

What Tenants Should Know About Indoor Allergens (Local Law 55 of 2018)

Allergens are things in the environment that make indoor air quality worse. They can cause asthma attacks or make asthma symptoms worse. Common indoor asthma triggers include cockroaches and mice; mold and mildew; and chemicals with strong smells, like some cleaning products. Environmental and structural conditions, like leaks and cracks in walls often found in poorly maintained housing, lead to higher levels of allergens.

New York City law requires that property owners take steps to keep their tenants' homes free of pests and mold. This includes safely fixing the conditions that cause these problems. Tenants also play a role in preventing indoor allergens.

TENANTS SHOULD:



Keep homes clean and dry.



Avoid using pesticides and chemicals with strong smells (for example, cleaning products, air fresheners).



Place food in sealed containers. Keep counters and sinks clean. Get rid of clutter such as newspapers and paper bags.



Tell property owners or building superintendents (also known as supers) right away if there are pests, water leaks, or holes or cracks in the walls and floors.



Use garbage cans with tight-fitting lids.



Let building staff into homes to make any needed repairs.



Take garbage and recycling out every day, and tie up garbage bags before putting them in compactor chutes.



Call **311** if property owners or supers do not fix the problem or if repair work is being done unsafely.

If you are a tenant and you or your child has moderate or severe persistent asthma, and there are pests or mold in your home, your doctor can request a free home environmental inspection for you through the New York City Health Department's Online Registry. Talk to your doctor or call **311 to learn more.**

For more information about property owner responsibilities and safely fixing indoor allergen hazards, see the reverse side of this fact sheet.

For more information about safely controlling asthma, visit nyc.gov/health/asthma.

What Property Owners Must Do to Keep Homes Free of Pests and Mold

New York City law requires all private building owners with three or more apartments to keep their tenants' homes free of pests and mold. The law also applies to property owners of housing units (such as co-ops, condos, shelters or public housing) where a tenant has asthma. This includes safely fixing the conditions that cause these problems.



All property owners must use integrated pest management (IPM) practices to safely control pests and fix building-related issues that lead to pest problems.

- Remove pest nests and thoroughly clean pest waste and other debris using a HEPA vacuum. Make sure to limit the spread of dust when cleaning.
- Repair and seal any holes, gaps or cracks in walls, ceilings, floors, molding, base boards, around pipes and conduits, and around and within cabinets.
- Attach door sweeps to all doors that lead to hallways, basements or outside.
- Remove all water sources for pests by repairing drains, faucets and other plumbing materials that collect water or leak.
- Use pesticides sparingly. If pesticides must be used to correct a violation, they must be applied by a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation-licensed pest professional.



All property owners must safely remove indoor mold and safely fix the problems that cause mold.

- Remove any standing water, and fix leaks or moisture conditions.
- Move furniture away from work areas or cover with plastic sheeting before cleaning.
- Limit the spread of dust. Use methods such as sealing off openings (for example, doorways, ventilation ducts) and gently misting the moldy area with water and soap or a mild detergent, before cleaning.
- Clean moldy areas with water and soap or a mild detergent. Dry the cleaned area completely.
- Clean any visible dust from the work area with wet mops or HEPA vacuums.
- Throw away all cleaning-related waste in heavy-duty plastic bags and seal securely.
- To clean 10 or more square feet of mold in a building with 10 or more apartments, property owners **must** use a New York State Department of Labor-licensed mold assessor and remediator. These licensed workers must comply with New York City Administrative Code section 24-154 and New York State Labor Law Article 32.



Owners of private buildings with three or more apartments must also:

- **Inspect every apartment and the building's common areas** for cockroach and rodent infestations, mold and the conditions that lead to these hazards, at least once a year and more often if necessary. Respond to tenant complaints or requests for an inspection.
- **Provide a copy of this fact sheet** and a notice with each tenant's lease that clearly states the property owner's and tenant's responsibilities to keep the building free of indoor allergens.
- Make sure vacant apartments are thoroughly **cleaned and free of pests and mold** before a new tenant moves in.

For more information about responsibilities and safely fixing indoor allergen hazards, visit nyc.gov/hpd and search for indoor allergen hazards.