

# The New York Times

## Installing Safety Bars in a Bathroom

Q & A

By JAY ROMANO

Published: October 19, 2012

**Q.** *I live in a rent-controlled apartment in New York City, and I am a senior citizen. Who is responsible for the purchase and installation of safety bars in the bathtub and shower area?*

**A.** **John Desiderio**, a Manhattan real estate lawyer, says the law is basically silent on the obligation of landlords to provide equipment inside an apartment to make it more usable for elderly tenants. “Neither rent control nor rent stabilization address the issue at all,” **Mr. Desiderio** said. But under the federal Fair Housing Act, landlords are required to make “reasonable accommodations” for tenants who need them, and this would include installing such equipment for an older tenant. **Mr. Desiderio** noted, however, that because of potential liability concerns related to the proper installation of such equipment, the landlord may insist that the tenant have the bars installed on his or her own, and then refund the installation costs to the tenant.