

Is there a moratorium on evictions?

Yes. Landlords can still file unlawful detainers in California, but those cases will not move forward during the COVID-19 crisis, except where an eviction is necessary to protect public health and safety. This rule, issued by the California Judicial Council, will last until 90 days after the governor's state of emergency declaration is lifted. This means that tenants will generally not need to file an answer or appear in court during the COVID-19 health crisis.

Do I still have to pay my rent?

Yes. Currently, there are no laws that give tenants relief on the rent they owe. Therefore, although you cannot be evicted now, you should still pay your rent. That is the safest thing to do.

Are there protections for me if I can't pay my rent?

Yes, but they are limited. If you have experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19 you may be eligible for some additional protections in court, but you will eventually be required to pay back all money that you owe. Depending on where you live, you may also have an extended amount of time to pay back what you owe. For example, LA City has given tenants 12 months to pay back any rent owed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Do I need to do anything to get protections in court?

Yes. If you can't pay your rent because of financial hardship resulting from COVID-19, you should tell your landlord immediately, in writing. You can find a sample letter on our website.

Do I need to prove that my loss of income is the result of COVID-19?

Yes. While these requirements vary city-by-city, you should collect as much documentation as you can. This could include letters from your employer terminating your employment or reducing hours, unemployment-related documents, pay stubs, documents related to school closures, medical documents if you or someone in your family contracts COVID-19, receipts from increased household expenses, etc. You could also try to get a note from your employer explaining your specific situation.

My landlord is demanding that I enter into a payment plan or pay part of my rent now. Do I need to do that?

No. You are not required to enter into any repayment plans with your landlord at this time. You are also not required to give your landlord any money you receive from charities or the federal government during the COVID-19 health crisis. Be cautious—any agreement you enter into with your landlord now could make it difficult for you in the future.

If I have enough money to pay rent now, but am worried about having enough money to support myself or my family, should I pay my rent?

Yes, if possible. For some protections to take effect, you need to be able to show that you could not pay rent. Therefore, if you choose not to pay rent, you may not be eligible for those eviction protections. However, this kind of decision is personal. You should make a budget, spend frugally, and decide what to do based on your own, specific circumstances.

Can I be evicted right now?

No. Landlords can still file eviction paperwork and you need to file an answer if they do. However, Los Angeles Courts are not conducting unlawful detainer trials during the COVID-19 health crisis. Therefore, because you cannot be legally evicted without a court order, you cannot be evicted at this time. However, just because you cannot be evicted now does not mean that you will not be held responsible for paying all of your rent later on.

If I already have an eviction against me, will the sheriff lock me out?

No. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has stated that they will not conduct any lockouts during this public health crisis. Although, be aware that the Sheriff has not stated exactly when this protection will end.

Can my landlord lock me out themselves?

No. Penal Code Section 418 makes it a crime to evict you by force or without a court order. It also makes it a crime to turn off any utilities in an attempt to evict you.

Is there anything I can do if I am locked out by my landlord?

Yes. You should call the police immediately and show them evidence that you live in the unit. They should allow you access. You can also call an attorney.

Are there going to be more changes to these laws?

Yes, probably. We are all learning more every day and it is very likely that these laws will continue to change. You should check regularly to make sure that you are making decisions based on the most accurate information available to you.

Can I find more information?

Yes. You can access more information about city-specific ordinances online at <https://caanet.org/coronavirus-resources-for-navigating-the-outbreak/> or by contacting your city officials. If you live in the City of Los Angeles, you can also contact HCIDLA <https://hcidla.lacity.org/> for more information. For more information on your specific situation, contact Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County at: (800) 433-6251, or online at <https://www.nsls.org/>.