



June 15, 2020

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Governor of Maryland declared a State of Emergency to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on March 5, 2020. To prevent homelessness and to control the occupancy and use of buildings during the emergency, on April 3, 2020, the Governor directed that for the duration of the emergency no court could order that a tenant be removed from a rental property for failure to pay rent or for violating a lease if the tenant could prove “a substantial loss of income resulting from COVID-19 or the related proclamation of a State of Emergency.” If you lost your job, had your hours cut at work, your place of work closed or you missed work to care for a home-bound school-age child, the Governor’s order applies to you. The Governor’s order also applies to businesses that have a substantial loss of income due to reduced business, a required closure or a loss of employees.

The Governor’s order does not excuse you from the payment of rent. The order only prevents you from being evicted during the emergency if you can prove a substantial loss of income. If you stop paying rent, your landlord may take action to evict you from the premises and to get a judgment against you for the back rent as soon as the courts re-open on July 25, 2020. For this reason, I strongly urge you to pay your rent if you have the money. If you do not have the money to pay your rent, contact your landlord and make a written agreement with your landlord as to how the unpaid rent will be paid. Good landlords want your business and should be willing to work with you to get the rent paid and to keep you in the property.

Due to the State of Emergency, the landlord/tenant courts are now closed and will remain closed until July 25, 2020. If the court has not already ordered you to leave your rental property for non-payment of rent or some other violation of your lease, you cannot be required to leave the premises until the courts re-open and you have had the opportunity to be heard by a judge. If you prove a substantial loss of income due to the COVID-19 shutdown, the court will not enter a money judgment or evict you from the premises until after the State of Emergency ends.

The City of Salisbury has passed a new ordinance to protect renters from rent increases, late fees and new rental fees until 90 days after the State of Emergency ends. This applies to any increase during the emergency even if you received notice of the increase before the emergency began. The Salisbury ordinance also requires landlords to offer tenants “payment plans for the payment of rent and rental fees in installments which will continue for no less than one year after the expiration of the Emergency. These payment plans must be in writing and signed by the landlord and tenant.” The Salisbury ordinance does not provide protection from eviction by a landlord. If you do not pay your rent or you violate your lease, when the emergency ends, your landlord will have the legal right to evict you from the property and to get a monetary judgment against you.



City of  
**Salisbury**  
Jacob R. Day, Mayor

This legislation can be found online at:

<https://salisbury.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/6-1-20-SpMtg-Agnd-Pckt.pdf> under Ordinance 2599.

If you feel your rights have been violated, please call Housing and Community Development Department at 410-341-9550.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J.R. Day', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Jacob R. Day  
Mayor