

Renter's Rights After a Disaster

*Upholding
the rights of
our tenants*

♦ **Can I get out of my lease if my home is damaged?**

If your lease says you can or if you cannot live in any part of your rented home because of damage, you can cancel the lease. If you cannot live in any part of your rental unit, you must give your landlord a written notice that you are canceling your lease. You should also request in writing a refund of your security deposit and any pre-paid rent from your landlord.

♦ **What do I do if I lost my job because of the disaster and cannot pay rent?**

If you do not pay rent your landlord can give you a notice to move. Your landlord may later file an eviction case against you. If your rent is subsidized by the government, you are entitled to have your part of the rent reduced. You should contact the agency that helps you with your rent to get a reduction.

♦ **Can my landlord make me move immediately if I can live in my home?**

No. A landlord can only make you move by giving you a notice telling you to get out by a certain date and then filing a lawsuit after that date. You cannot be evicted without reason. If your lease is expired, your landlord may be able to force you to move by giving you a 30 day notice. If your landlord locks you out and refuses to give you a key, you may file an action in court to gain re-entry.

♦ **Can my landlord make me move so they can make repairs?**

If you can still live in the home, you do not have to move until the lease is over. If you have a written lease, it may cover this situation. If not, your landlord can only make you move if your home is not safe to live in. The landlord can move you temporarily while making extensive repairs, but must move you back if your lease is not over.

♦ **What do I do if I am served with an eviction lawsuit?**

Carefully read the papers and be sure to show up to tell your side of the story. You have the right to represent yourself or you can call Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma for information or to represent you if you qualify. You may also find helpful information regarding eviction lawsuits at www.oklaw.org.