

Something needs fixing?

How to get a repair done properly, without putting your home at risk.

Most repairs are sorted quickly when they are reported clearly. When they are not, the temptation is to hold back the rent until the landlord acts. In October 2026 a Camps Bay family who did exactly that, for more than two years, were ordered out of their home by the Western Cape High Court. There is a better way, and it costs you nothing.

Four steps that work

1**Report it in writing**

WhatsApp or email, with a photo and a short description. Note the date. A written report is a record; a conversation in the passage is not.

2**Keep paying your rent, in full and on time**

Pay it to the account in your lease. Paying it somewhere else, even into an attorney's trust account, is not paying your landlord.

3**Let the contractor in**

Allow reasonable access for inspection and repairs. In the Camps Bay case, the Tribunal refused a rent reduction partly because the owner had not been allowed in to assess the problems.

4**Still not fixed? Go to the Rental Housing Tribunal**

The Western Cape Rental Housing Tribunal hears complaints about a lack of maintenance, and the service is free for tenants and landlords. Contact Centre 0860 106 166, or rht.enquiries@westerncape.gov.za.

What not to do

Do not stop paying rent to force a repair. It puts you in breach of your lease and can end with the lease cancelled and an eviction order.

Do not deduct the cost of repairs from your rent unless your landlord or agent has agreed to it in writing first.

Do not refuse access to the landlord, the agent or the contractor sent to assess or fix the problem.

If you rent through The Property Bureau

- Send your repair to us on WhatsApp at +27 65 847 5310, or email admin@propertybureau.co.za, with a photo.
- We log it against your home the day you report it and put it to the owner.
- Once the owner agrees, we instruct the contractor and tell you who is coming and when.
- We close the job only when the work is done and you have confirmed it, with photographs.
- You deal with one person in our office from start to finish.

Useful to know

- Once you lodge a complaint with the Tribunal, and until it rules or three months pass, whichever comes first, the landlord may not evict you, the landlord must do necessary maintenance, and you must keep paying your rent (Rental Housing Act, section 13(7)).
- A landlord can never evict you without a court order, and you should never be locked out or have services cut off as a way of forcing you out.

Report a repair on WhatsApp: wa.me/27658475310

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The Property Bureau. Boutique letting, management and sales in Cape Town since 2007. PPRA registered.

Sources: Costa v N.L.D.C.J and Others [2026] ZAWCHC 596 (12 October 2026); Rental Housing Act 50 of 1999, section 13; Western Cape Government, Rental Housing Tribunal. Checked 15 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.