

A Guide to BUILDING MAINTENANCE and REPAIR

Prepared by U-HAB The Urban Homesteading Assistance Board and HPD Department of Housing Preservation and Development of the City of New York

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How to Use This Book

The contents of this manual are divided into four sections:

SECTION 1—*Caring for Your Building* (pages 8 to 11), offers an introduction and overview to the entire subject of taking responsibility for the upkeep and improvement of your own building. Few tenants have any previous experience in planning,

conducting, or supervising the kinds of work projects that are required to properly maintain a building. And even those who are skilled at trades, such as carpentry, plumbing, or electrical work, have probably not had to deal with an entire building before. This section is designed to help you understand the big picture.

SECTION 2—*Getting Started* (pages 12 to 16), concentrates on the role of the maintenance and repair committee. It covers everything you need to know to successfully plan and carry out a maintenance and repair policy for your building, and it includes suggestions for getting help with this very important process.

SECTION 3—*The TIL Repair Plan* (pages 17 to 24). This section addresses planning, carrying out, and budgeting and paying for the repairs that your building may require while you are enrolled in the TIL program. As these projects tend to be big and expensive, it is especially important that they be well-planned and managed.

SECTION 4—*Working with Contractors and Employees* (pages 25 to 31), offers helpful guidelines on how to find, select, hire and supervise quality contractors to provide your building with the maintenance and repair services it needs.

A RESOURCES SECTION (pages 32 to 37) is located following the major text. It includes a Preventive Maintenance Checklist, Energy Conservation Guidelines, Schedule of Superintendent's Responsibilities and Building Code Violations.

*for more
information call:*

**UHAB (212) 226-4119
or TIL (212) 386-7312**

Finally, don't be afraid to contact HPD or your UHAB representative if you are at all confused or have any questions.

Good luck!

Section 1

CARING FOR YOUR BUILDING

Introduction

Along with collecting the rent, taking care of the maintenance and repair of your building is one of the most important responsibilities of a tenant association. Many residents will measure the success or failure of their tenant association by looking at things that affect them the most directly, and few things that an association can do have as great an impact on the quality of life in your building as maintenance and repairs. The association's ability to conduct routine maintenance, to handle emergency repairs, and to plan and carry out long-term improvements in the condition of the building will be key factors in whether or not your association succeeds.

But maintenance and repair is a complex process. More than simply supervising employees and hiring contractors, maintenance and repair requires good communications. You'll need clear communications among tenants and between your tenant association and the contractors or employees assigned to do the work. You'll need active participation by everyone in the building, as well as well-understood and carefully crafted decision-making practices. To put all of these elements together, you will need a repair and maintenance committee, which will take primary responsibility

for managing, supervising and monitoring all repair and maintenance work.

Before you get into the nuts-and-bolts of building maintenance and repair, take a long, hard look around your building (and your tenant association) and ask a few key questions:

The answers to these questions should help you understand what needs to be done, and where to begin, in improving the maintenance and repair of your building. Most likely, the place to start will be with the Maintenance & Repair Committee.

- What shape is your building in? How does it look, inside and outside, and how is it to live in? Are there any obvious, immediate repairs needed?
- Do you practice preventive maintenance, including energy conservation and weatherization, to avoid future repair problems?
- Do you have an established maintenance and repair committee?
- Does your repair and maintenance committee have clearly-defined written procedures for setting priorities and making needed repairs?
- Does your committee conduct regular surveys of apartments and the building?
- Are repair request forms distributed to all tenants, so that the committee has up-to-date information?
- Does your committee keep tenants informed about the status of planned repair projects, those that have been completed, or that are still in progress?

- Does your committee do a good job of supervising the work of the superintendent and any outside contractors?

Maintaining Your Building

Maintenance is generally defined as the work that is done on a regular basis to keep your building in good working condition: sweeping the halls, lubricating hinges and locks, or servicing the burner and boiler annually. Most maintenance tasks are performed by the building's super, but certain jobs may be done by the officers, the maintenance and repair committee, outside contractors, or the tenants themselves.

During TIL, the City is your landlord. After you have completed your time in TIL and purchased your building, regular maintenance of building systems and public areas becomes the legal responsibility of your co-op corporation. It's important to learn the maintenance skills you'll need now, while you are still in TIL, so that you can maintain your building more easily later.

For individual tenants, the transition to cooperative ownership usually means new and unfamiliar repair and maintenance responsibilities, and these are discussed in detail in this manual. Every tenant should be aware that their responsibilities will increase after sale, and that they can get a head start by initiating as much of this work as possible while your building is still enrolled in TIL.

Maintenance by the Tenant Association: Before and After Sale

The tenant association's officers and the maintenance and repair committee are responsible for ongoing maintenance of the building, including an annual cellar-to-roof inspection, upkeep of major systems, and planning for major repair projects

and/or capital improvements. Inspection reports should include information about code violations in the building (especially health or safety-related items such as smoke detectors, window guards and lead paint removal). The building's weatherization should be considered a major system, inspected and upgraded regularly to save money on fuel bills. Your tenant association should also try to schedule "work days" for the whole building, on which residents work together to do painting, patching, or other maintenance and upkeep. This is a great way to save money and keep your building well-maintained while creating pride, participation, and a sense of ownership among tenants.

Maintenance by the Tenants: Before and After Sale

Individual tenants can make a big difference to the quality of their own life in the building by taking responsibility for maintenance and repairs in their apartments. Tasks like paint touch-ups or basic carpentry can often be done by tenants themselves, using materials purchased and supplied by the tenant association. A fair, consistent written policy should be developed by your building's officers and maintenance and repair committee, explaining what projects the association will provide supplies for, what will be supplied, and how a tenant can request supplies. Remember, the tenant association should not pay tenants for work and cannot give rent abatements.

Tenants should report repair problems to the officers or committee as soon as they occur, especially if delays are likely to cause harm to tenants or to the building. Tenants can also help out by generally taking care of their building: not littering, reporting vandals to the officers, and helping to keep the building and grounds neat and well-maintained.

During TIL, tenants have no legal obligation to make improvements to their apartments, but many will choose to do the work anyway because they know it's in the best interests of themselves and their building. They also know that work they do

themselves is likely to be done exactly how they want it, instead of the way the contractor or super thinks it should be done.

After the tenants buy the building, they become shareholders and take on new responsibilities for repairing and maintaining their apartments. Generally, repairs that need to be done inside an apartment are the individual shareholder's responsibility, while tasks that involve the entire building or a major building system will be undertaken by the co-op corporation. Once again, it is important to remember that the co-op corporation is not a landlord. The shareholders are their own landlords. For example, a resident who might have wanted the tenant association to fix a broken stove in her apartment while the building was still enrolled in TIL would have to fix the stove herself (or have it fixed at her own expense) if it breaks down after sale.

Of course, if you and the other tenants in your building have been doing basic repairs in your apartments during the TIL period you are far more likely to make a smooth transition to co-op ownership. You will already have the skills to do the work, and the experience of doing it for yourselves.

Section 2

GETTING STARTED

The Maintenance and Repair Committee

The maintenance and repair committee is responsible for planning and supervising all maintenance and repair activity in the building. The committee must work closely with the tenant association's officers in order to figure out how much money is available for repairs, and how it should be used. Members of the maintenance and repair committee must be building-residents who belong to the tenant association, and they should be

prepared to invest considerable time and energy in this important responsibility.

The committee should meet at least twice a month to review building repair needs and set priorities. When an outside contractor is required, the committee seeks qualified contractors, solicits and evaluates bids for the job, and recommends the selection of a contractor to the executive committee. One member of the maintenance and repair committee usually supervises the work of your building's superintendent.

Your TIL tenant association by-laws are very specific regarding the duties and procedures of the maintenance and repair committee, and they should be followed closely. Article XI specifies how much money the committee can spend without the approval of the officers, and explains how many bids and references are required for jobs that cost more than a certain amount of money. It is important that the maintenance and repair committee review this section of the by-laws at the committee's first meeting, and follow the guidelines carefully.

Responsibilities of The Maintenance and Repair Committee

Responsibilities of the Maintenance and Repair Committee: The maintenance and repair committee must have active participation from its members, as well as good communication with the officers, tenants, TIL, and any contractors, tradespeople or employees working with the building. In addition, a clear decision-making process should be established, with accepted procedures for making needed repairs, a budget-based repair schedule, and a system for receiving repair requests and monitoring all repair and maintenance work.



MAINTENANCE & REPAIR COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Develop a building maintenance and repair policy (see page 15 for guidelines) and propose it to the tenant association.
2. Gather information about the building's repair needs by surveying apartments and public areas, and by conducting annual roof-to-cellar building inspections.
3. Compare your repair needs with your building's HPD letter of intent, and work with TIL to make sure that all required major repairs are included in an approved repair plan for your building.
4. Assign one M&R committee member to be the Building Improvement Coordinator (BIC). The BIC will be the liason between the T.A. and the City on all repair issues. The City will provide the BIC with the scopes of work for your building, contractors assigned and HPD staff responsible for supervising the work. The BIC is responsible to communicate all information to the T.A..
5. Work with the tenant association's officers to develop an annual and monthly budget that spells out how much can be spent on repairs.
6. Compile a list of contractors, tradespeople, and handy people whom you can call regularly for bids and estimates, and check their references to confirm their qualifications and reputation.
7. Develop a "scope of work" which clearly explains what is required or expected for each contract repair job, contact contractors for bids, review and evaluate bids when they are received, and advise the officers on selection of a qualified contractor.
8. Develop and maintain a schedule of upcoming repairs and projects-in-progress, including basic information about each job such as the scope of work involved, who the contractor is, the payment schedule, and the name of the tenant-supervisor assigned to oversee this effort.
9. Meet with contractors on a regular basis to review the progress of work on projects and monitor the progress and quality of work until it is satisfactorily completed.
10. Maintain an up-to-date file containing complete records for all past and present maintenance and repair projects.

Establishing a Maintenance & Repair Committee

To formally create a new maintenance and repair committee, you need to request that the formation of the committee be placed on the agenda of the next tenant association meeting. It's a good idea to talk with building residents informally first, to get a sense of who might be interested and willing to serve on the committee. Go door to door, letting people know that a maintenance and repair committee is being formed. Ask if they might be able to serve on the committee, and encourage them to participate. If possible, be prepared to answer their questions - or to find the answers as soon as possible. Put a notice under every door informing tenants about the committee, its purpose, and the person to contact for more information.

Serving on the Committee

This is a very important building committee, and anyone who is prepared to make the commitment to being an active member should be encouraged to join. You will need from three to seven members, and at least two of them must be board members. If there are residents in your building who have experience with building maintenance or trades, such as plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, or painting, it is a good idea to include them on your committee. Their expertise could be very helpful. In addition, because most repair and maintenance projects take place during normal daytime business hours, it is best if at least one member of the committee can be available during the day to monitor that work.

Gaining Skills and Getting Help

Once you have established a solid maintenance and repair committee, you're ready to get started working on your building. Now what? First off, get help. Very few people join a maintenance and repair committee with all the knowledge and skills they need to properly maintain and repair a New York City apartment building.

Fortunately, there is lots of help available to you and your committee. The TIL program offers technical information, free inspections of conditions in your building, and advice and assistance with energy conservation. TIL also helps coordinate the development and implementation of your building's repair plan, and in emergencies may be able to help you complete the needed repairs. If necessary, TIL may supply materials to your tenant association to reduce the total cost of repairs.

Your committee can also get help from UHAB, and from other agencies and departments such as Con Edison and the Fire Department. UHAB offers repair and maintenance classes and seminars that focus on setting repair priorities, establishing repair budgets, and hiring and monitoring contractors. UHAB trainers can help your committee with everything from developing a workable repair policy to servicing and maintaining your boiler. UHAB can provide your building with a hands-on inspection and site visit to help your committee get started, and we will work with you as you establish your repair and maintenance policies.

Also, the UHAB publication titled *A Guide To Maintenance And Repair For Tenants Who Manage Their Own Buildings* is a greatly expanded version of this manual. The Guide is available free of charge and contains detailed information about all building systems, building and apartment condition surveys, working with superintendents and contractors, identifying and remedying housing and building code violations, and low-cost weatherization techniques—among many other maintenance and repair related matters.

As you begin to take responsibility for the first time for the maintenance and repair of a large building, it can seem overwhelming— especially if the building for which you are responsible, like many of those that are enrolled in the TIL program, has been neglected and allowed to deteriorate over the years—but if you approach the job in a step-by-step way it won't be as hard as it might seem.

Setting a Maintenance and Repair Policy

Once you have formed a maintenance and repair committee, the next thing to do is to develop a written maintenance and repair policy for your building. A written policy is important. It clearly sets out procedures for doing repairs, and it can help prevent disputes before they happen. Also, by encouraging all residents to participate in creating the policy you can improve your chances of getting greater tenant involvement. In addition, having a written policy helps to ensure that any decisions you make in the future will be consistent and fair.

YOUR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR POLICY SHOULD INCLUDE:

- - Your tenant association's repair priorities (be sure to review Article XI of your by-laws)
- - Who will be responsible for regular repairs
- - How you will handle emergency repairs
- - How routine repair requests will be made and processed
- - How maintenance contracts will be handled (for your boiler, elevator, etc.)
- - How contractors will be hired and supervised
- - How your superintendent will be hired and supervised
- - How complaints will be received and responded to
- - How having a sub-manager, if you have one, affects your repair and maintenance policy

All policies must be in writing, approved by the association and TIL, and then included with your by-laws and distributed to every tenant (and the super, if he or she is not a tenant). Once your maintenance and repair policy is established and circulated, be sure to update it as needed if conditions change, distribute new copies every year,

and encourage residents to bring copies to meetings and refer to the policy when making decisions.

Building and Apartment Condition Surveys

After your committee has established its policies and determined its priorities, the first job it undertakes should be to conduct thorough building and apartment condition surveys. These surveys will allow you to develop a complete list of everything that needs to be done in your building. (These are discussed in more detail in the next section of this manual, The TIL Repair Plan.)

Repair Request Forms

Finally, your maintenance and repair committee should develop a simple form which tenants can use to request repairs. Clear instructions for how to use these forms - how to complete them and whom to submit them to, etc. - must be included in your written maintenance and repair policy. (Sample maintenance and repair request forms are available from UHAB, and one is also contained in Volume 7 of the Homesteaders Handbook series.)

Section 3

THE TIL REPAIR PLAN

The Repair Plan

During your first year in TIL a comprehensive repair plan will be developed for your building. Although it is not a legal contract, your repair plan is a very important management tool which you can use to prepare for the management and eventual ownership of your building. The repair plan offers a detailed description of all of the repairs that HPD will do during the time that your building is enrolled in TIL, as well as those that will remain the responsibility of your tenant association. Usually,

HPD looks after your building's the major systems needs, while the association takes care of smaller jobs.

Your repair plan will also include a general schedule for completion of the needed repairs. For example, the plan might state that your building's electrical wiring is scheduled to be done during fiscal year '96, which means between July 1, 1995 and June 30, 1996. This information will help you to develop a long-range schedule for your tenant association's repair responsibilities, since some of the association's repairs may have to be completed after the HPD jobs are done. For example, if major electrical or plumbing work is anticipated in your plan - work that typically requires at least partial destruction of ceilings and walls - you would probably not want to undertake extensive sheetrocking, plastering or painting until after those projects have been finished.

Developing your Repair Plan

To begin the process of developing a repair plan, your tenant association should conducting building and apartment condition surveys and complete a repair chart. After this has been done you should schedule a formal cellar-to-roof inspection of your building by a TIL inspector. It is very important that members of your maintenance and repair committee be present for this inspection, in order to hear what the inspector has to say and to provide input and ask questions.

In a large building the inspector will not be able to inspect every apartment, so the committee must make sure that she or he sees the apartments that are in the worst condition. This helps the inspector to get an accurate picture of the building's overall repair needs.

Conducting the Building and Apartment Condition Survey

The building condition survey provides the maintenance and repair committee with information about the condition of your building's major systems and public areas: plumbing, electrical, elevators, heating, structural systems, roof and windows, etc. The survey will tell you which repairs should be done immediately to eliminate hazardous conditions (like repairing bad electrical connections or faulty fixtures, or replacing broken hallway windows) and which repairs can be postponed. Because building conditions change, the maintenance and repair committee should conduct building condition surveys every three months.

The first building condition survey you conduct will provide a general overview of conditions in your building. Once your tenant association has been managing the building for several months, your committee should conduct a more detailed and comprehensive survey to help you develop and implement a more detailed long-range repair plan. UHAB can help with these surveys.

YOUR BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY SHOULD RECORD THE CONDITIONAL OF ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- - Sidewalk, steps and front stoop
- - Exterior walls of the building
- - Roof
- - Basement
- - Boiler room and boiler
- - Stairs and stairwells
- - Elevator
- - Outside doors (front, back, roof, and basement)
- - Intercom
- - Entrance or lobby and hallways
- - Hallway windows
- - Fire escapes
- - Light fixtures
- - Plumbing
- - Wiring

The maintenance and repair committee also needs to conduct apartment condition surveys for every apartment in the building. The apartment

condition surveys can tell you what repairs need to be done in individual apartments. Second, and equally important, the process of completing these surveys allows everyone in the building to become involved in the repair process.

Rather than simply distributing apartment condition surveys to tenants and asking them to fill them in on their own, it is a good idea to have a repair committee member work with each tenant to complete the survey. If the surveys are simply pushed under doors or left in the lobby, tenants may be confused as to how to complete them and may not return them on time. Also, since committee members will eventually need to visit every apartment in the building in order to officially inspect conditions, it makes sense to inspect and fill out the survey in one visit.

Apartment surveys let tenants offer their opinions about what repairs are needed in their own apartments. They can also help you find out whether or not your building is in compliance with the law on matters such as window guards, lead paint, and smoke detectors. As residents discuss the surveys with each other they begin to realize that there are problems throughout the building and not just in their own apartments. By helping tenants to understand how their repair requests fit with the needs of the rest of the building, the process of conducting apartment and building condition surveys can help to eliminate the “landlord-tenant mentality” and encourage residents to become more actively involved.

Building and Housing Codes

Regular quarterly building and apartment condition surveys will not only keep your maintenance and repairs committee aware of the overall shape of the building, they will alert the committee to situations which violate local laws and/or New York City's housing maintenance code.

3 MAIN Classifications

A - non-hazardous violations

B - potentially hazardous violations

C - immediately hazardous conditions

(see page 37)

Code violations are a very serious problem. The association must obey local laws regarding sanitation, building permits, handicapped access, recycling, etc. If a City building inspector discovered code violations the last time your building was inspected, a list of these violations should be on file with the Office of Rent and must be added to your repair chart, even if they were not noticed by your maintenance and repair committee during the building condition survey. (See the *Resources* section of this manual for a completed list of building code violation classifications, and information about where to go to find out about your building's recorded code violations.)

Developing a Repair Budget

The maintenance and repair committee needs a budget in order to know how much money is available for repairs, and to make the best possible decisions about improving building conditions with limited resources. Working with the tenant association officers, members of the committee should review the association's annual budget and past years' repair expenses and assist the officers in

projecting anticipated expenses for future repair needs.

Once an annual budget is completed and approved, the members of the maintenance and repair committee must carefully review the amounts budgeted for repairs. These figures are included in specific categories on the Budget Monitoring Sheet (see Volume 4 of the *Homesteader's Handbook* series, *Banking, Budgets and Rents*). The committee should use these budget numbers to develop a repair schedule for the year ahead. This will help you decide how much money to spend, or to recommend spending, every month. The committee should also monitor repair spending each month and adjust spending as necessary throughout the year.

Setting Priorities

No tenant association ever has the financial resources it would need to do all of the necessary repairs at once. This means that the maintenance and repair committee will have to decide which repairs are going to be done first, which second and third and so on. Using your budget and your repair policy, you can set repair priorities for everything on your list, in order of importance.

EMERGENCY

Conditions that threaten health or safety.

PREVENTIVE

Conditions that if left unresolved will become emergencies, leading to major damage or destruction of the building, and will cost significantly more if done later rather than sooner.

COSMETIC

Repairs that only affect the appearance of the building, an apartment, or a public area.

Most repairs fall into one of three priority categories: emergency, preventive, or cosmetic. You can decide which is which by using the following guidelines:

EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Regular and preventive maintenance and prompt minor repairs will prevent most emergencies from ever happening, but sometimes problems do arise. The tenant association has to be prepared for emergencies before they occur, and ready to respond quickly and effectively. To prepare for emergencies the association needs a plan which includes:

- A completed occupancy survey, so that you know exactly who lives in every apartment.
- The name and phone numbers (home and work) of the tenant association officer that residents should notify in case of emergency
- A current list of emergency phone numbers including: fire, police, gas and electric, hospital etc.
- A current list of contractors, especially plumbers, electricians and boiler servicepeople, who are on call 24 hours a day. This is important in case an emergency occurs at 11:00 PM, such as heating or electrical problems, that can't wait until morning to be repaired.
- A resident who will take responsibility for contacting your TIL coordinator to inform him/her of the emergency when it happens, and how your association intends to address it.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Preventive maintenance is work that must be done regularly in order to minimize the possibility of having building components or systems break down unexpectedly and require costly emergency repairs. Preventive maintenance is always much cheaper and easier than repairs. Examples of typical preventive maintenance activities are contained in the Preventive Maintenance Checklist included in the Resources section of this manual. Each year,

your maintenance and repair committee should review this checklist to make sure that all the items on it are being addressed. Dividing the responsibilities on the list between the super and several members of the committee or other tenants who are capable of completing the required tasks will make it easier to get everything done.

COSMETIC REPAIRS

Cosmetic repairs are generally things which make a building or an apartment more comfortable or attractive, like painting. Since cosmetic repairs are neither emergencies nor preventive maintenance, they have a lower priority when you're deciding which repairs to do first. This does not mean that these repairs are not important. Sometimes, a small repair can make a big difference to the quality of life in your building, such as switching from low-wattage to high-wattage light bulbs in hallways and public areas.

It can be very difficult for the maintenance and repair committee to establish priorities for cosmetic repairs without disputes or conflicts. Because there are no absolute rules or guidelines that specify that one tenant's wall must be fixed before another's floor, many residents tend to believe that their own repair needs are more important than others, and that they must be fixed first. To try to reduce these conflicts, it's a good idea to have your maintenance and repair committee create a clear procedure for making cosmetic repair decisions, and carefully explain this procedure to all tenants. In preparing this procedure, the committee will want to consider the issues outlined on the following page.

—Issues to consider by the Maintenance & Repair Committee—

COURT ORDERS

Sometimes a judge will order the association to complete a number of cosmetic repairs in an individual tenant's apartment. These repairs must be given a high priority.

BUDGET FACTORS

Your tenant association's available financial resources may limit your options. In the short term you may have only enough money to do a few small repairs. It is a good idea to begin building a reserve account, setting aside a small amount each month to save for more costly repairs.

UPCOMING MAJOR REPAIRS

Don't forget to review your repair plan and budget now for anticipated future major repairs. You should do this before spending any money on cosmetic work. Also, if TIL is planning to do major work on your building, you will want to postpone cosmetic repairs that might be damaged or destroyed in the process of construction.

TENANT IMPACTS

As a general rule, you should try to spend money in ways that benefit the largest possible number of tenants. This will encourage residents to participate in building improvement efforts, and to support the tenant association.

TENANT NEEDS

Some cosmetic repairs are more important than others. For example, a cracked and uneven floor that might cause people to trip and fall may be given higher priority than a small hole in the wall.

TENANT PARTICIPATION

Your committee might choose to reward tenants who pay their rent promptly and contribute their time to the association by giving their repair requests a higher priority than those of tenants who don't participate.

PREVIOUS REPAIRS

Keep a record of when repairs have been done in each apartment. If a tenant has had no work done

in their apartment for some time, that apartment might receive a higher priority for cosmetic repairs than one that has received work more recently.

Energy Conservation and Weatherization

Energy conservation and weatherization is one of your tenant association's most important long-term maintenance concerns. If you forecast your building's expenses over the next ten years or more, you will quickly see that spending a small amount of time and money on energy conservation now will more than pay for itself in the future. Five dollars' worth of weather-stripping around a window today could save you five dollars off your fuel each year for the next ten years - repaying your investment ten times over.

Fossil fuels like oil and natural gas are also major contributors to the pollution of our air, land and water. The more efficiently we use them, the less pollution they create. Oil and gas are among your building's greatest expenses, so reducing consumption is both a good way to reduce pollution and a way to save hundreds or even thousands of dollars, and keep your rents as low as possible.

Tenant Self-Help

Although the tenant association is responsible for managing maintenance and repairs to your building while it is enrolled in the TIL program, individual tenants can do many repairs in their own apartments. Tenant repairs should be approved by the tenant association and monitored and coordinated by the maintenance and repair committee, to ensure completeness and quality. Since repairs represent one of the biggest items in most tenant associations' budgets, self-help repairs can save you lots of money - especially when you realize that roughly two-thirds of a contractor's fees go to paying for labor. Money saved through self-help repairs can then be made available for other building projects.

Perhaps more importantly, when tenants work together to do repairs for themselves, they increase the overall level of participation in the tenant association, and they learn a great deal about what goes into actually the jobs. This will make you much more knowledgeable about repairs, and that in turn will make it much easier for you when it comes time to hire and manage outside contractors.

Technical help and some materials for self-help projects can usually be obtained from TIL, and UHAB can also provide technical assistance. A UHAB coordinator will visit your building to help you organize self-help maintenance and repair projects. Don't forget, however, that rental income is essential to your building's survival, so your association is not allowed to offer rent abatements for self-help repair efforts (including labor and materials) in either individual apartments or public areas of the building. This would be a violation of TIL regulations.

Implementing Your Plan

As soon as the maintenance and repair plan is delivered to your tenant association, the repair committee and officers should meet to discuss a budget and schedule for doing the first few repairs on the association side of the list. Meanwhile, the first repairs on the HPD side of the plan will be approved, prioritized, processed, bid on and awarded.

While the maintenance and repair committee is handling the association repair responsibilities, someone on the committee should stay in regular contact with the TIL coordinator to find out when HPD repairs will begin. When notified by TIL that repair work has been awarded, the repair and maintenance committee should request a pre-construction meeting with the TIL construction manager and the contractor who will be doing the work. Pre-construction meetings provide you with an opportunity to find out exactly how the contractors will gain access to your building; what parts of the building will be affected by the work-

in-progress, and for how long; who will monitor the work and inspect the job after completion; and which tenants and which workers will be the on-site contacts for the contractor, tenant association and TIL. They also give you a chance to brief the contractors about any special needs or conditions in your building - such as the presence of babies or people with respiratory illnesses, whose health might be affected by conditions during construction.

Pre-construction meetings do not happen automatically. If your tenant association wants to schedule a meeting, it is up to the officers and the committee to request it and to follow-up repeatedly with TIL or the contractor until the meeting occurs. When it does happen, the association should make sure that TIL, the contractor and the association are clear about each other's responsibilities in handling the job professionally and cooperatively.

Section 4

WORKING WITH EMPLOYEES & OUTSIDE CONTRACTORS

Working with your Superintendent

Many buildings employ a superintendent, janitor or handyman to perform routine maintenance and repair work. Like any other employee, your super must sign a written contract with the tenant association. The contract should describe the super's pay schedule (the amount he or she will be paid), pay frequency, and job responsibilities. The super's contract should clearly specify exactly what types of jobs the super will and will not be expected to do, as well as to whom she or he will report. A typical schedule of the superintendent's responsibilities is included in the *Resources* section of this manual.

Using the Super to make Repairs

When building maintenance and repairs need to be done, the first step your association should take is to find out whether or not they are part of your super's regular duties, as listed in his or her contract. The association can save a great deal of money by using the super to do routine small jobs.

If the needed repair work is not part of the super's job description, you will have to decide if she or he is capable and qualified to do the work, and whether you want the super or an outside contractor to do it. Your building should have a policy on whether the super will be allowed to contract with the association for work that falls outside of his or her job description.

If you do hire your super to do additional repairs, it is always a good idea to sign a separate contract for that work, just as you would with an outside contractor, including the price, specifications and time schedule. When hiring the super to do extra work, be sure to adhere to the regulations in the by-laws that provide guidelines for bids, references and work authorization. Also, if the super is awarded any contract for special work, make sure that he or she does not neglect his or her regular duties. For example, additional work projects should never be performed during normal working hours, when you are already paying for the super's services.

Supervising Employees

If your building has employees, such as a superintendent, janitor or handyperson, a member of your maintenance and repair committee should serve as the employees' direct supervisor. Building residents should be informed of who the employees' supervisor is. Any tenants' complaints or suggestions should be provided in writing to the designated supervisor. The supervisor should be a member of the maintenance and repair committee, and should maintain files on the building's employees. Employee files should include:

- A copy of the employee's contract.

- A written job description and work schedule.
- Any letters of notification from tenants or committee members describing problems with or praising the employee's performance.
- Any minutes of meetings the super or employee has participated in.
- Any relevant tax records for the employee.

Your superintendent has the legal right to join a union, and you cannot prevent him or her from doing so. If your building signs a contract with a union super, you must negotiate in good faith with the union and abide by the terms of the contract. If the super is not performing his or her job, you must notify the super in writing stating specifically how and why he or she is not fulfilling the job description. If the situation does not improve, several steps need to be taken:

1. Write a letter to the super explaining the specific problem or problems and your wish to resolve them.
2. Meet with the super and try to develop a solution to the problem.
3. Finally, if all else fails, you may have to fire the super.

Scopes of Work and Specifications

Whenever you enter into an agreement for maintenance and repair services, whether it is with a building employee performing work that goes beyond his or her normal duties, or with an outside contractor, it is very important that you develop a clear and complete scope of work, and in some cases detailed specifications, for the project.

A scope of work is a description of the work for which the contractor is being hired, including the materials to be used, guarantees, permits and other relevant information. A “specification” is more than a scope. A specification is a detailed description of the exact materials and methods required for the job. A specification leaves nothing up to the discretion of the contractor. While it is not always necessary to develop a specification (for many jobs a scope of work will suffice) a full specification is always recommended for complex and costly work where precise instructions are required to assure that the job is done properly. Your tenant association made hire an architect or engineer to prepare the scope of work and specifications.

Hiring Outside Contractors

Before hiring any outside contractors, the maintenance and repair committee should first refer to Article XI of the association’s by-laws for specific guidelines to use when finding, selecting and hiring contractors.

The committee can then begin to solicit bids for work. For simple, inexpensive jobs, contractors’ bids may be solicited through telephone conversations. A committee member can simply call several contractors, describe the job that needs to be done, and ask for the following information:

- The contractor’s price for the job.
- A general schedule for completing the job, with starting and ending dates.
- An understanding of who will be responsible for obtaining any permits required to do the work in question.
- Evidence that the contractor has the necessary licenses and insurance to do the job.
- Schedule for payment

For more complicated and expensive jobs,

written bids must be obtained.

To solicit written bids, a member of the maintenance and repair committee should call several qualified contractors and ask them to visit the building to review the project. After they have carefully inspected the work to be done, they should submit a bid in writing to the association. Written bids should include all of the information above, as well as a list of the names, addresses and phone numbers of references, a specific “scope of work” and possibly a “specification” for the job.

Project Bidding Guidelines

In order to comply with the by-laws and to protect yourselves, the following guidelines should be used by committees and officers when soliciting contractors to do work in their building:

Jobs Costing Under \$500

- The committee should get telephone bids from at least two different contractors
- TIL by-laws allow the maintenance and repair committee to authorize repairs costing up to \$500 (unless the by-laws have been amended)
- Before work begins, the contractor should provide the committee with a satisfactory scope of work.

Jobs Costing More than \$500 but under \$2000

- At least two written bids must be obtained.
- At least two references must be called for each contractor whose bid is being considered.

- A satisfactory written scope of work must be submitted with each bid. Specifications may be required if the work to be performed is complicated or costly.
- TIL by-laws empower the maintenance and repair committee to solicit bids and interview contractors, but they must submit their recommendation to the association's officers for final authorization.

Jobs Costing More than \$2000

- A minimum of three written bids, each including at least a detailed scope of work, must be obtained.
- At least two references shall be called for each contractor whose bid is being considered.
- A written "specification" may be required for complicated or costly jobs.
- TIL by-laws allow the maintenance and repair committee to solicit bids and interview contractors, but they must submit their recommendation to the officers for final authorization
- Before hiring any contractor, jobs costing more than \$2000 must be approved by a majority of the tenants at a general meeting.

After selecting a contractor to do a job, the officers and committee should prepare and sign a formal contract. A contract is a written agreement between your association and the contractor that protects your association from misunderstandings about the work, schedule or price. Every job should have at least a simple contract

Contracts should include the following:

- A scope of work.
- Specifications, if needed.
- A schedule for the job, including start and completion dates.
- A payment schedule, with a "hold back" provision enabling you to withhold part of the contractor's

payment (usually 10% of the total fee) until after the job has been satisfactorily completed.

- A detailed breakdown of costs showing both materials and labor costs.
- An inventory and description of the materials to be used, their cost, and stipulation as to who will take possession of any leftover materials.
- The number of people the contractor expects to have working on the job
- Evidence that all necessary permits have been obtained.
- On complicated jobs, provisions for cost overruns, time delays, and changes (called change orders) should be written into the contract. Issues covered should include who in the association is authorized to approve changes, and when the contractor must notify the association of a proposed change.

Supervising and Monitoring Contractors

Whenever outside contractors are working in your building, it is the responsibility of the maintenance and repair committee to make sure that someone is assigned to supervise and monitor their progress. Every contract should include a clause stating that at least 10% of the total cost of the job will be withheld from the contractor until the completed job is inspected and approved by the committee.

Contractors Hired by TIL

When a contractor is provided through the TIL program, the tenant association will not be signing a contract, because technically that contractor's will be working for TIL, rather than for your building. To ensure that these jobs go smoothly and that you receive quality work, your maintenance and repair committee must stay in close communication with the TIL coordinator so as to be prepared beforehand when a contractor comes to work in the building.

Before the contractor begins work, request his or her scope of services from your TIL coordinator

and review it carefully so that you clearly understand what the contractor is supposed to do. Assign an on-site monitor to meet the contractor when he or she arrives. Take the workers' names and their supervisor's name and phone number, and let them know about any special conditions in the building that they need to be prepared for. (For example, if a tenant in one of the apartments refuses contractors access unless someone from the maintenance and repair committee comes along.). Call the TIL coordinator, construction manager or unit chief immediately if there is a problem.

Assign one M&R committee member to be the Building Improvement Coordinator (BIC). The BIC will be the liason between the T.A. and the City on all repair issues. The City will provide the BIC with the scopes of work for your building, contractors assigned and HPD staff responsible for supervising the work. The BIC is responsible to communicate all information to the T.A..

Conclusion

Maintenance and repair play a crucial role in the life of your building, and successful maintenance and repair depends on solid performance of other aspects of building management: budgeting, committees, participation, rent collection and communication.

During your building's enrollment in the TIL program, your tenant association needs to establish effective maintenance and repair policies, gather essential information about your building's condition, develop and monitor compliance with the repair plan, prioritize and budget for maintenance and repairs, oversee ongoing maintenance and repair work in the building, and, finally, make sure that the super is doing a satisfactory job. This is obviously a great deal of work, but it will pay great benefits once you make the conversion to being a co-op. Then the tenants will be well prepared to maintain the building in accordance with the standards required by the law - and more important

- in a condition that makes all of its residents pleased and proud to be living there.

Effective performance of maintenance and repair tasks will give your building's residents a sense of pride and of allegiance to your tenant association. As the physical condition of the building improves, tenants see clear evidence that TIL really works. Their confidence in the program and in themselves grows, and they can take satisfaction that their hard work is paying off.

RESOURCES

Preventive Maintenance Checklist

Roof

- Clean drains and keep them clear
- Replace or repair loose or missing coping stones
- Check for cracks or blisters in the roofing, and repair as needed
- Sweep off any standing water after rains

Windows and Doors

- Keep all wooden parts freshly painted
- Check putty and replace as needed
- Lubricate all hinge and lock mechanisms frequently, especially in wet or cold weather
- Check latches and locks, and repair and replace immediately

Plumbing

- Repair leaky faucets as they're reported
- Check for plumbing leaks and repair immediately
- Clean out sink traps and building trap (in basement) if draining is slow

Electrical

- Check operation of appliances and lighting
- Inspect tenant wiring periodically and eliminate any fire hazards
- Make sure there is easy access to meter and switches
- If your building has fuses rather than circuit breakers, replace fuses as needed and keep a good supply available
- Make sure that correct amperage fuses are being used
- Keep meters clean as well-lit
- Make sure that cables and conduits are firmly attached to walls or beams, and that nothing is hanging from them

Exterior Walls

- Maintain gutters and down spouts to keep water off exterior walls
- Check condition of mortar between bricks, and repair as needed
- Check condition of caulking and weather seal around windows, doors and skylights, and repair as needed

Heating

- Check fuel and water level of boiler daily
- Keep boiler room neat and clean
- “Blow-down” the water in the boiler once a week
- Clean or replace the boiler’s oil filter once a month, or whenever you get a fuel delivery during the heating season
- Drain the heating risers annually (just prior to the heating season begins)
- Have the thermostat (heat timer) recalibrated annually
- Check the low water shut-off valve for proper operation

Security and Fire Safety

- Replace burnt-out light bulbs immediately
- Check smoke detectors and replace batteries annually

- Check to see that all valves and meters are marked for easy identification in an emergency, and keep all keys handy for the same purpose
- Know the locations of all “service shut-offs” in our building’s basement: heat, water, gas, electricity, etc.
- Check and maintain security of front and rear doors locks
- Secure vacant apartments against entry; check them regularly
- Repair cracks in path and sidewalks
- Check window guards annually and repair or replace if necessary
- Check fire extinguishers every six months
- Check fire escapes condition and maintain or repair as needed
- Keep fire escapes and stair corridors free of obstructions

Energy Conservation Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to help show you ways to conserve energy and lower your fuel bills. The guidelines begin with simple, inexpensive but effective steps that you can and should take right away

SHORT-TERM COST-RECOVERY

Assuming that the required work is done by the tenants themselves, the following energy conservation repairs will pay for themselves within three to four months:

- Installing felt or vinyl gasket weatherstripping on windows and doors. (Weatherstripping is not effective if windows are in very poor condition. In that case, cover your entire windows with clear plastic.)
- Using butyl or silicone-latex caulk around window frames, to keep cold air from coming in.
- Adding door sweeps at the bottoms of doors, to prevent drafts.
- Installing clear plastic storm windows (mounted inside) during the winter months.
- Using flow-reducing shower heads, to control the amount of hot water you use.

- Putting aerators on sink taps, to reduce water consumption.
- Insulating steam and hot water pipes.
- Insulating your boiler or hot water heater.
- Having your burner serviced and adjusted.
- Having your boiler tubes cleaned out and repaired.

MEDIUM-TERM COST-RECOVERY

Again assuming that tenants do the work themselves, these items will pay for themselves in one to two years:

- Installing radiator reflectors to throw heat into the room.
- Installing metal weatherstripping on windows.
- Metal weatherstripping is more expensive than felt or vinyl, but it will last much longer.
- Installing thermostatic radiator valves.
- Having your heat distribution system professionally balanced.
- Installing automatic door closures.
- Installing time clock thermostats, such as Heat Timers.
- Having your building's skylights replaced or repaired.
- Installing separate gas-fired hot water heaters.

LONG-TERM COST-RECOVERY

Finally, the items listed below normally require hiring a contractor, and will recover their cost of investment within three to eight years:

- Installing new storm windows with weatherstripping.
- Replacing old wooden windows.
- Having your old oil boiler replaced with a new, efficient model.
- Having your building's heating plant upgraded.
- Adding new roof installation.

- Adding new wall insulation.

UHAB'S **Guide to Maintenance and Repair** has a detailed discussion of low-cost self-help weatherization and heating system balancing, both of which you will find extremely useful for energy conservation. Your tenant association may also request a meeting with a UHAB coordinator, who will come out to your building to help you develop and implement an effective energy conservation program.

Schedule of Superintendent's Responsibilities

REGULAR CLEANING

Clean the sidewalks. Mop the entrance and vestibule daily. Sweep the stairs and halls daily. Mop stairs and halls at least twice a week.

KEEP THE BASEMENT CLEAN.

Do not permit rubbish, garbage, furniture or debris to accumulate. Keep the basement locked at all times.

GARBAGE COLLECTION.

Instruct tenants to put garbage in proper bags or cans. Keep cans covered and bags closed. Move cans or bags to street on pick-up days. Refer problems to the TA officers.

CLEAN YARDS AND AIR SHAFTS.

Inspect the roof, bulkhead and skylight. Keep roof and yard drains clean. Keep roof, hallways and fire escapes free of all obstructions.

INSPECT ALL LIGHTS.

Ensure that lights are turned on and off at proper times. Immediately replace burnt out bulbs in public areas and basements.

MAKE MINOR REPAIRS.

Replace fuses, shut valves to prevent floods, do minor carpentry, painting, and plumbing as required, etc.

MONITOR TENANT MOVE-OUTS.

Report move-outs to the tenant association officers. All vacant apartments should be kept clean and locked securely. They must not be used by the super or by others. Report unlocked doors or squatters to the officers.

MAINTAIN BUILDING HEAT AND HOT WATER.

Monitor the fuel supply. Immediately notify the officers if fuel-level falls below half a tank or if there are any other problems.

REPORT DEFECTS OR PROBLEMS.

Be alert for defects or problems in the building's roof, windows, stairs, plumbing, elevator, electricity, radiators, etc. and report them immediately to the officers.

REPORT ILLEGAL CONDUCT.

Observe visitors to the building and keep all doors locked securely. Report any illegal conduct.

BE NEAT, POLITE AND COURTEOUS.

Be available for emergencies and keep a listing of police, fire department, hospital, boiler service, plumber and TA officers on hand.

Building Code Violations

CODE VIOLATIONS FALL INTO ONE OF THREE CLASSIFICATIONS:

Classification A

This category includes non-hazardous or cosmetic violations such as a lack of paint, no peepholes in apartment doors, missing mirrors in self-service elevators, or failure to provide tenants with rent receipts. These violations must be removed or corrected within 90 days from the time they were reported.

Classification B

This category covers potentially hazardous violations such as having insufficient metal garbage cans and covers to hold the building's waste, inadequate lighting in the public

hallways, or the presence of vermin. These violations must be corrected or removed within 60 days from the time they were reported.

Classification C

Class C violations include immediately hazardous conditions such as a defective gas appliance that is leaking carbon monoxide, the presence of rodents, a non-functioning central heating system, or an obstructed toilet. These violations must be corrected or removed immediately, within 24 hours.

To obtain a computer print-out of recorded code violations for your building, contact **UHAB** or your **TIL** coordinator.

You may also request a code violation search from the City. Your request must be made, in writing, to the Office of Code Enforcement for your borough. The Addresses are listed below:

Manhattan

39 Broadway
New York, NY 10006

Brooklyn

Municipal Building, Rm
809
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Bronx

1932 Arthur Ave. 3rd
Floor
Bronx, NY 10457

Queens

126-02 Queens Boulevard
Kew Gardens, NY 11415

UHAB Publications

Publicaciones de UHAB

MANAGEMENT MANUALS

MANUALES de ADMINISTRACIÓN

- A Guide for Tenants Who Manage Their Own Building

- ♦ Guía para Inquilinos Que Administran Su Propio Edificio

- A Guide to Cooperative Ownership

- ♦ Una Guía a la Propiedad Cooperativa

- A Guide to Payroll Bookkeeping
- (No está disponible en Español / Not available in Spanish)
- Managing Money and Keeping Records

- ♦ Administrando Dinero y Manteniendo Archivos

DEVELOPMENT MANUALS MANUALES de DESARROLLO

- The Affordable Cooperative
- (No está disponible en Español / Not available in Spanish)
- Becoming a Cooperative

- ♦ Convirtiendose a Cooperativa

- A Guide to Rehab Feasibility
- (No está disponible en Español / Not available in Spanish)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL UHAB AT (212) 226-4119