

Your Rights as a Tenant During COVID-19 Outbreak

For more information:
Legal Aid Justice Center
434-977-0553
1000 Preston Ave.,
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Your Landlord Cannot Evict You Without Going to Court

- Your landlord cannot evict you without a court order, no matter what your lease says.
- You do not have to move out just because the landlord tells you to leave, gives you a “5 Day Pay or Quit,” written notice, or files an eviction lawsuit (“unlawful detainer”) against you.
- It is illegal for a landlord to lock you out or turn off your utilities to try to evict you.

Some Evictions Are on Hold

- **If you receive something from your landlord or the Court, call the Legal Aid Justice Center at 434-977-0553 for advice. Do not agree to a telephonic or video hearing. Do not sign anything from your landlord before speaking with an attorney.**
- The Governor has asked the Supreme Court to suspend all evictions until June 28th, 2020.
- In Virginia, an emergency law protects tenants impacted by COVID-19. If you are served with an eviction lawsuit or “summons for unlawful detainer,” you can ask the judge to postpone for 60 days. You must go to your first hearing, written on the summons, and bring written proof that you lost your income due to COVID-19.
- August 26, 2020 is the earliest your landlord can file an eviction for non-payment if they have mortgages with, or subsidized by, the federal government. Your landlord must send a 30-day notice after July 25, 2020, wait those 30 days, and THEN file an eviction in court. Even for reasons other than nonpayment, you may have more rights to stay in your home.
- If you live in public or subsidized housing, and your income changes (because you lose your job or have a reduction in hours), call your housing provider RIGHT AWAY to ask for a rent decrease.

Your Landlord Must Still Do Repairs

- Even now, your landlord must still provide you with a safe and healthy place to live.
- If something breaks that makes your home unsafe, send your landlord a letter asking for repairs right away. (It is important for you to try to put this in writing and keep a copy.)