
Next Steps & What to Expect

How to prepare for your appointment with an attorney

Learn about Evictions on FloridaLawHelp:

- [Evictions: What Every Tenant Should Know](#)
- [Help! I just got a 3-day Notice](#)
- [Do you have to pay if your rental home needs repairs?](#)
- [What Happens if you Can't Pay Rent](#)

Find your Paperwork:

Bring the following things with you to your appointment if you have them.

- Pay stubs or proof of income
- Lease
- Any notices from landlord
- Keep envelopes to show date sent
- Any papers from the court
- Photographs related to your problem
- Letters, notes, texts, or e-mails between you and your landlord
- Proof of rent payments (bank records, receipts from your landlord or money orders, notes/e-mails/texts from your landlord about payments)
- Copies of any police reports or code enforcement reports related to your problem
- A list of people who know something about the problem you are having and their contact information: name, phone, address, e-mail, where they work.
- A list of property that has been damaged or lost
- A list of money that you have spent on things like doctors' bills, travel expenses, storage unit fees, moving trucks, or repair costs
- A list of all of your doctors and medications (you can get this from your pharmacy)

Ask & Answer:

Write down a list of all your questions to ask during your meeting or phone call. You may be nervous and this will help to make sure that you do not forget anything. Here are some examples:

- When will I know if I will have a lawyer to represent me? How will I be contacted?
 - What should my next step be?
 - What should I think about to decide whether to move or deposit rent with the court and fight the eviction process?
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Be prepared by having some answers ready for your initial meeting or phone call

- Basic information like your name, address, and phone numbers.
- How much money do you get every month and how much you spend?
- Who lives with you, what are their names, ages, and how much money do they get every month?
- Information about the property like the landlord's name, whether you rent an apartment, room or house and a description of the rental property and any problems with the property.
- Lease information like when you signed and the length of the lease, how much of a security deposit did you pay, what is your monthly rent, late fees, date that rent is due, and whether anything is included with the rent like electricity or cable.
- When you stopped paying rent and why.
- When you received an eviction notice and what was the notice called.
- What type of communications have you had with your landlord? Any harassment?
- What date did you move into the property?
- How did you found out about the rental property?
- Can you afford your rent?
- Do you have any reason to believe that your landlord is discriminating against you because of your race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, or because you have children? If you do, be sure to let the person you meet with know.
- What do you want to happen? For example, do you want to stay in your rental home/apartment, do you want repairs made, do you want to move but need additional time?

The steps in the eviction process:

1. You are given notice of lease termination / notice to vacate by your landlord.
2. If you do not move or pay unpaid rent, then your landlord can ask the court to evict you by filing an Eviction Complaint.
3. You will receive your landlord's Eviction Complaint along with an Eviction Summons.
4. You have FIVE business days to tell the court why you should not be evicted by filing a written Answer.
5. You must also deposit your rent into the court's registry (and continue to deposit rent as it comes due). If there is a disagreement about the amount of rent that is owed then you should file a "Motion to Determine Rent." IF YOU DO NOT DEPOSIT THE RENT, THE COURT MAY NOT HEAR THE CASE AND YOU MAY LOSE THE CASE BY DEFAULT.

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6. If you file an Answer and deposit rent the court may schedule a hearing and decide if you should be evicted. Bring all witnesses and papers you wish the court to consider on this date. When the case is over money deposited in the court registry may be given to your landlord and NOT returned to you. Never assume that money you pay into the registry will be returned to you.
 7. If a court finds that you should be evicted a Writ of Possession will be posted on your door. You have 24 hours from the time it is posted to get your belongings out of your home and then the landlord can change the locks.

Florida Law requires that landlords use the court system to evict people. You may call the police and your lawyer if your landlord changes the locks or shuts off your power or water to get you to leave. There are also laws that protect against certain kinds of discrimination in housing. Let your lawyer know if you think you have been the victim of discrimination.