

# Utility Shutoffs & Lockouts

## **Help! My landlord shutoff my utilities and/or locked me out of my home. What do I do!?**

- A “lockout” is when your landlord changes the locks, removes your property from the unit, or shuts off your utilities. This is a crime! If the landlord wants to evict you, they must follow the proper procedures and file an eviction case. Your next step is dependent on whether or not your landlord is at the premises.
- Bring something to take notes on!

## **My landlord lives or is present on the property**

- Call the police. Write the names and badge numbers of each officer that shows up.
- When the police arrive, notify them of the utility shutoff or lockout. Make sure to use the word “lockout” in the conversation.
- Request the police to order your landlord to turn on the utilities/provide keys to the unit.
- Request a police report. If they do not provide a police report, you can request an ordinance complaint form.

## **My landlord does not live nor is present on the property**

- Go to the police station in the district of your residence. Obtain an arrest warrant against your landlord.
- When you go to the police station, write the names and badge numbers of each officer you speak with.

## **Alert your local alderperson**

- It may be helpful to alert your local alderperson to the issue, as they likely have a “Constituent Services” staff member who can help guide you to resources or could help you call the police if you are nervous about calling yourself.
- You can search for your alderperson's name and office number by entering your address [here](#).

## **I called the police/went to the police station and they aren't doing anything to help me!**

### **What do I do now?**

- Go up the chain of command. Ask for a supervisor. Write the supervisor's name and badge number. If the supervisor is still unhelpful, ask for the watch commander. Write the watch commander's name and badge number.
- Refer every officer to the Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance §5-12-160 and Special Order S04-01-03(IV).
- If all else fails, file a complaint with the Chicago Police Department Internal Affairs Division, Office of Professional Standards, 1130 S Wabash, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60605, Attn: Intake Unit, Phone: 312-747-6307
- You should also contact the following agencies about your issue:
  - Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) - 312-745-3598
  - Chicago Police Accountability Task Force - [comments@chicagopatf.org](mailto:comments@chicagopatf.org)

Note: It is unfortunately common practice for the police to not help tenants when their landlords break the law. It is a gross systemic injustice that we all must bring to the forefront to hold both the police and landlords accountable. This is why it is important to record all interactions with the police and their identities. If the police dismiss you by saying “it's a civil matter” and “there's nothing they can do,” stay strong and hold your ground because they are wrong!

**If you are experiencing a lock out, chat with us at [www.rentervention.com](http://www.rentervention.com) or text “Hi” to 866-773-6837. We can help!**