



City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court, Inc.

HOUSING COURT BILL OF RIGHTS

You have RIGHTS in housing court. To learn more, speak with staff of the City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court or call our Housing Court Information Hotline: 212 962 4795.

1. You have the right to a translator, free of charge, if you need one.
2. You have the right to be notified of the case against you in a specific way. You must receive notice of your case according to certain rules (for example, you must be “served” the papers correctly) and the notice must be specific and accurate. Cases in housing court cannot be continued if you have not received certain notices and/or these notices do not include required information.
3. You have the right to at least one adjournment to seek legal counsel. An adjournment is a delay in your case.
4. You have the right to request repairs and to request an inspection. You have the right to a habitable apartment. Lack of repairs or services may constitute a breach of the warranty of habitability. Code enforcement inspectors from the city’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development conduct inspections. They will issue violations according to standards established by law.
5. You have the right to refuse to speak with a landlord’s attorney or sign a stipulation outside the courtroom. A stipulation is an agreement that indicates how the tenant and landlord have agreed to resolve the dispute. Before you sign a stipulation, you have the right to go before the judge to have it explained to you and/or ask any questions.
6. You have the right to conference your case with the court attorney. The court attorney works for the court and will mediate a meeting between you and the landlord or the landlord’s attorney.
7. You have the right to a trial. If you lose the trial, you may be ordered to pay the rent arrears within five days.
8. You have the right to present evidence and/or witnesses. Evidence may include photos of problems in an apartment, violation reports issued by the city, videotapes and testimony.
9. You have the right to view your court file. Your court file is public property. Anyone can look at it. You can obtain it in order to copy documents contained in it.
10. You have the right to submit an order to show cause. An order to show cause is a request to the court to reopen the case for some reason. You may need to reopen your case if you need more time.
11. You have the right to a “satisfaction of judgment” – a document that indicates that you paid off a judgment entered in housing court.