

Landlord-Tenant FAQs (4/14/20)

This FAQ addresses LL/T questions that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic and is intended to provide guidance to educate clients. This resource is based on laws and orders in place in Maryland, and is intended for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. For specific questions, contact a local legal services provider in your state/county.

Q: Can I be evicted from my home during the state of emergency?

A: No. Maryland courts have put all eviction matters on hold until further notice, and sheriffs are not allowed to evict anyone right now. Once the courts re-open and the order is lifted, eviction proceedings can continue. Gov. Hogan also issued an executive order on April 3, 2020, temporarily prohibiting evictions of tenants in MD suffering from substantial loss of income due to COVID-19.

Q: Do I still need to pay my rent?

A: Yes. While you cannot be evicted from your home during the state of emergency, the Maryland governor's executive order did not freeze rent payments and did not prohibit landlords from charging late fees as a result of missed payments. And, eviction proceedings can resume once the courts re-open and the court order temporarily suspending them is lifted. If you are unable to pay your rent, you should call your landlord to discuss payment options.

Q: What do I do if I am illegally locked out or evicted?

A: In Baltimore City, call and report to the District Commissioner (<https://www.mdcourts.gov/district/directories/commissionermap>). Outside of Baltimore City, call 911 or your local Sheriff's Office to report the incident.

Q: What do I do if my housing conditions are endangering my life, health or safety?

A: Maryland courts are closed to non-emergency matters including all landlord-tenant cases. If you have an emergency, you can contact the Maryland Court Self-Help Center at 410-260-1392 to get legal advice. The Self-Help Center remains open Monday-Friday from 8:30 am-4:30 pm by phone, and from 8:30 am – 8:00 pm through the "chat" function on mdcourts.gov/selfhelp/mcshc.

Q: Can the utility company shut off my utilities if I can't pay my bill?

A: No. The Governor of Maryland issued an executive order on March 16, 2020, prohibiting utility companies from shutting off access to gas, electric, sewage disposal, water, phone, internet, or cable services in Maryland during the emergency. Companies cannot charge late fees for payments due after March 16, 2020.

Q: Can I get help paying my bills during the emergency?

A: Maybe. Several organizations are offering resources to help people in Maryland with rent, mortgage, and utility payments.

- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Maryland HOPE Initiative
- Fair Housing Action Center of Maryland
- United Way of Central Maryland