# Guide Me: Steps to take when…

## Your landlord wants to evict you and you get a letter or notice that tells you to move out

This is the first step in the eviction process. You do not need to leave by the date in the notice. Your landlord can only start an eviction case against you in court after the date you are told to leave has passed.

### Learn about your rights and options

Use this time to learn about your rights and options.

If you get served a notice to quit for nonpayment of rent, you have the right to pay what you owe and stop the landlord from starting an eviction case in court.

Learn about:

* filing an Answer if your landlord takes you to court and you get the Summons and Complaint in your eviction case, and
* defenses and counterclaims you may be able to use in your Answer, and
* ways to stop or delay an eviction.

See [MassLegalHelp.org/Evictions](https://MassLegalHelp.org/Evictions).

### Until December 31, 2020, you may be eligible to stop an eviction where your landlord is asking for back rent

You might be protected by the federal CDC Moratorium if:

* You cannot pay your full rent because you have lost income or have high medical expenses,
* You are making best efforts to pay the rent including applying for financial help, and
* You are likely to become homeless or doubled up if evicted.

Learn more about the moratorium, and how to send your landlord a declaration that you are protected by the federal CDC moratorium on evictions.

See  
[MassLegalHelp.org/covid-19/housing](https://www.masslegalhelp.org/covid-19/housing) and  
[MassLegalHelp.org/cdc-declaration.pdf](https://masslegalhelp.org/cdc-declaration.pdf)

### Talk to your landlord

Some landlords may be willing to resolve the issues underlying the notice to quit without going to court.

If your landlord is evicting you because you owe rent, they may agree to a payment plan and let you stay if can get caught up on your rent.

Even if your landlord is not interested in letting you stay-long term, they agree to give you a reasonable amount of time to move on your own.

It may cost the landlord more to pay a sheriff or constable to evict you, and move all your things out.

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