Governor Charlie Baker recently approved a new law that helps protect tenants during the COVID-19 state of emergency. **It is important for tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities under this law.**

**Eviction Moratorium**

For a limited time, ***in most cases,*** this law prohibits your landlord from:

* Filing for eviction (“summary process”) in court; or
* Sending you any notice terminating your lease or demanding that you leave your unit.
* Your landlord ***can*** still send you other kinds of notices, including a statement of amounts you owe.

Unless extended by Governor Baker, this protection will end on August 18, 2020 or 45 days after the end of the Massachusetts state of emergency, whichever comes first.

During this time, no court can:

* Accept a “summary process” filing for eviction.
* Schedule a court hearing on an eviction.
* Enter a judgment in an eviction case.
* Issue an order (called an “execution”) allowing the landlord to have you and your belongings removed from your unit by the sheriff.

**This law is intended to keep tenants from being evicted, and from having to cope with the eviction process, in the midst of our current public health crisis. However, you are still responsible for lease payments to your landlord.**

***To avoid the risk of eviction after this protection ends, please read the information below:***

* If you know that you will not be able to pay your rent due to COVID-19, **don't wait** -- immediately contact your landlord or management agent.
* Discuss with your landlord or management agent how and when you will be able to pay all your rent.
* If you miss a rent payment because of financial hardship related to COVID-19, **notify your landlord in writing within 30 days after the date the payment was due.**
  + **Under this new law, if you miss a payment because of COVID-19 related financial hardship and you give the required notice on time, you can’t be charged late fees, and your landlord can’t report the missed rent to a credit reporting agency**
  + Please use this form to help you document COVID-19 financial impacts. You can fill out this form as give it to your landlord: https://www.mass.gov/lists/moratorium-on-evictions-and-foreclosures-forms-and-other-resources

If you can't pay all of your rent now, paying whatever you can will avoid a huge bill later.

**Important note: The eviction moratorium applies only to “non-essential” evictions for reasons that do not involve a threat to health or safety. If you or someone in your home commit crimes or violates your lease in ways that may threaten the health or safety of other residents, health care workers, emergency personnel, persons lawfully on the property or the general public, your landlord is still allowed to terminate your lease and file for eviction, and the court can still order your eviction.**

**Housing Resources:**

* Take advantage of this temporary hold on evictions to access the resources you need to be able to pay your rent when the moratorium ends. Depending on your situation, these may include:
  + Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) funding may be available for you to pay rent or a mortgage payment if you are eligble. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-dhcd-website#residential-assistance-for-families-in-transition-(raft)-program-and-covid-19-state-of-emergency->.
  + Unemployment insurance, including temporary extra payment of $600/week, under Federal CARES Act - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-unemployment-information>.
* Contact your regional Housing Consumer Education Center for more information about these and other resources. For a list of agencies, see <https://www.masshousinginfo.org/regional-agencies>.
* More information is available at <https://www.mhp.net/news/2020/resources-for-tenants-during-covid-19-pandemic>.