

Tenants Complain About Landlord After CO Leak

by Darcy Pohland

(WCCO) A Twin Cities landlord spent the day in court Wednesday after a number of his tenants filed complaints. Most of the tenants are students at the University of Minnesota who say he's taking advantage of them.

The renters said they're dealing with all kinds of problems including mold on their walls, carbon monoxide leaking from their stove and some say they haven't had a fridge for three weeks now. These problems were enough for them to take legal action.

One tenant said the problems started in March with water damage.

"Huge water droplets just coming down from the ceiling ... then it starts literally pouring in," said renter Whitney Niblett.

Niblett and her roommate Sara Jensen reported the water damage and management did respond.

"They attempted to cover it up and within an hour of covering it up it soaked back through," said Niblett.

Just after Easter, their fridge broke.

"All this stuff (in the fridge) has gone bad because our refrigerator has been broken for almost a month now but we would like to get reimbursed," said Jensen.

The most troubling problem happened last week when the carbon monoxide detector Jensen bought, started going off. She said once the fire department arrived they tested the stove and then called Centerpoint Energy.

"Centerpoint Energy was picking up 2300 parts per million in toxic levels," said Jensen.

The stove was red tagged and the gas was turned off. Jensen wonders if they didn't have the carbon monoxide detector what would have happened.

So she sent a registered letter about the problem to the property manager a week ago.

"When management found out about the 911 call, inspections doesn't need to get involved. That should be a tip for management to say there's a problem," said Minneapolis Fire Marshall Dave DeWall.

Instead, management issued an eviction notice because the roommates were withholding rent until the problems were fixed.

The manager said, "We haven't done anything wrong. We weren't allowed access to do the necessary repairs."

The renters dispute that claim.

On Monday, the city housing inspectors were out to the building and found a laundry list of problems. The most concerning to the Fire Marshall is the problems with carbon monoxide and mold.

The property manager contends that the roommates are bad tenants. He said they haven't returned phone calls or paid rent on time. He said he has a good reputation as a property manager.

The two sides went to housing court Wednesday to hash out the matter and they did reach a settlement.

The tenants agreed to pay the missed months rent and late fees in exchange for getting out of the lease at the end of April.



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On Monday, the city housing inspectors were out to the building and found a laundry list of problems. The most concerning to the Fire Marshall is the problems with carbon monoxide and mold. (File) CBS

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