

Illegal Lockout

What is the legal eviction process?

To lock you out legally, a landlord must:

- File a complaint against you in court
- Win a judgment against you in court
- File the writ of possession and alias writ of possession
- Schedule a lockout date
- A sheriff or landlord-tenant officer will complete the lockout and give you a blue eviction notice or post it on the property.

After a judgment in court, you have at least **21 days** before you can be legally evicted.

What is an illegal lockout?

It is illegal for a landlord to evict a tenant by:

- changing the locks without a sheriff or a landlord-tenant officer
- using force
- turning off the tenant's utilities
- removing the tenant's possessions
- removing doors or windows from the house
- any other means except a sheriff or landlord-tenant officer

What do I do if I have been illegally locked out?

- **Call Municipal Court at 215-686-7334 between 9AM and 4:30PM.** The court can tell you if your landlord followed the legal eviction process.
- **If it was an illegal lockout, call the police by dialing 911.** Show the officer your lease or photo ID.
- **If the police officer does not assist you, get the name of the officer and call the district.** Ask to speak to the Captain or the Community Relations Officer about an illegal lockout. You can reference the name of the law—Philadelphia 9-1600.

