



PRO SE / SELF-REPRESENTED GUIDE

Eviction Defense Exhibit Guide

Protect your housing by organizing your defense documents. Gather evidence of payments, conditions, and landlord issues.

Facing eviction can be overwhelming, but tenants have rights. Whether you're disputing unpaid rent, challenging improper notice, or raising habitability issues, organized evidence strengthens your defense. This guide helps you gather documents that may protect your housing or give you more time to find alternatives.

Lease & Tenancy Documents

- Lease or rental agreement**
Your signed lease showing all terms and conditions
- Lease amendments or addendums**
Any changes made after the original lease
- Move-in checklist**
Condition of unit when you moved in
- Notice to vacate (from landlord)**
The eviction notice with date received

Payment Records

- Rent receipts**
All receipts for rent payments
- Bank statements showing payments**
Cancelled checks or electronic transfer records
- Money order stubs**
If you paid by money order, keep the stubs
- Payment ledger or log**
Your record of all payments made with dates

Habitability & Repair Issues

- Photos of property conditions**
Dated photos showing maintenance issues, damage, or hazards
- Written repair requests**
Copies of requests you made to the landlord
- Code violation notices**
Any notices from housing inspectors
- Repair estimates**
Estimates for repairs the landlord hasn't made

Communications with Landlord

- Text messages or emails**
All communications about rent, repairs, or issues
- Written letters**
Any letters sent or received with dates
- Notes from phone conversations**
Your notes documenting verbal conversations

Special Circumstances

- Rental assistance applications**
Proof of pending assistance or approved payments
- Medical documentation**
If health issues affect your situation
- Disability accommodation requests**
Any requests for reasonable accommodations

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

1. Ignoring the eviction notice and missing court dates
2. Moving out before you are legally required to
3. Not documenting property conditions before moving in
4. Paying rent in cash without getting receipts
5. Not responding to the eviction complaint in writing

ORGANIZATION TIPS

- Create a payment history timeline showing all rent paid
- Date all photos of property conditions (use phone camera with date stamp)
- Keep copies of everything - never give away your only copy
- Organize by category: lease, payments, communications, conditions
- Make a timeline of events leading up to the eviction

COURTROOM PREPARATION

- Answer the complaint in writing before your court date if required
- Bring proof of any rent owed that you can pay at court
- Know your local tenant rights - some cities have additional protections
- If you qualify, seek help from legal aid or tenant rights organizations
- Be prepared to discuss any counterclaims (repair issues, retaliation)
- Ask about mediation - many courts offer it for eviction cases

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