

What can the landlord do?

Believe them!

Remember, the abuser is doing everything possible to make the victim feel useless and alone. Reassure victims that the abuse is not their fault and that there is help available.

Help victims get help.

Give them the number for the **Family Violence Info Line: 310-1818**

If the victim is your tenant, you could...

- Relocate the victim to another unit if you can.
- Waive any expenses that you can. The victim is likely short of money. The abuser may have control of their bank account and may have ruined their credit rating. If the victim paid the security deposit, process any refund as quickly and as generously as you can. Waive any fees for late payment of rent that you can.
- Get permission to call the tenant's emergency contact. Many landlords request emergency contact information from their tenants. The victim may be willing to have you call that person or someone else.
- Evict the tenant. Unfortunately, the domestic violence may reach the point where it is affecting your premises or other tenants. You may decide that you have to terminate the lease. You have the same rights and responsibilities as you

have in any other evictions. If the unit has been significantly damaged or someone has been threatened or hurt, you can terminate the tenancy with a 24-hour notice.

If you think anyone is in danger, call the police: 911

If you think children may be at risk, you MUST report it to Child and Family Services: 1-800-638-0715

Frequently asked questions

One of my tenants is being abused and wants me to change the locks on the door. Can I?

It depends whether or not the abuser is a tenant.

- If the abuser is also a tenant, you cannot change the locks unless there is a court order forbidding the abuser from being in or near the premises. If there is an order, ask for a copy. It may say what to do about the lock and keys. If the order bars the abuser from being on the premises but they still show up, call the police.
- If the abuser isn't a tenant and doesn't even live on the premises, you can change the locks.

What can the landlord do?

The abuser just started living in the unit without ever signing the lease. What can I do?

If the abuser was living in the unit without your knowledge and consent, you can issue a notice to vacate the premises.

However, if you have known the abuser was living in the unit but didn't do anything about it, the person may have acquired the same status as a tenant. You may be considered to have given them permission to be there. Only a court can decide whether they have become a tenant. To be on the safe side, you would need to give the abuser an eviction notice. However, that would also apply to any other tenants on the premises.

Check your lease to see how well you've covered this situation. It might be good to get it reviewed by a lawyer.

One of my tenants has an Emergency Protection Order. What does that mean to me?

Protection orders vary so you would need to see the particular order. Look to see what it covers. Does it say the abuser can't come near your premises? Does it say the victim has 'exclusive possession' of the premises? If so, it may also say that a peace officer can remove the abuser. However, it may also say that the abuser can go to the premises to get their personal property. It might specify when that can occur and that the abuser must be accompanied by a peace officer.

Check the date on the Emergency Protection Order to see when it expires. If it has expired, ask the victim if it has been reviewed by the Court of Queen's Bench. If so, there may be another order in place. Victims often get confused about the orders they have. A bit of probing may be necessary!

Handy resources

Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta

Laws for Landlords and Tenants in Alberta – website

Service Alberta

Information for Landlords – booklet