

# Summary of Massachusetts Eviction Record Sealing Law

Effective May 5, 2025

[M.G.L. Chapter 239, §16](#)

Applies to eviction actions in the Housing Court, District Court, Municipal Courts, and Superior Courts.

## Was the eviction action dismissed or did judgment enter for Tenant? Check the outcome first.

Eviction Outcome	Waiting time and Requirements	Notice	Court Action	Section
<b>Dismissed</b> Any type of summary process eviction action	Immediately after conclusion of the case including exhaustion of appeal rights	No notice required	Court may process without a hearing	16(e½)
<b>Judgment for Tenant</b> Any type of summary process eviction action	Immediately after conclusion of the case including exhaustion of appeal rights	No notice required	Court may process without a hearing	16(e½)

## If eviction action was not dismissed or judgment did not enter for Tenant, what was the reason for the eviction?

Reason for Eviction	Waiting time and Requirements	Notice	Court Action	Section
<b>No fault eviction</b> No-fault is where the tenancy is ended for economic, business or other reasons and there is no allegation of non-payment or violation of a material term of tenancy in the Notice to Quit or Summons & Complaint. Other reasons include where there has been no violation of the terms of the lease and the lease has ended.	Immediately after conclusion of the case including exhaustion of appeal rights	Notice must be given to parties in original action	Court shall comply with request if requirements met  If no objection filed within 7 days of filing petition, court may process without a hearing	16 (a) 16 (b)

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Reason for Eviction	Waiting time and Requirements	Notice	Court Action	Section	
<b>Non-Payment Eviction</b> Paid off	Immediately after satisfaction of judgment or agreement so long as the case is concluded including exhaustion of all appeal rights			16(k)	
	<b>2 Step Process</b>				
	1. Landlord has 14 days to file a notice of satisfaction. If the landlord does not, then the Tenant must file a court form called a <i>Petition for Judgment or Agreement to be Deemed Satisfied</i>	Notice of the <i>Petition to Deem Satisfied</i> must be given to the parties in the action	Court shall comply with request if requirements met  If no objection filed within 7 days of filing the petition, court may process without a hearing		
2. After the landlord files notice of satisfaction OR the court deems the amount satisfied, Tenant files <i>Petition to Seal</i>	Notice must be given to parties in original action	Court shall comply with the request if requirements met and no objection filed within 7 days of filing petition  Court may process without a hearing			
<b>Non-Payment Eviction</b> Not paid off	4 years after conclusion of the case including exhaustion of appeal rights  No non-payment eviction (or “lessor action” <sup>1</sup> ) brought against tenant in Massachusetts in 4 years before request  Tenant certifies that the non-payment was due to economic hardship and that they were unable to pay the full amount of judgment because of economic hardship	Notice must be given to parties in original action	Court shall comply with the request if requirements met  If no objection filed within 7 days of filing a petition, court may process without a hearing  If objection filed within 7 days of filing the petition, the court shall hold hearing and may require tenant to submit a <i>financial statement</i> .	16(c)	

<sup>1</sup> “Lessor action” is defined in the statute as a civil action against the owner/manager relating to breach of warranty, breach of rental agreement, or violation of any other law. Under 16(c) and 16(d), the petitioner/tenant can have no “lessor action” prior to 4 years of filing a petition to seal a non-payment eviction that is not satisfied or 7 years prior to a fault eviction. It is unlikely that a tenant will become a lessor or owner/manager and be sued by a tenant in the 4 or 7 years prior to filing a petition.

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<b>Fault Eviction</b>	7 years after conclusion of the case including exhaustion of appeal rights  No “fault” eviction (or “lessor action”) brought in Massachusetts in 7 years before request	Notice shall be given to parties in original action	Court shall comply with request if requirements met  If no objection filed within 7 days of filing petition, court may process without hearing	16(d)
<b>139/19 Civil Action</b> Where landlord obtains judgment in its favor	7 years after conclusion of the case including exhaustion of appeal rights  No 139/19 or “fault” eviction case brought in Massachusetts in the 7 years before request  Not convicted of any 139/19 criminal offense in the 7 years before request	Notice shall be given to parties in original action	Hearing required  Court shall schedule a hearing to see if requirements met and the sealing is in the interest of “justice and public safety”	16(e)
<b>139/19 Civil Action</b> Where landlord does NOT obtain a judgment	Immediately after conclusion of the case including exhaustion of appeal rights	Notice shall be given to parties in original action	Statute is silent as to whether a hearing is required or petition can be processed administratively	16(e)

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<b>Access to sealed eviction records for limited purposes only</b>		
By party or party's representative	Must petition court to obtain access using a court form, called " <i>Request of Release of Information</i> "	16(h)
Consumer Reporting Agency which assembles and evaluates consumer credit or other information on consumers and furnishes it to third parties	Information contained in a court record that is sealed shall be removed from the consumer report or from the calculation of any score or recommendation within 30 days of sealing  Attorney General enforces this section and if violated, the consumer reporting agency is liable to consumer for actual damages, costs, and reasonable attorneys fees	16(i)
For purposes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public Safety</li> <li>● Scholarly/Educational</li> <li>● Journalistic</li> <li>● Governmental</li> </ul>	For good cause using a court form (called " <i>Request for Release of Information</i> ")  Court has discretion to make information available and must balance interests of litigants and public with the interests of the requesting party  No personal identifying information can be released unless court determines appropriate <u>and</u> necessary to fulfill purpose of the request  Personal information cannot be used for commercial purposes	16(f)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collection of money judgment</li> <li>● Pursue a criminal investigation or prosecution</li> <li>● Where entered into evidence in criminal prosecution that resulted in a criminal charge</li> </ul>	Must use a court form, called " <i>Request for Release of Information,</i> " for court to make the determination that information is necessary or appropriate	16(g)
<b>Other protections when tenants apply for housing or credit</b>		
Applications for housing or credit that seek information on prior evictions must have a required statement that can say "no record" where sealed. This right must also be stated on court's <i>Petition to Seal</i> .	Attorney General enforces this section and an entity is liable if the Attorney General issues a written warning and entity fails to address the violation within 90 days	16(j)