Landlord/Tenant Law For Public Librarians	
Legal Aid Fondation Los Angeles  Thursday, March 21, 2013 12 Noon  Ronnette Ramos Managing Attorney Legal Aid Fondation of Los Angeles Rramos@lafla.org  Manufacture Medical M	

#### Agenda

- Provide a general overview of landlord tenant law matters and the eviction process
- Become familiar with key terminology in landlord tenant law matters
- Tour the California Court's self-help center's sections on evictions and housing
- · Learn about additional print and online resources addressing landlord – tenant issues

#### **Landlord-Tenant Overview**

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## Tenant's Legal Rights and Responsibilities

- Pay Rent
- Take reasonable care of the rental unit
- Repairs
- · Limits on the Landlord's right of entry
- Security deposit limits
- Time to return security deposit
  - · Itemized accounting

## Tenant's Legal Rights and Responsibilities

- · Repair and deduct
- Withhold rents
- Sue for damages
- · Right to warranty of habitability
- Protection against retaliatory eviction

#### Refund of Security Deposits

- · Allowable deductions:
  - Unpaid rent
  - · Cleaning the rental unit when tenant moves out
  - · Repair of damages other than normal wear and tear
  - If the lease allows for cost of restoring or replacing personal property (such as keys or furniture)
- 21 calendar days or less after tenant moves out
- · Send tenant a full refund of security deposit OR
- Mail or personally deliver an itemized statement
- · If Landlord does not provide refund
  - · Tenant can call or request a refund
  - Tenant can sue in small claims court

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#### Landlord's Responsibilities

- · Implied covenant of quiet enjoyment
- Landlord must make the unit fit to live in, or habitable
- Landlord must repair problems that make the rental unit unfit to live in or uninhabitable

#### What is an Unlawful Detainer?

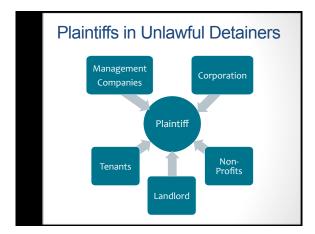
- Statutory procedure defined under California Code of Civil Procedure §1161-1179a
- Lawsuit that a landlord must file and win before he or she can evict a tenant
- · Also called an eviction lawsuit

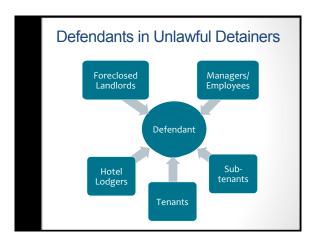
#### **Rent Control**

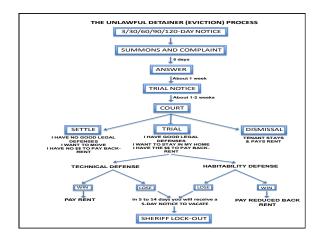
- · Protections:
  - · Rent increases are limited on a yearly basis
  - Greater Tenant Protections
  - · Cities with Rent Control

Berkeley Beverly Hills East Palo Alto
Glendale Hayward Maywood
Los Angeles Oakland Palm Springs
Richmond Ridgecrest San Diego
San Francisco Santa Monica Thousand Oaks
West Hollywood

Who are the Parties Involved in an Unlawful Detainer?







### Notices to Terminate a Tenancy

#### No Cause / Fault Notices

- 30/60/90-day notice to vacate
  - · Non-rent control properties
- 90-day notice
  - Government subsidized housing

#### For Cause Evictions

- Three-day notice to pay rent or quit
- Three day notice to cure or quit
- · Three-day notice to quit

# Step 1: Eviction Notice Stage Notice must be WRITTEN Notice must be WRITTEN STRICT COMPLIANCE with a significant control of the strict of t

#### Three-Day Notice to Pay Rent or Quit

- · For when tenant is behind on the rent
- Three days begins on the first day after service of the notice
- If the third day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday – the three-day period will not expire until the following Monday or nonholiday

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#### Three-Day Notice to Cure or Quit

 For when tenant is violating terms of the lease or rental agreement, other than nonpayment of rent, and the problem can be fixed

- · Must specify violation
- · Written lease agreement must exist

#### Three-Day Notice to Quit

- For when tenant is violating terms of the lease or rental agreement, other than nonpayment of rent, and the problem cannot be
- · committing "waste"
- · creating a nuisance on the premises
- Illegal use

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## Tenant Defenses for Defective Notice

#### Pay or Quit Notice:

- Rent is not due
- · Includes late fees
- Demands more rent than tenant owes
- Fails to state specific information pursuant to C.C.P. §1161(2)
- · Fails to state amount due

#### Perform or Quit Notice:

- Fails to state how to cure alleged violation
- · No written lease
- Not in the alternative and breach is "curable"

#### Applies to all:

- Does not declare a forfeiture of the lease
- · Defective service of notice

#### Service of Notice

- Notice may be served upon the Tenant in one of three ways:
  - Personally
- Leaving a copy with a person of suitable age and sending a copy by mail
- · Nail and mail

# Step 2: The Unlawful Detainer The court eviction process begins by filing a summons and complaint Named Defendant(s) must be served a copy of the summons and complaint The Court will mail out a Notice stating that UD lawsuit has been filed

The Complaint:	Control of the Cont
States landlord's basis for the eviction	MANUSCO CONTINUE ADMINISTRATORY IDC.  CONTINUE CONTINUE ADMINISTRATORY IDC.  CONTINUE CONTINUE CONTINUE ADMINISTRATORY  CONTINUE CONTINUE CONTINUE CONTINUE ADMINISTRATORY  CONTINUE CONTI
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#### **Common Defective Complaint Defenses**

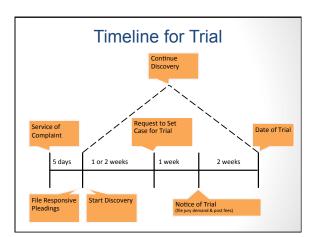
- · Notice not attached
- Lease not attached:
  - · Cases not based on failure to pay rent.
- · Tenant named but incorrect address
- Improper Plaintiff:
   Plaintiff must have some right of possession to the property either as the owner or agent of the owner

How to Respond to an Unlawful Detainer Complaint

#### Responsive Pleadings

- Answar
- General denial or deny each allegation in the complaint
- Technical and factual defenses
- If in doubt, raise the defense, otherwise it is waived
- Pre-Judgment Claim of Right to Possession
- If tenant is in possession and not named on complaint
- Demurrer
- Plaintiff failed to state a cause of action
- · Complaint is unclear
- · Motion to Quash Service of the Summons
  - · Improper service of the summons and complaint

Fail to file an answer, a default judgment will be entered and tenant will have to vacate  Answering defendant must claim defense(s) to complaint's allegations	Step 3: Filing a Response	CAMPAINS	US-166 YOU COSH! MET SHILY
Fail to file an answer, a default judgment will be entered and tenant will have to vacate  Answering defendant must claim and defenses(s) to the second of the supplement will be sufficiently and the second of the supplement will be entered and tenant will have to vacate  Answering defendant must claim defenses(s) to	<b>5 DAYS</b> to file an answer	DESCRIPTION LANCE APARTMENTS, IEC.  DEFENDANT JOSEPH HESIDENT  CONT.	
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#### **Pre-Trial Considerations** Jury Trial Demand: • Must be filed within 5 days of the Notice of Trial date (C.C.P. § 631(d)(4)) Jury Fees: \$150 at least **5 days before trial** Motion for Summary Judgment (C.C.P. § 437c): No triable issue of material fact Defendant must show Plaintiff does not have a cause of Filed upon 5 days notice (C.C.P. § 1170.7) and opposition may be filed 1 day before or on hearing day. Trial Date: Request to Set Case for Trial Discovery: • See Next Slide Discovery and Unlawful Detainers Civil Discovery Act C.C.P. § 2016 et seq. Types of Discovery: **Time Limitations:** Written Interrogatories Discovery completed 5 days Form (UD-106) before the date of Trial Special Interrogatories Responses due w/in 5 days for personal service, 10 days for mailing Demand for Production of **Documents** · Motions to Compel may be filed Request for Admissions at any time upon 5 days notice Depositions Scheduled w/in 5 days of the Notice but no later than 5 days before Trial

#### **Commonly Used Tenant Defenses**

- · Waiver of Notice to Quit
  - Generally: Affirmative defense if landlord accepts rent to cover a period of time after the termination date stated in the notice
- Estoppel
- Generally: Tenant must have relied on the landlord's conduct and was injured by it
- · Breach of the Warranty of Habitability
  - What is a breach?
  - · Proof of a substantial breach
- · Retaliatory Eviction
- Discrimination

#### After the Court's Ruling

- · If tenant wins
  - Tenant will not have to move and pay back rent
  - Landlord may be ordered to pay court
    costs
- · If landlord wins
- · Court issues Writ of Possession
- Service of Writ and posting of 5 day Notice to Vacate
- · Sheriff will remove all occupants

## Default Judgment if Tenant Fails to File Answer within Five Days

- · Default judgment entered in favor of landlord
- · Writ of possession
- Service of writ and posting of five day Notice to Vacate
  - To request additional time, tenant must file Stay of Execution with the court
- · Sheriff will remove all occupants
- Setting aside default judgment requires proof of mistake, inadvertence, excusable neglect

## Abandoned Personal Property Left in a Rental Unit

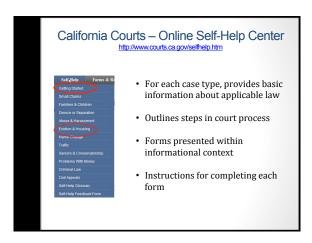
- California law has specific steps to follow to get possessions returned
  - Civil code § 1951.3
  - · Identify and value the property left behind
  - Send possible owners notice
- · If tenant does not respond to Notice
  - Property worth less than \$750 = Landlord
- Property worth more than \$750 = auction
- · Notice of Right to Reclaim Personal Property


## Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act

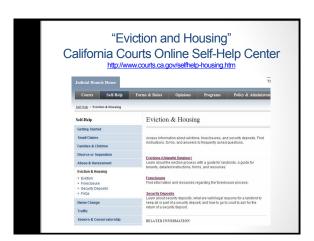
- Applies to all residential properties foreclosed after 5/20/2009
- Does not preempt local and state laws that offer additional protections
- 90-Day Notice required unless lease term not yet expired
- Must be "bona fide" tenant.
- Section 8 Tenants: new owner subject to lease and contract with PHA

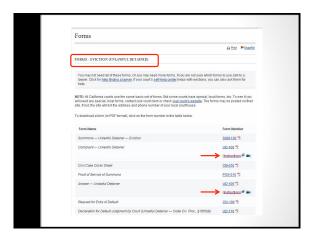
Online Resources for Locating Information, Forms and Referrals

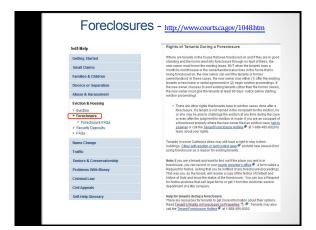
# California Courts — Online Self-Help Center http://www.courts.ca.gov/ Inter/lywww.courts.ca.gov/ Inter/lywww.co



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Small Claims	Learn how to ask for a fee waiver when you cannot afford to pay the court filing fees.
Families & Children	Service of Process
Divorce or Separation	"Service of process" is a key part of every case that is handled in court. Learn all the different ways to serve the other side in your case, when they are
Abuse & Harassment	allowed, and what is required for each type of service. Also learn about steps you can take to find someone in order to serve him or her.









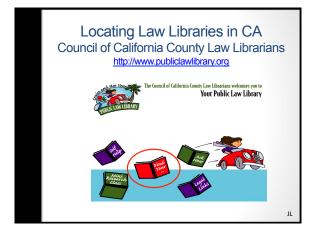


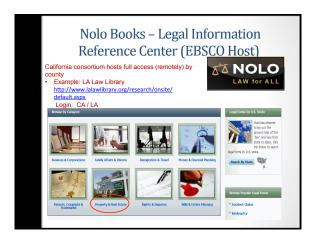












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