

⚠ IMPORTANT — READ FIRST

This cover sheet is **for information purposes ONLY**.

Do **NOT** send this page to your landlord. Only send the attached letter once filled out.

**INFORMATION PAGE FOR ILLEGAL UNIT CONCERN
For Tenants in Illinois**

Who should use this sample illegal unit concern letter?

This letter is for tenants in Illinois who believe they are renting an **illegally converted unit** (sometimes called a “bootleg unit,” “illegal apartment,” or “unlawful dwelling”). These are units that were built, divided, or rented out without following the building, health, or zoning codes.

Why is this letter important?

Illinois law (**65 ILCS 5/11-31.1-12.1**) protects tenants living in illegal units. If your landlord is renting you an illegal unit, the landlord may owe you:

- Up to **3 times the rent you paid**,
- **Court costs**, and
- **Reasonable attorney’s fees**.
- But before you can make a legal claim, the law requires you to **give your landlord written notice** of the violation. This template helps you do that.

How to use this letter:

1. Fill in your information and check all boxes that apply to your situation (for example, “no separate meter” or “only one exit”).
2. Send the letter to your landlord **by registered mail or personal delivery only**. Regular mail, email, or text will not meet the law’s requirements.
3. Keep a copy of the letter and proof of delivery for your records. This will be critical if you need to go to court later.

Important things to know:

- **Proof matters.** It is best to have documentation (like a letter from the city, zoning records, or inspection reports) showing your unit is illegal.
- **Safety concerns.** Illegal units often lack safe exits, proper wiring, or adequate ventilation. You may have a right to move out if conditions are unsafe.
- **Landlord retaliation is illegal.** Illinois law (765 ILCS 720/1 and local ordinances, where applicable) prohibits landlords from retaliating against tenants for asserting their rights. Retaliation includes raising rent, cutting services, or trying to evict you.
- **Next steps.** After sending this notice, you may:
 - o Negotiate with your landlord to resolve the issue, or
 - o File a claim in court for damages if the landlord does not correct the violation.

⚠ This letter does not end your lease by itself. If you want to move out, you should get legal advice about how to safely terminate your lease while preserving your rights under the law.

Landlord's Name:
Landlord's Address:

Subject: Notice of Violation - You Have Breached Illinois Law (65 ILCS 5/11-31.1-12.1)

Date:

Sent via: Registered mail ○ or Personal delivery ○

Dear _____,

I am the tenant at _____ (*Address and Unit Number*). I am writing to bring to your attention a matter of serious concern regarding the rental property. It has come to my attention that you may have violated Illinois law (65 ILCS 5/11-31.1-12.1) by operating an illegally converted unit.

According to the aforementioned law, an owner may be held liable to an occupant of an illegally converted unit for up to three times the rent paid to the owner. I could be entitled for damages up to three times the rent I have paid you, court costs, and reasonable attorney's fees. As per the statute's requirements, I am providing you with written notice of the alleged violation.

Upon information and belief, the unit I am currently renting has been illegally converted.

- ☐ The local governmental agency charged with enforcement of health, building, and city codes informed me that the unit is not legal.
- ☐ The actual number of residential units in the building exceeds the number designated in the Certificate of Zoning Compliance.
- ☐ There is only one egress (exit) out of the unit.
- ☐ There is no separate meter for gas or electricity.

I am concerned about my safety and well-being, as well as the potential legal consequences of residing in an unauthorized dwelling.

I have sent this letter via registered mail or personal delivery in compliance with 65 ILCS 5/11-31.1-12.1.

Sincerely,

(Tenant Signature)
(Tenant Name)
(Phone)
(Email)