

# Form Review #17

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Reproduced from ORHA Forms Manual

## What this form is for

Your tenant needs to notify you about maintenance needs. They live there and you don't. This form enables them to so notify you.

## When this form is used

When your tenant needs some repair or maintenance, they should complete this form for you. There are at least two major benefits to requiring written maintenance requests. The first is that a procedure, regularly adhered to, is a strong defense in court. If your tenant, now in FED court, alleges that he asked you to fix the leaking roof numerous times and you never did and that's why he didn't pay rent, your defense that you require all such requests be in writing backed up by your providing piles of maintenance requests from this and other tenants is usually compelling to a judge.

Second, the request then authorizes you or your agent (like your maintenance guy or the plumber) to enter the property without further notice. You can just go in. Of course, knock first. And remember that the authorization is only good for seven days. If you haven't started the repair within seven days, you need permission again. If the repairs are started but not finished within the seven days, that's okay. You can continue until finished.

If you have an office, always have this form handy so tenants who come in to request repairs can fill one out. If you don't, offer to mail one (or to drop it by) for the tenant to fill out and return. You can emphasize that you need the request in writing. You might include one with the new tenant package (copy of the lease, etc.) so they'll have it handy. Too often, though, those get lost. If you've got a common area, like a laundry room, you could leave a supply there.

## How the form is filled in

This form is generally filled in by the tenant, not you. Some landlords, though, will fill it out over the telephone, then ask the tenant to come by and sign it. Or, if you're going to do the repair, say you'll bring it over to have the tenant sign before you do the work. However it's completed, here's what it should contain.

- 1 The tenant's name and address go here. The date is when the maintenance problem is being reported. It should be the date the form is being signed.
- 2 The tenant's telephone number goes here. That's handy for calling them to say you're coming over or the plumber will be late or to diagnose the problem further.
- 3 You need the tenant to describe the problem. This can be as specific as the tenant can be. Sometimes it's pretty general, though. "The toilet won't stop running." "No heat."
- 4 If the form is unsigned, it's not an authorization to enter. Get it signed. One signature is sufficient.

## Older editions

Forms back to at least 1986 still comply with current law. Some older ones state the date and time the tenant is authorizing the entry.