



Northeast  
**Lawyer For a Day Project**  
*A Project of Northeast Legal Aid With  
Support From The Northeast Justice  
Center And Private Bar Volunteers*  
**978-458-1465**



**March 16, 2020**

## **YOUR RIGHTS IN HOUSING COURT DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK**

In response to the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19, the Housing Court has issued a “Standing Order” outlining the following changes:

1. **POSTPONED COURT DATES:** All pending eviction cases are postponed until *no earlier than Tuesday, April 21, 2020*. That means if your eviction case is currently scheduled for any date before April 21, you do not have to go to court. A party who wants a hearing before April 21 must file a motion showing good cause for an earlier date. You should receive notice of any new court date by mail.
2. **WHAT IF YOU MISSED COURT?:** If you are a tenant and a judgment for possession was entered by “default” against you between March 1 and April 21, you can file a motion to remove the default and the judgment “shall be vacated.”
3. **GET ADVICE BEFORE SIGNING AN AGREEMENT:** With the risks of homelessness or displacement during a public health crisis, if you are a tenant, *we urge you to get advice before signing any Agreement for Judgment*. Online information is available at [www.masslegalhelp.org](http://www.masslegalhelp.org). “Self-help” evictions or “lock-outs” are illegal. *It will likely be very difficult to find a new apartment during this crisis*. To help stop the spread of the virus, the Lawyer for a Day Program will *not* have a table set up during this time period. Legal Aid and volunteer lawyers will do their best to be available to help low-income parties who don’t have lawyers, either by telephone or e-mail. If you have questions about a pending eviction case and are low-income and without your own lawyer, you may contact the following paralegals for an intake/assistance:

**Lowell:** Eden Chorm, Tel. 781-254-1265

**Lynn:** Lorraine Medrano, Tel. 781-244-1403

**Lawrence:** Myrta Cupeles, Tel. 781-254-2831

4. **WHAT IF JUDGMENT ALREADY ENTERED AGAINST YOU?:** Please note that as of the date of this notice, there is NO ban on carrying out evictions pursuant to agreements *already signed* or judgments *already entered* by the Court if execution issues. A law proposing such a ban has been introduced in the Massachusetts Legislature and you can check online or call us for current status.

For more information, The Housing Court Standing Order can be found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/housing-court-standing-order-1-20-temporary-modifications-to-court-operations-arising-from-the/download>

If you don’t receive notice of a new date, you can look up your case file online at [www.masscourts.org](http://www.masscourts.org) or call the Housing Court at 978-689-7833.