



EARLY LEASE TERMINATION LAW FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING

If you are a survivor of abuse, sexual assault or stalking, a new Vermont law allows you to terminate your lease early if you need to move due to safety concerns. This law applies to all rental housing.

Who do these protections cover?

Protected tenants include:

- Victims of abuse, or a parent, foster parent, legal guardian, or caretaker with at least partial physical custody of a victim of abuse as defined in 15 V.S.A. § 1101. Abuse means the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between household members:
 - Attempting to cause or causing physical harm
 - Placing another in fear of imminent serious physical harm
 - Abuse to children
 - Stalking
 - Sexual Assault
- Victims of Sexual assault or a parent, foster parent, legal guardian, or caretaker with at least partial physical custody of a victim of sexual assault as defined in 12 V.S.A. § 5131(5).
- Victims of Stalking or a parent, foster parent, legal guardian, or caretaker with at least partial physical custody of a victim of stalking as defined in 12 V.S.A. § 5131(6)

How do I request an Early Lease Termination?

- You may request that you be released from your lease early, without penalty if:
 - You are in imminent fear of harm due to abuse, sexual assault or stalking or were the victim of sexual assault that occurred on the premises within the last 6 months
 - You give 30 days written notice AND
 - You provide documentation from a court, law enforcement, or other government agency, a domestic or sexual violence program, a legal, clerical, medical, or other professional from whom you or your minor or dependent, received counseling or other assistance concerning the domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; OR a self-certification signed under the penalties of perjury. *The landlord cannot share this information with anyone else.

What if I need to leave immediately?

You may leave as soon as you need to. You will be responsible for the rent from 30 days that you give notice.



Resources

If you would like to learn more about how this law could help you, please consult with a domestic/sexual violence advocate or an attorney prior to contacting your landlord.

- Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-228-7395
- Statewide Sexual Violence Hotline: 1-800-489-7273
- Find your local domestic or sexual violence program or a copy of the self-certification form at www.vtnetwork.org
- Legal Help: <https://vtlawhelp.org/>