

Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Tenant

Renting a Place to Live while in the United States

The most basic **right** of a **tenant** is the **right** to a living space that is fit for human habitation. This is what a tenant is paying the **landlord** to provide. Landlords in **Durham, North Carolina** are under a legal duty to make sure that their apartments are habitable. In the State of North Carolina, housing-related law is often on the side of the landlord or owner. North Carolina is not a tenant's rights state.

What to do when you have problems with your landlord or the lease?

If you have a concern about something physically wrong with where you are living, and the landlord has not addressed the issue within a reasonable period of time, you can contact:

City of Durham, Human Relations Division
Neighborhood Improvement Services Dept.

#807 East Main Street, Suite. 2-300
Golden Belt Center, Durham NC 27701
Tel. 919.560.1647, extension 34226

Call the extension listed above and ask for Mr. Wilbur Pratt. You will make an appointment with Mr. Pratt to come inspect your dwelling.

If you have an issue with a **lease or a tenant's right issue**, we recommend meeting with the lawyer who comes to Duke campus once a week during the school year. The lawyer provides a free 15-minute consultation. Contact International House for information on how to make an appointment.

We strongly recommend purchasing **Renter's Insurance** while you are renting an apartment or home in the United States. Why? Renter's Insurance is similar to homeowner's insurance, but it is cheaper and covers a smaller range of difficulties. In general, this type of insurance will cover all of the possessions inside your accommodation, including if your items are stolen or damaged. Be warned that Duke students have had fires in their apartments in the past, often due to cooking accidents in the kitchen. In general, renter's insurance covers damages from fire or lightning, windstorm or hail, explosion, damage caused by vehicles/aircraft, theft, falling objects, weight of ice or snow or sleet, sudden accidental tearing apart, burning, etc. Many apartment complexes now require their renters to purchase renter's insurance. It is not expensive - usually around \$15 - \$20/month.