



My landlord threatened to evict me

❖ If your landlord is threatening to evict you, call the Eviction Defense line at 1-855-657-8387 or apply for help online at nwjustice.org/apply-online.

Should I read this?

Yes, if you rent the place where you live and you just got a verbal threat, text message, or written eviction notice from your landlord.

No, if you live in a mobile home park and own your home but rent the lot. In that case, read [My landlord threatened to evict me from my manufactured/mobile home park](#) and see “Get Legal Help” contact information below.

Can my landlord evict me just by sending a text or verbally threatening me?

No. Washington state does not let landlords evict tenants without first following the proper court eviction process. Your landlord must win an eviction lawsuit against you and then get a judge to sign an order directing the sheriff to evict you.

When can my landlord start an eviction lawsuit?

Your landlord can start an eviction lawsuit only for certain good reasons. Some examples of good reasons are if you get behind on rent, break (breach) other parts of the lease agreement, or your landlord wants to sell the home you live in or move into your rental unit. Read [Landlords must give a “good” reason to end certain tenancies](#) to learn more.

How does the legal eviction process start?

Your landlord must give you a proper written “termination notice” before starting an eviction lawsuit. **Verbal threats, phone calls, voicemails, emails, and text messages are not proper notices.**

What is a proper termination notice?

It depends on why the landlord is trying to evict you. We list just a few examples here. You can read about all the different types of legal notices at WashingtonLawHelp.org.

- If you get behind on rent, your landlord must give you a **14-Day Notice**. Read [My landlord just gave me a 14-Day Notice to Pay or Vacate](#) to learn more.
- If your landlord believes you are breaking other rules in your lease, your landlord must give you a **10-Day Notice**. Read [My landlord just gave me a 10-Day Notice to Comply or Vacate](#) to learn more.
- If your landlord thinks you are engaging in extreme behavior, such as destroying the property, or illegal activity on the property, the landlord can give you a **3-Day Notice**. Read [My landlord just gave me a 3-Day Notice to Quit](#) and get legal help right away.

These “**termination notices**” are warnings from the landlord. If you ignore them, the landlord may file an eviction lawsuit against you and it can go on your record.

In all these cases, you should try to get legal help right away. See contact information at the end of this fact sheet.

Does the termination notice have to be delivered in a certain way?

Yes. Your landlord (or their employee or another adult) can “**personally serve**” you at home by handing you the notice.

The landlord can also hand it to another adult or older teenager living with you. If your landlord does this “substitute service,” your landlord must also send a copy of the notice to you.

If the landlord tries but fails to have you personally served, the landlord can then “serve” the notices by taping them on your door, but then they must also mail a copy to you.

Can the landlord email me a termination notice?

No. A termination notice that is sent by text, voicemail, email, or in person is not a proper notice. It does not start the eviction process.

Does the notice have to be notarized?

No.

Get Legal Help

- **Facing Eviction?** Call 1-855-657-8387.
- **Apply online** with [CLEAR*Online](https://www.nwjustice.org/apply-online) - [nwjustice.org/apply-online](https://www.nwjustice.org/apply-online)
- **Facing Foreclosure?** Call 1-800-606-4819.
- **Facing a legal issue in King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call 2-1-1 (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) weekdays 8:00 am - 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 - 12:15 pm or apply online at [nwjustice.org/apply-online](https://www.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.

This publication provides general information concerning your rights and responsibilities. It is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.

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