

Repairs and Maintenance

Residential Landlord-Tenant Act [RCW 59.18](#)

Landlords are required to:

- Maintain the unit so it does not violate state and local laws in ways that endanger the tenant's health and safety
- Fix any structural damage to a dwelling unit
- Maintain all electrical, plumbing, heating systems
- Fix appliances that came with the unit
- Provide heat, running water, and hot water
- Keep the dwelling reasonably weathertight

Landlords are *not* required to:

- Repair damage by the tenant or a guest of the tenant
- Repair normal wear and tear

If repairs are required, the tenant must notify in writing what needs to be repaired. Once notified, the landlord has:

- 24 hours to start repairs to water, heat, electricity, or a life-threatening problem
- 72 hours to start repairs to most appliances
- 10 days for other repairs



If repairs are not completed...

If after the landlord has received written notice, they don't start repairs under the above timelines, the tenant has several options. We would recommend talking to an attorney or a landlord-tenant expert to understand the various requirements tied to each option. A tenant must be current in rent to use one of these options.

- Option 1 – End their tenancy and move out. The landlord cannot withhold any amount of the tenant's deposit and must refund any prepaid rent.
- Option 2 – The tenant can go to court or arbitration.
- Option 3 – The tenant can hire someone to do the repairs (or do the repairs themselves) and deduct the repair costs from the tenant's rent. There is a landlord notification process that must be followed prior to completing the work per the RCWs.

This information is provided as a general summary and should not be treated as legal advice for a particular situation. Please visit <https://www.atg.wa.gov/residential-landlord-tenant-resources> for more resources or contact an attorney.