

COVID-19:

RENT AND ILLEGAL LOCKOUTS



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- It is illegal for your landlord to change the locks, shut off utilities, or physically remove your belongings without a court order for eviction.
- New York has paused eviction proceedings statewide until at least June 20th, so it is not legally possible for your landlord to lock you out before that date.
- The pause in evictions does not cancel rent payments. You should continue to pay rent if you can. But if you are unable to pay rent, know that the law strictly forbids your landlord from locking you out without a court order.



CARRY PROOF OF RESIDENCY

- When you leave the apartment, always carry proof of residency like a government issued ID or a utility bill with your name and address. If you do not have either of these, then any piece of mail with your name and address is the best alternative.
- Take pictures of these documents on your phone immediately as a backup in case you get locked out without access to the physical copies. If you have a written lease, take pictures of the pages that display your name, the address, and the date that the lease ends.



CALL 911 IF ILLEGALLY LOCKED OUT

- Explain to the dispatcher that your landlord is illegally evicting you. The police will be sent to your address. If possible, call a lawyer, social worker, or community group leader and ask them to be present when the police arrive.
- Show the police your proof of residency. The police might ask you to call your landlord, but this should not be necessary. The police can supervise you while you break into your own apartment or pay a locksmith to do so.
- If you cannot show proof of residency, ask other tenants, a building super, or even your landlord as a last resort to confirm your tenancy.
- If the police leave without resolving your illegal lockout, contact the housing court for your borough immediately. NYC housing courts remain open for emergency proceedings including illegal lockouts.