

Evictions and Utility Shutoffs

Virginia landlords **cannot** evict their tenants without giving notice and following exact legal rules. That's because a state law, the Virginia Residential Landlord Tenant Act, (VRLTA) protects tenants in:



- Rental units, and
- Hotels, motels, and boarding houses rented for more than 90 days or with a written lease for more than 90 days.

Exception: The VRLTA may not cover every rental. Even if the VRLTA does not cover you, other state laws may cover your situation. A lawyer can give you advice about your particular situation.

Does a landlord have to give me notice before evicting me?



Yes. Landlords must always give a written notice before they can evict. The reason for the eviction doesn't matter.

Do I have to move out when the landlord gives me an eviction notice?

No. There are other steps in the legal process that the landlord must follow before you can be evicted. And you have the right to fight the eviction.

Can a landlord give me notice by just telling me?

No. For it to be legal, the notice must be **in writing**. You do not have to move just because a landlord told you to.

What can happen if I don't pay my rent?

The landlord can give you a written "pay or quit" notice to:

- pay rent within 5 days, or
- move out.

If you pay the rent within 5 days, you can stay. If you do not pay, the landlord can start an eviction case.

Are there other kinds of notices?

Yes. If the eviction is *not* about unpaid rent ...

- and you have a month-to-month lease, at any time, the landlord can give you a **30-day** notice to leave, OR
- you pay rent weekly, at any time the landlord can give you a 7-day notice to leave.

Sometimes the landlord gives you notice for a problem that is correctable, such as:

- not following the rules of the lease (*other than* unpaid rent), or
- a violation that affects health and safety.

If the reason for the notice is something you *can* correct, the landlord must give you a **21/30 notice**.

This notice says you must correct the problem within 21 days, or your lease will end 30 days after the date of the notice.

If it's a problem that *cannot* be corrected, the landlord can give you a notice that says your lease will end in 30 days.

If you do not move out at the end of the notice period, the landlord can start an eviction case in the General District Court (GDC).

Can a landlord give me a notice to evict me *right away*?

If there is a *real* emergency or other threat to health and safety, a landlord may give you a notice to move in less than 30 days. The number of days depends on the kind of emergency. But it *must* be a reasonable number.

You do not have to move just because the landlord gave you a written notice. But if you do not move out, the landlord can start an eviction case in the General District Court (GDC).