

Know Your Rights: NYC's Asthma Free Housing Act

Health Justice Advocacy Clinic at Columbia Law School/
NY Lawyers for the Public Interest

N Y L P I

JUSTICE THROUGH
COMMUNITY POWER



**A HEALTHY HOME
IS A HUMAN RIGHT.**
HEALTH JUSTICE ADVOCACY CLINIC
COLUMBIA LAW



Survey



What is a healthy home?

What is a Healthy Home?

A healthy home can look different for everyone, and so everything you said is exactly right.

Today, we're here to discuss what the *law* says a healthy home is.



What is a hazard?

Mold



Pests

Cockroaches, mice or rats

Why It Matters: Asthma

Asthma is a lung disease that can make it difficult for air to flow in and out of your lungs.

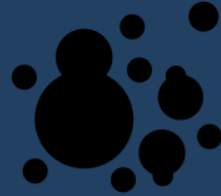
Asthma can really affect your quality of life. It can even send you to the hospital.

What triggers your asthma?

Certain things in your home may be making your asthma worse.



Mice/Rats



Mold



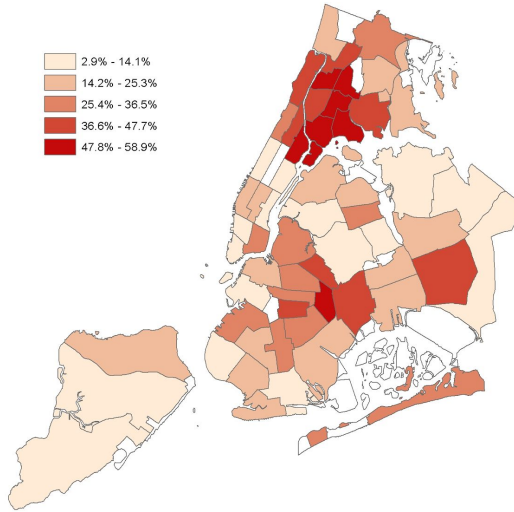
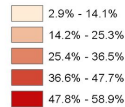
Cockroaches/Pests



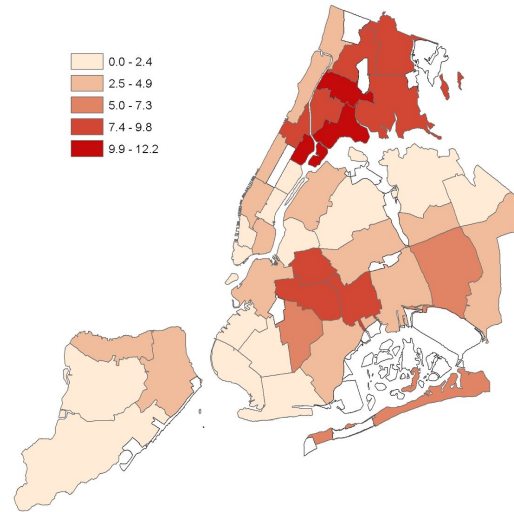
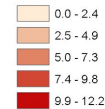
Pesticides/Chemicals

Overlap between asthma hospitalizations and poor housing quality in NYC

Percent of Residents Who Rated Conditions of Residential Structures Fair or Poor
(2011, Community Districts)



Asthma Hospitalizations per 1,000 Children*
(2010, United Health Fund Districts)



* Children under age 15.

Source: Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (2013), *Keeping Track of New York City's Children, Tenth Edition*; Figure 3.12 and Figure 4.15.

A Home Free of Mold and Pests is Your Right

Local Law 55, or the Asthma Free Housing Act, creates ways for NYC residents to hold landlords accountable for keeping their homes free of mold and pests.

What does your landlord have to do?

Before you move in:

- **Inspect** for mold and pests
- **Certify** that the home you're moving into is free of mold and pests

What does your landlord have to do?

After you've moved in, if you see mold and/or pests:

- **Safe Work** - use safe work practices when cleaning up mold
- **Really Fix It** - fix underlying problems such as leaks

What You Can Do Under the Law to Keep Your Home Free of Mold and Pests

Overall

3 Things to Remember:

1 Track

2 Move Furniture

3 Write it Down

How to get your unit inspected in 3 stages:

**Complaint
and/or Referral**

Inspection

Follow Up



Step 1 : File a Complaint and/or Receive a Referral

Step 1

1. File a complaint by calling 311 or reporting the issue online
2. Or, **if you or your child has asthma** -- Have your doctor request a free home environmental inspection for you

Doctor Referrals

2 Things to Remember:

1 Share

2 Ask

Tips for Talking with Your Doctor

Share

Tell the doctor if you've seen mold or pests in your home.

Ask

If you or someone in your household has been diagnosed with persistent moderate or severe asthma, ask your doctor to request a free home environmental inspection for you through the New York City Health Department's Online Registry



Step 2: Inspection

Step 2

3 Things to Remember:

1 Track

2 Move Furniture

3 Write it Down

Tips to Prepare for an Inspection

Track

To make sure the inspector actually comes, check your complaint status online and don't be afraid to call them back.

Move Furniture

Move the furniture if you think mold could be behind it, because the inspector doesn't have to.

Write Down What You See

Take pictures, write on paper, or use the JustFix NYC app (justfix.nyc)



Step 3: Follow Up

Frequently Asked Questions/Concerns

What if I have a good relationship with my landlord?

What if I'm worried about my angering my landlord?

Housing Court

You can go to housing court if mold or pest issues in your home are not fixed.

Justice JEOPARDY!

Just Moving In

100

200

300

400

Current Tenant

100

200

300

400



You're interested in moving into a new building. What can you do to research the landlord and the history of complaints within the building?

What is: Go to whoownswhat.justfix.nyc to explore the HPD complaints and violations that have been made in that building throughout the years.



You're thinking about renting a new apartment. What can you look for before signing the lease?

What are: signs of mold or pests AND a certification from the landlord that the unit has no mold or pests.



You're taking a tour of a new apartment and you see mold on the wall, or a cockroach scurrying by. What can you do?

What is: Take a picture and/or write it down! If you let the landlord know, they should fix it before you move in. If they don't fix it, you'll have the picture later to show when the issue started.



Congratulations, you've decided to sign the lease! What are two things you can look for when signing?

What is: A certification that the home is free of mold and pests, as well as a fact sheet on Local Law 55.



You see mold on the walls in your apartment. What can you do?

What is: You can choose to contact the landlord directly or call 311 to initiate an inspection and complaint. You can also ask your doctor to request an inspection on your behalf.



Your child is diagnosed with asthma and you've noticed mold and/or pests in your home recently. What can you do?

What is: Share and Ask. Tell your doctor that you have seen mold or pests in your home so that the doctor can request an inspection of your home.



You called 311 and are waiting for an inspector to come. What can you do to prepare?

What is: Take pictures of the mold or pests in your home, and write down when you saw them. You can also use the JustFix NYC app (justfix.nyc).



You complained about the mold in your apartment and now your landlord is threatening to evict you. What can you do?

What is: You could have a conversation with your landlord and remind them that retaliation is illegal. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, you could seek advice from a lawyer. It is also important that you record any threats made by your landlord and any conversations that you have with them.



Questions?



Thank You!

Contact Us: