

What rights do tenants have in Arkansas?

by Brenda Lepenski
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1. Available source of hot and cold running water
2. An available source of electricity
3. A source of potable drinking water
4. A sanitary sewer system and plumbing that conform to applicable building and housing (system must have been working and installed at the time of lease agreement)
5. A functioning roof and building envelope
6. A functioning heating and air conditioning system (system must have been working and installed at the time of lease agreement)

To read the law in full detail, [click here](#).

Lewellen said one of the most effective ways for tenants to get things fixed is to contact their city code enforcement to see if they have ordinances in place that contain a similar objective.

Brian Contino, code enforcement manager at the City of Little Rock, said Little Rock has an ordinance in place to help residents who have concerns.

"The city instituted a rental inspection program where we do respond to resident complaints for apartments or housing rentals and to verify that they are inadequate living conditions," Contino said.

Contino said residents can look into having their air-conditioning repaired if the unit was installed and working at the time the renter entered into the lease agreement. However, Contino that the city can not force landlords to add amenities that were not installed and working at the time of the lease agreement.

"Officers will go in and they'll write up a full report of the violations in the unit or the property," Contino said. "If it's a life safety issue such as exposed wiring or holes in the floor or ceiling, such as we'll give them about 7 days to fix that."

Contino said the city is doing inspections on a complaint basis only until the start of the new year when they resume systematic inspections.

Bob Johnson, Mayor of Jacksonville, said his city also offers ordinances in place to help tenants.

"When your hot water is not working, or especially this time of year, air conditioner, you could die you could have heat stroke," Johnson said. "We are talking serious conditions, that need to be addressed [and] I'm glad of what the city of Jacksonville is doing."

Johnson said it's beneficial when a city has ordinances in place to help tenants.

"The state law says, talk to your landlord," Johnson said. "City law says we'll talk to your landlord, we will find your landlord we will put pressure on your landlord to get things taken care of."

Johnson said there are penalties that rental properties can face in their city if they violate city ordinances and fail to fix the issues.

"If it's an apartment complex, everybody has to move and they don't collect rent anymore and they won't be able to re-rent until they fix all those problems," Johnson said. "We hit them where it hurts--in their pocketbook."

Lewellen said the [Center for Arkansas Legal Services](#) provides no-cost legal advice on the rights of renters and that people can also call them at 501-376-3423