



Tenant Protections During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic isn't solely a health crisis, but an economic one as well. Thousands of Washingtonians have been laid off or had their hours cut back at work, threatening their ability to pay rent and meet other basic needs. In order to keep people safely home, state and local lawmakers have instated increased protections for renters during this crisis.

Eviction Moratorium

Governor Inslee has instated a statewide moratorium on residential evictions, which will last until June 4, 2020.

- ***How does this protect renters?***

From now until June 4, 2020, renters in Washington State cannot be evicted from their homes. The moratorium ensures that:

- All types of evictions are banned, unless it is in response to a significant and immediate threat to health or safety (this does NOT apply to tenants sick with COVID-19, who are protected by this moratorium).
- People living in residential and commercial units, transient housing (AirBnBs, hotels, motels), motor homes, and public campgrounds are all protected by this act.
- Lease terminations, rent or deposit increases, and late fees are banned during this time.
- All eviction court proceedings (including those that are already existing) are banned. Threatening to seek or enforce an eviction is also banned.
- Rent cannot be charged for housing in situations where a tenant's access is prevented due to COVID-19.
- Landlords cannot require a tenant to move to a lesser unit if they haven't paid rent.
- Unpaid rent and corresponding fees are no longer an enforceable debt, unless the landlord can prove refusal of reasonable payment.

- ***What will happen when the moratorium ends?***

Tenants will be expected to pay the rent that is owed. Housing advocates encourage renters to use this moratorium as a time to discuss a payment plan with your landlord.

If the tenant does not pay the rent that is due, the landlord may serve a 14-day notice, after which eviction proceedings will proceed as illustrated by the timeline below. No eviction court cases due to non-payment of rent will be allowed to take place until after June 11. Tenants cannot be evicted without a court hearing.

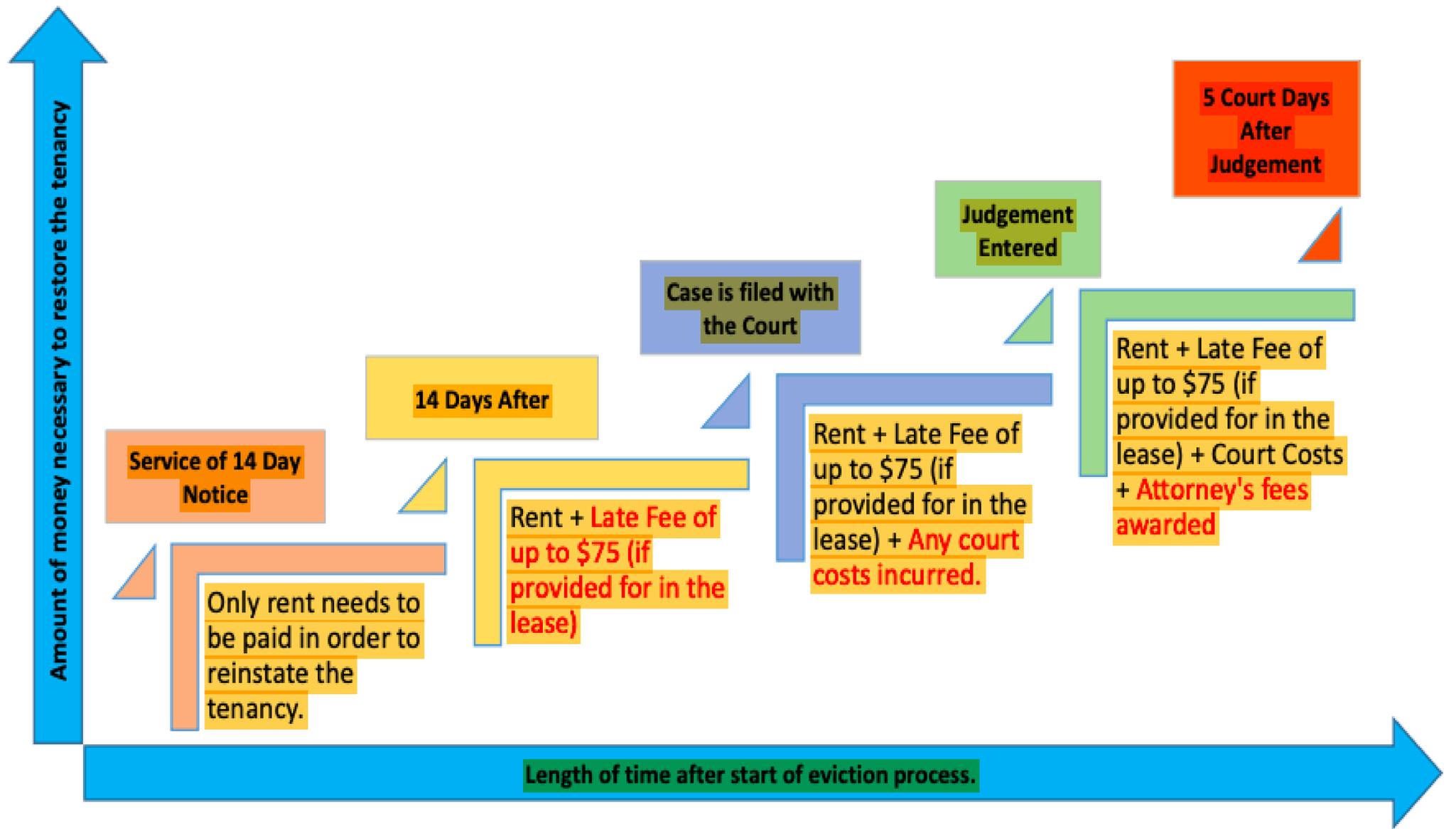
- ***What tips are there for speaking with my landlord?***

Landlords cannot terminate a lease prematurely for non-payment of rent, but they may not renew it. If you fear retaliation from your landlord due to non-payment of rent, call 211 for tenant protection hotlines. Remember to always put all communication to and from your landlord in writing.

- ***What if the property I live in is being foreclosed?***

If your landlord is unable to pay the housing costs they owe on the property you live in, the property may be subject to foreclosure. If this happens, you will either be allowed to finish your lease or be given a 90-day notice. If your landlord chooses to sell before your lease is up, the lease agreement will continue with the new owner.

Eviction Process Post-Moratorium



- **What if I can't pay my rent when the moratorium is over?**

If you cannot pay your rent, **remember that you have options.**

- Start by speaking with your landlord and negotiating a payment plan. If your landlord waives rent, be sure to get this documented in writing.
- For referrals to non-profits who offer rental assistance in your area, call 211.
- Rent strikes should only be considered as a last resort, as it could end in eviction. If you do decide to strike, be sure you get participation from your entire building, and strike with a specific grievance in mind.
- Visit the following resources for more in-depth information:

[-WA Emergency Housing Protections \(spreadsheet\)](#)

[-WA Law Help](#)

[-King County Housing Justice Project](#)

[-Northwest Justice Project](#)

