

The Sheriff is Coming to Lock Me Out ... Now What?

If a court has given your landlord a Writ of Possession and the sheriff is coming to lock you out, prepare now. If you are not able find and move to a new place before the lock out, below are some things you can do to prepare and this is what you can expect to happen next.

NOTE: Sometimes there are ways to prevent or delay a lock out. First, be sure to read our information on eviction and tenant rights. If you think something may have gone wrong in the eviction process and/or you have not already gotten legal advice, [apply for assistance online](#) or call 603 Legal Aid at 1 (800) 639-5290.

How quickly will the sheriff come?

Once the court grants the landlord the Writ of Possession, you can be locked out at any time. Each County sheriff's office has its own practice. Some may give you advance warning, but others will show up unannounced to lock you out. Your County sheriff's office may or may not be willing to tell you what their process is and when they will be coming.

It is winter and I have kids - or I am disabled - does that mean I can not be locked out now?

No. You can still be locked out. We do not know how this myth started. The NH eviction process is the same year-round.

How much time will I have once the sheriff arrives at my door?

When the sheriff arrives to lock you out, you will likely get only 10-20 minutes to gather your things and get out. This is not the time to start packing. You should try to do as much packing as you can beforehand. If possible, remove your belongings before the sheriff arrives.

At a minimum, as soon as you know the Writ of Possession is coming, you should pack a bag or box of the most important things you want to take with you and leave it by the front door. If you go out, take it with you in case the locks are changed before you return.

What should I take with me?

Only you can decide what things are most important, but consider things like:

clothing & personal items

- medications
- important documents
- things of sentimental value like baby books or photo albums
- anything of monetary value, such as a computer or jewelry.

If there are things you will need to take but cannot leave packed, put a note on top of the packed bag or box reminding yourself to get those things. Then, if you go out or when the sheriff arrives, you can get those things and add them to your other belongings. Things such as:

- a blanket or stuffed animal your child needs to sleep, or
- medication that must be refrigerated.

What about the things I could not take with me?

Once you leave your apartment, you have 7 days to arrange with your landlord to get any property you left behind. Your landlord must cooperate but you do not have control over that property and will not have free access to it.

If you have questions about property you have left behind, read our page on how to retrieve property left behind.

Where can I go?

You should try to arrange for a place to go before you are locked out. There is housing search information and possible financial assistance at the [New Hampshire Housing website](#). You can also apply for financial assistance at your town or city welfare office.

Learn more about these programs on our local welfare page.

I am locked out and have no place to go!

If you have not found a place to go by the time you are locked out, call 2-1-1 and ask for homeless outreach.

Try also reading...

- [The Eviction Process](#)
- [Evictions from Manufactured Housing](#)
- [A Walk Through the Eviction Process](#)
- [Property Left in Apartment after eviction](#)

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