



LOCAL NEWS

How renters can get help in Arkansas

Since the tornadoes, we've had many calls and messages about apartment maintenance and rent prices. Now, experts are weighing in on what rights renters have.



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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Over the past few weeks, we've seen your calls and messages about apartment maintenance and rent price issues before and after the tornado. If you're in a situation like this— what can you do about it?

Arkansas law guarantees renters a certain safety standard in their homes, but it also has measures that protect landlords from unruly tenants.

Figuring out your rights as a renter can be confusing.

Kale Anderson, a housing attorney with Arkansas Legal Aid, helps low-income tenants with housing issues.

"Most other states are going to offer renters more rights than Arkansas," Anderson said. "We work with what we have."

Viewers have sent us photos of sewage issues, leaky ceilings after rain and missing doors at apartments across Little Rock.

So what are your legal options if these issues continue after making management aware?

"If it continues not being fixed and ends up causing some health problems," Anderson said. "Then you could have the ability to break your lease."

Do you have to pay rent if you're still in a lease and problems stick around?

"As long as you're living in the place," Anderson said. "Your safest option is to continue paying that rent because Arkansas does not have a law that allows you to stop paying that if you're still on the premise."

According to ApartmentList.com, rent in Arkansas has risen 17.8% in the last three years.

How much can a landlord raise your rent each lease?

There's not much of a limit as long as there's proper notice, but it still depends.

"There may be an argument to be made to a judge that doubling it after a disaster, in particular, is not fair," Anderson said. "I know landlords and apartment complexes are allowed to raise rent."

Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin said if anyone rent spiked after the tornado, and that rent increase wasn't announced before the natural disaster, to file an issue with the attorney general's office.

"In those situations, rate increases can't exceed 10% unless the increases had been announced prior to the emergency," Griffin said. "Complaints about price gouging or other issues can be filed with my office."

While all of this might seem overwhelming, there are ways to seek help for free.



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Some of the resources for renters include:

- [Arkansas Legal Services](#)
- [Attorney General's Office](#)
- [City Code Enforcement](#)
- [Arkansas Department of Health](#)
- [Arkansas Housing Authority \(HUD\)](#)
- [Arkansas Renters United \(ARU\)](#)

Arkansas Renters United is an activist group that may be able to help navigate the next steps in finding aid.

"I can help you by listening first," ARU organizer Neil Sealy said. "I can help you analyze your situation and provide summaries, referrals and resources."

Arkansas Legal Services said people should seek professional advice before acting in a situation dealing with legal questions.

Renter's rights in Arkansas | Here's what to know



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