



My Landlord Just Threatened to Evict Me

Read this *only* if you live in the state of Washington.

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- ❖ **Update! Eviction law is changing quickly, and the eviction moratorium is scheduled to end June 30.** Read about changes to the law at [Washington State New 2021 Landlord/Tenant Legislation](#) and check back for updates.
 - ❖ **If your landlord is threatening to evict you,** use our [Eviction Defense Helper](#) at WashingtonLawHelp.org **OR** apply for help online at <https://nwjustice.org/apply-online>.
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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 Just 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 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. For example, if you get behind on rent (but not during the eviction moratorium, which is active until June 30, 2021), break other terms of the lease agreement, or your landlord wants to sell the home you live in or move into your rental unit.

How does the legal eviction process start?

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

What is a proper termination notice?

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

- If you fall behind in rent, your landlord must give a **14-Day Notice**. Read [My Landlord Just Gave Me a 14-Day Notice to Pay or Vacate](#).
- 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](#).
- 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 document.

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

Yes. The landlord (or their employee or another adult) can “**personally serve**” you at home by handing the notice to you. The landlord can also hand it to another adult who lives with you. The landlord can also tape it on your door, but then they must also mail you a copy.

A verbal termination notice in person, by phone or by voicemail, or a written notice by text or email, is not proper and does not start an eviction lawsuit.

❖ The termination notice does not have to be notarized.

Get Legal Help

Eviction laws and the ways courts are handling the COVID-19 crisis may change quickly and be different depending on where you live. Get the latest information and learn about help for evictions in your area on **WashingtonLawHelp.org**.

- **Outside King County:** Call the CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays from 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
- **In King County:** Call 2-1-1 for referral to a legal services provider weekdays from 8:00 am – 6:00 pm.
- **Persons 60 and Over** can call CLEAR*Sr at 1-888-387-7111 (statewide).
- **Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired callers** can call CLEAR or 211 (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) using a relay service of your choice.
- **Apply online with [CLEAR*Online](https://nwjustice.org/get-legal-help) - nwjustice.org/get-legal-help**

CLEAR and 211 will provide free interpreters.

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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