

# You have a right to safe, healthy housing, but are you worried about landlord retaliation?

## What is landlord retaliation?

A landlord who is retaliating is trying to “get even” with a tenant. Landlord retaliation is a spiteful action in response to something you might say or do about a problem in your apartment. **Landlord retaliation is illegal.** Some examples of landlord retaliation include:

- ▶ Raising your rent.
- ▶ Taking away heat or hot water.
- ▶ Refusing to make repairs in your home.
- ▶ Threatening to evict you from your apartment or filing an eviction case in court.

## What are some of your rights as a tenant?

It is illegal for your landlord to retaliate against you when:

- ▶ You ask your landlord to fix something that is wrong with your apartment (such as peeling paint, leaks, insect and mice problems).
- ▶ You contact a building or health inspector, the fire department, or another government agency about unsafe living conditions.
- ▶ You join a tenants’ union or similar organization.
- ▶ You participate in the Rhode Island Department of Health’s Breathe Easy at Home project. (for more information, see: [www.health.ri.gov/asthma](http://www.health.ri.gov/asthma)).

## When is eviction not retaliation?

Your landlord can still legally evict you if:

- ▶ You owe your landlord rent.
- ▶ You complain about a problem requiring repairs that you caused, or was caused by a member of your family or other person on the premises with your consent.
- ▶ Your apartment or building is condemned.

## Who should you contact if you think your landlord is retaliating against you?

You should contact a lawyer if you feel your landlord has retaliated against you. Free legal services are available to help some tenants who are having problems with their landlords. Services are available in both English and Spanish.

**Rhode Island Center for Justice**  
**1 Empire Plaza, Suite 410**  
**Providence, RI 02903**  
**401-491-1101 ext. 810**  
**[www.centerforjustice.org](http://www.centerforjustice.org)**

For more information, see the Rhode Island Landlord-Tenant Handbook:  
[sos.ri.gov/assets/downloads/documents/state-library/RI-landlord-tenant-handbook.pdf](http://sos.ri.gov/assets/downloads/documents/state-library/RI-landlord-tenant-handbook.pdf)

