



# COVID-19: Rent Increase Freeze and Tenancy Terminations

**23 April 2020**

The Government has made new rules to look after renters during COVID-19.

These are the new rules.

## **Rent Increase Freeze**

- Landlords cannot increase the rent for buildings that people live in from 26 March to 26 September. This is called a rent increase freeze.
- You do not have to pay any rent increases during this time, even if your landlord has told you to
- The government will decide after 26 September whether the rent increase freeze will continue for longer

## **Landlords telling you to move out**

The rules have changed for landlords telling renters to move out.

Between 26 March to 26 June, landlords can only ask you to move out if:

- You and the landlord agree that you will move out.

Or for one of these reasons:

- You have not paid your rent for more than 60 days;

- You have done a lot of damage to the house;
- You have hurt, harassed or threatened people at the house;

The landlord must ask the Tenancy Tribunal to make an order saying you must move out.

Even if your agreement for living at the house was going to end **the landlord cannot make you move out at this time.**

If your landlord tries to make you move out they may have to pay a fine.

If your landlord tries to make you move out at this time you can get support.

You can get support by:

- Contacting one of these organisations:
  - ✓ Blind Citizens NZ phone 0800 222 6940 email [admin@abcnz.org.nz](mailto:admin@abcnz.org.nz);
  - ✓ Kapo Maori Aotearoa 0800 77 0990; email [info@kapomaori.com](mailto:info@kapomaori.com);
  - ✓ Blind Low Vision NZ phone 0800 22 33 33.
- Calling the Citizens Advice Bureau for free on: **0800 367 222.**

If your landlord comes to your house to try to make you move out you can call the police by calling 111.

The government will decide after 26 June whether these rules will continue for longer.

## **Paying Rent late**

The new rules say rent has to be 60 days late before the landlord can tell you to move out. The landlord must ask the Tenancy Tribunal to make an order saying you must move out.

Some people got letters from their **property manager** saying if rent is late, they will be told to move out.

Property managers should not send those letters.

If you get a letter like this, contact [appropriate DPO] and we will tell the government.

Renters still need to try their best to pay rent.

If you do not have enough money to pay rent, talk to your landlord.

Try to work out a plan with your landlord for when you will pay rent.

You can also talk to Work and Income to see if they will help with money.

You can call Work and Income for free on **0800 559 009**.

## **Choosing to move out, or stay in your house**

The rules about moving out have stayed the same for renters.

But you can stay in your house even if you have given notice and told the landlord you would move out.

You must tell your landlord you are going to stay by writing them a letter or an email.

## **Moving into a new house**

Now some people have told their landlord they are going to move out, but they cannot move into their new house because the person who is living there has chosen to stay:

- If this happens you do not have to pay rent to the landlord of your new house.
- Even if you signed a tenancy agreement you do not have to pay rent to the landlord of your new house.

## **Other reasons your rental agreement might end**

There are some other situations that might mean your rental agreement ends.

A rental agreement will also end if:

- The renter moves out of the house and stops paying rent without talking to the landlord;
- There is only one person renting the house, and they die;
- The house is not safe for people to live in.

This is not all of the information about the rules for renting houses in New Zealand. You may need to talk to a lawyer if you are thinking about signing a contract, or going to court.