

BREAKING YOUR LEASE EARLY

If you (or a child living with you) have been the victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking within the past 90 days, you have the right to be released from your lease or rental agreement with a 14-day notice, so you can move quickly.

How to end your lease with a 14-day notice:

- Make a request to your landlord in writing. See Sample Form 1
- Provide verification of the abuse by giving your landlord one of the following:
 - ❑ a copy of a court protective order (Restraining or Stalking Order or other court order);
 - ❑ a copy of a police report showing that you or a child living with you has been the victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking;
 - ❑ a statement from a law enforcement officer stating you have reported an act of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. See Sample Form 3
- You will not be charged for terminating your lease early (like a lease buy-out fee).
- If you are the only person on the lease:
 - You can end your tenancy and you are responsible for rent only up to the termination date.
- If there are other people on the lease:
 - You will not be responsible for rent or damage occurring past your release date.
 - Remaining tenants will continue to be responsible for rent.

CHANGING YOUR LOCKS FOR YOUR SAFETY

If you (or a child living with you) have been the victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, you have the right to have your locks changed promptly.

Your landlord must promptly change your locks or give you permission to change your locks if you:

- Notify your landlord that you (or a child living with you) are a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking and that you want your locks changed.
- This notice can be verbal, but written notice is always best. See Sample Form 2
- You do not need to provide proof that the violence occurred.

If your landlord refuses or takes too long to change your locks:

- You can change the locks without the landlord's permission.
- You must provide a copy of the new key to the landlord.

Who pays?

- You are responsible for the cost of changing your locks.
- The landlord should not insist you pay for the lock change before changing the locks.

Note: If the abuser is on the rental agreement with you and you want to change the locks to keep the abuser out:

- You must have a FAPA restraining order that specifically orders the abuser to move out of the unit.
- The landlord should not allow the abuser into the unit without your permission unless court ordered.
- The abuser is jointly responsible for the rent until the date the abuser was excluded from the unit.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ABUSED WOMEN

Sex discrimination in housing is illegal. When a landlord learns that a tenant is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, the landlord sometimes reacts by discriminating against the victim. In some cases this type of action against domestic or sexual violence victims is illegal sex discrimination.

Some examples of landlord actions that might be sex discrimination:

- Your abusive partner lives with you, and your landlord evicts you or takes away your housing voucher because of the abuser's actions.
- Your landlord learns that you are in an abusive relationship, makes comments about women who have been abused and then evicts you, or denies your rental application.
- Your landlord learns that you are in an abusive relationship or that you have experienced sexual assault, and then treats you differently from male tenants by imposing different rules on you as a condition of renting.
- A landlord learns from a prior landlord or review of public records that you were in an abusive relationship or filed for a protective order, and then denies your application because of this history.

If any of these things have happened to you or you think your landlord has otherwise discriminated against you, you may have rights under state and federal laws. You may wish to contact an attorney to investigate your possible rights.

Sample Form 1. Notice to Landlord to Terminate Lease With a 14-day Notice.

Dear (landlord's name): (Date)

I am a tenant at (your address). I (or a minor child who lives with me) am a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking within the past 90 days. Pursuant to new changes to the Oregon Residential and Landlord Tenant Act, this is my 14-day notice that I will end my rental agreement on _____(enter a date 14 days from today and add three days if mailing).

I have enclosed (choose one) a copy of my protection order, a copy of a police report showing that I (or a minor child who lives with me) was the victim of an act of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, or, a statement from a law enforcement officer stating that I have reported an act of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.

Sincerely,
(Your name and address)

Sample Form 2. Request to Change Locks for Safety.

Dear (landlord's name) (Date)

Pursuant to new changes to the Oregon Residential and Landlord Tenant Act, I write to request that you promptly change the locks to my unit. I am a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.

(If you are the only tenant on the lease you do not need to provide verification of the violence.)

(If the abuser is on the lease) Enclosed please find a copy of the restraining order that orders the abuser out of the dwelling unit.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
(Your name and address)

Sample Form 3. Law Enforcement Officer Verification (This is one form of verification to the landlord.)

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER VERIFICATION FORM

Name of Law Enforcement Officer Name of Tenant

STATEMENT BY TENANT:

I, _____, (Name of Tenant) do hereby state as follows:

- 1) I (or a minor member of my household or family) have been a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- 2) The most recent incident(s) that I rely on in support of this statement occurred on the following dates: _____

- 3) I make this statement in support of my request to be released from my rental agreement.

Signature of Tenant Date

STATEMENT BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

I, _____(name of law enforcement officer), do hereby verify as follows:

- 1) I am a law enforcement officer.
- 2) My name, business address, and business telephone are as follows: _____
- 3) I verify that the person whose signature is listed above has informed me that the person (or minor member of the person's household) is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking based on incident(s) that occurred on the dates listed above.
- 4) I reasonably believe the statement of the person above that the person (or minor member of the person's household) is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. I understand that the person who made this statement may use this document as a basis for gaining release from a rental agreement with the person's landlord.

Signature of Law Enforcement Officer Date

HOUSING RIGHTS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, and STALKING SURVIVORS

New changes in Oregon housing law provide protections if you are a domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking survivor.

- You may end your lease early to move quickly;
- You may have your locks changed for your safety;
- It may be discrimination if your landlord treats you differently because you have been a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking (for example: not renting to you or evicting you because you are abused)

RESOURCES:
National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-656-HOPE

Portland Women's Crisis Line
for statewide help, and referral
to a local crisis program
1-800-235-5333

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