

My Landlord Has Locked Me Out or Shut Off Utilities

Your landlord must have a court order to evict you. If your landlord changes the locks, removes your belongings, or shuts off your utilities without a court order, this is called “Self-Help Eviction” and is illegal in Ohio.

What If I’m Behind on Rent? Violated the Lease?

It does not matter how far you are behind on rent or what the landlord claims you have done wrong. Self-help eviction is still illegal.

The only way a landlord can legally force you to leave is by taking you to eviction court, getting a court order (“writ”) and coming to your home with a court bailiff, deputy sheriff, or other court officer.

What Can I Do If My Landlord Tries to Use Self-Help Eviction?

- Give your landlord a copy of this Notice.
- Get a court order to force the landlord to let you back in or turn the utilities back on.
- If your belongings are already gone, you may sue the landlord for the lost property as well as any other damages you suffered as a result of the self-help eviction.

Where Can I Sue?

If your damages are less than \$3,000, you can sue the landlord in Small Claims Court.

Ask your local Small Claims Court for a booklet on how to file your case. The booklet will list the fees you must pay, explain how to file your legal complaint and when you must appear in court.

The Clerk of Courts can give you a blank complaint form to fill out and file.



NOTICE TO LANDLORD

Ohio Revised Code §5321.15 States

- A. No landlord of residential premises shall initiate any act, including termination of utilities or services, exclusion from the premises or threat of any unlawful act, against a tenant, or a tenant whose right to possession has terminated, for the purpose of recovering possession of residential premises, other than as provided in Chapters 1923, 5303 and 5321 of the Revised Code.
- B. No landlord of residential premises shall seize the furnishings or possessions of a tenant or of a tenant whose right to possession has terminated, for the purpose of recovering rent payments, other than in accordance with an order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- C. A landlord who violates this section is liable in a civil action for all damages caused to a tenant, or to a tenant whose right to possession has terminated, together with reasonable attorney’s fees.