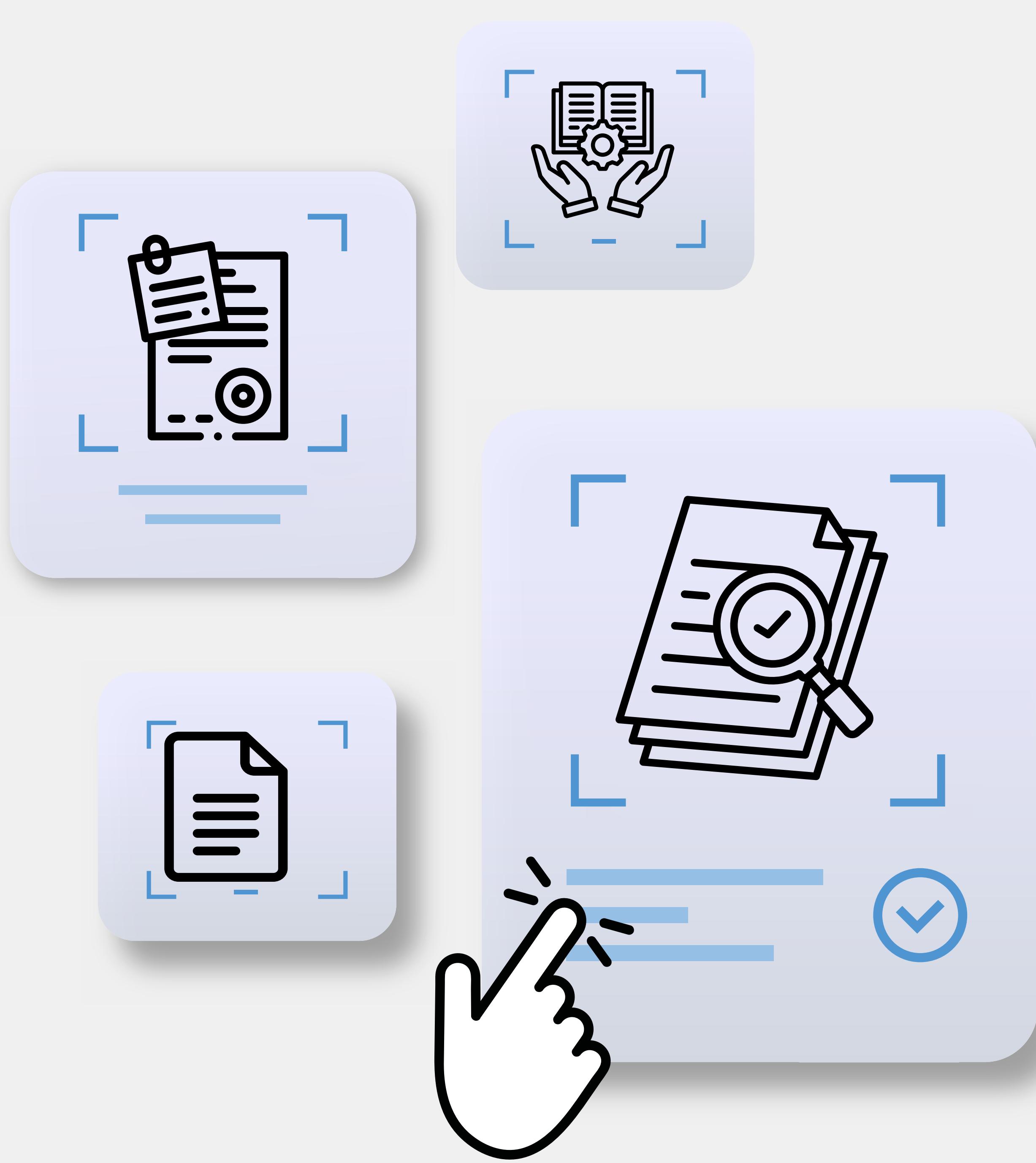


What Should I Collect As Evidence To Build My Tenant Rights Case?



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TENANT
LAW GROUP

Improving the Lives of California Renters Since 2016

What Should I Collect As Evidence To Build My Tenant Rights Case?

When your housing situation becomes unsafe, unfair, or hostile, the first step in protecting your rights as a tenant is to start collecting evidence of any illegal behavior or activities.

Whether you're facing landlord harassment, uninhabitable conditions, or an illegal eviction, the documentation you gather may be critical in building a strong case.

Tenant Law Group has created this guide to help California tenants understand what kinds of evidence to collect and how to do it safely and effectively. If you're unsure where to start, you're not alone—and we're here to help.



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Why Is Collecting Evidence So Important?

In a tenant rights case, your word matters—but documentary, photographic, and video evidence is what helps prove your case. It can strengthen your claims, demonstrate a pattern of misconduct, and protect you if your landlord denies wrongdoing (which is usually the case).

Good documentation can help with:

- Proving landlord harassment or retaliation.
- Showing the condition of the rental unit over time.
- Challenging false accusations or eviction notices.
- Supporting claims for damages or legal violations.

What Types of Evidence Should I Be Collecting?

Below are the most important types of evidence to help build a strong tenant case:

1. Photos and Videos

- Take clear photos or videos of any unsafe or uninhabitable conditions.
- Capture things like mold, leaks, pests, broken windows, or lack of heat.
- Take wide-angle and close-up shots and include time-stamped images if possible.

2. Written Communication

- Save emails, texts, and letters between you and your landlord.
- Include repair requests, rent receipts, notices, and any threats or retaliation.
- Take screenshots of conversations with a visible date.



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3. Maintenance Requests and Repair Logs

- Keep a log of when you reported problems and how your landlord responded.
- Note dates, times, and whether you received a reply or follow-up.
- Include copies of work orders, repair invoices, contractor notes, or written estimates from repair professionals.

4. Notices and Documents

- Save any notices to enter, eviction notices, rent increase letters, or lease termination documents.
- Keep copies of any documents posted on your door or sent via mail.
- Keep a copy of your lease agreement and any addenda or renewals.

5. Police Reports and Incident

- If you've called the police due to harassment, threats, or safety concerns, request a copy of the police report.
- If you become a Tenant Law Group client, we can help collect these documents for you.

6. Medical Records

- If your health has been affected by poor housing conditions (e.g., respiratory issues from mold, injuries from unsafe structures), request medical records from your doctor.
- Include visit summaries, diagnoses, or doctor's notes linking your condition to your living environment.
- If you become a Tenant Law Group client, we can help collect these documents for you.

7. Receipts and Rent Payment Records

- Save receipts for any repairs or cleaning supplies you purchased because your landlord failed to act.



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- Document any temporary housing costs if you had to stay elsewhere due to unlivable conditions.
- Keep proof of rent payments (Venmo, Zelle, checks, or money orders) to show you've fulfilled your obligations.

8. Witness Statements

- If neighbors, roommates, or visitors witnessed unsafe conditions or harassment, ask them for a short written statement.
- Include their full name, contact info (if possible), date, and a clear description of what they saw or heard.
- If you become a Tenant Law Group client, we can help collect these statements for you.

9. Inspection Reports or Official Complaints

- Save code enforcement inspection reports or written complaints you filed with the city.
- Save any letters from the housing department or city officials regarding your case.
- If you become a Tenant Law Group client, we can help collect these for you.

[Download our printable tenant evidence checklist here.](#)



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Where Should I Keep My Evidence?

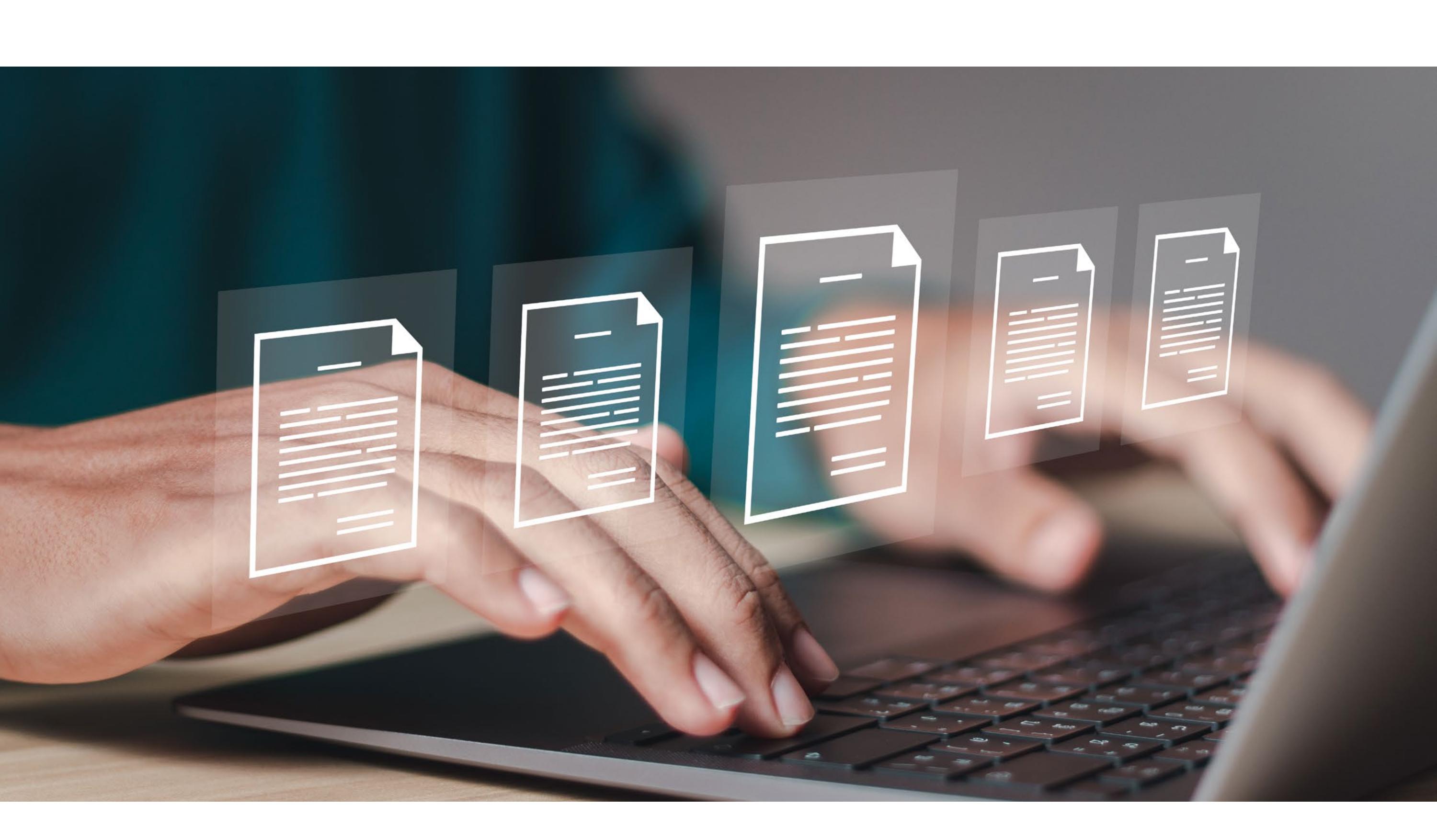
1. If You're Comfortable with Digital Tools:

- Create a digital folder on your phone, tablet, or computer to store photos, scanned documents, and screenshots.
- Use cloud storage like OneDrive, Google Drive, or Dropbox to keep your files backed up and accessible from anywhere.
- Organize files by date and category (e.g., “Photos – Mold,” “Text Messages – Repair Requests”) so they’re easy to find.

2. If You Prefer Non-Digital Methods:

- Use a physical folder or binder to store printed copies of all documents, letters, and photos.
- Print out important emails, screenshots, or text messages using a library or print shop.
- Label each item with the date and a short description (e.g., “Repair request sent 6/5/24,” “Photo of water damage 5/15/24”).
- Keep a written journal or notebook to log your communications, problems, and landlord responses over time.

Tip: Whether digital or on paper, store everything in a safe, accessible place and keep backup copies when possible.



Empowering Tenants to Document and Defend Their Rights

Gathering evidence might feel overwhelming, especially when you're dealing with difficult living conditions or an unresponsive landlord. But it's important to remember that every piece of evidence you collect is a step toward protecting yourself and your rights.

California law offers strong tenant protections, and having clear, organized documentary, photographic, or video evidence can make a significant difference in your ability to secure a recovery in your case.

Whether it's photos, letters, receipts, or witness statements, your records tell a story that deserves to be heard. Don't hesitate to act.

You have the power to stand up for your home, and support is available every step of the way.



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Where Can I Get Legal Help as a Tenant in California?

If you're a California tenant and Tenant Law Group is unable to represent you, the following legal aid and advocacy organizations can assist.

Tenant Law Group Legal Aid Directory



See the full list by scanning the QR code or clicking the link to visit our [website](#).

This document provides general information about landlord-tenant laws in California and is not intended as legal advice. We encourage you to consult with a qualified tenant rights attorney or local tenant advocacy organization for guidance specific to your situation.



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