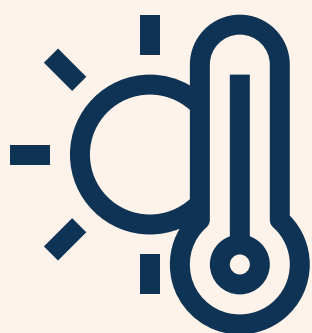


What Makes a Habitable Rental Home?

Almost every state in the U.S. requires that landlords maintain safe and livable residential units. This is often called a "warranty of habitability." In some places, there are laws that specify exactly what those requirements are; in others, the standards are less defined. Here are some common requirements:

Warm in the Winter, But Not Always Cool in the Summer

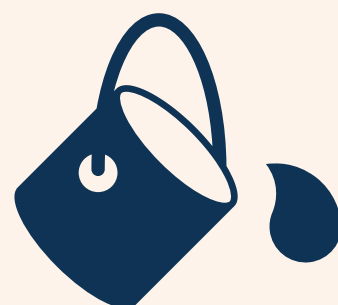


Habitability laws require maintaining a comfortable temperature, particularly during the winter months. ([Here are a few examples.](#))

However, despite how deadly extreme heat is, most states do not require landlords to provide air conditioning. Recently, [local laws](#) have been popping up across the country to change that.

No Hazardous Lead

Under [federal law](#), your landlord must tell you if there's known lead in your apartment. Check out your local lead laws ([here's a list of state laws](#)) to know your rights and resources. Cities, like [Baltimore](#), [Philadelphia](#), and [New York](#), often have their own programs in addition to state protections.

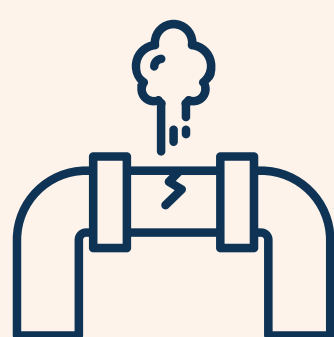


Pest-free

Landlords are generally required to address rat, mice, bed bug, and cockroach infestations (and more). But if you cause an infestation, you may be responsible for addressing the problem. Check your lease along with [state](#) and local laws.

Emergency Precautions

Landlords are required to take precautions against deadly gas and apartment fires. Check out local and state laws about smoke detectors ([required in all homes](#)), carbon monoxide detectors ([often required](#)), and fire escapes.



Leaks, Mold, and Water Damage

These types of problems are often covered by the implied warranty of habitability, even if your state doesn't [spell out](#) your rights. [Shelterforce](#) reported on a recent push for more explicit mold laws, which are becoming ever more important as climate change further deteriorates the rental housing stock.

Everything in Good Repair

Your apartment should be in good working order. That can include appliances, windows, doors, and more. It can also include keeping existing air conditioning or heating systems in good repair!

Working plumbing and electricity apply here, too, along with hot water. In [Chicago](#) and [New York](#), for example, the water must reach at least 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

