

Tenant/Landlord Complaint Process

Once you have submitted your complaint, an inspector is assigned to schedule visiting the property to inspect for the violations noted on the complaint form. If the inspector is already currently working on a previous complaint on the subject property, your complaint will be added to the pending actions.

You must indicate on the tenant/landlord complaint form the date you notified your landlord of the problem. The Codes Bureau will not respond if you have not first notified your landlord of the problem.

Once an inspector has inspected the property, one of three actions will take place:

- 1) The inspector may issue a notice to correct the noted violations. The notice in accordance with law must be mailed to the property owner or agent. If a structural violation is noted, the notice must be sent by certified mail. Contained in the notice is a prescribed number of days in which the owner or agent must correct the violations. Should the owner fail to correct the violations in the prescribed time, a non-traffic citation is issued.
- 2) The inspector may issue an immediate citation. This may occur if the owner previously was issued a notice of violation and failed to comply or if the violation is related to high grass and weeds, sanitation or snow removal and the violation is of an extreme nature. If by virtue of your lease, the tenant is responsible to correct violations on the property, the tenant will be issued formal notice.
- 3) If the violations noted is life threatening, the City may placard the property as "Unfit for Human Habitation". This action would require the property to be vacated in a prescribed time.

Note: You may also file a complaint with the State Attorney's Office Bureau of Consumer Protection. There is no fee to file this action and you may file on line at www.attorneygeneral.gov/index.aspx

Once a citation(s) has been issued, it is sent to the District Justice for processing. The District Justice then notifies the owner or agent by certified mail with a prescribed fine. The defendant may either pay the fine or request a hearing. Oftentimes, a defendant may simply pay the fine but not correct the violations. In this case the City's only recourse is to issue additional citations. Should the owner or agent fail to pay or request a hearing, a warrant is issued for the arrest of the defendant.

In either scenario as described above, it may take days, weeks or longer to achieve compliance depending on the cooperation of the property owner or agent as well as the manner in which a citation(s) is adjudicated by the District Justice.

It is your right as a citizen to appear before the District Justice for any hearing to support actions taken pursuant to your complaint. You may track the disposition of any citation(s) issued by contacting the District Justice that has jurisdiction where the subject property exists. It is important when filing a complaint on a property with the Bureau of Codes that you check the box stating that you are willing to appear for any court hearing to support your complaint. When doing so, the inspecting officer will request that you be subpoenaed for any hearing that may be requested by the defendant to support your complaint.