

NYC Tenant Harassment: One-Page Toolkit for Tenants

What Is Landlord Harassment?

It is **illegal** for building owners to force tenants to leave their apartments or surrender their rights. Under NYC law, harassment includes any act or omission by a landlord intended to cause you to vacate, including but not limited to: withholding essential services (heat, hot water, gas, electricity), failing to make repairs, making baseless threats or false statements, changing locks, removing your possessions, making unwanted buyout contact, filing frivolous court cases against you, or any repeated conduct that substantially interferes with your comfort and quiet enjoyment of your home.

IF YOU ARE BEING HARASSED

STEP 1: Document Everything

- Keep a detailed log of all incidents with dates, times, witnesses, and photos
- Save all written communication (texts, emails, letters)
- Take photos/videos of conditions (broken heat, mold, pests, etc.)

STEP 2: Report to the Right Agency

For rent-stabilized or rent-controlled apartments:

- Call HCR/DHCR: 1-866-ASK-DHCR (1-866-275-3427) or visit hcrny.gov
- They will freeze rent increases until the harassment complaint is resolved

For market-rate or any NYC apartment (general harassment):

- Call 311 (or 212-639-9675) and ask for HPD's Anti-Harassment Unit (TAHU)
- Or call the **NYC Tenant Protection Hotline**: 917-661-4505 (Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm)

For construction-related harassment:

- Contact DOB's Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA) via 311

For discrimination-based harassment:

- Call **NYC Commission on Human Rights**: 718-722-3131
 - Call **NYS Immigration Hotline** (if targeted for immigration status): 800-566-7636
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WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU REPORT

Agency	Process	Timeline	Enforcement
HPD (TAHU)	Files complaint → HPD may inspect building → Issues violations → Can pursue civil penalties	Weeks to months	Civil penalties \$1,000–\$10,000; Stop-work orders for construction violations
HCR/D HCR	Files complaint with state → DHCR investigates → Issues harassment order if sustained	Varies	Rent freeze; Stop landlord from raising rent until compliance
Housing Court (HP Proceeding)	You file court case requesting repairs & harassment order → Judge reviews → May order landlord to stop + pay penalties	30 days to several months	Court order; Civil penalties \$1,000–\$10,000 (higher for repeat offenders within 5 years)

HOW TO FILE A HOUSING COURT (HP) CASE

When to use this: When HPD is slow or if you need immediate court relief

What you need:

- Your landlord's full legal name and mailing address (search www.nyc.gov/hpd if unknown)
- A list of all conditions/repairs/violations
- Documentation of harassment

How to file:

1. Go to the Housing Court clerk in your county:
 - **Manhattan:** New York County Housing Court
 - **Brooklyn:** Kings County Housing Court
 - **Queens:** Queens County Housing Court
 - **Bronx:** Bronx County Housing Court
 - **Staten Island:** Richmond County Housing Court
2. Get the forms:
 - Order to Show Cause (OSC)
 - Verified Petition in Support of OSC
 - Inspection Request Form (optional but recommended)

- Fee Waiver Form (if you cannot afford the court fee)
- 3. Submit forms + fee (or fee waiver) to clerk
- 4. Clerk assigns inspection date and court hearing date
- 5. Serve copies on landlord and HPD

Cost: Court filing fee (available, or you can request a waiver if you cannot afford it)

GET FREE LEGAL HELP

Many NYC tenants qualify for **free legal assistance**:

- **Housing Court Help Center:** Visit your borough's Housing Court or call 311
 - **Legal Services NYC:** 212-431-7200 (for low-income tenants)
 - **Community Legal Services:** Check hpd.ny.gov for full list of legal aid providers
 - **Tenant Advocacy Groups:** ANHD, MFY, Housing Court Help Center
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KEY PHONE NUMBERS & RESOURCES

Agency/Service	Phone	Website
NYC 311 (all complaints)	311 or 212-639-9675	on.nyc.gov/TenantHarassment
HPD Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit	311 → request TAHU	hpd.ny.gov/tenant-harassment
NYC Tenant Protection Hotline	917-661-4505 (Mon–Fri 10am–4pm)	—
HCR/DHCR (rent-regulated)	1-866-ASK-DHCR (1-866-275-3427)	hcr.ny.gov
NYC Commission on Human Rights	718-722-3131	nycchr.org
NYC Tenant Harassment Prevention Task Force	AHU@HPD.NYC.GOV	hpd.ny.gov/thpt
Housing Court Clerk	311 → Housing Court	nycourts.gov/housing
DA Housing & Tenant Protection (Manhattan)	212-335-3300	manhattanda.org

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- ✓ **Keep reporting through official channels** — 311, HPD, HCR, and Housing Court. The Tenant Harassment Prevention Task Force monitors these complaints to identify patterns of abuse across buildings.
- ✓ **You do NOT need a lawyer** to file an HP action, but free legal aid is available.
- ✓ **Retaliation is illegal.** Your landlord cannot retaliate against you for reporting harassment, filing complaints, or asserting your rights.
- ✓ **Document everything.** A detailed log is your strongest evidence.
- ✓ **Follow up.** Call the agency handling your complaint every 2–3 weeks to check status.

This toolkit summarizes New York City Housing Maintenance Code (Title 27, Chapter 2), Rent Stabilization Code, and state Homes and Community Renewal enforcement. For detailed legal guidance, consult with a tenant rights attorney or call the Housing Court Help Center.