

Chapter 12

LEASE TERMINATIONS [24 CFR 966.4]

INTRODUCTION

LSHA may terminate tenancy for a family because of the family's action or failure to act in accordance with HUD regulations [24 CFR 966.4 (l)(2)], and the terms of the lease. This Chapter describes LSHA's policies for notification of lease termination and provisions of the lease.

A. TERMINATION BY TENANT

The tenant may terminate the lease by providing LSHA with a written 30-day advance notice as defined in the lease agreement.

B. TERMINATION BY LSHA

Termination of tenancy will be in accordance with LSHA's lease, ACOP and house rules.

The public housing lease is automatically renewable, EXCEPT the public housing lease shall have a 12-month term for community service and will not be renewed in the case of noncompliance with the community service requirements. See Chapter 15 for Community Service.

The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 explicitly prohibits PHAs from considering incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking as "other good cause" for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence. (Refer to Chapter 12-D)

The lease may be terminated by LSHA at any time by giving written notice for serious or repeated violation of material terms of the lease, such as, but not limited to the following:

- Nonpayment of rent or other charges due under the Lease, or repeated chronic late payment of rent;
- Failure to provide timely and accurate statements of income, assets, expenses and family composition at Admission, Interim, Special or Annual Rent Recertifications;
- Assignment or subleasing of the premises or providing accommodation for boarders or lodgers;
- Use of the premises for purposes other than solely as a dwelling unit for the Tenant and Tenant's household as identified in this Lease, or permitting its use for any other purposes;
- Failure to pass inspections with adequate notices to correct;

- Failure to abide by necessary and reasonable rules made by the Landlord for the benefit and well being of the housing project and the Tenants;
- Failure to abide by applicable building and housing codes materially affecting health or safety;
- Failure to dispose of garbage waste and rubbish in a safe and sanitary manner;
- Failure to use electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air conditioning and other equipment, including elevators, in a safe manner;
- Acts of destruction, defacement or removal of any part of the premises, or failure to cause guests to refrain from such acts;
- Failure to pay reasonable charges (other than for normal wear and tear) for the repair of damages to the premises, project buildings, facilities, equipment, or common areas; or
- The Tenant, any member of the Tenant's household, or a guest or other person on the premises due to the tenant's residency shall not engage in criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity, on or off public housing premises (as defined in the lease), while the Tenant is a Tenant in public housing, and such criminal activity shall be cause for termination of tenancy
- Inviting, allowing, or creating a situation that causes any person or persons who have been banned from LSHA property to be present on the LSHA property. An up-to-date banned list is maintained at the LSHA's main office and is included in the LSHA's newsletters.
- Alcohol abuse that LSHA determines interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
- Non-compliance with Non-Citizen Rule requirements.
- Non-compliance with the restricted/banned persons from the developments
- Failure to cooperate with law enforcement
- Six (6) late payments in a 12 month period
- Three (3) consecutive court notices in 6 months or six (6) court notices in any 12 month period
- Other good cause.

C. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

LSHA's written Notice of Lease Termination will state the reason for the proposed termination, the date that the termination will take place, and it will offer the resident all of the rights and **protections afforded by the regulations and this policy.** (See Chapter on Complaints, Grievances and Hearings.)

Notices of lease termination shall be in writing and delivered to tenant or adult member of the household or sent by first class mail properly addressed to tenant.

All notices of lease termination for cause of actions protected by VAWA for violent activity will include a statement of the protection against termination provided by VAWA for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Any family member who claims that the cause for termination involves (a) criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others or (b) incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking of which a family member is the victim will be given the opportunity to provide documentation in accordance with the policies.

Timing of the Notice

If LSHA terminates the lease, written notice will be given as follows:

At least 14 calendar days prior to termination in the case of failure to pay rent;

A reasonable time, defined in the lease as 10 calendar days, considering the seriousness of the situation when the health or safety of other residents or LSHA employees is threatened;

At least thirty days prior to termination in all other cases.

LSHA shall notify the Post Office that mail should no longer be delivered to the person who was evicted for criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity.

Criminal Activity

LSHA will immediately and permanently terminate tenancy of persons convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on the premises of the assisted housing project in violation of any Federal or State law. "Premises" is defined as the building or complex in which the dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

LSHA will terminate assistance of participants in cases where LSHA determines there is reasonable cause to believe that the person is illegally using a controlled substance or engages in drug-related or other criminal activity. The same will apply if it is determined that the person abuses alcohol in a way that interferes with the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. This includes cases where LSHA determines that there is a pattern of illegal use of controlled substances or a pattern of alcohol abuse.

LSHA will consider the use of a controlled substance or alcohol to be a pattern if there is more than two incidents during the previous 6 months.

"Engaged in or engaging in a recent history of" drug related criminal activity means any act within the past 5 years by applicants or participants, household members, or guests which involved drug-related criminal activity including, without limitation, drug-related criminal activity, possession and/or use of narcotic paraphernalia, which did or did not result in the conviction of the applicant or participant, household members, or guests.

In evaluating evidence of negative behavior, LSHA will give fair consideration to the seriousness of the activity with respect to how it would affect other residents, and/or likelihood of favorable conduct in the future that could be supported by evidence of rehabilitation.

LSHA will waive the requirement regarding drug-related criminal activity if:

The person demonstrates successful completion of a credible rehabilitation program approved by LSHA, or

The individual involved in drug-related criminal activity is no longer in the household because the person is incarcerated.

D. PROHIBITION AGAINST TERMINATING TENANCY OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING (VAWA 2103)

The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA), provides that "criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, engaged in by a member of a tenant's household or any guest or other person under the tenant's control, shall not be cause for termination of the tenancy or occupancy rights, if the tenant or affiliated individual in the tenant's family is the victim or threatened victim of that abuse." VAWA further provides that incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed either as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim of such violence or as good cause for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence.

VAWA does not limit the LSHA's authority to terminate the tenancy of any tenant if the LSHA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the property.

VAWA protection does not apply of the individual is not on the lease. VAWA protection does not apply to a live-in aide or caretaker. While a live-in aide or caregiver who resides in a unit may be a lawful occupant, nonetheless such individual is not a tenant and the protections of VAWA would not apply, except that the live-in aide or caregiver cannot be denied assistance if he or she independently applies for assistance.

Similarly, if an affiliated individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence,

sexual assault, or stalking, the tenant with whom the affiliated individual resides cannot be evicted or have assistance terminated on the basis of the violence suffered by the affiliated individual, and, consequently, the affiliated individual may receive indirectly the benefit of continued assistance to the tenant.

“Affiliated individual”, with respect to an individual, means: (A) A spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or a person to whom that individual stands in the place of a parent to a child (for example, the affiliated individual is a child in the care, custody, or control of that individual); or (B) any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual.

VAWA 2013 provides that an incident of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall not be construed as: (1) A serious or repeated violation of a lease executed under a covered housing program by the victim or threatened victim of such incident; or (2) good cause for terminating the assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights under a covered housing program of a victim or threatened victim of such incident.

Victim Documentation

LSHA Policy

When a tenant family is facing lease termination because of the actions of a tenant, household member, guest, or other person under the tenant's control and a tenant or immediate family member of the tenant's family claims that she or he is the victim of such actions and that the actions are related to domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, the LSHA will require the individual to submit documentation affirming that claim.

The documentation must include two elements:

A signed statement by the victim that provides the name of the perpetrator and certifies that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking.

One of the following:

A police or court record documenting the actual or threatened abuse; or

A statement signed by an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider; an attorney; a medical professional; or another knowledgeable professional from whom the victim has sought assistance in addressing the actual or threatened abuse. The professional must attest under penalty of perjury that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse, and the victim must sign or attest to the statement.

VAWA Certification Form- HUD 50066

The required certification and supporting documentation must be submitted to the LSHA within 14 business days after the LSHA request is received by the victim. Upon written request from the tenant, the LSHA will extend the 14-day deadline for an additional 10 business days as long as the extension request is submitted within the initial 14 business-day period.

If the individual does not provide the required certification and supporting documentation within 14 business days or the approved extension period, the LSHA may proceed with termination of the family's lease.

Regardless of the certificate- the LSHA may proceed to terminate the perpetrator by bifurcation of the lease when allowed by the state law.

If the LSHA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the property if the tenant's tenancy is not terminated, the LSHA will bypass the standard process and proceed with the immediate termination of the family's lease.

If the LSHA is confronted with conflicting documentation about the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. VAWA provides, as does the existing regulation on conflicting documentation, that if the LSHA receives documentation under § 5.2007(b)(1) (including certification forms from two or more members of a household each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the perpetrator), the LSHA may require an applicant or tenant to submit third-party documentation as provided in § 5.2007(b)(1)(ii) or (b)(iii). The statute specifies no time period in which the third-party documentation is to be submitted, however LSHA requires submission within 30 days.

Terminating or Evicting a Perpetrator of Domestic Violence

Although VAWA provides protection from termination for victims of domestic violence, it does not provide protection for perpetrators. In fact, VAWA gives the LSHA the explicit authority to bifurcate a lease, or to remove a household member from a lease, "in order to evict, remove, terminate occupancy rights, or terminate assistance to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant and who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others, without evicting, removing, terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing the victim of such violence who is also a tenant or lawful occupant." This authority supersedes any local, state, or other federal law to the contrary. However, if the LSHA chooses to exercise this authority, it must follow any procedures prescribed by HUD or by applicable local, state, or federal law for eviction, lease termination, or termination of assistance [Pub. L. 109-271].

LSHA Policy

When the actions of a tenant or other family member result in a determination by the LSHA to terminate the family's lease and another family member claims that the actions involve

criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others, the LSHA will request that the victim submit the above required certification and supporting documentation in accordance with the stated time frame. If the certification and supporting documentation are submitted within the required time frame or any approved extension period, the LSHA will bifurcate the lease and evict or terminate the occupancy rights of the perpetrator. If the victim does not provide the certification and supporting documentation, as required, the LSHA will proceed with termination of the family's lease.

If the LSHA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the property if the tenant's tenancy is not terminated, the LSHA will bypass the standard process and proceed with the immediate termination of the family.

Reasonable Time to Establish Eligibility (bifurcation)

For individual victims that are ineligible, but residing in the unit legally, HUD allows a minimum 90-day period that would be divided into two time periods to possibly gain eligibility:

One time period would be to establish eligibility to remain in the unit in which the tenant is now residing, and a second time period would be to allow the tenant to locate alternative housing if the tenant is unable to establish eligibility for the unit in which the tenant is now residing.

For the first period, the process provides for 60 calendar days, commencing from the date of bifurcation of the lease, for the tenant to establish eligibility to remain in the unit in which the tenant is now residing. For the second reasonable period, the process provides for 30 calendar days, commencing from the 61st date from the date of bifurcation of the lease for the tenant to find alternative housing.

Of course, during first (60 days) period and the second (30 days) period, the tenant may undertake efforts to both establish eligibility to remain in the unit in which the tenant is residing and to find alternative housing.

LSHA is strongly encouraged to assist a tenant in efforts to establish eligibility for the covered housing in which the tenant is participating, and then assist in finding alternative housing if it no longer seems possible that the tenant will be able to establish eligibility for the covered housing program.

For each of these time periods, the process would allow, but not mandate, the LSHA to grant an extension for up to 30 days, subject, however, to the program regulations under the applicable covered housing program authorizing the LSHA to grant an extension, as part of the LSHA's standard policies and practices or, alternatively, granting such an extension on a case-by-case basis.

LSHA's public housing and Section 8 voucher programs where demand for available

housing and assistance is high—a period of more than 90 days may adversely affect applicants waiting for admission to public housing or receipt of a voucher, and, therefore, for these programs, the process is for a maximum period of 90 days, without an extension.

It is important to note that the reasonable time period may only be provided to tenants by covered housing providers that remain subject to the requirements of the other covered housing program once the eligible tenant departs the unit.

LSHA Confidentiality Requirements

All information provided to the LSHA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of such violence or stalking, must be retained in confidence and may neither be entered into any shared data base nor provided to any related entity, except to the extent that the disclosure (a) is requested or consented to by the individual in writing, (b) is required for use in an eviction proceeding, or (c) is otherwise required by applicable law. The LSHA will not disclose to other parties where the victims have moved- if the victim is transferred or allowed to enter into another program.

E. RECORD KEEPING

A written record of every termination and/or eviction shall be maintained by LSHA at the development where the family was residing, and shall contain the following information:

- Name of resident, number and identification of unit occupied;
- Date of the Notice of Lease Termination and any other notices required by State or local law; these notices may be on the same form and will run concurrently;
- Specific reason(s) for the Notices, citing the lease section or provision that was violated, and other facts pertinent to the issuing of the Notices described in detail (other than the Criminal History Report);
- Date and method of notifying the resident;
- Summaries of any conferences held with the resident including dates, names of conference participants, and conclusions.

F. TERMINATIONS DUE TO INELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5.514]

If LSHA determines that a family member has knowingly permitted an ineligible individual to reside in the family's unit on a permanent basis, the family's assistance will be terminated for 24 months.

This provision does not apply to a family if the eligibility of the ineligible individual was considered in calculating any proration of assistance provided for the family.