



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A CALIFORNIA TENANT

- **You can only be evicted by court order.** It is illegal for a landlord to lock you out, shut off your utilities, or put your things out on the curb to try to force you out. If you get an eviction notice, get legal help right away. If your landlord files for eviction in court and you fail to respond, the court may order eviction without waiting for you.
- **You can generally only be evicted for “just cause.”** This does not apply if you lived somewhere for less than a year or to some types of housing, such as housing built in the last 15 years. ([Civil Code § 1946.2](#).) Just cause includes:
 - Not paying rent
 - Breaking a material term of your lease
 - Committing nuisance or waste, or using the premises for unlawful purposes
 - Engaging in criminal activity on the premises or directed at your landlord
 - Refusing to allow lawful entry to the premises
 - Refusing to sign a new lease that contains similar terms to your existing lease
 - The owner is withdrawing the unit from the rental market, moving into the unit, demolishing or substantially remodeling the unit, or complying with a law or order that requires you to leave
- **Your rent can generally be increased by no more than 10% in one year.** Depending on where you live, this cap may be even lower. This cap does not apply to some types of housing, such as housing built in the last 15 years. ([Civil Code § 1947.12](#).) When raising your rent, your landlord must provide formal written notice — a call, text, or email is not enough.
- **Your landlord must repair health and safety issues.** For example, they must provide safe and working plumbing and heating, and keep the premises free from roaches and rats. If there is a health or safety issue, ask your landlord in writing to repair it, and keep copies of your requests.
- **Your landlord must return your security deposit.** Your landlord must itemize any deductions from your security deposit within 21 days of you moving out. Deductions can be made for things like unpaid rent, cleaning, and repairing damage beyond ordinary wear and tear.
- **Your landlord must provide reasonable accommodations if you have a disability.** Your landlord must also allow you to make reasonable physical modifications to your rental unit.
- **Your landlord cannot discriminate against you.** Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, marital status, income source, veteran status, or certain other characteristics is illegal.
- **Your landlord may not retaliate against you for exercising your tenant rights.** Your landlord also cannot threaten to disclose your immigration status to pressure you to move out, or harass or retaliate against you by disclosing your immigration status to law enforcement.
- **You may have additional rights.** You may have additional rights under local rent control, rent stabilization, or just cause eviction laws. Check what rules are in place where you live by visiting your local government’s website.

Get legal help as soon as possible if you believe your landlord has violated your tenant rights or if you’re facing eviction. If you cannot afford a lawyer, free or low-cost legal help may be available: visit [LawHelpCA.org](#). If you do not qualify for legal aid and need help finding a lawyer, visit [calbar.ca.gov/Public/Need-Legal-Help/Using-a-Certified-Lawyer-Referral-Service](#) for the California State Bar’s certified lawyer referral service. If you cannot get legal assistance, visit [selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/eviction-tenant](#) for the California Courts’ self-help resources for tenants facing evictions.

For more information and resources, visit [oag.ca.gov/housing](#).

