

Pennsylvania Eviction Process: Notices, Court Steps and Timeline

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

Most Pennsylvania evictions start with a written notice to quit and are decided by a magisterial district judge, or the Philadelphia Municipal Court inside the city. The notice length depends on the reason and the lease term, set out in the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951.

Key points

- For unpaid rent, the landlord serves a written notice to quit giving the tenant 10 days to leave. Many leases waive this notice in writing.
- For a lease breach or the end of the term, the notice to quit gives 15 days for a lease of one year or less or with no set term, and 30 days for a lease longer than one year.
- At the end of a lease of one year or less, or a month to month tenancy, the landlord gives a 15 day notice to quit; a lease longer than one year needs 30 days.
- Cases are filed with the magisterial district judge for the area, or with the Philadelphia Municipal Court for property in Philadelphia.
- The court schedules a hearing, generally one to two weeks after the complaint is filed, and the tenant responds by appearing.

Pennsylvania at a glance

Rule	Pennsylvania	Law
Notice for unpaid rent	For unpaid rent, the landlord serves a written notice to quit giving the tenant 10 days to leave. Many leases waive this notice in writing.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 501
Notice for a lease violation	For a lease breach or the end of the term, the notice to quit gives 15 days for a lease of one year or less or with no set term, and 30 days for a lease longer than one year.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 501
Ending a tenancy without cause	At the end of a lease of one year or less, or a month to month tenancy, the landlord gives a 15 day notice to quit; a lease longer than one year needs 30 days.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 501

Rule	Pennsylvania	Law
Where the case is filed	Cases are filed with the magisterial district judge for the area, or with the Philadelphia Municipal Court for property in Philadelphia.	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951 and Pennsylvania Rules for Magisterial District Judges
Tenant response time	The court schedules a hearing, generally one to two weeks after the complaint is filed, and the tenant responds by appearing.	Pennsylvania Rules for Magisterial District Judges
Removal after judgment	After a judgment for possession, the landlord can generally request an order for possession once the appeal period passes, and a constable or officer serves it before carrying out the move out.	Pennsylvania Rules for Magisterial District Judges
Typical overall timeline	An uncontested residential case often takes about four to eight weeks from notice to move out.	Court practice (estimate)

Timeline

Step	Typical time	Rule
Notice period for unpaid rent	10 days	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 501
Notice period for a lease violation	15 days	Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 501
Tenant response after the case is served	Set by the court	Pennsylvania Rules for Magisterial District Judges
From judgment to removal	Short waiting period	Pennsylvania Rules for Magisterial District Judges
Whole case, uncontested	A few weeks	Court practice (estimate)

Mistakes to avoid

- Demanding more than the rent actually owed in a notice for unpaid rent, for example by adding late fees or utilities.
- Counting the notice period wrong and filing a day too early.
- Taking partial rent after serving a notice without knowing how it affects the case.
- Keeping no proof of service. Write down who delivered the notice, how and when, and keep a copy.
- Trying to speed things up with a lockout, a utility shutoff or by moving belongings out.

Verify current law

Laws named in this summary:

- Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 501
- Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951 and Pennsylvania Rules for Magisterial District Judges
- Pennsylvania Rules for Magisterial District Judges
- Pennsylvania case law and Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951
- Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, section 501(g) (Act 88 of 2024)

Official sources:

- Pennsylvania General Assembly: Unconsolidated Statutes, Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/US/HTM/1951/0/0020..HTM>
- Pennsylvania General Assembly: Consolidated Statutes: <https://www.palegis.us/statutes/consolidated>
- Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: rules: <https://www.pacourts.us/>

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