Coronavirus (COVID-19) - what landlords and tenants need to know

14 February 2020

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The Ministry of Health is closely monitoring reports of the coronavirus and following advice from the World Health Organization.


Landlords and tenants need to be aware of their responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act. This includes where a tenancy agreement has been signed, but the tenant hasn’t yet moved into the rental property.

Discrimination is unlawful under tenancy law when it breaches the Human Rights Act. For example, it is unlawful to refuse potential tenants based on their race or nationality. It’s also unlawful to discriminate when deciding to continue or to end a tenancy.

If you do want to end your tenancy, you need to provide the right notice.

- Tenants need to give their landlords at least 21 days written notice to end a periodic tenancy.
- Landlords generally need to give their tenants at least 90 days written notice to end a periodic tenancy (in some specific situations landlords can give 42 days’ notice).
- Tenants and landlords in fixed term tenancies can only end the tenancy early if both parties agree.


Different rules apply for ending a tenancy if you’re a tenant or landlord in a boarding house.


A tenant who thinks they have been discriminated against can either:


It’s important to know that tenants can only apply to one of these organisations. Before you decide what to do, it’s a good idea to talk to both organisations to understand what your options are.

Landlords can contact both if they want to check their decisions are lawful.