

An eviction notice on your door

Hard · 1 hour to start · Free (legal aid if you qualify)

A notice starts a process. It isn't the end. Read it today, find the deadline, get free legal help, and never skip a court date. Only a court can evict you, so a landlord can't change your locks or shut off your utilities.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ The notice or court papers, and the envelope they came in
- ☐ Photos and messages about repairs, if that's part of it
- ☐ Your lease and rent receipts
- ☐ A calendar

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 Read it today and find the type and the deadline.** Is it a notice to pay or move, a notice to fix a lease problem, a notice ending your tenancy, or court papers? In California, a three-day notice counts only court days, so weekends and court holidays don't count.
- 2 Check what it demands.** In California, a notice to pay rent isn't legally effective if it asks for more than the rent actually owed, or adds late fees, utilities or interest.
- 3 If it's about rent and you can pay, pay within the deadline, in a way you can prove, and keep the receipt.** If you can't, use the steps in Can't pay rent on time and call 211 for rent help.
- 4 Get free legal help now, not the night before court.** Legal aid, housing counselors and social services groups can explain the protections where you live. Find legal aid near you.
- 5 If you're served with court papers, answer by the deadline.** In most California eviction cases, you have only 10 court days to file a written response. Missing it can mean losing without a hearing.
- 6 Go to every court date, on time, with your papers.** Too many renters give up before they get to court.
- 7 Know who can actually remove you.** In New York, only a sheriff, marshal or constable can carry out an eviction, and only after a court judgment.

Watch out A landlord can't evict you on their own. In California, they can't lock you out, cut off water, gas or electricity, remove doors or windows, or take your belongings to force you out. They have to go through court. If it happens, call the police non-emergency line and legal aid. Rules here vary by state, and some cities add their own. The examples come from the official tenant guides for California, New York and Texas. Find yours in the list of state guides below, or call legal aid.

DAD NOTE *The worst move is doing nothing. Read it, call legal aid today, and show up.*

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/your-place/when-something-goes-wrong/an-eviction-notice-on-your-door/

Checked October 3, 2026. Sources: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; California Department of Real Estate; New York State Attorney General; Legal Services Corporation.