

Help for flood victims who rent their home

If you rent your home and it has been damaged by floods, you might need some help or information about how and when your home will be repaired.

As a tenant you have the right to have your accommodation kept in a reasonable state of repair.

If your home is damaged by flooding, your landlord is responsible for repairing the damage. This includes damage to the structure of your home. It also includes keeping the installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity, sanitation and heating in working order.

You must tell your landlord about the need for any repairs as a result of flooding as soon as possible. Your landlord must then carry out the repairs within a reasonable period of time.

If there has been extensive damage, you may have to leave your home while work is done. But you will only have to move out if it's impossible for you to carry on living there. If you can move from room to room while work is carried out, then you will not have to leave. The landlord is legally responsible for protecting you and your belongings during this time.

If your home is so badly damaged that you do have to move out, your landlord does not have to provide you with somewhere else to go.

You must tell your landlord if you have to move out. If possible, you should not move out until:

- you are satisfied that your landlord knows why you are leaving
- your landlord has confirmed you will be able to move back in once the repairs are done and live there on the same basis as before
- your landlord has given you an estimate of how long the repairs are expected to take.

If you have to move out, you should try to reach an agreement with your landlord about payment of rent. You should ask your landlord either to suspend rent payments on the home you've moved out of, or, to pay reasonable costs for alternative accommodation.

This is especially important if you're getting Housing Benefit as you can only get benefit to pay the rent on one property, not two. Your local council will need to decide whether benefit can continue to be paid for the home you've moved out of or for your alternative accommodation.

This is a complicated situation and you should get advice from an experienced adviser.

If your landlord won't come to an agreement with you about paying the rent, you may have to go to court. You can ask a court to order your landlord to award you a reduction in rent for the period that you were unable to live in your home. The amount of reduction awarded by the court will depend on how bad the damage is to your home. You can also ask the court to award you compensation for things like inconvenience and distress.

If you can't continue to live in your home because of flood damage and you have not been able to find alternative accommodation, you should ask your local council's homeless department to help you. As this is an emergency, they will probably have a legal responsibility to provide suitable temporary accommodation for you and your family.

Further help

Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Bureaux give free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to help you solve problems. To find your nearest CAB, including those that give advice by e-mail, click on [nearest CAB](#), or look under C in your phone book.

Other information on Adviceguide which might help:

- Disrepair in rented accommodation
- Renting from a social housing landlord
- Finding accommodation
- Private sector tenancies
- Help with your rent – Housing Benefit
- Courts of law

This fact sheet is produced by [Citizens Advice](#), an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. It is intended to provide general information only and should not be taken as a full statement of the law. The information applies to England and Wales.

This fact sheet was last updated on 9 July 2010, and is reviewed regularly. If it is some time since you obtained this fact sheet, please contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau to check if it is still correct. Or visit our website - www.adviceguide.org.uk - where you can download an up-to-date copy.