



New West
BC ACORN
**STATE OF
REPAIR
REPORT**

Information collected
and presented by New
West ACORN

July 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



**What is ACORN? /
Methodology**



03



Survey Results



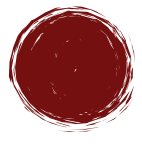
04



**ACORN’s Demands/
Suggestions**



09



Conclusion



10



WHAT IS ACORN?

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now – ACORN Canada, founded in 2004, is an independent grassroots organization that fights for social and economic justice for low and moderate income communities.

We believe that social and economic justice can best be achieved by building community power for change. ACORN has over 185,000 low-to-moderate-income individual members in 30 neighbourhood chapters across five provinces.



METHODOLOGY

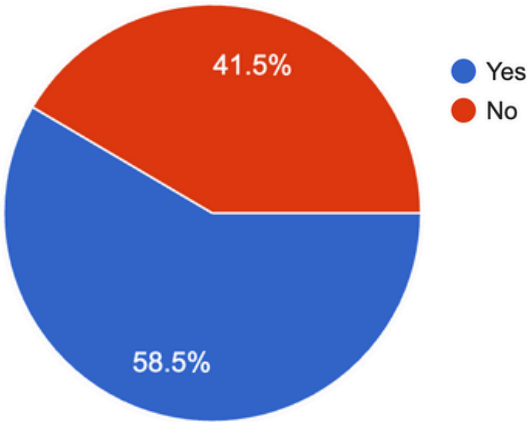
Through chapter meetings and door-knocking in apartment buildings across New West, we identified some likely concerns tenants face (maintenance issues, landlord communication, access to cooling) and developed a Google form survey to gather information surrounding these issues.

We distributed this survey to our mailing list of New West tenants, did outreach with paper versions of this survey at community events, and put up posters with links to the survey in neighbourhoods around New West.

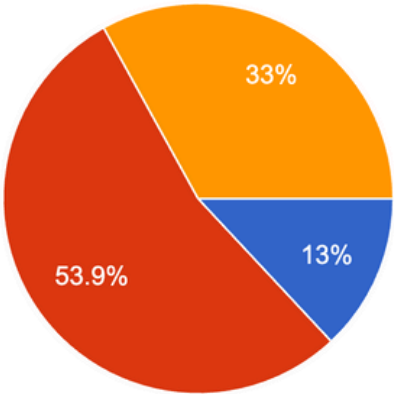
118 survey responses were received, all from self-reported New West tenants. Results from select questions are represented in the following report.

THE STATE OF NEW WEST APARTMENTS

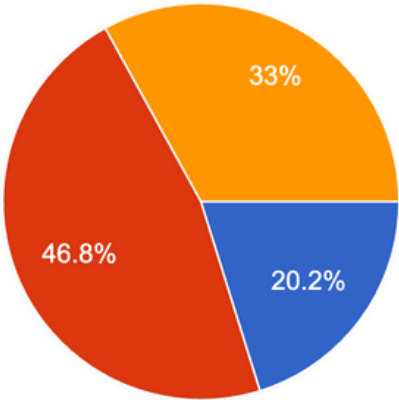
WHEN YOU MOVED INTO YOUR UNIT, WERE REPAIRS NEEDED?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE CONDITION OF YOUR UNIT?

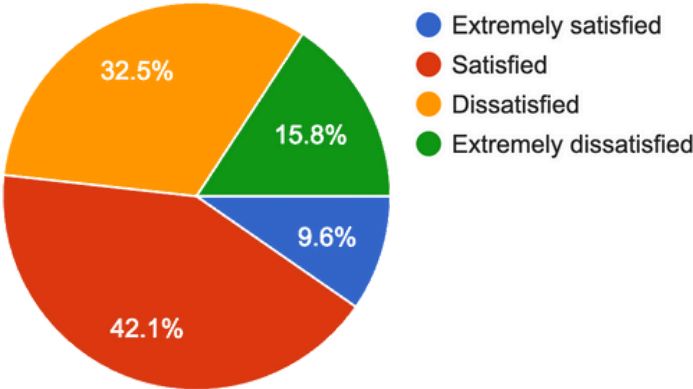


HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE CONDITION OF COMMON AREAS IN YOUR BUILDING?



- Needs urgent repair and maintenance
- Needs some repair and maintenance
- Needs almost no repair and maintenance

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE IN YOUR BUILDING?



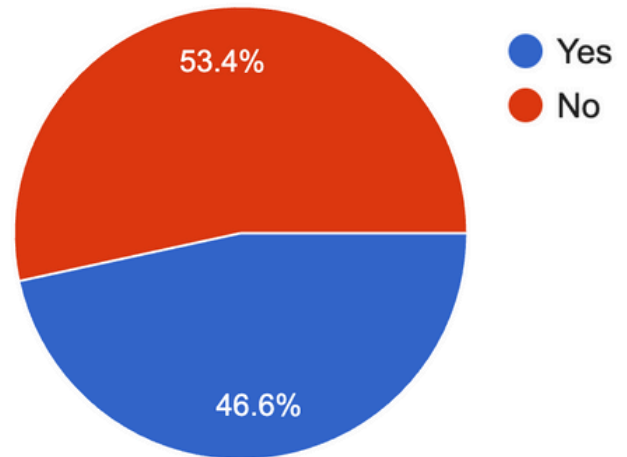
- Extremely satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied



Key Takeaways

- A majority of respondents needed repairs to their units upon move in
- $\frac{2}{3}$ of respondents say their units and common areas in their building need repairs and/or maintenance done
- Almost half of respondents reported they were dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied with the condition of their apartment building

DO YOU HAVE, OR HAVE YOU EVER HAD, MICE IN YOUR APARTMENT?



TENANT TESTIMONIES

"The city knows, the police know, the fire dept all know about this slumlord. I pay for heat I don't get, I pay for hot water I don't get, there is one garbage bin for 7 apts and no recycling or composting, no laundry and the storage and parking supposed to be included has been resold to 3rd parties, the common hallways are cleaned once or twice a year. Every year I have to pay more and more for nothing."

”

"They haven't fixed our suite properly, in 26 years. They did minor repairs, that's it. I've been asked to leave, so they can fix my suite. They have tried to evict me...The new owners are only fixing things that will make them money.. they need to address the mold, the windows, the older kitchens from the 1960's & bathrooms. The holes where bugs are coming in. Tenants on lower levels have seen mice running around & bedbugs."

”

NEW WEST TENANTS AND ACCESS TO COOLING

Tenants were asked if they were impacted by extreme heat and whether they have access to AC.

- Only 12% of tenants stated that their apartments remained **at a comfortable temperature** during summer
- Over 65% of tenants have experienced extreme heat in their apartments during summer – 40.7% of tenants reported their apartment is **often extremely hot**
- 37% of tenants don't have access to AC.
 - Among those who don't have AC, 29% of tenants stated cost as the main reason.
 - 16.7% stated their landlord **does not allow** AC

Other responses shared by tenants when asked why they don't have AC in their apartment:

"My A/C is malfunctioning due as it has to compete every year with the heat they pump from the hallways. What will Happen next year. With no A/C? I cannot afford to buy a new one. Its worry some."

"I have had to buy several AC units. But the massive gaps in doors and windows allow much heat inside still and cold in the winter."

Key Takeaways

- Extreme heat is a widespread issue in New West rental housing
- Almost half of survey respondents stated they don't have access to cooling for reasons beyond their control (cost, landlord not allowing AC, infrastructure does not allow for effective cooling)
- Some tenants who do have access to AC are still unable to keep their apartments cool, due to repair and maintenance issues being neglected by their landlords (holes in walls, malfunctioning heating in common areas)

FOR TENANTS, REQUESTING REPAIRS ISN'T ALWAYS SIMPLE

52%

OF TENANTS REPORT THEY HAVE PREVIOUSLY CHOSEN TO **NOT** REQUEST REPAIRS BECAUSE THEY EXPECTED TO BE IGNORED

60%

OF TENANTS HAVE HAD TROUBLE GETTING THEIR LANDLORD TO DO REPAIRS IN A TIMELY MANNER

CONCERNS ABOUT RETALIATION MAY DISSUADE TENANTS FROM ASKING FOR REPAIRS

60%

OF TENANTS REPORT BEING CONCERNED ABOUT **EVICTION** WHEN ASKING FOR REPAIRS FROM THEIR LANDLORD

31%

OF TENANTS REPORT THEY HAVE BEEN **HARASSED** BY THEIR LANDLORD

25%

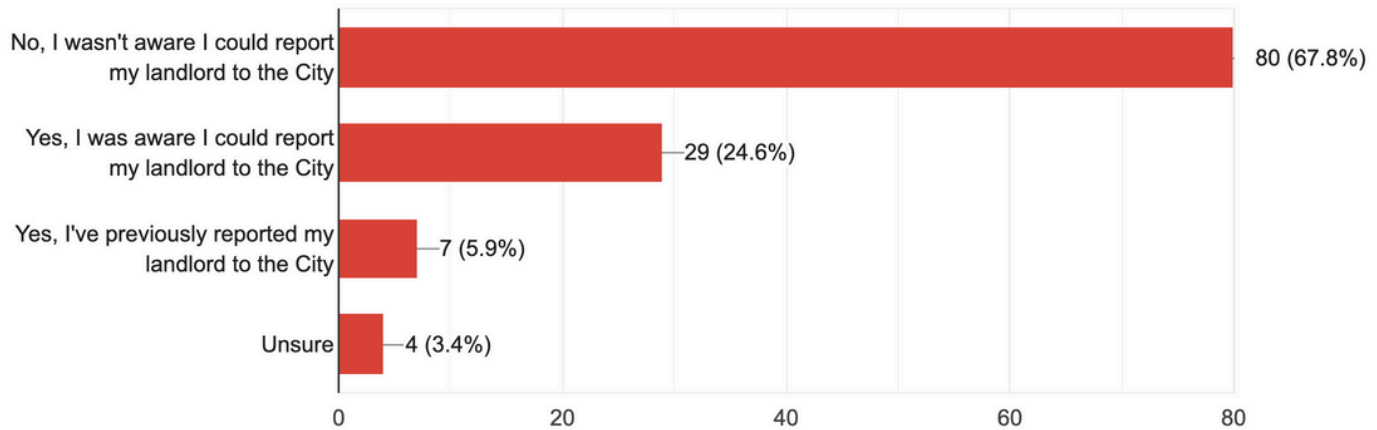
OF TENANTS REPORT THEY FEEL THREATENED WHEN MAKING COMPLAINTS ABOUT THEIR BUILDING

Key Takeaways

- Fears about retaliation likely lead many tenants to avoid requesting repairs from their landlord
- Past experience having difficulty getting repairs done likely impacts the number of tenants who bother to report repair and maintenance issues

Are you aware that New Westminster has a bylaw regulating apartment conditions and that landlords who neglect repairs or maintenance can be reported to the City?

118 responses



Only 13 survey respondents reported having previously contacted New West by-law to report conditions in their apartment. We asked about their experience and the outcome of their complaint:

- 2 respondents reported that they had a good experience and that bylaw got their landlord to do the repairs
- 3 respondents were contacted by bylaw who began an investigation, but their repairs didn't get done
- 7 respondents **never heard back from by-law officers**—the most common reported outcome

Analysis

The majority of New West tenants report experiencing neglected repair and maintenance issues

- Tenants are largely unaware of the city's Business Regulations and Licensing (Rental Units) Bylaw, or the city's role in enforcing standards of maintenance in rental units
- Justified fears of retaliation or expectations that repair issues will not be addressed likely lead many tenants to not request repairs
 - This puts tenants at risk—especially when it comes to issues affecting health and safety, such as pest infestations and extreme heat



ACORN'S DEMANDS/SUGGESTIONS

New West needs to meaningfully address the widespread health and safety issue of substandard conditions in rental housing. We are calling on New West City Council to ramp up enforcement of apartment standards and keep tenants safe from unhealthy conditions, by implementing these policy solutions:

- Sufficiently fund New West's bylaw enforcement team to allow **proactive inspections** of all purpose-built rental housing
- Create a renter's office to centralize all tenant related information and services provided by the city, and increase awareness of the city's role in enforcing apartment standards
- Work with ACORN to review and reform the process of reporting substandard conditions in rental units, to remove barriers tenants face
- Increase fines for landlords who neglect repair and maintenance issues to financially motivate landlords to respond to maintenance requests in a timely manner
- Review the existing Business Regulations and Licensing (Rental Units) Bylaw with tenant input, to make sure all appropriate common repair issues are included
- Take steps to improve awareness of tenant rights in New West, by making information about the Business Regulations and Licensing (Rental Units) Bylaw more accessible, and requiring landlords to post standardized information about contacting City by-law in common areas



CONCLUSION

New West rental housing is in trouble. Repair and maintenance issues are common, and landlords are not sufficiently motivated to maintain their own buildings and provide safe and healthy housing for tenants. ACORN believes the reasons for this are structural. For example, loopholes in BC's existing rent control laws create a financial incentive for landlords to push out long-term tenants, and ignoring basic maintenance and repairs is an easy way to do that.

Moreover, tenants are not reporting issues to the City for a variety of reasons whether that be dis-trust/belief in the system, limited time, language barriers, fear of retaliation, and/or not knowing they can. A complaint-based approach alone will not address these barriers. This is why proactive enforcement is necessary and the City must step in to support tenants' right to safe and healthy homes.

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