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Q & A

**Time to Evict
Those Pesky Bedbugs**

Q *I live in a rent-stabilized apartment infested with bedbugs, and the landlord claims it is up to me to eliminate the problem. Is he correct?*

A He is not. "Bedbugs are the landlord's problem," said Thomas P. Higgins, a Manhattan landlord-tenant lawyer. Under the warranty of habitability, the landlord has a duty to maintain residential premises in a habitable condition.

In other words, the landlord must ensure that the apartment does not subject the tenant to any conditions that are "dangerous, hazardous or detrimental to their life, health or safety," Mr. Higgins said. He noted that in one recent case, a Housing Court judge gave the tenant a 12 percent reduction in rent for the yearlong period during which the apartment had bedbugs.

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