

Illegal Lock-Outs – Know Your Rights

In response to the Coronavirus emergency, many courts are closed and no evictions are being processed at this time. As a result, landlords may attempt to remove tenants illegally for nonpayment of rent or other reasons.

You can help to protect yourself from illegal lock-outs. Know your rights.

- Landlords may only evict tenants by obtaining a valid court order for eviction. This order can only be issued after the tenant has been given the opportunity to appear at a hearing.
- By law, an eviction is executed by the Sheriff or Constable, not the landlord.

It is illegal for a landlord to conduct an illegal eviction (also known as a self-help eviction). An illegal eviction is when the landlord changes the locks without a court order, when the landlord turns the tenant's utilities off, when the landlord throws out the tenant's possessions, when the landlord removes the windows and doors to the home, etc.

What do you do if you're illegally locked out?

- Call the police. Show them proof that you are a tenant.
- Call Legal Aid of Southeastern PA (LASP) at **877-429-5994** or www.lasp.org/apply-here. We can help you to file an emergency petition with the courts.

What extra steps can you take to protect yourself?

- Keep proof that you are a tenant outside of your home. (For example, in your car or with a trusted neighbor.)
- Proof that you are a tenant may be a copy of your lease, a utility bill, photo i.d., rent receipts, etc.