

# Landlords must give a “good” reason to end certain tenancies

## What will I learn from reading this?

You will learn how, in most cases, landlords must have a “good” or legal reason to end (to “terminate”) a tenancy or evict a tenant.

You will learn what the law counts as a “good” reason, and how the landlord usually must tell the tenant what the reason is in a written notice.

You will also learn about exceptions to this law. You can read the law at [RCW 59.18.650](#).

## I rent my home. Does this law apply to me?

The law applies to everyone, but in different ways.

A landlord **must give** a “good” reason to terminate your tenancy if either of these is true:

- You are a “month-to-month” tenant for an indefinite amount of time, even if you had a prior written rental agreement.
- You are in the middle of a “fixed term” written agreement, which means you and the landlord have agreed to rent for a specific time, like 6 or 12 months, but your landlord wants to evict you in the middle of that term.

A landlord **does not need to give** a “good” reason to terminate your tenancy if you have had a written rental agreement for multiple 6- to 12- month terms without ever becoming a month-to-month tenant. For example, you have lived for many years in a rental and have renewed your rental agreement every time it came up for renewal.

## The law does not make the landlord give me a “good” reason. Does the landlord still have to give me some kind of notice?

**Yes.** If the law does not make the landlord give you a “good” reason, the landlord must still give you a **60-Day Notice** that they want to stop renting to you. Read [My landlord just gave me a 60-Day Notice](#) to learn more.

## What are the legal reasons a landlord can evict someone?

There are several “good causes,” or reasons landlords can use to terminate a tenancy or evict a tenant. In all cases, landlords must properly serve a written notice (on paper). The landlord cannot just tell a tenant verbally, or through a text message. They cannot try to force a tenant out by changing the locks or shutting off the utilities. Read [My landlord locked me out](#) to learn more.

Here are the reasons a landlord can terminate a tenancy, and how much notice the landlord must give the tenant in each situation.

- 1. Nonpayment of Rent.** If the landlord believes you have fallen behind in rent, the landlord can give you a **14-Day Notice to Pay or Vacate**. Read [My landlord just gave me a 14-Day Notice to Pay Rent or Vacate](#) to learn more.
- 2. Lease violation.** If the landlord believes you have broken (“violated”) an important term or rule in a lease, the landlord can give you a **10-Day Notice to Comply or Vacate**. If you live in subsidized housing, the landlord can give you one of these notices for violating an important requirement of the housing program. Read [My landlord just gave me a 10-Day Notice to Pay Rent or Vacate](#) to learn more.
- 3. Crime, nuisance, or waste.** If the landlord believes you have committed crimes on the property or have repeatedly or substantially interfered with your neighbors’ or landlord’s right to use and enjoy their own homes, the landlord can give you a **3-Day Notice to Quit**. Read [My landlord just gave me a 3-Day Notice to Quit](#) to learn more.
- 4. Landlord or their family needs to move in.** If the landlord or their immediate family needs to move into the rental unit, the landlord can give you a **90-Day Notice**. Read [My landlord gave me a 90-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 5. Landlord wants to sell.** If the landlord wants to sell your unit, they can

give you a **90-Day** Notice. If the landlord does not actually sell the home, you may be able to sue for unlawful eviction. Read [My landlord gave me a 90-Day Notice](#) to learn more.

- 6. Convert to Condo.** A landlord who plans to make the rental a condominium can give you a **120-Day** Notice. If the landlord does not actually convert the rental, you may be able to sue for unlawful eviction. Read [My landlord just gave me a 120-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 7. Renovations.** A landlord who plans to knock down (demolish) or renovate the home can give you a **120-Day** Notice. Read [My landlord just gave me a 120-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 8. Condemned.** If a certified local agency has said the rental unit is “uninhabitable,” the landlord can give you a **30-Day** Notice. If 30 days’ notice is not possible, the landlord must give as much advance notice as possible. Read [Tenants’ Rights: My place has been condemned](#) and [My landlord just gave me a 30-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 9. Shared space.** If you and the landlord share a dwelling unit, kitchen or bathroom, the landlord must give you a **20-Day** Notice before the end of the rental term. Read [My landlord just gave me a 20-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 10. Transitional housing.** If you are in a transitional housing program and your participation has ended or you no longer qualify for the program, the landlord can give you a **30-Day** Notice. Read [My landlord just gave me a 30-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 11. Overstayed lease.** If you are still living in the rental unit after your lease or rental agreement ended and you have not signed a new, “reasonable” agreement after being asked to by the landlord, the landlord can give you a **30-Day** Notice. Read [My landlord just gave me a 30-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 12. False information on your application.** If you intentionally lied on your rental application about something important, the landlord can give you a **30-Day** Notice. Read [My landlord just gave me a 30-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 13. Landlord no longer renting at all.** If the landlord has a “business or

economic reason” to no longer rent the place, the landlord can give you a **60-Day** Notice. Read [My landlord just gave me a 60-Day Notice](#) to learn more.

- 14. Repeated lease violations.** If you have gotten four or more written “10-Day” notices in the last 12 months, the landlord can give you a **60-Day** Notice. Read [My landlord just gave me a 60-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 15. Sex offender.** If you must register as a “sex offender” during the tenancy or you did not share that you are registered as a “sex offender” on your rental application, the landlord can give you a **60-Day** Notice. Read [My landlord just gave me a 60-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 16. Sexual harassment.** If the landlord believes you have made unwanted sexual advances or sexually harassed the property owner, a manager, or another tenant, in violation of the lease, the landlord can give you a **20-Day** Notice. A landlord may also give you this type of notice if the landlord believes you have harassed the landlord, an employee, or another tenant because of their race, gender or other protected status. Read [My landlord just gave me a 20-Day Notice](#) to learn more.
- 17. Not on the lease.** If you are living in the rental for at least 6 months without being on the lease and the person on the lease moves out, the landlord must give you a **30-Day** Notice asking you to submit a rental application or move out. If you don’t do either thing within 30 days, the landlord can evict you. Read [My landlord just gave me a 30-Day Notice](#) to learn more.

### **The landlord gave me a 90-day notice that they planned to sell the unit, so I moved. What if I found out the landlord didn’t sell the unit after all?**

This may count as a “wrongful eviction” under state law. You might be entitled to compensation for having to move and the distress that caused you. Read [Did my landlord illegally end my tenancy or evict me and what can I do about it](#) to learn more about what wrongful eviction is and the basics about suing your landlord.

## Get Legal Help

- **Apply online:** [nwjustice.org/apply-online](https://nwjustice.org/apply-online)
- **Facing Eviction?** Call 1-855-657-8387
- **Facing Foreclosure?** Call 1-800-606-4819
- **Facing a legal issue in King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call 211 (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) weekdays 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. They will refer you to a legal aid provider.
- **Facing a legal issue outside of King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call the CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays between 9:15 am and 12:15 pm or apply online at [nwjustice.org/apply-online](https://nwjustice.org/apply-online).
- **Seniors (age 60 and over)** with a legal issue outside of King County can also call CLEAR\*Sr at 1-888-387-7111

**Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired callers** can call any of these numbers using the relay service of your choice.

Interpreters provided.

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