

ILLEGAL LOCKOUT DURING COVID PANDEMIC

What is an illegal lockout?

An illegal lockout occurs when your landlord or someone acting for your landlord (e.g. superintendent) prevents you from entering your home like changing the locks and not giving you the replacement key. In Ontario, this is considered an illegal eviction. Your landlord is not allowed to take matters into their own hands to lock you out or evict you from your home. Only the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) can issue an eviction order and only the Sheriff can enforce the order to evict you.



During the pandemic, the LTB has suspended in-person hearings and the issuing of most orders (decisions). But if your case is urgent (e.g. an illegal lockout), they may schedule a phone hearing and issue orders as needed.

5 STEPS TO TAKE IF YOUR LANDLORD LOCKS YOU OUT

- 1 Speak to your landlord**

If you have been locked out by your landlord, contact them to ask for the new key to your home and remind them that locking you out is against the law.
- 2 Call Rental Housing Enforcement Unit**

They may be able to help you by speaking with your landlord, following-up with a letter, or starting a formal investigation and filing charges if your landlord refuses to comply.
- 3 Call your Community Legal Clinic**

They may contact your landlord to inform them of your legal rights to return to your home or they may help you fill out a T2 application (see tip #5) to get a hearing at the LTB.
- 4 Call the police (non-emergency line)**

Ask if they can speak to your landlord to let you back in or to accompany you if you feel unsafe. Make sure you have proof that you live there such as a driver's licence, a piece of mail, or a friend/relative to vouch for you.
- 5 File a "T2 Application about Tenant Rights" against your landlord**

You can e-file the T2 application or download a copy to fill out and email to the LTB. In the application, you can ask for an **interim order**, which may provide your landlord with directions to let you back into your home. Visit our website to access a tip sheet on T2 applications.



Hire a locksmith

If you get an interim order and your landlord doesn't let you back in, you can hire a locksmith to change the locks to your door as a last resort option. If any damages occur, you may have to pay for the cost. You must give your landlord a copy of the new key.