

STATE OF REPAIR:

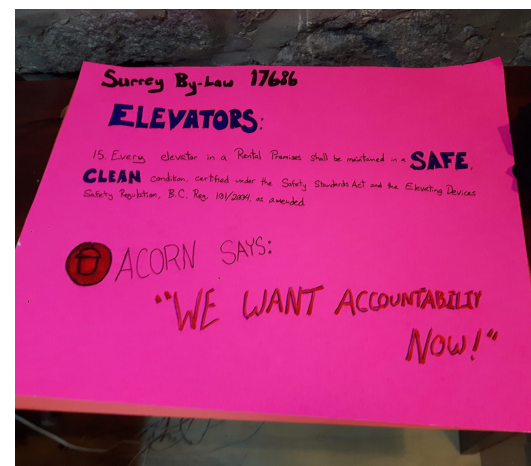
BC ACORN TENANT SURVEY

**76.9% OF RESPONDENTS
REPORTED PROBLEMS IN
THEIR UNITS**

**47.4% REPORTED
PROBLEMS GETTING
REPAIRS DONE IN THEIR
BUILDING**

**44.9% OF RESPONDENTS
REPORTED THAT REPAIRS
ARE NOT DONE IN A
TIMELY MANNER**

**28.2% REPORTED
FEELING THREATENED
WHEN COMPLAINING
ABOUT THEIR BUILDING**



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INTRODUCTION

BC ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) is an independent national organization of low and moderate income families with 12,800 members across the region. ACORN Canada has over 102,000 members in 22 neighbourhood chapters across the country. ACORN believes that social and economic justice can best be achieved with a wide membership base who are invested in their organization and focused on building community power for change.

This report shows that the more needs be done to support tenants and hold landlords to account, as renters are living in substandard conditions without the necessary support to stand up to landlords on issues such as rental unit repairs.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey was conducted from March 28 - April 25, 2017. It was distributed to low and moderate income BC ACORN members and families to measure the extent of the problem of substandard living conditions in the region's rental apartments.

Major deficiencies are evident in the homes of respondents, with 76.9% of respondents reporting problems in their units and 47.4% reporting problems getting repairs done in their building.

Some tenants reported feeling threatened when making complaints about their building. It is therefore imperative that the rights of tenants are protected so that they are not living in fear of landlords, while occupying substandard housing. The survey results also reveal that only 10.2% of respondents had called to complain to City bylaws about their landlord. More needs to be done to educate tenants on their rights, as many respondents do not know how to complain, or who to complain to. Additionally, some respondents reported that they do not think there is any point in complaining, indicating that there is a lack of enforcement as tenants do not believe they are protected by bylaws.

This report highlights the worrying trend of tenants being failed as they struggle with poor housing conditions and a lack of support to address housing issues. The affordability of rental units is a key concern, and BC ACORN is calling for a focus on the *quality of housing*, as well as the cost. The survey results clearly show that tenants are living in a state of disrepair. We need tenants' rights to protect renters living in buildings where unscrupulous landlords are overcharging for substandard housing!

METHODOLOGY

BC ACORN's Tenant Survey was conducted between March 28 and April 25, 2017. In total, 78 responses were received. The three principal areas that the survey addressed were:

- 1) What is the state of repair in the apartment building you live in?
- 2) What has been your experience getting repairs from your landlord?
- 3) What has been your experience getting help from the City to get repairs done?

The targeted demographic for respondents were low and moderate income ACORN members. The survey was sent out electronically through our membership lists and during ACORN events and tax service.



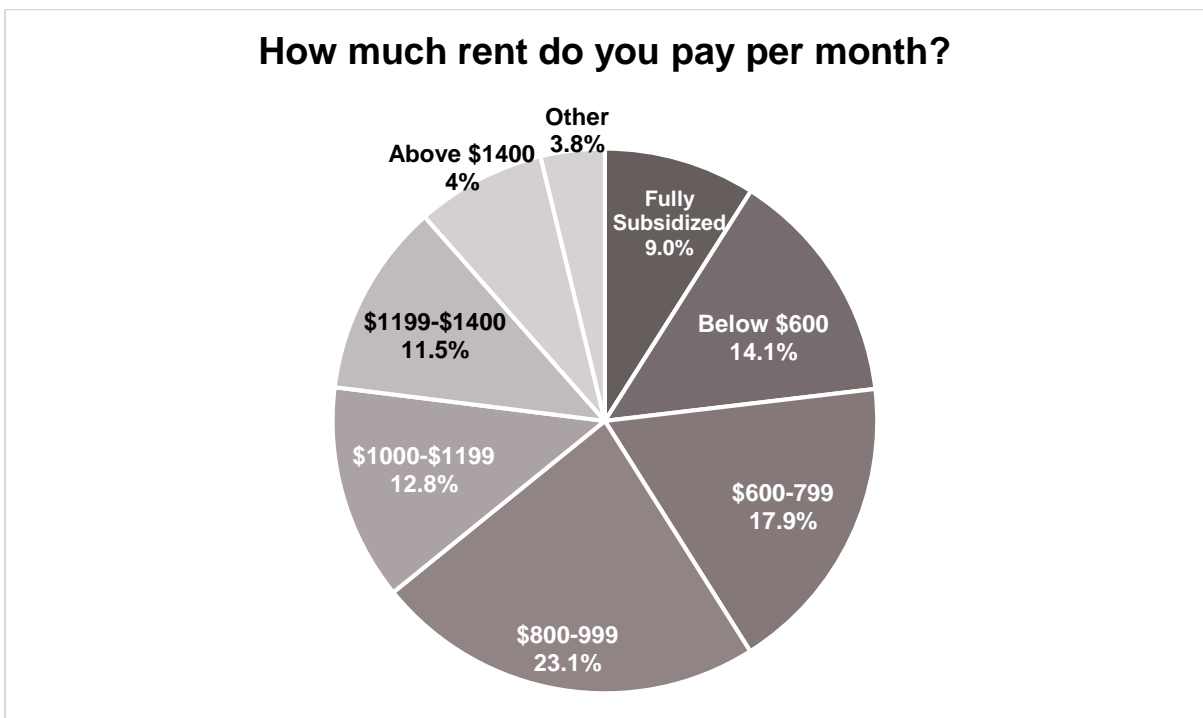
RESULTS

78 tenants responded to our survey. Geographically, respondents are dispersed across the locations mapped below:

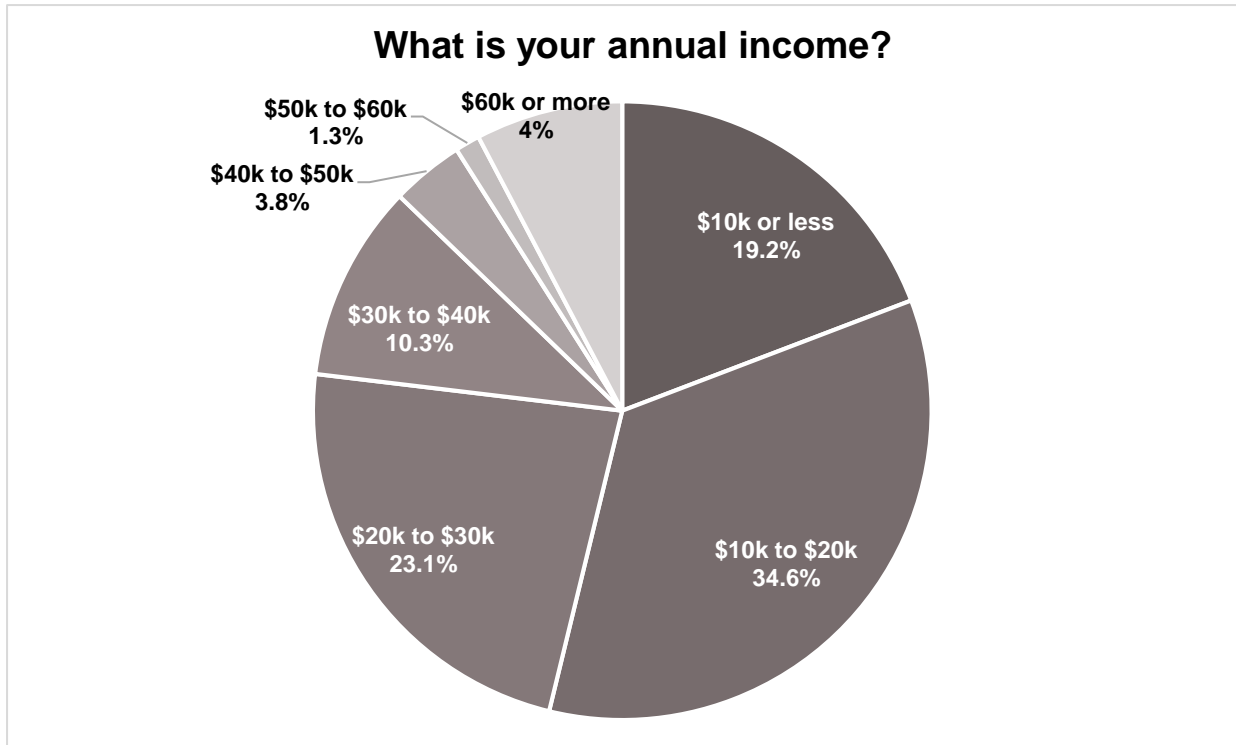


Rental Costs

Rental costs varied across respondents. Only 9% of respondents receive full subsidy. The majority of respondents pay more than \$800 per month.



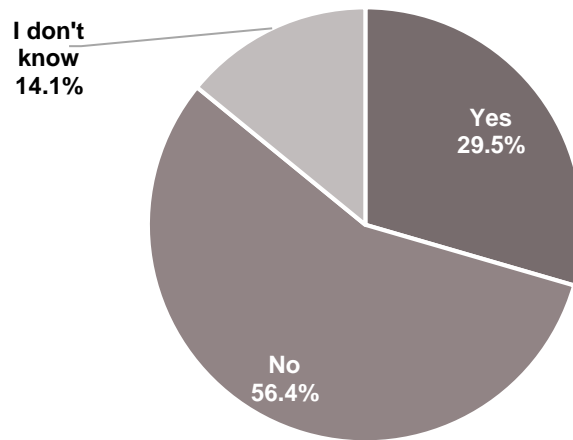
Many respondents have a low to moderate income, with most **earning less than \$30,000**. Almost 20% earn **less than \$10,000**. This is deeply concerning for BC ACORN members as rental rates and other living costs continue to rise.



Housing Conditions

48.7% of respondents reported that their unit required repairs at the beginning of their tenancy, indicating that units were being rented in substandard conditions. Most tenants reported issues in their units, **76.9% of respondents** in total. Respondents noted issues such as drafty windows and holes/cracks in walls. Tenants also have issues with mice, rats, and cockroaches and other bugs in common areas. These are all issues that should be addressed by landlords to ensure tenants are living in safe and habitable environments.

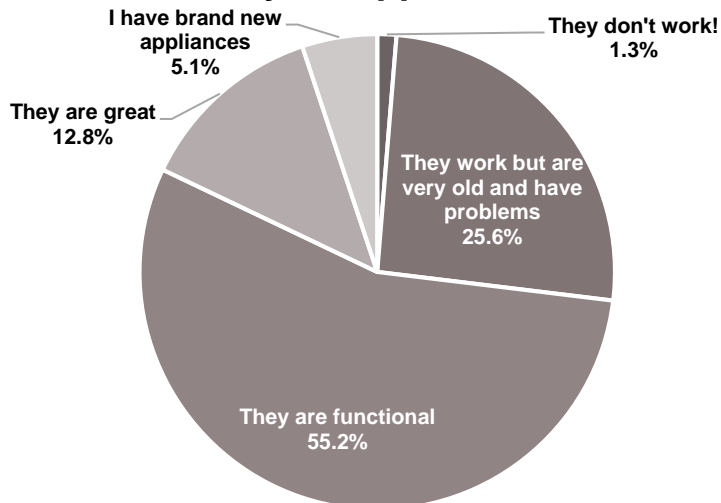
Have you ever experienced a lack of heat in the winter in your building?



29.5% of tenants surveyed have experienced a lack of heat in their homes in winter.

Respondents also highlighted issues with their hot water, with a total of 24.4% respondents reporting such issues. Tenants experienced problems such as their water being too hot and the temperature changing from hot to cold.

Rate your appliances:



Over 25% of respondents reported that there are issues with their appliances.

Property Issues Checklist

Drafty windows	28.2%
Holes or cracks on walls or ceiling	28.2%
Too hot in summer	28.2%
Out of date appliances (fridge or stove)	26.9%
Unfinished repairs in my unit	24.4%
Ventilation problems in bathroom or kitchen	24.4%
Countertops damaged or broken	24.4%
Leaky faucets	24.4%
Too cold in winter	23.1%
Mould	23.1%
Water damage	21.8%
Floor is not smooth or is coming up	20.5%
Appliances do not work, or don't work properly	19.2%
Electrical sockets broken or don't work	17.9%
Closet doors do not work properly	16.7%
Kitchen or closet shelves damaged or broken	16.7%
Peeling paint on walls or ceiling	16.7%
Lights don't work properly	12.8%
Lack of water pressure	9%
Balcony paint peeling	5.1%
Balcony has cracks or holes	2.6%
Balcony door is broken	2.6%
Other	21.8%
I have no issues in my suite	23.1%

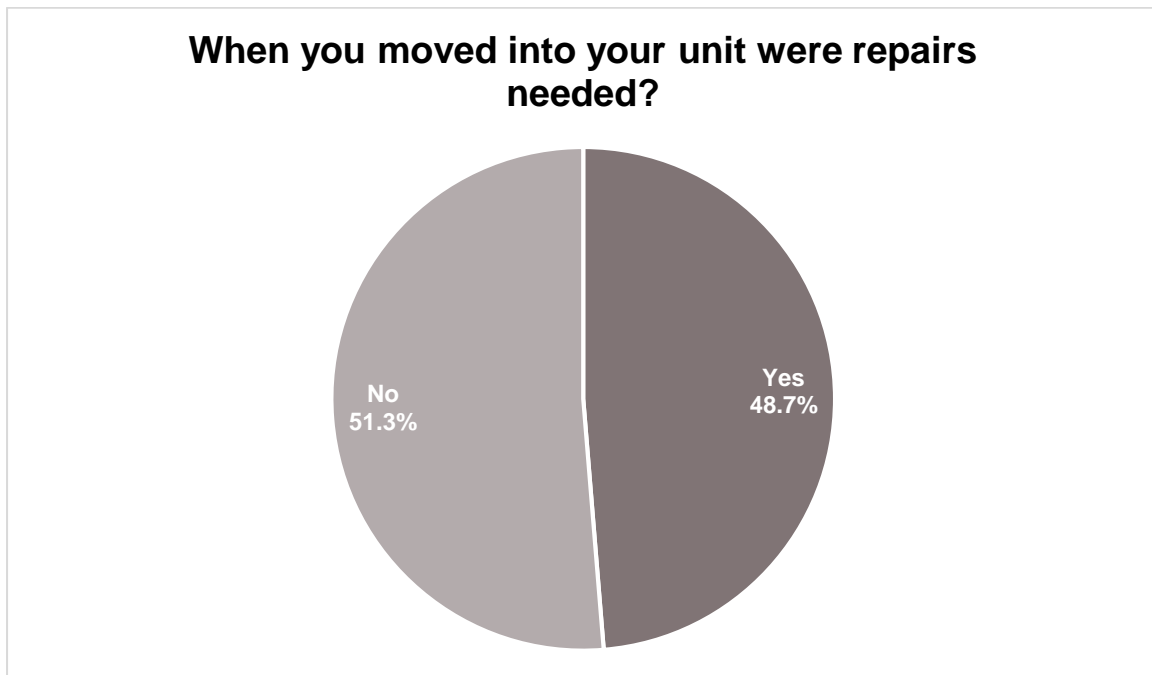
28.2% of respondents reported drafty windows and holes/cracks in walls, while 24.4% reported unfinished repairs in their units.

Issues with Common Areas Checklist

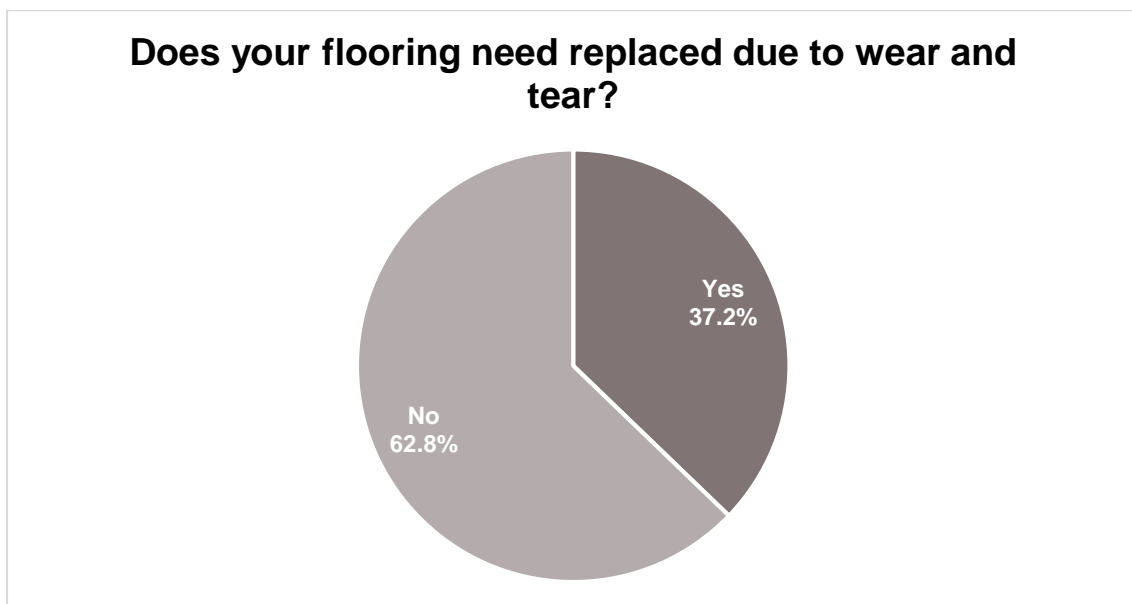
Mice or rats in building	23.1%
Roaches or other bugs in building	17.9%
Walkways/Sidewalks on apartment property have cracks/holes	14.1%
Parking garage has leaks or mould	12.8%
Yard/outside areas are dirty or not kept clean	11.5%
Laundry room machines don't work	10.3%
Hallway or lobby carpets do not get cleaned	10.3%
Hallway walls and/or ceilings have holes or cracks	10.3%
Hallways ceilings have leaks or mould	9%
Stairwells have garbage or are unclean	9%
Hallway walls and/or ceilings have peeling paint	7.7%
Hallway lights are missing or broken	7.7%
Lobby intercom/buzzer is broken	7.7%
Front door does not lock or is often unlocked	7.7%
Security cameras do not work	7.7%
Parking garage walls or ceiling have cracks or holes	7.7%
Outside walls or balconies of building have cracks/peeling paint	6.4%
Elevators are dirty or are damaged	6.4%
Parking area or driveway has potholes or cracked concrete	6.4%
Laundry room has peeling paint on walls/ceiling	6.4%
Stairwells have faeces or urine	3.8%
Stairwell lights are missing or broken	3.8%
Garbage chute is unclean or has bad odours	3.8%
Laundry room has leaks or mould	2.6%
Stairwells have broken railings	2.6%
Stairwells have peeling paint on ceiling or walls	1.3%
Other	24.4%
I have no issues with the common areas of my building	38.5%

23.1% of respondents reported mice or rats in their building and 17.9% reported cockroaches or other bugs

Repairs

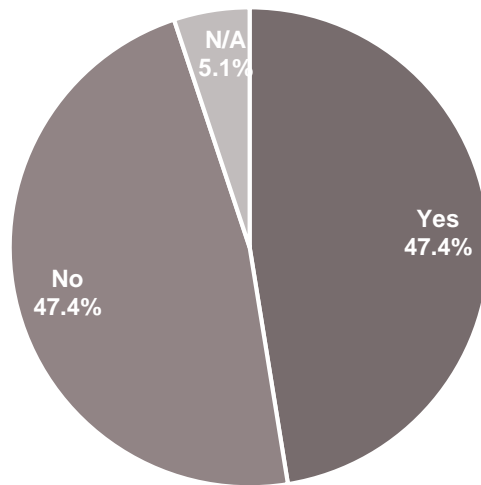


48.7% of respondents reported that their unit needed repairs when they moved in.



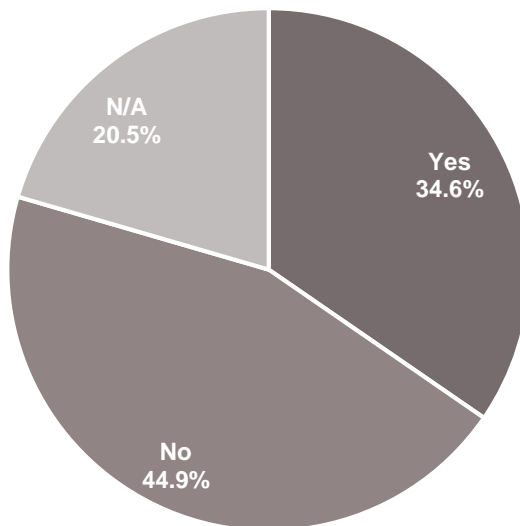
37.2% of respondents reported that their floor needed replaced.

Have you ever had problems getting repairs done in your building?



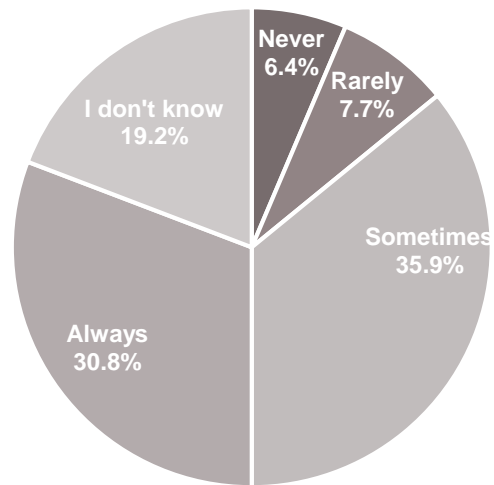
47.4% of respondents reported that they had problems getting repairs done in their building.

My work orders get done in a timely manner



44.9% of respondents' work orders do not get done in a timely manner.

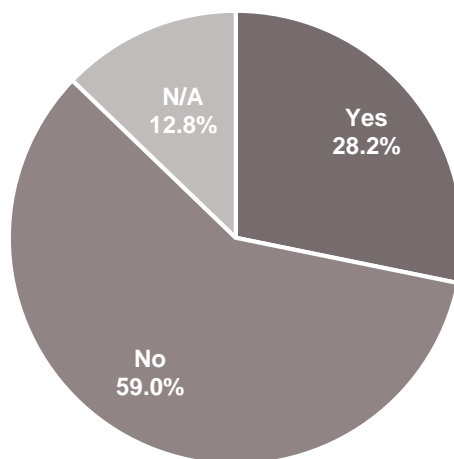
Maintenance workers, contractors, and/or repair people do quality work in the building



Only 30.8% of respondents felt that repairs carried out in their building were always quality work.

When asked about building management, 25.6% of respondents felt that management **does not treat them fairly** and **34.6%** felt that building management **does not act professionally**. In addition, almost one third of respondents **felt threatened** when making complaints about the building:

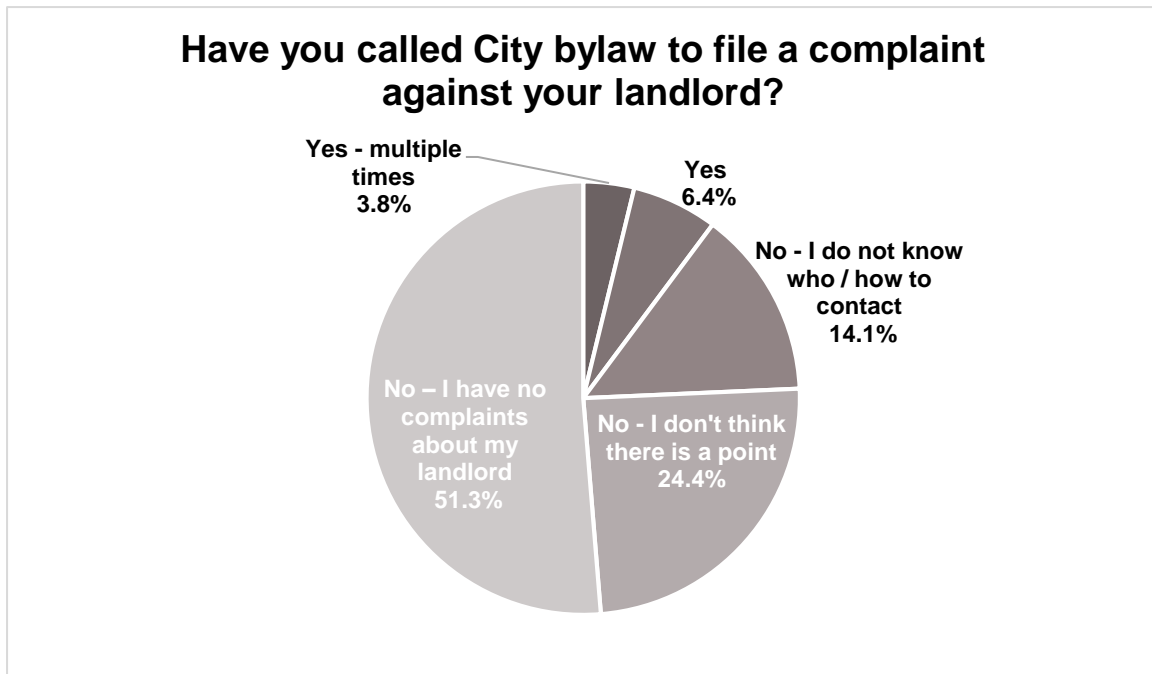
Do you feel threatened when making complaints about the building?



Over 28% of respondents reported that they feel threatened when making complaints about their building.

Complaints

Only 10.2% of respondents reported calling the City to complain about their landlord. Over 24% of respondents think there is no point in complaining, while 14.1% do not know how to make a complaint.



Comments about Buildings

Many respondents provided comments about their buildings, further revealing issues with their units and landlords. Some of these comments include:

Old building not kept up to par.
Difficult getting repairs done properly and promptly.

We are mostly single parent families on income assistance with little or no other housing options. We get direct verbal threats from management when repairs are requested. People who ask why the management will not follow BC rules for managers and tenants get evicted. It's that simple!

Illegal rent increases, no rent receipts and threatening attitude - will increase rent or evict if "problems occur"

I don't rock the boat on anything that is wrong, there is no where else to move that I can afford.

These comments reinforce the survey results that show tenants are trapped in substandard housing, unable to complain and unable to move.

CONCLUSION

The results of the BC ACORN Tenant Survey evidence the state of disrepair experienced by tenants in rental units. A majority of respondents reported issues with their apartments, as well as issues having repairs completed. Many respondents reported that they are apprehensive making complaints about their building as they feel threatened. City bylaws do not offer support, as respondents indicated they were either unaware of how to complain about their building, or do not see the point in complaining. This is indicative of the failings of the current system and highlights the need to for tenants' rights, to ensure their needs are met. Landlords must be held to account to provide affordable housing that meets an acceptable standard.