

FAQs for COVID-19 Temporary Moratorium on Residential Evictions

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Mayor Jenny Durkan issued an emergency order on March 14, 2020 that places a temporary moratorium on residential evictions for non-payment of rent. The order goes into effect **immediately**. It will continue for 30 days or until the civil emergency ends, whichever is sooner. It may be extended beyond 30 days if the Mayor deems it necessary.

Here is what landlords and tenants need to know:

For Landlords

What if my tenant does not pay the rent?

Tenants are expected to pay rent. However, if a tenant is not able to pay rent, the landlord may issue a billing statement or letter to the tenant documenting the rent due. Landlords and tenants are encouraged to work out reasonable payment plans if possible. At the end of the moratorium, the landlord may issue a 14-day notice for any rent balance that remains unpaid but may not charge fees for late or partial payments made during the moratorium.

If I choose to send a billing statement to a tenant owing rent during the temporary moratorium, what do I need to know?

Because this is *not* a termination notice, the letter or statement must not threaten eviction (do not use pay or vacate language) and is not required to have the tenant rights language under SMC 22.206.180(K). If the rent remains unpaid at the end of the moratorium, you may then issue a 14-day notice for unpaid rent.

Can I issue eviction notices for violations of the rental agreement other than non-payment of rent?

Yes. There is nothing in this emergency order that prevents a landlord from issuing notices for violations of the rental agreement other than for the non-payment of rent.

What if I already issued a 14-Day Notice to Pay or Vacate?

The order states that landlords must not act on existing notices for the non-payment of rent until the end of the temporary moratorium.

What if I have a pending eviction action?

For pending evictions, the emergency order states the courts may grant a continuance on an eviction hearing to be scheduled after the moratorium ends and allows the tenant to raise the moratorium as a defense to an eviction proceeding for the non-payment of rent.

For Tenants

Do I still have to pay my rent during the moratorium?

Yes, tenants still have an obligation to pay their rent. If you don't pay, balances will continue to get larger and you may get a notice to pay or vacate if you still owe rent after the moratorium ends. Your landlord cannot charge any fees for late or partial payments during the moratorium.

Are there resources available for individuals who have been impacted by COVID-19?

If you are affected by COVID-19, [Washington State Employment Security](#) has programs that may be able to help. The State adopted a series of emergency rules to relieve the burden of temporary layoffs, isolation and quarantine for workers and businesses. This [easy-to-read comparison guide](#) lists some of the most common scenarios that may occur and benefits that may apply. The City will continue to update the list of local, state, federal or private resources available for individuals impacted by COVID-19.

What do I do if I receive an eviction notice for the non-payment of rent during the moratorium?

Tenants who receive an eviction notice for not paying rent during the temporary moratorium should [go online to submit a complaint](#) (See '+ Create New' and select 'Complaints'). You may also contact the Renting in Seattle helpline at 206-684-5700. Wait times on the phone line may be longer than usual.

Can I be evicted if I violated my rental agreement during the moratorium?

Yes. The temporary moratorium only applies to evictions for the non-payment of rent. The emergency order does not apply to other types of terminations or eviction notices.

What can I do if the landlord started my eviction case before the moratorium?

Tenants can raise the moratorium as a defense in court to the eviction action that is based only on the non-payment of rent and courts may grant a continuance on an eviction hearing to occur after the moratorium.