

What Is An Illegal Lockout?

A lockout is illegal when your landlord forces you to move or does not let you into your home without first going to court and having you served with a warrant of eviction. Changing the locks, removing the front door or turning off the heat, electricity or water would be considered illegal.

What should I do if I am locked out of my home illegally?

If your landlord locks you out of your apartment illegally, call the police either by dialing 853-2222 in Buffalo, or by calling your local precinct. When you call, make sure to write down the name of the person you talk to.

What happens next?

The police should send officers to the apartment. Make sure to get the names of the officers. When they respond, tell them that your landlord locked you out.

What if the police are not helpful?

If the police are not helpful, contact the Captain at the precinct that responded to your call. Explain the problem. If it is after 4:00 p.m., ask for the Duty Officer and ask that person to send in a Duty Inspector.

Is my landlord responsible for my expenses if I am illegally locked out?

Your landlord may be responsible for the money you have to spend because you were locked out. If you do spend money on a hotel or in a restaurant, save your receipts. You may be able to get some of your money back. Contact Neighborhood Legal Services for help.

What if the police can't help me?

If you cannot get back into your apartment after calling the police, call Neighborhood Legal Services.

What can I do to get my things back?

You may have to sue your landlord. See the hotline entitled Small Claims Court for more information.