

HOUSE BILL 491

N1, L2
HB 1068/19 – ENT

01r2006

By: **Delegate Rosenberg**

Introduced and read first time: January 24, 2020

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Landlord and Tenant – Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent – Lead Risk**
3 **Reduction Compliance**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring an action for repossession for failure to pay rent to contain
5 certain statements on whether the property is registered or licensed under certain
6 local law or regulation and whether the property is an affected property under
7 certain lead-based paint abatement laws; authorizing a court to adjourn a certain
8 trial to enable either party to obtain documents or other proof of claim or defense
9 under certain circumstances; repealing a certain prohibition against raising as an
10 issue of fact a landlord's compliance with certain requirements related to
11 lead-based paint abatement; requiring a landlord to provide direct evidence of
12 certain required information under certain circumstances; requiring the court to
13 determine the amount of rent and late fees due if a landlord has met a certain
14 evidentiary burden; requiring a rental property in Baltimore City to be in compliance
15 with certain lead-based paint abatement requirements before a landlord may file a
16 complaint for repossession of the property for failure to pay rent; authorizing a court
17 in Baltimore City to adjourn a certain trial to enable a party to procure certain
18 witnesses or obtain documents or other proof of claim or defense under certain
19 circumstances; making stylistic changes; and generally relating to actions for
20 repossession for failure to pay rent.

21 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
22 Article – Real Property
23 Section 8–401(a)
24 Annotated Code of Maryland
25 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

26 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
27 Article – Real Property
28 Section 8–401(b) and (c)
29 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2015 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
The Public Local Laws of Baltimore City
Section 9–2 and 9–5(a)
Article 4 – Public Local Laws of Maryland
(1979 Edition and 1997 Supplement, and 2000 Supplement, as amended)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Real Property

8–401.

(a) Whenever the tenant or tenants fail to pay the rent when due and payable, it shall be lawful for the landlord to have again and repossess the premises.

(b) (1) Whenever any landlord shall desire to repossess any premises to which the landlord is entitled under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the landlord or the landlord's duly qualified agent or attorney shall file the landlord's written complaint under oath or affirmation, in the District Court of the county wherein the property is situated:

(i) Describing in general terms the property sought to be repossessed;

(ii) Setting forth the name of each tenant to whom the property is rented or any assignee or subtenant;

(iii) Stating the amount of rent and any late fees due and unpaid, less the amount of any utility bills, fees, or security deposits paid by a tenant under § 7–309 of the Public Utilities Article;

(iv) Requesting to repossess the premises and, if requested by the landlord, a judgment for the amount of rent due, costs, and any late fees, less the amount of any utility bills, fees, or security deposits paid by a tenant under § 7–309 of the Public Utilities Article;

(v) If applicable, stating that, to the best of the landlord's knowledge, the tenant is deceased, intestate, and without next of kin; [and]

(VI) IF THE PROPERTY IS REQUIRED BY LOCAL LAW OR REGULATION TO OPERATE UNDER A VALID REGISTRATION OR LICENSE ISSUED BY A STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION, STATING THAT THE PROPERTY IS REGISTERED OR LICENSED AND STATING THE REGISTRATION OR LICENSE NUMBER

1 **FOR THE PROPERTY TO BE REPOSSESSED; AND**

2 [(vi)] **(VII)** If the property to be repossessed is an affected property as
3 defined in § 6–801 of the Environment Article, stating that the **PROPERTY IS AN**
4 **AFFECTED PROPERTY AND THAT THE** landlord has registered the affected property as
5 required under § 6–811 of the Environment Article and renewed the registration as
6 required under § 6–812 of the Environment Article and:

7 1. A. If the current tenant moved into the property on or
8 after February 24, 1996, stating the inspection certificate number for the inspection
9 conducted for the current tenancy as required under § 6–815(c) of the Environment Article;
10 or

11 B. On or after February 24, 2006, stating the inspection
12 certificate number for the inspection conducted for the current tenancy as required under
13 § 6–815(c), § 6–817(b), or § 6–819(f) of the Environment Article; or

14 2. Stating that the owner is unable to provide an inspection
15 certificate number because:

16 A. The owner has requested that the tenant allow the owner
17 access to the property to perform the work required under Title 6, Subtitle 8 of the
18 Environment Article;

19 B. The owner has offered to relocate the tenant in order to
20 allow the owner to perform work if the work will disturb the paint on the interior surfaces
21 of the property and to pay the reasonable expenses the tenant would incur directly related
22 to the relocation; and

23 C. The tenant has refused to allow access to the owner or
24 refused to vacate the property in order for the owner to perform the required work.

25 (2) For the purpose of the court's determination under subsection (c) of this
26 section the landlord shall also specify the amount of rent due for each rental period under
27 the lease, the day that the rent is due for each rental period, and any late fees for overdue
28 rent payments.

29 (3) The District Court shall issue its summons, directed to any constable or
30 sheriff of the county entitled to serve process, and ordering the constable or sheriff to notify
31 the tenant, assignee, or subtenant by first-class mail:

32 (i) To appear before the District Court at the trial to be held on the
33 fifth day after the filing of the complaint; and

34 (ii) To answer the landlord's complaint to show cause why the
35 demand of the landlord should not be granted.

(4) (i) The constable or sheriff shall proceed to serve the summons upon the tenant, assignee, or subtenant or their known or authorized agent as follows:

1. If personal service is requested and any of the persons whom the sheriff shall serve is found on the property, the sheriff shall serve any such persons; or

2. If personal service is requested and none of the persons whom the sheriff is directed to serve shall be found on the property and, in all cases where personal service is not requested, the constable or sheriff shall affix an attested copy of the summons conspicuously upon the property.

(ii) The affixing of the summons upon the property after due notification to the tenant, assignee, or subtenant by first-class mail shall conclusively be presumed to be a sufficient service to all persons to support the entry of a default judgment for possession of the premises, together with court costs, in favor of the landlord, but it shall not be sufficient service to support a default judgment in favor of the landlord for the amount of rent due.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (1) through (4) of this subsection:

(i) In an action to repossess nonresidential property under this section, service of process on a tenant:

1. Shall be directed to the sheriff of the appropriate county or municipality; and

2. On plaintiff's request, may be directed to any person authorized under the Maryland Rules to serve process; and

(ii) In Wicomico County, in an action to repossess any premises under this section, service of process on a tenant may be directed to any person authorized under the Maryland Rules to serve process.

(6) (i) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (3) through (5) of this subsection, if the landlord certifies to the court in the written complaint required under paragraph (1) of this subsection that, to the best of the landlord's knowledge, the tenant is deceased, intestate, and without next of kin, the District Court shall issue its summons, directed to any constable or sheriff of the county entitled to serve process, and ordering the constable or sheriff to notify the occupant of the premises or the next of kin of the deceased tenant, if known, by personal service:

1. To appear before the District Court at the trial to be held on the fifth day after the filing of the complaint; and

2. To answer the landlord's complaint to show cause why the

1 demand of the landlord should not be granted.

2 (ii) 1. The constable or sheriff shall proceed to serve the
3 summons upon the occupant of the premises or the next of kin of the deceased tenant, if
4 known, as follows:

5 A. If any of the persons whom the sheriff is directed to serve
6 are found on the property or at another known address, the sheriff shall serve any such
7 persons; or

8 B. If none of the persons whom the sheriff is directed to serve
9 are found on the property or at another known address, the constable or sheriff shall affix
10 an attested copy of the summons conspicuously upon the property.

11 2. The affixing of the summons upon the property shall
12 conclusively be presumed to be a sufficient service to all persons to support the entry of a
13 default judgment for possession of the premises, together with court costs, in favor of the
14 landlord, but it shall not be sufficient service to support a default judgment in favor of the
15 landlord for the amount of rent due.

16 (c) (1) If, at the trial on the fifth day indicated in subsection (b) of this section,
17 the court is satisfied that the interests of justice will be better served by an adjournment to
18 enable either party to procure their necessary witnesses **OR TO OBTAIN DOCUMENTS OR**
19 **OTHER PROOF OF CLAIM OR DEFENSE**, the court may adjourn the trial for a period not
20 exceeding [1 day] **10 DAYS**, except with the consent of all parties, the trial may be
21 adjourned for a longer period of time.

22 (2) (i) [The] **IN A PROCEEDING UNDER THIS SECTION, THE**
23 **LANDLORD SHALL PROVIDE DIRECT EVIDENCE OF THE** information required under
24 subsection (b)(1)(vi) **AND (VII)** of this section [may not be an issue of fact in a trial under
25 this section].

26 (ii) If, when the trial occurs, it appears to the satisfaction of the
27 court, that **THE LANDLORD HAS MET THE BURDEN OF PROVIDING DIRECT EVIDENCE**
28 **UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH AND THAT** the rent, or any part of the
29 rent and late fees are actually due and unpaid, the court shall determine the amount of
30 rent and late fees due as of the date the complaint was filed less the amount of any utility
31 bills, fees, or security deposits paid by a tenant under § 7–309 of the Public Utilities Article,
32 if the trial occurs within the time specified by subsection (b)(3) of this section.

33 (iii) 1. If the trial does not occur within the time specified in
34 subsection (b)(3)(i) of this section and the tenant has not become current since the filing of
35 the complaint, the court, if the complaint so requests, shall enter a judgment in favor of the
36 landlord for possession of the premises and determine the rent and late fees due as of the
37 trial date.

1 court to be due and unpaid, together with the costs of the suit, the complaint against the
2 tenant shall be entered as being satisfied.

3 Article 4 – Baltimore City

4 9–2.

5 Whenever the tenant under any demise or agreement of rental, express or implied,
6 verbal or written, of lands or tenements, whether real estate or chattels real within the
7 limits of the City of Baltimore, shall fail to pay the rent thereunder when due and payable,
8 it shall be lawful for the lessor to have again and repossess the premises so rented **SO LONG**
9 **AS THE PREMISES COMPLY WITH THE REGISTRATION, PERMIT, OR LICENSE**
10 **REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN § 5–4 OF ARTICLE 13 OF THE BALTIMORE CITY CODE**
11 **AND §§ 6–811, 6–812, 6–815, 6–817, AND 6–819 OF THE ENVIRONMENT ARTICLE OF**
12 **THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND.** The filing of a complaint in summary ejectment
13 under this subtitle, the trial of said cause and the granting of a judgment of restitution
14 shall not preclude the plaintiff or the owner of said premises from filing and maintaining
15 an independent suit for rent due and unpaid.

16 9–5.

17 (a) If, at the trial aforesaid, the judge shall be satisfied the interest of justice will
18 be better served by an adjournment, [he] **TO ENABLE A PARTY TO PROCURE NECESSARY**
19 **WITNESSES OR OBTAIN DOCUMENTS OR OTHER PROOF OF A CLAIM OR DEFENSE, OR**
20 **FOR OTHER PURPOSES OF THE JUDGE’S DISCRETION, THE JUDGE** may adjourn the
21 trial for a period not exceeding [seven] **10** days, except by consent of the parties, and if at
22 said trial or due adjournment, as aforesaid, it shall appear to the satisfaction of the judge
23 before whom said complaint has been tried as aforesaid, that the rent or any part of the
24 rent for said premises is actually due and unpaid, then the said judge shall give judgment
25 in favor of said lessor for the amount of rent found due, with costs of suit, and shall order
26 that said tenant and all persons claiming or holding by or under said tenant shall yield and
27 render up possession of said premises unto said lessor, or unto [his] **THE LESSOR’S** duly
28 qualified agent or attorney within 4 days thereafter; provided, however, that upon
29 presentation of certificate signed by a practicing physician certifying that surrender of said
30 premises within said period of 4 days would endanger the health or life of any occupant
31 thereof, said judge may, at the trial or subsequent thereto, extend the time for such
32 surrender of the premises upon such terms and for such period or periods as [he] **THE**
33 **JUDGE** shall deem necessary and just. If the interval between the filing of the landlord’s
34 complaint and the trial of the cause shall be more than [three] **3** days, any order or
35 judgment of said court with respect to the payment of rent shall include all rent due and
36 unpaid up to and including the day of trial; and the proceedings amended to set forth the
37 basis of said judgment or order.

38 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
39 October 1, 2020.