

Eviction Moratorium

under COVID-19 Emergency Declaration

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated March 19, 2020 to reflect details of Ordinance No. 1282, adopted by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners.

This document answers common questions Multnomah County has received since Chair Deborah Kafoury announced on March 17, 2020, a [moratorium on residential evictions](#) for nonpayment.

[Read the full executive rule here.](#)

[Read the COVID-19 Eviction Moratorium ordinance here.](#)

Does the moratorium on evictions apply to all reasons for an eviction?

No, this moratorium applies only to residential evictions due to nonpayment of rent, fees, or utility service charges (hereafter referred to collectively as “rent”) payable to the landlord due to wage loss resulting from COVID-19. This moratorium does not apply to evictions for any other lawful purpose.

How will the moratorium on evictions be enforced?

Through this Executive Rule and County Code Chapter 25, these measures are immediately in force to address and alleviate the emergency.

Does this mean tenants are not obligated to pay rent?

No. Tenants are legally obligated to pay rent as usual. However, if they are unable to pay rent due to COVID-19 impacts to their wages, they must provide notice to their landlord and prove that impact, and will have six months to pay back the rent that is owed.

How will tenants be able to ensure they will not be evicted because of COVID-19?

Tenants must notify their landlords on or before the day that rent is due that they are unable to pay rent, and provide proof of wage loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Affected tenants will need to demonstrate substantial wage loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic through written documentation or other objectively verifiable information. Wage loss may be a result of job loss, reduction in hours worked, business closure, school or daycare closure causing missed work to care for a minor child, missed work to care for illness of self or a family member, or other similar causes of lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anyone who anticipates, or has already experienced, wage loss related to the pandemic are advised to hold onto paycheck stub records, documentation of employment termination, and copies of work schedules or other types of documentation showing a reduction in hours.

Legal Aid Services of Oregon has created a [sample letter](#).

What type of documentation acceptably demonstrates substantial wage loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Letter from employer citing COVID-19 as a reason for reduced work hours or termination;
- Letters from clients or customers citing COVID-19 as a reason for reducing or cancelling purchase orders, requests for services-for-hire, or other profit generating contracts;
- Letter from a school or other government issued documentation declaring a school closure related to COVID-19; or
- Letter from a medical doctor recommending rest at home, self-quarantine, hospitalization, or similar measures for the Affected Tenant or a family member.

Will there be financial relief or support available to renters and homeowners once the moratorium is lifted and the six-month grace period for backpay begins?

We are assessing all options to provide assistance to renters and homeowners once the moratorium is lifted and the six-month period to pay the deferred rent amount begins. But first, we are taking these immediate steps to keep people housed in the midst of this outbreak, and limit the spread of the disease.

Does the moratorium protect residents from utility service interruptions due to nonpayment?

The moratorium does not directly protect residents from utility service interruptions due to nonpayment. However, the [Portland Water Bureau](#) stated that it will not disconnect water service for non-payment of sewer, stormwater and water bills during the declaration of emergency. Likewise, [Pacific Power, Portland General Electric \(PGE\) and Northwest Natural](#) have temporarily suspended service disconnections for nonpayment and will extend their services without late fees.

Will there be financial relief or support available to landlords who do not receive rental payment from their tenants?

We understand that landlords depend on their tenants' rent to pay for their mortgages, property taxes and repairs of their properties. We are assessing all options to provide assistance to landlords during and after the moratorium.

What happens if a landlord does not comply with the moratorium? What remedies are available to tenants?

Any landlord that fails to comply with this Ordinance may be subject to civil proceedings initiated by the County, a tenant or an evicted member of the tenant's household, for damages.

Landlords could be required to pay up to three times the monthly rent, as well as actual damages, reasonable attorney fees, and costs.

Will evictions for mortgage foreclosure be impacted?

Yes. In addition to the moratorium, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office has committed to not enforcing currently scheduled writs if it will cause a person to be without housing during the state of emergency.

When will the eviction moratorium end?

This moratorium is effective until the end of Multnomah County's emergency declaration. Renters will be given six months after the emergency declaration has expired to pay back rent owed. The emergency declaration is currently in effect until April 10, 2020, but it is likely that it will be extended by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners.

