



## California Law on Repairs

**CCC Section 1941.** Nineteen Hundred and Forty-one. The lessor of a building intended for the occupation of human

beings must, in the absence of an agreement to the contrary, put it into a condition fit for such occupation, and repair all subsequent dilapidations thereof, which render it untenable, except such as are mentioned in section nineteen hundred and twenty-nine.

**CCC Section 1941.1.** (a) A dwelling shall be deemed untenable for purposes of Section 1941 if it substantially lacks any of the following affirmative standard characteristics or is a residential unit described in Section 17920.3 or 17920.10 of the Health and Safety Code:

- (1) Effective waterproofing and weather protection of roof and exterior walls, including unbroken windows and doors.
- (2) Plumbing or gas facilities that conformed to applicable law in effect at the time of installation, maintained in good working order.
- (3) A water supply approved under applicable law that is under the control of the tenant, capable of producing hot and cold running water, or a system that is under the control of the landlord, that produces hot and cold running water, furnished to appropriate fixtures, and connected to a sewage disposal system approved under applicable law.
- (4) Heating facilities that conformed with applicable law at the time of installation, maintained in good working order.
- (5) Electrical lighting, with wiring and electrical equipment that conformed with applicable law at the time of installation, maintained in good working order.
- (6) Building, grounds, and appurtenances at the time of the commencement of the lease or rental agreement, and all areas under control of the landlord, kept in every part clean, sanitary, and free from all accumulations of debris, filth, rubbish, garbage, rodents, and vermin.
- (7) An adequate number of appropriate receptacles for garbage and rubbish, in clean condition and good repair at the time of the commencement of the lease or rental agreement, with the landlord providing appropriate serviceable receptacles thereafter and being responsible for the clean condition and good repair of the receptacles under his or her control.
- (8) Floors, stairways, and railings maintained in good repair.
- (9) A locking mail receptacle for each residential unit in a residential hotel, as required by Section 17958.3 of Health and Safety Code. This subdivision shall become operative on July 1, 2008.

(b) Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to prohibit a tenant or owner of rental properties from qualifying for a utility energy savings assistance program, or any other program assistance, for heating or hot water system repairs or replacement, or a combination of heating and hot water system repairs or replacements, that would achieve energy savings.

### **CCC Section 1941.2.**

(a) No duty on the part of the landlord to repair a dilapidation shall arise under Section 1941 or 1942 if the tenant is in substantial violation of any of the following affirmative obligations, provided the tenant's violation contributes substantially to the existence of the dilapidation or interferes substantially with the landlord's obligation under Section 1941 to effect the necessary repairs:

- 1) To keep that part of the premises which he occupies and uses clean and sanitary as the condition of the premises permits.
- 2) To dispose from his dwelling unit of all rubbish, garbage and other waste, in a clean and sanitary manner.

- 3) To properly use and operate all electrical, gas and plumbing fixtures and keep them as clean and sanitary as their condition permits.
  - 4) Not to permit any person on the premises, with his permission, to willfully or wantonly destroy, deface, damage, impair or remove any part of the structure or dwelling unit or the facilities, equipment, or appurtenances thereto, nor himself do any such thing.
  - 5) To occupy the premises as his abode, utilizing portions thereof for living, sleeping, cooking or dining purposes only which were respectively designed or intended to be used for such occupancies.
- (b) Paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (a) shall not apply if the landlord has expressly agreed in writing to perform the act or acts mentioned therein.

**CCC Section 1941.4.** The lessor of a building intended for the residential occupation of human beings shall be responsible for installing at least one usable telephone jack and for placing and maintaining the inside telephone wiring in good working order, shall ensure that the inside telephone wiring meets the applicable standards of the most recent California Electrical Code, and shall make any required repairs. The lessor shall not restrict or interfere with access by the telephone utility to its telephone network facilities up to the demarcation point separating the inside wiring. "Inside telephone wiring" for purposes of this section, means that portion of the telephone wire that connects the telephone equipment at the customer's premises to the telephone network at a demarcation point determined by the telephone corporation in accordance with orders of the Public Utilities Commission.

### **CONTACT A LEGAL ADVISOR BEFORE EXERCISING THE RIGHTS DEFINED IN SECTION 1942**

### **CCC Section 1942.**

- (a) If within a reasonable time after written or oral notice to the landlord or his agent, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 1962, of dilapidations rendering the premises untenable which the landlord ought to repair, the landlord neglects to do so, the tenant may repair the same himself where the cost of such repairs does not require an expenditure more than one month's rent of the premises and deduct the expenses of such repairs from the rent when due, or the tenant may vacate the premises, in which case the tenant shall be discharged from further payment of rent, or performance of other conditions as of the date of vacating the premises. This remedy shall not be available to the tenant more than twice in any 12-month period.
- (b) For the purposes of this section, if a tenant acts to repair and deduct after the 30th day following notice, he is presumed to have acted after a reasonable time. The presumption established by this subdivision is a rebuttable presumption affecting the burden of producing evidence and shall not be construed to prevent a tenant from repairing and deducting after a shorter notice if all the circumstances require shorter notice.
- (c) The tenant's remedy under subdivision (a) shall not be available if the condition was caused by the violation of Section 1929 or 1941.2.
- (d) The remedy provided by this section is in addition to any other remedy provided by this chapter, the rental agreement, or other applicable statutory or common law.

**CCC Section 1942.1.** Any agreement by a lessee of a dwelling waiving or modifying his rights under Section 1941 or 1942 shall be void as contrary to public policy with respect to any condition which renders the premises untenable, except that the lessor and the

lessee may agree that the lessee shall undertake to improve, repair or maintain all or stipulated portions of the dwelling as part of the consideration for rental. The lessor and lessee may, if an agreement is in writing, set forth the provisions of Sections 1941 to 1942.1, inclusive, and provide that any controversy relating to a condition of the premises claimed to make them untenable may by application of either party be submitted to arbitration, pursuant to the provisions of Title 9 (commencing with Section 1280), Part 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure, and that the costs of such arbitration shall be apportioned by the arbitrator between the parties.

#### **CCC Section 1942.4.**

(a) A landlord of a dwelling may not demand rent, collect rent, issue a notice of a rent increase, or issue a three-day notice to pay rent or quit pursuant to subdivision (2) of Section 1161 of the Code of Civil Procedure, if all of the following conditions exist prior to the landlord's demand or notice:

- 1) The dwelling substantially lacks any of the affirmative standard characteristics listed in Section 1941.1 or violates Section 17920.10 of the Health and Safety Code, or is deemed and declared substandard as set forth in Section 17920.3 of the Health and Safety Code because conditions listed in that section exist to an extent that endangers the life, limb, health, property, safety, or welfare of the public or the occupants of the dwelling.
  - 2) A public officer or employee who is responsible for the enforcement of any housing law, after inspecting the premises, has notified the landlord or the landlord's agent in writing of his or her obligations to abate the nuisance or repair the substandard conditions.
  - 3) The conditions have existed and have not been abated 35 days beyond the date of service of the notice specified in paragraph (2) and the delay is without good cause. For purposes of this subdivision, service shall be complete at the time of deposit in the United States mail.
  - 4) The conditions were not caused by an act or omission of the tenant or lessee in violation of Section 1929 or 1941.2.
- (b) (1) A landlord who violates this section is liable to the tenant or lessee for the actual damages sustained by the tenant or lessee and special damages of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) and not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).
- 2) The prevailing party shall be entitled to recovery of reasonable attorney's fees and costs of the suit in an amount fixed by the court.
- (c) Any court that awards damages under this section may also order the landlord to abate any nuisance at the rental dwelling and to repair any substandard conditions of the rental dwelling, as defined in Section 1941.1, which significantly or materially affect the health or safety of the occupants of the rental dwelling and are uncorrected. If the court orders repairs or corrections, or both, the court's jurisdiction continues over the matter for the purpose of ensuring compliance.
- (d) The tenant or lessee shall be under no obligation to undertake any other remedy prior to exercising his or her rights under this section.
- (e) Any action under this section may be maintained in small claims court if the claim does not exceed the jurisdictional limit of that court.
- (f) The remedy provided by this section may be utilized in addition to any other remedy provided by this chapter, the rental agreement, lease, or other applicable statutory or common law. Nothing in this section shall require any landlord to comply with this section if he or she pursues his or her rights pursuant to Chapter 12.75 (commencing with Section 7060) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

#### **CCC Section 1942.5.**

(a) If the lessor retaliates against the lessee because of the exercise by the lessee of his rights under this chapter or because of his complaint to an appropriate agency as to tenantability of a

dwelling, and if the lessee of a dwelling is not in default as to the payment of his rent, the lessor may not recover possession of a dwelling in any action or proceeding, cause the lessee to quit involuntarily, increase the rent, or decrease any services within 180 days of any of the following:

- 1) After the date upon which the lessee, in good faith, has given notice pursuant to Section 1942, or has made an oral complaint to the lessor regarding tenantability.
  - 2) After the date upon which the lessee, in good faith, has filed a written complaint, or an oral complaint which is registered or otherwise recorded in writing, with an appropriate agency, of which the lessor has notice, for the purpose of obtaining correction of a condition relating to tenantability.
  - 3) After the date of an inspection or issuance of a citation, resulting from a complaint described in paragraph (2) of which the lessor did not have notice.
  - 4) After the filing of appropriate documents commencing a judicial or arbitration proceeding involving the issue of tenantability.
  - 5) After entry of judgment or the signing of an arbitration award, if any, when in the judicial proceeding or arbitration the issue of tenantability is determined adversely to the lessor. In each instance, the 180-day period shall run from the latest applicable date referred to in paragraphs (1) to (5), inclusive.
- (b) A lessee may not invoke subdivision (a) more than once in any 12-month period.
- (c) It is unlawful for a lessor to increase rent, decrease services, cause a lessee to quit involuntarily, bring an action to recover possession, or threaten to do any of those acts, for the purpose of retaliating against the lessee because he or she has lawfully organized or participated in a lessees' association or an organization advocating lessees' rights or has lawfully and peaceably exercised any rights under the law. In an action brought by or against the lessee pursuant to this subdivision, the lessee shall bear the burden of producing evidence that the lessor's conduct was, in fact, retaliatory.
- (d) Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting in any way the exercise by the lessor of his or her rights under any lease or agreement or any law pertaining to the hiring of property or his or her right to do any of the acts described in subdivision (a) or (c) for any lawful cause. Any waiver by a lessee of his or her rights under this section is void as contrary to public policy.
- (e) Notwithstanding subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive, a lessor may recover possession of a dwelling and do any of the other acts described in subdivision (a) within the period or periods prescribed therein, or within subdivision (c), if the notice of termination, rent increase, or other act, and any pleading or statement of issues in an arbitration, if any, states the ground upon which the lessor, in good faith, seeks to recover possession, increase rent, or do any of the other acts described in subdivision (a) or (c). If the statement is controverted, the lessor shall establish its truth at the trial or other hearing.
- (f) Any lessor or agent of a lessor who violates this section shall be liable to the lessee in a civil action for all of the following:
- 1) The actual damages sustained by the lessee.
  - 2) Punitive damages in an amount of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for each retaliatory act where the lessor or agent has been guilty of fraud, oppression, or malice with respect to that act.
- (g) In any action brought for damages for retaliatory eviction, the court shall award reasonable attorney's fees to the prevailing party if either party requests attorney's fees upon the initiation of the action.
- (h) The remedies provided by this section shall be in addition to any other remedies provided by statutory or decisional law.