Rent Increases
and Fair Rent Commissions



May 2026

Do you have a legal problem?
Call our hotline:

Statewide Legal Services
1-800-559-1565

Can the landlord raise my rent?

If you have a lease that has not yet expired, your landlord is **not** allowed to raise the rent until after the lease expires unless the lease explicitly says so.

Whether you have a written lease or not, the landlord cannot raise your rent without giving you advance notice **in writing** about the proposed increase. For most leases, the landlord must give you at least 45 days' notice before the increase can take effect. For month-to-month tenancies, the landlord must give you one months' advance notice. For week-to-week tenancies, you must be given written notice at least one week in advance.

Whether you have a written lease or not, your landlord is **not** allowed to raise your rent or take away services such as utilities if, in the last 6 months:

- You made a good faith complaint to the health department, housing code office, or the Fair Rent Commission.
- You asked your landlord to make repairs in your apartment or you filed court papers because your landlord wasn't making necessary repairs. These repairs must be about things that make the apartment unlivable, such as serious insect infestation, lack of heat, or doors that won't lock. Even if your apartment needs repairs, **you must pay your rent on time or your landlord can start an eviction against you**. For more information, see www.CTLaw.help/eviction.
- You joined a tenants' union.

What can I do about a rent increase?

There are ways to fight a rent increase. First, try asking the landlord not to raise your rent, or ask if they can make it a smaller increase. If the landlord agrees, ask them to put your agreement in writing. This will be your new written lease.

If the landlord still wants to raise your rent and your town has a fair rent commission, you can file a complaint with the commission. Fair Rent Commissions have the power to decide if the rent increase is too high.

Whether or not there is a Fair Rent Commission in your town, you should send the landlord a letter saying that you don't agree with the new amount. Continue paying the old rent amount, or pay an increase that you think is reasonable. Always pay on time, and pay by check or money order. If you pay rent through an online portal, take screenshots of everything you do inside the portal. Write "Rent in full for the month of _____" on your check or money order.

Can I be evicted for not paying a rent increase?

If you and the landlord can't agree on the rent increase, the landlord can try to force you to move by starting an eviction against you.

What is a fair rent commission?

A Fair Rent Commission can investigate rent complaints from tenants and hold hearings on those complaints. A Fair Rent Commission can then order the landlord to:

- lower the rent,
- phase in a rent increase over time, or
- delay a rent increase until the landlord makes necessary repairs.

If the landlord is ignoring housing code enforcement orders, the Fair Rent Commission can also order the tenant to pay rent to the Commission instead of to the landlord. For a list of towns that have a Fair Rent Commission, go to www.CTLaw.help/frc. Not all towns have a Fair Rent Commission.

Note: If your town does not have a fair rent commission and you are a senior or you have a physical or mental disability, you can sue your landlord to stop the rent increase. If you want to sue, you should talk to a lawyer.

Who can file a complaint with a fair rent commission?

If you live in a town with a Fair Rent Commission, you can file a complaint. You do not need to have a written lease or a lawyer to file a complaint.

Note: Seasonal renters who rent 120 days per year or fewer cannot file a complaint with a Fair Rent Commission.

When should I file a complaint?

You can file a complaint with the Fair Rent Commission if:

- The rent increase seems too high.
- Your landlord wants to start charging you for utilities that used to be included in your rent.
- You think the amount you pay for rent is unfair because your apartment is unsafe, unhealthy, or violates the housing code.
- You complained about the conditions in your apartment and the landlord raised the rent or started an eviction in response to your complaint.

How do I file a complaint with the Fair Rent Commission?

- Go to www.ctlaw.help/frc for a list of Fair Rent Commission office. Not all towns have a Commission.
- Ask for a complaint form and fill it out (some commissions accept complaints online).
- Make two copies of your complaint and keep one for yourself.
- File your complaint with the Commission.

Remember: Your landlord cannot evict you just because you filed a complaint with the Fair Rent Commission, but **you can be evicted if you do not pay at least the old rent amount** each month. If you have paid your rent and your landlord tries to evict you after you filed a complaint with the Commission, tell the Commission right away and call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320.

What if someone in my household is a senior or has a disability?

If someone in your household is a senior or has a physical or mental disability and you live in a building, complex, or mobile home park with five or more units, you should let the Commission know, because the law would allow the Commission to look at your case in a slightly different way.

What happens after I file a complaint?

The Commission will take your complaint and schedule a hearing. But they may first meet with you and your landlord to see if you can make an agreement.

You don't have to make an agreement with your landlord, but you can if the agreement seems fair. If you can't make an agreement, tell the Commission you want a hearing.

Each month when your rent is due, offer to pay the old rent amount or a higher rent amount that you think is fair. Keep offering this rent until the Commission has ruled on your complaint.

How can I get ready for my hearing with the Fair Rent Commission?

- ► Before the hearing, tell the Commission if you want copies of city or town documents such as code enforcement or health department reports about your property.
- ► If you would like a witness, such as a repair person, a code inspector, or a town employee, to speak at the hearing, tell the Commission. If a witness refuses to go to the hearing, ask the Commission to order (or *subpoena*) the witness to go to the hearing and to bring the documents you need to help your case.
- ► Make two copies of these papers:
  - Proof of your income, such as paycheck stubs.
  - Copies of your heat and utility bills if you pay the heat or utilities and they are high.
  - The Housing Code Office's report or Health Department report, if there is one.
- ► Practice what you want to say, and write notes to help you remember. If you get nervous, you can read from your notes.
- ► Describe any unsafe, unhealthy, or unlawful conditions in your apartment such as pests, leaks, or no water. Bring photos that show these problems.
- ► You have the right to have a lawyer speak for you at the hearing.

What will happen at the hearing?

You, the landlord, and any witnesses must take an oath to tell the truth.

You and the landlord will each get a chance to speak, show important papers and photos, and call witnesses.

You have the right to ask questions of the landlord and the landlord's witnesses.

The Commission will record the hearing and decide your case either after the hearing or at a later date.

How does the Commission make its decision?

The Commission considers many things, especially:

- The amount of the increase and any other recent rent increases.
- The rent for similar units in your area.
- If you have to pay for your own heat or utilities in addition to the rent.
- Your income and your ability to pay the higher rent.
- If your unit is in good condition or if it needs repairs.
- The landlord's costs and how the rent increase will be used.
- Whether you have caused damage to the apartment beyond normal wear and tear.

What will the Commission do after the hearing?

After the hearing, the Fair Rent Commission will consider the testimony and documents. It can decide a number of things:

1. It can decide that the rent increase is fair and order you to pay it.

2. It can decide that the rent increase is unfair and do one of these things:

- ► Set the rent at a fair amount and order the landlord to accept that amount as rent. It may also decide that the rent has to be increased gradually so you don't have a large increase all at once.
- ► Delay a rent increase until repairs are made. The Commission has the power to order you to pay rent each month to the Fair Rent Commission instead of to the landlord, but it usually does not make such an order. You should continue to pay your landlord the old rent or the amount that you think is fair.

3. The commission may also give your complaint to other city agencies, such as the Health Department or Housing Code Office. These agencies must then make sure that your landlord repairs the unsafe and unhealthy conditions in your apartment.

Can I listen to the Commission's discussion of my case?

Yes. The Commission's meetings must be held in public. They usually take place at the same meeting where you testified. You can listen to the meeting, but you may not speak while the Commission discusses your complaint.

What if my landlord retaliates against me for filing a complaint?

Tell the Fair Rent Commission right away and ask it to order your landlord to stop. If the Commission finds that your landlord retaliated against you for filing a complaint, it can order the landlord to stop the retaliation.

What if my landlord doesn't follow the Fair Rent Commission's orders?

If your landlord does not follow any order of the Fair Rent Commission, you should tell the Commission right away. The Commission has the power to force the landlord to comply.

What if I do not agree with the Fair Rent Commission's decision?

You have a right to appeal the Fair Rent Commission's decision. An appeal is a court case that must be taken to the housing session in the area in which you live. If you want to appeal a Fair Rent Commission decision, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320.

For a list of towns that have a Fair Rent Commission, go to www.CTLaw.help/frc.

How to Get Help from Legal Aid

Contact Statewide Legal Services

www.slsct.org
1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380

SLS provides free advice to low-income people who have legal problems in Connecticut. For some legal problems, they may send you to another legal aid program or to a volunteer attorney.

Statewide Legal Services of CT

eviction HELP CT

Need help with a housing problem?

If you are facing eviction or losing your housing subsidy, you may have the right to a free lawyer. Call 1-800-559-1565 or go to www.EvictionHelpCT.org.

Contact your local legal aid office:

Connecticut Legal Services

www.ctlegal.org

Bridgeport
203-336-3851
1000 Lafayette Blvd.

New Britain
860-225-8678
16 Main St.

New London
860-447-0323
125 Eugene O'Neill Dr.

Stamford
203-348-9216
1177 Summer St.

Waterbury
203-756-8074
255 Bank St., 3rd Fl.

Willimantic
860-456-1761
1125 Main St.

Greater Hartford Legal Aid

www.ghla.org
999 Asylum Ave., Hartford
860-541-5000

New Haven Legal Assistance Association

www.nhlegal.org
205 Orange St., New Haven
203-946-4811

Consumer Law Project for Elders

1-800-296-1467
Help with money and debt problems for people 60+.

Do you know your rights?
Go to **www.CTLawHelp.org** for free legal information.

For more information, go to www.CTLaw.Help/rent-increase

This booklet was produced by Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut. The information in this booklet is based on laws in Connecticut as of 5/2026. This information is not intended as legal advice. For advice on your situation, call Statewide Legal Services or contact a lawyer.