



Emergency vs. Not an Emergency

✓ Real Emergencies (Call ASAP — Day or Night)

Think fire, flood, blood, or death.

- 🔥 Fire or active smoke
- 🌊 Burst pipe, major flood, sewage backing up
- 🚑 Serious injury, accident, or blood that isn't just a paper cut
- ⚡ Exposed sparking wires, gas leaks, carbon monoxide alarms
- 🚪 Broken exterior door/window where security is compromised

Rule of thumb: if it's life safety or major property damage, it's an emergency.

✗ Not Emergencies (Annoying, but Wait Until Morning)

These might feel urgent in the moment, but they don't meet the "fire, flood, blood, or death" standard:

- 🍕 Microwave meltdown at midnight: You can't reheat your leftover pizza. Sad, yes. Emergency? No.
- 🧼 Dishwasher drama: It won't start. Luckily, sinks and sponges still exist.
- 💡 Lightbulb burnout: Unless you're suddenly plunged into total darkness, one bulb doesn't make the list.
- 🚽 One toilet down (but others still working): You've got backups.
- 📺 Wi-Fi woes/Netflix won't load: A tragedy, but not one your maintenance tech can fix.

⚖️ The "In-Between" Stuff (Context Matters)

❄️ AC out during a heatwave: Only becomes an emergency if temps hit legal limits. Example: Fairfax County requires landlords to keep apartments under 77°F May–Oct. Other places use 80–85°F. If you're sitting at 82°F, it's uncomfortable, but not legally urgent.

🔥 Heat out in winter: Serious if temps drop below code (usually around 68–72°F).

🏢 Older buildings (two-pipe systems): Sometimes you're stuck between heat and AC season. It might be warmer than you like, but managers wait until cold snaps pass before flipping the system.

📝 Renter Tips

- Document: Snap a pic/video of the issue and the thermostat if it's temperature related.
- Check your local landlord-tenant handbook for exact heat/cool standards.
- Expect delays during extreme weather — vendors get slammed, and the hottest/coldest cases get priority.

👉 **Bottom Line:** Save the after-hours calls for true emergencies. Everything else? Put in a regular work-order and maybe grab a fan, blanket, or snack in the meantime.

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