

# Living in a motel or hotel: What are my rights?

## **Author**

Northwest Justice Project

## **Last Review Date**

April 29, 2025

For anyone who's been living in a motel or hotel.

## **I live in a motel or hotel as my only housing. What are my rights?**

It depends on how much your situation resembles that of a tenant in an apartment. For example:

- Do you pay monthly rent?
- Do you **not** use housekeeping services?
- Have you lived there for longer than 30 days?

The more your situation looks like a regular rental, the more likely it is that you're a tenant with the legal protections of a tenant — like a court process for evictions. You should try to talk to a lawyer right away if you're worried about the security of your living situation, but you haven't received any notice to move yet.

**There's an additional way to show that your hotel or motel might be rental housing.** The state Department of Health inspects and licenses housing for temporary visitors, like hotels and motels (<https://doh.wa.gov/licenses-permits-and-certificates/facilities-z/transient-accommodations-hotels-and-motels>). A licensed hotel or motel is required to post their license in the lobby. If your hotel or motel isn't inspected or licensed, you might have even more protections under the Residential Landlord Tenant Act (<https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=59.18>).

If the landlord gives you a notice to vacate, threatens to lock you out or does lock you out, try to get legal help right away.

## **What are my rights if the city condemns the hotel?**

If you've lived there with the management's consent for at least **30 days**, you should qualify to get money from the management or owner, called relocation assistance, to help with moving expenses. You may not get this money right away.

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