# Guide Me: Steps to take when…

## Your landlord wants to raise the rent and you have a lease

### No increase during the term of the lease

Usually your landlord cannot raise the rent **during the term of your lease**.

Your landlord can **only** raise your rent during the term of the lease **if** the lease has a clause that says the landlord can do so. Few leases include this clause.

### Check your lease to see if it renews automatically with a rent increase

Some leases renew automatically and raise the rent going forward. These leases are not typical.

If you have a lease with this kind of clause, check the lease to see what you need to do to cancel any renewal.

### My lease has ended. Can my landlord just raise the rent?

No. You must agree to the rent increase before a landlord can start charging you more rent.

**Watch Out**

As soon as you start paying higher rent – even if you never sign anything – legally, you have accepted the rent increase and you must keep paying it.

You only have to pay the higher rent if you agree to it.

### Is there any limit on how much a landlord can raise the rent?

No. Landlords can set rent at any amount they think tenants will pay. They do not have to limit rent to what you can afford.

But a landlord cannot raise the rent as a way to **retaliate** against you. It can count as **retaliation** if your landlord tells you they are going to raise your rent within 6 months of the date:

* You write to them about the bad conditions in your home, or
* You report code violations.

If you think your landlord is retaliating against you, See [Taking Your Landlord to Court.](https://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing/lt1-pullout-13-taking-landlord-to-court)

### I do not want to pay more rent. What should I do?

1. Do not sign anything that says you agree to the rent increase.
2. Write your landlord a letter that says, "I do not accept the rent increase."
3. Continue to pay the rent you have been paying.
4. Do not pay the rent increase. As soon as you start to pay more rent – even if you never sign anything – legally, you accept the rent increase and you must keep paying it.
5. Negotiate a smaller rent increase. If you are willing to pay a smaller rent increase, ask your landlord if he will accept a lesser increase. Some landlords may agree.

### What happens if I do not accept the rent increase?

When you do not accept a rent increase after your lease has ended, you no longer have an agreement with your landlord to rent your home. Your tenancy ends and your landlord can ask you to leave.

If you do not leave voluntarily, your landlord can begin an eviction case against you. But the landlord may be required to send you a notice to quit first.

As long as you keep paying the rent you were paying, your landlord cannot evict you for non payment of rent.

When landlords evict tenants because the tenants refuse to pay a rent increase, the court usually gives tenants more time to move.

Learn more about Rent Increases. See [MassLegalHelp.org/Rent](https://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing/lt1-chapter-5-rent)

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