



Legal Aid Society

RENTER'S RIGHTS AFTER A DISASTER

• Can I get out of my lease if my home is damaged?

If your lease says you can or if you cannot live in part of your rented home because of damage, you can cancel the lease.

If you cannot live in any part of your rental unit, you must give your landlord a written notice that you are canceling your lease. You should also ask in writing a refund of your security deposit and any pre-paid rent from your landlord.

• What do I do if I lost my job because of the disaster and cannot pay rent?

If you do not pay rent your landlord can give you a notice to move. Your landlord may later file an eviction case against you.

If your rent is subsidized by the government, you are entitled to have your part of the rent reduced. You should contact the agency that helps you with your rent to get a reduction.

• Can my landlord make me move immediately if I can live in my home?

No. If your home is still in livable shape, then normal landlord-tenant laws apply. You cannot be evicted without reason. Your landlord can only evict you if the lease is expired or you break the lease.

A landlord can only make you move by giving you a notice telling you to get out by a certain date and then filing a lawsuit after that date. Your landlord may not have to give you notice if you do not pay rent.

If your lease is expired, your landlord may be able to force you to move by giving you a 30-day notice. If your landlord locks you out and refuses to give you a key, you can sue to get back in your place.

• Can my landlord make me move so they can make repairs?

If you can still live in the home safely, you do not have to move until the lease is over. If you have a written lease, it may cover this problem. If not, your landlord can only make you move if your home is not safe to live in.

If the landlord has to move you out to make repairs so that the home will be safe again, the landlord can break your lease. **The landlord should give you 14 days to move out.** The landlord should also give you back your security deposit and any pre-paid rent.

• What do I do if I am served with an eviction lawsuit?

Carefully read the papers and be sure to show up in court to tell your side of the story. You have the right to represent yourself or you can call Legal Aid Society for information or to help if you qualify. You may also find helpful information regarding eviction lawsuits at www.las.org.

• 1-844-HELP4TN for immediate legal advice.

• To apply for legal assistance, please call Legal Aid Society at 1-800-238-1443 or visit www.las.org for more information.

