

9. Home Economics

1. Do's and Don'ts of keeping a clean house
 - **Do not**
 - a. Throw trash on the floor
 - b. Throw trash out the window
 - c. Stick chewed gum on furniture, walls or floors
 - **Do**
 - a. Make the bed
 - b. Sweep the floor daily
 - c. Mop whenever the floor is wet
 - d. Pick up and throw away any identifiable garbage
 - e. Wash all used dishes and utensils after cooking and eating
 - f. Wipe clean all kitchen appliances that you have used to cook
 - g. Throw away food that you no longer wish to eat tomorrow
 - h. Before the day is over, tie up the garbage bags and take the trash out

2. Weekly activities to keep your home clean
 - Suggested weekly cleaning
 - a. Wash bed sheets and pillow cases
 - b. Keep dirty clothing in a bag or basket so that you know where the dirty clothes are. When the bag or basket of dirty clothing is almost full, WASH THEM!
 - c. Sweep and then mop the floor; vacuum the carpet or rug
 - d. Sweep under sofa and other furniture
 - e. Clean the toilet. Remember to clean in, out and around the toilet
 - f. Make sure sink is clean – clean sink spills, make sure there is no hair or other items that may clog the sink
 - g. If you have shower curtains, change or clean them often

3. [I have no heat or hot water in my apartment. What can I do?](#)
 - Tenants whose building owners fail to provide adequate heat or hot water should **first speak with the owner or building manager** about the problem. If an owner does not correct the problem, tenants can call the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) [Central Complaint Bureau](#) at **(212) 824-HEAT**.
 - Heat and hot water are not always paid by the landlord. You should ask the landlord before you rent the apartment whether heat and hot water are paid by the landlord.
 - By law, owners must provide adequate heat between October 1st and May 31st. Between 6am to 10pm, if outside temperature is below 55 degrees Fahrenheit, owners must heat apartments to at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Between the hours of 10pm to 6am, if the outside temperature is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, owners must heat apartments to at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

4. How can I negotiate with my landlord about maintenance in the building?
 - Below are some of the things to know about negotiations with your landlord about maintenance in the building.
 - a. Before negotiations or requesting the landlord to provide maintenance for your home, know your tenant rights and landlord's responsibilities.

- b. Do not yell at or call the landlord names, but be firm and stand up for your needs.
 - c. Indicate to the landlord why you need the sink fixed or a new paint job or any maintenance needed in the building.
 - d. State that the need is urgent if it is urgent and tell the landlord why it's urgent.
 - e. Tell the landlord when you will be home for the maintenance to take place.
 - f. If the landlord is only available when you are not available, adjust your time or find a trusted relative or friend to housesit when the landlord comes to make repairs or perform maintenance.
 - g. Every time you see the landlord, remind him or her of the need. So that you do not get on the landlord's nerves, try to limit this reminder to once a day.
 - h. If the landlord does not provide services to requested repairs, follow the instructions below to question #5.
5. [What can I do if my apartment needs maintenance and the owner is ignoring my requests?](#)
- If conditions do not impact your health, it is reasonable to allow the landlord 2-3 weeks to make the repairs.
 - **DO NOT withhold rent.** This gives the landlord rights to an eviction action against you. The eviction action will be for non-payment where repairs cannot be raised by you. The landlord will have all the advantages.
 - When you want repairs done, and the conditions do not impair your health, you should do the following in this order:
 - a. Call the landlord or superintendent and let him/her know what repairs are needed. Allow 2-3 weeks for the repairs to be made if the condition does not endanger your health.
 - b. If the repairs are not made, write a letter to the landlord explaining the repairs that are needed and note in the letter that you had spoken to him/her or the super 2-3 weeks ago but nothing has been done. (It is best to include the actual date that you have spoken to him or her). Send the letter by CERTIFIED MAIL. The landlord will have to sign for the letter and you will get proof that the letter was received.
 - c. NOTE: There may be conditions that you can repair yourself.
 - d. If another 2-3 weeks passes and the repairs are still not done, you can call the city and request to have an inspector come to view the apartment. You would call the NYCHA and HPD complaint number at **(212) 824-4328**. When you call, list all the conditions in the apartment that need to be repaired. Start with the most serious first. HPD will send an inspector within a few days or 2-3 weeks depending on the situation. The inspector will write up the violations, and indicate to the landlord a certain amount of time to make the repairs. If the landlord does not make the repairs in the specified amount of time, the landlord could be fined or, if the repairs impact on tenant health, the city may make the repairs and bill the landlord.
 - e. If the landlord receives a list of violations and does not make repairs, and the repairs are not considered serious enough for HPD to make the repairs, you can go to [Housing Court](#) and initiate a Housing Proceeding action against the landlord.
 - If the repairs endanger your health such as no heat, hot water, ceiling has fallen, gas leak... do the following:
 - a. Call the landlord or super and let him know the severity of the problem. **NOTE: If you believe there is a gas leak, immediately call the gas company.** For Manhattan and Bronx call **(800) 350-9346**. For Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island call **(718) 643-4050**.

- b. If the landlord makes no effort to do the repairs, call the HPD Code Enforcement Hotline **(212) 824-4328** to request an inspection. List all the repairs needed starting with most serious.
 - c. If you do not want to wait for HPD to send an inspector, you can go to the [Housing Court](#) and begin a Housing Proceeding action against the landlord for failure to make repairs.
6. [What should I do if my building owner is harassing me?](#)
- Building owners are prohibited by law from harassing tenants to force them out of their apartments. Examples of harassment include verbal or physical abuse, consistent withholding of services or persistent physical or mental intimidation. If you believe you are being harassed by your building owner you can proceed as follows.
 - Tenants in Rent Regulated apartments – contact the New York State Division of [Housing and Community Renewal](#) (DHCR) at their Rent Info Line at **(718) 739-6400**.
 - Tenants in NON-Rent Regulated Apartments – have grounds to initiate legal action in [Housing Court](#) against their building owners.
 - a. Tenants may want to consult and secure services of an attorney before initiating any lawsuits.
 - b. Tenants who cannot afford legal representation may be eligible for free or inexpensive assistance from the [Legal Aid Society](#) at **(212) 577-3300**.
 - c. Tenants may also seek legal assistance from HPD’s Fair Housing Counselors who offer advice and Housing Court Mediation Services.
 - d. Assistance is also available at information tables set up in Housing Court.
7. [I have a pest problem](#)
- You can call to make a complaint to the [Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#) (DOHMH) at **(212) 442-9666**. If you live in a New York City Housing Authority building, first contact your building manager and, if you are not satisfied, then call the NYCHA at **(212) 306-3000** before calling DOHMH.
8. [I see drugs being sold in my building. What can I do?](#)
- Tenants in HPD owned buildings are encouraged to immediately report all drug activity to HPD’s Narcotics Control Unit at **(212) 863-7284**.
 - Tenants in privately owned buildings should notify their building owners and the police of illegal activity in their building. Owners have an obligation to alert the police to any illegal activity in their building.
9. [I am behind on rent](#)
- Local Income Support Centers have a diversion team who will help clients apply for a “one-shot deal” or ongoing public assistance to pay rent arrears and advise all applicants on eligibility for “Jiggetts” relief.
- “Jiggetts” relief assists families who are about to be evicted to receive payments of part or all of their rent.
 - a. If approved, you will receive payments from your welfare center for rent arrears as well as for your current and future excess rent.
 - b. To be eligible, you must meet the five following criterias:
 - I. You and your child receive public assistance, but not as home relief. (A Jiggetts counselor can explain this category to you).
 - II. Your rent is higher than your shelter allowance. (For example, a family has a shelter allowance of \$286.00 a month, but a rent of \$350.00 a month).

- III. Your rent is relatively inexpensive. (If your rent is approximately double or less than your allowance, you should be eligible.)
 - IV. You owe back rent which partly consists of “excess rent” (the difference between your actual rent and your shelter allowance)
 - V. You have no chance to get money for your back rent from any other source.
 - c. For more information, please call the Jiggetts Relief hotline at **(212) 614-5570** or the Jiggetts Outreach Hotline at **(212) 614-5325**.
 - The [Eviction Prevention](#) program of the Social Services Department of The Community Services Society of New York (CSS) offers some of the following services for rent arrears:
 - a. Limited financial aid for rent or mortgage arrears, using FEMA or CSS funds.
 - b. Confirming eligibility of clients for “one shot deal” or public assistance.
 - c. Referrals and vouchers for budget and credit counseling services.
 - d. Referrals to brokers, housing specialists, or HRA to find affordable housing.
 - e. Negotiating along with clients for payment agreements with landlords.
 To find out more information contact the [Eviction Prevention](#) information: **(212) 614-5319** or the Eviction Prevention Intake line at **(212) 614-5351**
 - The Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) [Housing Subsidy](#) can help by providing up to \$1,800 to qualified families to pay for broker’s fees and security deposits. Your ACS case manager or agency case planner must apply on your behalf. To contact the ACS Housing Subsidy Program, please call **(212) 676-6777**.
 - The [Money Management](#) section may be able to provide guidance on how to manage your income so that you do not fall behind on rent.
10. I am behind on electric bills.
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a one time grant per year to help low income homeowners and renters to pay fuel and utility costs. The application process usually starts around October and November. Apply early as funds are limited. To apply.
 - a. If you are 60 years or older, call the [Department for the Aging](#) HEAP Program at **(212) 442-1000**
 - b. If you are under 60 years of age, call the [Human Resources Administration](#) (HRA) at **(877) HRA-8411**
 - If there are certain months of the year where your electric bill is higher, you can contact the electric company. They should be able to work with you to set up a special payment plan to spread out high month bills over a longer period of time.
 - An electric company usually sends a 14-day disconnect notice (sometimes as little as 3 days). You will need to pay back any money owed by the disconnect date to keep the company from shutting off your power. However, there are some restrictions:
 - a. The company cannot disconnect your power on a Friday, during the weekend, on a legal holiday or the day before a legal holiday, or any day the office is closed.
 - b. If you or a member of your family is seriously ill, the company will not disconnect your power for up to 30 days. Have the doctor call the company or have the doctor send a letter. Even though you are given this grace period, you will still need to pay the bill back.
11. Know building owner’s responsibilities and rights to your apartment
- Owners must ensure that buildings are:
 - a. Safe
 - b. Clean

- c. Well maintained in both common areas and individual apartments.
- Owners must provide and maintain:
 - a. Security measures
 - b. Heat
 - c. Hot and cold water
 - d. Good lighting
 - e. Maintenance to keep building in good repair.
- In NYC, owners may enter a tenant's apartment for three general reasons:
 - a. Emergency repairs require no advance notice to the tenant.
 - b. Non-emergency repairs or improvements require a minimum of one week's advance written notice.
 - c. Apartment inspections require a minimum of 24 hour's advance written notice.

12. Know tenant responsibilities to prevent eviction

- Tenants have responsibilities to their building owners and their apartments.
- Tenants may not damage the building either intentionally or through neglect.
- Tenants are responsible for the actions of their guests.
- Tenants must obey the terms of their lease, PAY RENT on TIME and honor the rights of other tenants.