

# Colorado Squatters Rights: Adverse Possession and Removing Occupants

Summary for landlords and property managers. Last reviewed October 29, 2026. Full guide: <https://www.generationadvisory.com/laws/colorado-squatters-rights>

Colorado's general adverse possession period is 18 years, shortened to seven for someone who holds color of title and pays the taxes. A separate statute gives owners a sheriff removal route for unauthorized occupants.

## Key points

- A claim to land by adverse possession generally requires 18 years of actual, open, hostile, exclusive and continuous possession.
- Someone in possession under color of title made in good faith who pays all taxes for seven years in a row can claim sooner.
- The seven year route requires both color of title and payment of all taxes for the whole period.
- An owner can give the sheriff a sworn declaration asking for removal of an unauthorized occupant who was never a tenant, or can file a forcible entry and detainer case.

## Colorado at a glance

| Rule                                    | Colorado                                                                                                                                                                 | Law                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adverse possession period               | A claim to land by adverse possession generally requires 18 years of actual, open, hostile, exclusive and continuous possession.                                         | C.R.S. section 38-41-101                                                   |
| Claim under a document (color of title) | Someone in possession under color of title made in good faith who pays all taxes for seven years in a row can claim sooner.                                              | C.R.S. section 38-41-108                                                   |
| Paying property taxes                   | The seven year route requires both color of title and payment of all taxes for the whole period.                                                                         | C.R.S. section 38-41-108                                                   |
| How owners remove occupants             | An owner can give the sheriff a sworn declaration asking for removal of an unauthorized occupant who was never a tenant, or can file a forcible entry and detainer case. | Colorado Revised Statutes, title 38, article 36.5 (unauthorized occupants) |

## Mistakes to avoid

- Waiting months to act after someone moves in.
- Changing locks or removing belongings yourself.
- Accepting rent or utility payments from the occupant.
- Leaving a vacant property unchecked for long stretches.

## Verify current law

Laws named in this summary:

- C.R.S. section 38-41-101
- C.R.S. section 38-41-108
- Colorado Revised Statutes, title 38, article 36.5 (unauthorized occupants)
- Colorado Revised Statutes, title 13, article 40
- C.R.S. section 38-12-510

Official sources:

- Colorado General Assembly: Colorado Revised Statutes and bills:  
<https://leg.colorado.gov/colorado-revised-statutes>
- Colorado Office of Legislative Legal Services: Renters' Rights law summary (November 2024):  
[https://content.leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/renters\\_rights\\_-\\_colorado\\_law\\_summary.pdf](https://content.leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/renters_rights_-_colorado_law_summary.pdf)
- Colorado Judicial Branch: <https://www.coloradojudicial.gov/>

General information, not legal advice. Check current law and talk to a Colorado attorney before you act. Last reviewed October 29, 2026.