

§6002. Tenancy at will; buildings on land of another

Tenancies at will must be terminated by either party by a minimum of 30 days' notice, except as provided in subsections 2 and 4, in writing for that purpose given to the other party, but if the landlord or the landlord's agent has made at least 3 good faith efforts to serve the tenant, that service may be accomplished by both mailing the notice by first class mail to the tenant's last known address and by leaving the notice at the tenant's last and usual place of abode. In cases when the tenant has paid rent through the date when a 30-day notice would expire, the notice must expire on or after the date through which the rent has been paid. Either party may waive in writing the 30 days' notice at the time the notice is given, and at no other time prior to the giving of the notice. A termination based on a 30-day notice is not affected by the receipt of money, whether previously owed or for current use and occupation, until the date a writ of possession is issued against the tenant during the period of actual occupancy after receipt of the notice. When the tenancy is terminated, the tenant is liable to the process of forcible entry and detainer without further notice and without proof of any relation of landlord and tenant unless the tenant has paid, after service of the notice, rent that accrued after the termination of the tenancy. These provisions apply to tenancies of buildings erected on land of another party. Termination of the tenancy is deemed to occur at the expiration of the time fixed in the notice. A 30-day notice under this paragraph and a 7-day notice under subsection 2 may be combined in one notice to the tenant. [PL 2015, c. 293, §6 (AMD).]

A notice to terminate under this section must include language advising the tenant that the tenant has the right to contest the termination in court. Failure to include language regarding the right to contest termination in the notice to terminate is not grounds to dismiss a forcible entry and detainer action. If the landlord fails to include language required by this paragraph in a notice to terminate and the tenant does not appear at the court hearing scheduled in any forcible entry and detainer action arising from the notice to terminate, the landlord's failure to include the required language in the notice to terminate constitutes sufficient grounds to set aside any default judgment entered against the tenant for failure to appear at the court hearing. This paragraph does not limit the right of a tenant to raise as a defense in an action for forcible entry and detainer the landlord's failure to include language in the notice to terminate as required by a lease agreement or any federal or state statutes, regulations or rules affecting the tenancy. [PL 2009, c. 566, §4 (NEW).]

1. Causes for 7-day notice of termination of tenancy. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, the tenancy may be terminated upon 7 days' written notice in the event that the landlord can show, by affirmative proof, that:

- A. The tenant, the tenant's family or an invitee of the tenant has caused substantial damage to the demised premises that the tenant has not repaired or caused to be repaired before the giving of the notice provided in this subsection; [PL 2009, c. 171, §2 (NEW).]
- B. The tenant, the tenant's family or an invitee of the tenant caused or permitted a nuisance within the premises, has caused or permitted an invitee to cause the dwelling unit to become unfit for human habitation or has violated or permitted a violation of the law regarding the tenancy; [PL 2015, c. 293, §7 (AMD).]
- C. The tenant is 7 days or more in arrears in the payment of rent; [PL 2017, c. 103, §1 (AMD).]
- D. The tenant is a perpetrator of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking and the victim is also a tenant; [PL 2017, c. 103, §2 (AMD).]
- E. The tenant or the tenant's guest or invitee is the perpetrator of violence, a threat of violence or sexual assault against another tenant, a tenant's guest, the landlord or the landlord's employee or agent, except that this paragraph does not apply to a tenant who is a victim as defined in section 6000, subsection 4 and who has taken reasonable action under the circumstances to comply with the landlord's request for protection of the tenant, another tenant, a tenant's guest or invitee, the

landlord or the landlord's employee or agent or of the landlord's property; or [PL 2017, c. 103, §3 (NEW).]

F. The person occupying the premises is not an authorized occupant of the premises. [PL 2017, c. 103, §3 (NEW).]

If a tenant who is 7 days or more in arrears in the payment of rent pays the full amount of rent due before the expiration of the 7-day notice in writing, that notice is void. Thereafter, in all residential tenancies at will, if the tenant pays all rental arrears, all rent due as of the date of payment and any filing fees and service of process fees actually expended by the landlord before the issuance of the writ of possession as provided by section 6005, then the tenancy must be reinstated and no writ of possession may issue.

In the event that the landlord or the landlord's agent has made at least 3 good faith efforts to personally serve the tenant in-hand, that service may be accomplished by both mailing the notice by first class mail to the tenant's last known address and by leaving the notice at the tenant's last and usual place of abode.

Payment or written assurance of payment through the general assistance program, as authorized by the State or a municipality pursuant to Title 22, chapter 1161, has the same effect as payment in cash. [PL 2017, c. 103, §§1-3 (AMD).]

2. Ground for termination notice. A notice of termination issued pursuant to subsection 1 must indicate the specific ground claimed for issuing the notice.

A. If a ground claimed is rent arrearage of 7 days or more, the notice must also include a statement:

(1) Indicating the amount of the rent that is 7 days or more in arrears as of the date of the notice; and

(2) Setting forth the following notice: "If you pay the amount of rent due as of the date of this notice before this notice expires, then this notice as it applies to rent arrearage is void. After this notice expires, if you pay all rental arrears, all rent due as of the date of payment and any filing fees and service of process fees actually paid by the landlord before the writ of possession issues at the completion of the eviction process, then your tenancy will be reinstated." [PL 2009, c. 171, §3 (NEW).]

B. If the notice states an incorrect rent arrearage or contains any other clerical errors that do not significantly or materially alter the purpose or understanding of the notice, the notice cannot be held invalid if the landlord can show the error was unintentional. [PL 2009, c. 171, §3 (NEW).] [PL 2009, c. 171, §3 (RPR).]

3. Breach of warranty of habitability as an affirmative defense. In an action brought by a landlord to terminate a rental agreement on the ground that the tenant is in arrears in the payment of rent, the tenant may raise as a defense any alleged violation of the implied warranty and covenant of habitability, provided that the landlord or the landlord's agent has received actual or constructive notice of the alleged violation, and has unreasonably failed under the circumstances to take prompt, effective steps to repair or remedy the condition and the condition was not caused by the tenant or another person acting under the tenant's control. Upon finding that the dwelling unit is not fit for human habitation, the court shall permit the tenant either to terminate the rental agreement without prejudice or to reaffirm the rental agreement, with the court assessing against the tenant an amount equal to the reduced fair rental value of the property for the period during which rent is owed. The reduced amount of rent thus owed must be paid on a pro rata basis, unless the parties agree otherwise, and payments become due at the same intervals as rent for the current rental period. The landlord may not charge the tenant for the full rental value of the property until such time as it is fit for human habitation. [PL 1995, c. 208, §1 (AMD).]

4. Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. A victim may terminate the victim's tenancy in a tenancy-at-will or a lease with a term of less than one year with 7 days' written notice and documentation required pursuant to section 6001, subsection 6, paragraph H due to an incident or threat of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. A victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking may terminate the victim's tenancy in a lease with a term of one year or more with 30 days' written notice and documentation required pursuant to section 6001, subsection 6, paragraph H. When written notice is provided to the landlord, the victim is not liable for any rent due beyond the date the notice expires or the date the victim vacates the unit, whichever is later, unless the victim has prepaid rent for the month, in which case the landlord is not required to refund the rent for that month.
[PL 2015, c. 293, §9 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1971, c. 322, §§2,3 (AMD). PL 1971, c. 544, §§46-A,47 (AMD). PL 1977, c. 441 (AMD). PL 1979, c. 232 (AMD). PL 1979, c. 298 (AMD). PL 1981, c. 65 (AMD). PL 1981, c. 428, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 1983, c. 398 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 284 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 202, §1 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 211, §2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 208, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 248, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 296, §1 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 171, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 566, §4 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 293, §§6-9 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 103, §§1-3 (AMD).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the First Special Session of the 130th Maine Legislature and is current through October 31, 2021. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.