

⚠ 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 LOCKOUTS
For Tenants in Chicago

Who should use this sample illegal lockout letter?

Tenants in Chicago who have been illegally locked out of their unit by their landlord.

What is an illegal lockout?

An illegal lockout is when your landlord tries to prevent you from living in or accessing your unit. Your landlord can NOT:

- Change, remove or add locks;
- Remove or block doors and windows;
- Remove appliances or fixtures;
- Cut off utility services like electricity, gas, heat, & water;
- Remove personal property;
- Cause injury to you or your property;
- Threaten to do any of the above

What do I do with this letter?

Fill in the blanks, check the boxes that apply, sign it, and give it to your landlord. Keep a copy for yourself.

What other options do I have if my landlord doesn't stop the illegal lockout?

- Call the local police department and ask the officer to resolve the lockout. If they are not helpful or repeat that "It's a civil matter," then (1) ask for the Beat Sergeant or Watch Commander, (2) inform them about Special Order S04-01-03, and (3) report officer to the IPRA. You would need the officer's name and badge number for the report.
- Call 311 to file a complaint.
- Contact a legal services attorney or tenant advocacy group.

For more info, visit

<https://help.rentervention.com/article/144-what-do-i-do-if-my-landlord-did-an-illegal-lockout>.

Important Note on Retaliation

The Chicago Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (§ 5-12-150) makes it unlawful for your landlord to retaliate against you for exercising your rights. Retaliation includes rent hikes, service cutbacks, refusing to renew your lease, or eviction threats. Actions taken within one year are presumed retaliatory.

Landlord's Name:
Landlord's Address:

Subject: Unlawful Lockout – Immediate Demand to Restore Access

Date: _____
Sent via: ☐ Email ☐ Text ☐ Mail ☐ Certified Mail

Dear _____,

I am a tenant at _____ (*Address and Unit #*). I am writing to notify you of an illegal lockout that happened on or around _____ (*Date*).

This lockout is against the law. Under the Chicago Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance Section 5-12-160, lockouts are illegal. Lockouts are any action or threat by a landlord that prevent a tenant from living in or accessing their unit.

The illegal lockout that happened included (*Check any that apply*):

- ☐ Removing or adding locks
- ☐ Removing or blocking doors and windows
- ☐ Interfering with utilities such as electricity, gas, hot or cold water, plumbing, heat, telephone service, or internet
- ☐ Removing personal property
- ☐ Removing appliances
- ☐ Causing injury to a tenant or their property
- ☐ Threat to do any of the above

Even if rent is owed, you cannot remove a tenant without a court order and Sheriff enforcement. Self-help evictions are illegal.

Legal Consequences of an Illegal Lockout:

- A court may order you to restore possession.
- You may be ordered to pay a money judgment of two months' rent or twice the actual damages that I've suffered (whichever is greater), plus attorney's fees.
- You may be fined by the Chicago Police Department.

I demand that you immediately stop this illegal lockout and restore access to my home.

Sincerely,

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