

Tenants Locked Out & COVID 19



“ Landlords cannot illegally change your lock or remove you from your unit without going through the court process. ”

-Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

Evictions begin with a notice, followed by a lawsuit in Justice Court, a hearing, an appeal to county court if necessary, and finally, a writ of possession (order to remove the tenant) if the tenant has not moved out. There are some situations where a landlord can change your locks, but even so, must always give the tenant a key.

*Information from Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA)
Infographic by Texas Homeless Network (THN)*

Can a landlord lock a tenant out for owing rent if the tenant's lease does not allow it?

No. Landlords can only change locks for failure to pay rent if the lease says they can. The landlord still must give the tenant a key and access to the property upon request.

Does a landlord have to give a tenant notice to change locks?

Yes. Landlords must locally mail the tenant notice at least 5 days before changing locks, or landlords must hand-deliver a notice or post a notice on the inside of a tenant's front door at least 3 days before changing their locks.

Can a landlord change locks when the tenant or their family is inside the property?

No. If an occupant on the lease is in the property, the landlord may not change the locks. Also, a landlord may not change the locks for owing rent more than once during a rental payment period.