Florida 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/florida-squatters-rights

Florida requires seven years of continuous possession for adverse possession, and a claimant without a deed must also pay the property taxes and file a return with the property appraiser. Since 2024 an owner can ask the sheriff to remove unauthorized occupants without a court case when strict conditions are met.

Key points

- Adverse possession requires seven years of actual, continuous possession.
- A claimant holding a written instrument or judgment that appears to give title can claim after seven years of possession, with no tax return filing required.
- A claimant without such a document must pay all outstanding property taxes within one year of taking possession, keep paying them, and file a return with the county property appraiser.
- An owner can submit a sworn complaint to the county sheriff to remove people who entered a home without permission, are not current or former tenants and are not family, as long as no court case about the property is pending.

Florida at a glance

Rule	Florida	Law
Adverse possession period	Adverse possession requires seven years of actual, continuous possession.	Florida Statutes sections 95.16 and 95.18
Claim under a document (color of title)	A claimant holding a written instrument or judgment that appears to give title can claim after seven years of possession, with no tax return filing required.	Florida Statutes section 95.16
Paying property taxes	A claimant without such a document must pay all outstanding property taxes within one year of taking possession, keep paying them, and file a return with the county property appraiser.	Florida Statutes section 95.18

Rule	Florida	Law
How owners remove occupants	An owner can submit a sworn complaint to the county sheriff to remove people who entered a home without permission, are not current or former tenants and are not family, as long as no court case about the property is pending.	Florida Statutes section 82.036 (HB 621, 2024)

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:

- Florida Statutes sections 95.16 and 95.18
- Florida Statutes section 95.16
- Florida Statutes section 95.18
- Florida Statutes section 82.036 (HB 621, 2024)
- Florida Statutes sections 83.59 and 51.011
- Florida Statutes section 83.67

Official sources:

- The Florida Legislature: Online Sunshine (Florida Statutes): https://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/
- Florida Courts: Self-Help Center: https://www.flcourts.gov/Resources-Services/Office-of-Family-Courts/Self-Help-Information

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