

Stop an eviction from showing up on tenant screening reports

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Learn how Washington State law may allow you to get a court order (called an Order to Limit Dissemination) that stops tenant screening companies from showing an eviction record when you apply for housing. Includes court forms and instructions.

1. What is an Order to Limit Dissemination?

Tenant screening companies report filed eviction lawsuits. Even if the eviction lawsuit was dismissed (canceled), tenant screening companies will report the eviction case to potential landlords. Landlords may consider you a higher risk and deny your application because of the reported eviction. Eviction records can stay on tenant screening reports for up to 7 years.

But if you get a court **Order to Limit Dissemination (OLD)** in an eviction case, tenant screening companies cannot report that eviction case to potential

landlords in screening reports. They also cannot use that eviction case in calculating a rental score or making a recommendation about whether the landlord should rent to you.

To get an Order to Limit Dissemination, you must ask the court where your eviction was filed for an order that stops these companies from using the eviction record.

After the judge signs the Order, you have to send copies of the Order to tenant screening companies so they will not report the eviction court record in a screening report.

An Order to Limit Dissemination stops tenant screening companies from reporting about the eviction case.

An Order to Limit Dissemination **does not:**

- Stop a potential landlord from asking if you have ever been evicted
- Stop a potential landlord from looking up the records on their own
- “Seal” or “vacate” the eviction record or make it disappear from official court records

But it can make it easier to find rental housing by removing an eviction record from the tenant screening reports most commonly used by landlords.

Domestic violence survivors only: If you were not at fault for your eviction, you can try to get the court to black out your name (redact) or change the court record, so your name does not appear. The law permits this only in a few cases. Try to get legal help with this.

2. Can I get an Order to Limit Dissemination?

You can get an Order to Limit Dissemination for any of 3 reasons under RCW 59.18.367(1): (<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=59.18.367>)

1. You won the eviction case by proving the landlord was wrong (the **eviction case was not based in fact or law**). The judge might even have dismissed the eviction case.
2. You **“reinstated”** (got back) the tenancy that was the subject of the eviction. This means you fixed the problem your landlord went to court about or, after the case, you paid off the judgment against you. You may have stayed in the rental after you “reinstated” the tenancy.
3. You persuade the judge that you have **“other good cause.”**

For example, you may be able to show you have “good cause” to get an OLD if you have strong evidence that your situation has improved since the eviction (such as you got a new job or a housing voucher, or you got treatment for any mental health or substance abuse issues that led to the eviction).

I am currently in an eviction case. Can I get an Order to Limit Dissemination?

Maybe. You can:

- Ask the judge for an Order to Limit Dissemination during or at the end of your hearing.

or

- Ask the landlord or landlord's attorney to agree to the entry of an Order to Limit Dissemination. This kind of agreement, which you can file with the court, is called a stipulation. The landlord may agree to this if you agree to something in return, such as paying rent you owe or promising to move out by a certain date. You can ask the landlord to sign off on your proposed court order. (See instructions for filling out forms, below.)

If your case is already over, you can also use the process we describe below.

My eviction case is over. How do I get an Order to Limit Dissemination?

You must file a motion under the case number of the eviction lawsuit and then go to a hearing in front of a judge.

You must give the landlord in the eviction case a copy of the paperwork you filed before the hearing. When you give the landlord your motion and notice of the hearing according to the law and court rules, it is called "service." You can only have your hearing if you "serve" the landlord beforehand. You must give the landlord a chance to come to the hearing and make their own argument about the Order to Limit Dissemination.

3. Forms

Form attached:

Motion for Order to Limit Dissemination (NJP Housing 602)

Form attached:

Notice of Hearing (general civil) (NJP General 008)

Form attached:

Declaration of (name): _____ **(general civil)** (NJP General 010)

Form attached:

Order to Limit Dissemination (NJP Housing 603)

Form attached:

Letter to tenant screening company (NJP Housing 604)

The landlord in the eviction case is the **plaintiff**. You and any others who lived with you are the **defendant(s)**.

A **caption** is a heading required on court documents. It identifies the names of the parties (plaintiff and defendants), the court's name, and case number.

Instructions for the "Motion for Order to Limit Dissemination"

Fill out the caption with your name (Defendant), landlord's name (Plaintiff), court's name (County), and court case number from the eviction.

1. Request to limit dissemination

In the first blank, put your full legal name. In the second, put the eviction case number again.

2. Statement of facts and reasons for request

Put the facts that support your motion.

Example 1: My landlord filed the eviction action on August 1, 2023. The judge dismissed the case on August 3, 2023, after the landlord and I came to agreement about the issues. I still live in the unit.

Example 2: The landlord filed the eviction action on August 1, 2023. I filed an Answer and Counterclaims on August 5, 2023. After a trial on August 30, 2023, the judge ruled in my favor.

Example 3: The landlord and I entered into a 1-year lease agreement on February 1, 2023. The landlord filed the eviction action on August 1, 2023. At trial on August 30, 2023, the judge found I owed \$1200 in late rent plus fees. On August 31, 2023, I paid the entire amount owed, including the late fees, and the court-ordered landlord's attorney fees into the court registry.

3. Statement of Issues.

In this section, you connect the facts of your case to the relevant section of the law about Orders of Dissemination. You must state the issue as a question.

Example 1: Does the dismissal of this unlawful detainer on August 3, 2023, mean the plaintiff's case was without sufficient basis in fact or law?

Example 2: Did defendant's payment of the judgment and costs amount to a reinstatement of the tenancy?

Example 3: Does good cause exist to limit the dissemination of the unlawful detainer action?

4. **Evidence Relied Upon.**

List any evidence you are filing with your motion. You will attach this evidence to your declaration or the declaration of the person who provided you with the evidence, see “Instructions for the ‘Declaration of:’” below.

Your evidence could include copies of emails or letters between you and the landlord, receipts showing you made payments, or a declaration by you or someone who has personal knowledge about what happened.

You may give the court evidence of how you have changed or are now a good tenant. You could include declarations by you or someone who knows how you have changed for the better.

You must give (serve) the plaintiff a copy of any evidence before the hearing. You cannot have your hearing unless the judge knows you gave the landlord a chance to review what you want the judge to look at.

5. **Legal Authority.**

This section is very important. Check all boxes that apply.

Person making this motion fills out below. Sign and date the motion. Print or type your address.

Instructions for the “Notice of Hearing”

Ask the clerk if your county has their own form for this. If so, use the form the clerk gives you.

If your county does not have their own form, fill out the caption on the Notice of Hearing as you did for the motion.

Getting a hearing date and time: Call the court clerk for the Superior Court in your county. Tell them what type of motion you are filing. Ask for a hearing date. Every county has its own rules about how many days before a hearing to file a motion. Ask the clerk when you must file the motion. In most counties, it is at least 7 days before the hearing. Put the info they give you in the appropriate spaces.

Sign your name and put the date you signed.

Instructions for the “Declaration of (Defendant Name)”

Fill out the caption the same way you filled out the caption on your motion.

On the first line, put your name.

Fill out the declaration statement after “I DECLARE that:” with the facts you put in your motion under “2. Statement of facts and reasons for request.” If the person writing a declaration provided any documents that you want to use as evidence, attach them to the declaration and label them with letters, starting at “Exhibit A.”

Put the date and place you are signing this form, then sign.

Instructions for the (proposed) “Order to Limit Dissemination”

Fill out the caption like you did for the other documents.

Put your name in all the blank in the first paragraph, "1. Basis."

At the end of the Order, sign under **presented by**. If the landlord had agreed in advance to this Order, you can ask the landlord (or their attorney) to sign under **approved by**.

Leave the blank under **judge/commissioner** for the judge to sign **if** the judge decides in your favor.

Instructions for the sample letter

You can create your own version of this letter **after** you get your court order signed by the judge.

Do not file this letter with the court or give it to the judge. See [Chapter 5](#).

4. After filling out forms

After filling out the forms:

1. Make 3 copies of each document
2. Organize the copies into 3 sets of documents
3. Have 1 set served on the landlord or landlord's attorney. See below for more details
4. File your original papers with the court

5. Keep one set for yourself

Here are more detailed instructions for each step:

1. Make copies

Make **3** copies of every paper. Here is the full list of court papers:

- Motion for Order to Limit Dissemination
- Declaration of Defendant (or other witness)
- Any other attachment you mentioned in your Declaration, such as financial documents
- Order (your proposed Order)

2. Make sets of those copies

Make 3 full sets of copies of your papers: 1 for you, 1 for the landlord or landlord's attorney, and 1 for the judge for "working papers." Working papers, also called working copies, are a courtesy set for the judge.

Sometimes the originals do not make it into the court file in time for the judge to read them.

3. Serve the papers

You must have someone over the **age 18** who is *not* a party or witness in your case deliver a set of copies to the landlord, in person or by mail.

If the landlord had an attorney in the eviction case, and it is not yet 30 days since entry of the ruling in that case **OR** 63 days since the filing of the last pleading in that case, you must have the landlord's attorney served. Follow the instructions below, but for the landlord's attorney.

If you have someone hand-deliver the papers to the landlord's office, they should ask someone who works there to sign the Affidavit of Service. This is your proof they got their copies.

After serving the landlord, the person who served the papers for you will fill out the Affidavit of Service with the date they served the landlord and how they served the landlord.

If you mailed the papers, you must put the name of the person who mailed it and the date they mailed the motion to the landlord. Save all receipts for proof that you served the landlord.

After you fill out the form, have the server sign and date it.

Have the papers served **before** you go to the clerk's office to file.

4. **File your original motion papers with the court**

Go to the Clerk's office in the courthouse where the landlord filed your eviction lawsuit. Explain that you are filing a motion and scheduling (called "setting") a hearing.

Give the Clerk the set of originals for filing. Ask the Clerk to stamp your set of copies with the “Filed” stamp. Also ask the clerk how to leave the judge a working copy of your papers. Keep your copy of your papers for your own records.

The clerk may ask you to fill out a notice of hearing form and will give you a date and time to fill in. Keep a copy for yourself. You must serve a copy of this hearing notice to the landlord.

I served and filed the motion. Now what?

Check your mail. The landlord might but **does not have** to file and give you a copy of their **response** to your motion. If you do get a copy of the response, read it to know ahead of time what the landlord’s arguments are, if any.

How do I represent myself at the hearing?

Before the hearing date: Write down the points you want to make. Practice presenting your case. You will not have much time to talk. Your presentation should be organized and short. You can bring notes with you to your hearing.

Day of the hearing: Try to arrive at least 30 minutes before your hearing time. When you get to the courtroom, have a seat. Wait until the judge calls your case or name. Respond by announcing that you are there. (You will hear other lawyers and people do this if your case isn’t the first on the schedule to be announced.)

5. After the hearing

The judge signed the Order to Limit Dissemination Now what?

Tenant screening companies should stop reporting the eviction case in tenant screening reports. **They may still do so. You must take extra steps to protect yourself.** Send a copy of this order with a letter (you can [data-entity-type="media" data-entity-uuid="4e32d214-d5e6-4090-9fd1-7726ab774b3f" data-entity-substitution="media" title="Letter to tenant screening company">use our sample letter](#)) to all the tenant screening companies that commonly screen eviction records for landlords.

Some of the companies prefer to receive a scanned and emailed copy of the Order along with your letter. Others require you to send a paper copy of the Order and letter to a mailing address.

We have compiled a list of companies with their preferred contact information below. The contact information can change, so we have also linked to the company pages where you can find the most current information.

Name of Tenant Screening Service Provider (and link to dispute page if available) and contact information to send OLD and letter

ACRANET (Airfactz) (<https://www.acranet.com/consumer-dispute/>):
compliance@acranet.com (<mailto:compliance@acranet.com>)

AppFolio (<https://www.appfolio.com/consumer>):
screening.consumer.relations@appfolio.com
(<mailto:screening.consumer.relations@appfolio.com>)

Contemporary Information Corp. (CIC) (<https://www.cicreports.com/contact-us/>): expungehousing@cicreports.com
(<mailto:expungehousing@cicreports.com>)

First Advantage Resident Solutions (<https://fadv.com/>):
consumer.documents@fadv.com (<mailto:consumer.documents@fadv.com>)

Global Verification Network: service@globalver.com
(<mailto:service@globalver.com>)

On-Site c/o Realpage (<https://www.on-site.com/renter-relations/>)

Fax: 1-800-866-8736

Mail:

On-Site c/o RealPage, Inc.
Attn: LeasingDesk Consumer Relations
2201 Lakeside Blvd. Richardson, TX 75082

Orca (<https://www.orcainfo-com.com/contact.cfm>): orca@orcainfo-com.com
(<mailto:orca@orcainfo-com.com>)

RentGrow, Inc. (<https://www.rentgrow.com/dispute-now/>):
information@rentgrow.com (<mailto:information@rentgrow.com>)

Screening Reports, Inc.: disputes@screeningreports.com
(<mailto:disputes@screeningreports.com>)

Tenant Background Search
(<https://www.tenantbackgroundsearch.com/contactUs.aspx>):
support@tenantbackgroundsearch.com
(<mailto:disputes@screeningreports.com>)

WashingtonLawHelp.org gives general information. It is not legal advice.
Find organizations that provide free legal help on our [Get legal help](#) page.

Superior Court of Washington, County of _____

Plaintiff (*Landlord*):

And Defendant (*Tenant/s*):

No. _____

Motion for Order to Limit Dissemination
(MT)

Motion for Order to Limit Dissemination

Use this form to ask the court for an order that stops tenant screening companies from showing an eviction record when you apply for housing. Use this with a proposed Order to Limit Dissemination, NJP Housing 603.

To both parties:

Deadline! Your papers must be filed and served by the deadline in your county's Local Court Rules, or by the State Court Rules if there is no local rule. Court Rules and forms are online at www.courts.wa.gov.

If you want the court to consider your side, you **must**:

- File your original documents with the Superior Court Clerk; AND
- Give the Judge/Commissioner a copy of your papers (if required by your county's Local Court Rules); AND
- Have a copy of your papers served on all other parties or their lawyers; AND
- Go to the hearing.

The court may not allow you to testify at the motion hearing. Read your county's Local Court Rules, if any.

Bring proposed orders to the hearing.

To the person filing this motion:

You must schedule a hearing on this motion. You may use the *Notice of Hearing* (form NJP General 008) unless your county's Local Court Rules require a different form. Contact the court for scheduling information.

To the person receiving this motion:

If you do not agree with the requests in this motion, file a statement explaining why the court should not approve those requests. You may file other written proof supporting your side.

1. Request to limit dissemination

My name is: _____. I am the Defendant in this unlawful detainer case. I respectfully ask the court to limit the dissemination of this case.

2. Statement of facts and reasons for request

I ask the Court to limit the dissemination of information from this case because (*briefly explain*):

[illegible]

3. Statement of Issues

(Clearly and briefly state the legal issues you want the court to decide.)

Should the Court issue an Order Limiting Dissemination under RCW 59.18.367?

4. Evidence Relied Upon

(Clearly identify the evidence you want the judge to consider with your motion.)

- Records and pleadings in the court file
- Declaration of (*name*): _____
- Declaration of(*name*): _____
- Other:

5. Legal Authority

I am making this motion according to one or more of the following subsections of RCW 59.18.367:

- ☐ The plaintiff's case was sufficiently without basis in fact or law.
- ☐ My tenancy was reinstated under RCW 59.18.410 or other law.
- ☐ Other good cause exists for limiting dissemination of the unlawful detainer action.

☐ Any other relevant legal authority: *(describe)*

A Proposed Order *(check one)*: ☐ is ☐ is **not** attached to this *Motion*.

Person making this motion fills out below:

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of Washington that the facts I have provided on this form are true.

Signed at *(city and state)*: _____ Date: _____



Person making this motion signs here

Print name here

I agree to accept legal papers for this case at *(check all that apply)*:

☐ my lawyer's address, listed below.

☐ the following address *(this does **not** have to be your home address)*:

Street or mailing address

city

state

zip

☐ Email *(optional)*: _____

(If this address changes before the case ends, you must notify all parties and the court clerk in writing.)

Lawyer (if any) fills out below



Lawyer signs here

Print name and WSBA No.

Date

Lawyer's address

city

state

zip

Email *(if applicable)*: _____

Warning! Documents filed with the court are available for anyone to see unless they are sealed. You may make a *Motion to Redact or Seal*, form All Civil 050 and 052, under [General Rule 15](#) to seal other documents.

_____ Court of Washington, County of _____

Petitioner / Plaintiff:

And Respondent / Defendant:

No. _____

Notice of Hearing

(No mandatory form)

Clerk's action required: 1

☐ Need interpreter (*language*) _____

Notice of Hearing

To the Court Clerk and all parties:

1. A court hearing has been scheduled:



for: _____ at: _____ (*check one*) ☐ a.m. ☐ p.m.
date time

at: _____ in _____
court's address room or department

docket / calendar or judge / commissioner's name

☐ Online or phone: _____

2. The purpose of this hearing is (*specify*): _____

as requested by the (*check one*) ☐ Petitioner/Plaintiff ☐ Respondent/Defendant



Person asking for hearing signs here

Print name here (and WSBA #, if lawyer)

Date

I agree to accept legal papers for this case at (*check all that apply*):

☐ the following address (*this does **not** have to be your home address*):

Street or mailing address

city

state

zip

☐ Email: _____

_____ Court of Washington, County of _____

Petitioner / Plaintiff:

And Respondent / Defendant:

No. _____

Declaration of
(*name*): _____

(DCLR)

(*No mandatory form*)

Declaration of (*name*): _____

1. I am (*check one*): ☐ the Petitioner / Plaintiff ☐ the Respondent / Defendant

☐ Other (*relationship to people in this case*): _____, age ____.

2. I declare:

Superior Court of Washington, County of _____

Plaintiff (*Landlord*):

And Defendant (*Tenant/s*):

No. _____

Order to Limit Dissemination

(MT)

Order to Limit Dissemination

Use this form with Motion for Order to Limit Dissemination, NJP Housing 602.

1. Basis

Defendant (*name*) _____ has moved this Court for an Order to Limit Dissemination of this action under RCW 59.18.367. The Court finds there is good cause to limit dissemination of this unlawful detainer action for the Defendant.

2. Order

Dissemination of this unlawful detainer case record is hereby limited with respect to the Defendant named in section 1, above.

This case should not be a factor in determining any score or recommendation to be included in a tenant screening report about the Defendant. Tenant screening report providers are prohibited from using this case as a basis for a recommendation that Defendant's rental application/s be rejected or denied.

Ordered.

Dated: _____ at _____ a.m./p.m. _____

Judge/Court Commissioner

Presented by:



Signature of Defendant or lawyer *WSBA No.* *Print Name* *Date*

Approved by:



Signature *Print Name* *Date*

Date: _____

To:

Name of tenant screening service provider

Street address or PO Box

City, state and zip

And by email to: _____

Tenant Screening Service Provider:

The enclosed order for limited dissemination of an unlawful detainer case record has been entered on my behalf in the _____ County Superior Court, Case No.

Under RCW 59.18.367(3):

“When an order for limited dissemination of an unlawful detainer action has been entered with respect to a person, a tenant screening service provider must not: (a) Disclose the existence of that unlawful detainer action in a tenant screening report pertaining to the person for whom dissemination has been limited, or (b) use the unlawful detainer action as a factor in determining any score or recommendation to be included in a tenant screening report pertaining to the person for whom dissemination has been limited.”

If you are contacted for a tenant screening report regarding me, do not disclose the existence of this unlawful detainer action in any report regarding me, or use the action as a factor in determining any score or recommendation pertaining to my rental application.

Thank you.



Sign here

Print name

Street address

City, state and zip

Phone number / Email - optional