

This excerpt is provided by the Rental Housing Association of Northern Alameda County. www.rhanac.org 510-893-9873

Oakland tenants sue their landlord for \$10 million
Oakland Tribune

Wednesday, January 5th, 2005 - Oakland - Basic things such as hot water are repaired.

Moore says she paid to install her own wheelchair ramp, although the main entrance to the building is still not handicapped accessible. She would move, but it's difficult to find an apartment that would accommodate her disability, she said.

Oakland city officials began to crack down on the Phams in October with a lawsuit that asked that they be required to move into one of their apartment buildings until all repairs are made.

In response, the Phams agreed to make needed repairs.

Phuong Pham has been cooperating with the city and was surprised to hear of the tenant lawsuit, which she had not yet seen, said her attorney, Jeffrey P. Woo of San Francisco.

But Laura Blair, a lawyer with the Oakland City Attorney's Neighborhood Law Corps, said she has seen no evidence that Pham has done anything more than cosmetic repairs.

During a Dec. 15 inspection, the heat had not been restored to all her properties as promised, Blair said. At the time, inspectors said they discovered asbestos in an apartment where a seven-months pregnant woman was living.

The woman, Berenit Dominguez, has since moved into another Pham apartment at the city's request, said Carlos N. Plazola, an aide to Oakland City Council President Ignacio De La Fuente.

De La Fuente acknowledged the city cannot afford to apply the same intense pressure to other landlords that Pham has received.

Steve Edrington, executive director of the Rental Housing Association of Northern Alameda County, said most landlords want to do the right thing. He said he had no knowledge of the Pham properties.

"We're for decent and safe housing. We don't like people who don't take care of their properties," he said.