestations (bugs, mold), and structural defects.

Contact the local board of health or inspectional services division in the city or town where you live to request an inspection.

To learn more, visit [bit.ly/3wo9ueY](https://bit.ly/3wo9ueY)

## **If you have a health condition that is caused or made worse by conditions in your home, your landlord may be required to make changes.**

State and federal laws require landlords to make reasonable accommodations or changes that allow people with disabilities or a serious health condition, an equal opportunity to use and enjoy their homes.

Conditions in your home can affect serious health conditions like asthma, other respiratory disorders, and chronic allergies.

*Your landlord may need to make changes like these examples listed below:*

- Allow you to transfer to a different unit;
- Address a rodent or insect (bug) infestation;
- Removing carpeting;
- Reroute, update, or otherwise change an

- HVAC (air conditioning) system;
- Remove mold, asbestos, dust, secondhand smoke, radon, or other contaminants;
- Seal spaces around baseboards, windows, or pipes to prevent air contaminants; and
- Change policies or practices, such as by adopting or enforcing a "no smoking" policy.

You may be required to provide medical information or a doctor's note to explain why the reasonable accommodation or change is necessary.

If a landlord denies a request for an accommodation or modification because it would be too difficult, they must talk with you about whether or not there is another reasonable accommodation or change that would address the problem.

If your landlord does not respond to your request, denies your request, or fails to make a necessary reasonable accommodation, you have a right to have your case reviewed by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination ([bit.ly/3PwuQy2](https://bit.ly/3PwuQy2)). If you live in Boston, you may also file a case with the Boston Fair Housing Commission ([bit.ly/3NkLQph](https://bit.ly/3NkLQph)), or if you live in Cambridge, you may also file a case at the Cambridge Human Rights Commission ([bit.ly/38zECit](https://bit.ly/38zECit)).

You may also alert the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division by filing a complaint online at [bit.ly/3NqISzJ](https://bit.ly/3NqISzJ), or by phone at (617) 963-2917.



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