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For a more comprehensive explanation of the service requirements, check out our [Comprehensive Guide to Evicting a Tenant in Washington State](#). However, the abbreviated service instructions below should suffice in 90+% of cases. You must be careful to correctly serve your tenant, because if you do not, a tenant's attorney will likely be able to invalidate your notice and you will have to re-notice the tenant and start the eviction process over from scratch.

### **How to Serve a Pre-lawsuit Unlawful Detainer Notice:**

1. Personal service: Hand a copy of the notice to each resident.
2. Substituted personal service:
  - a. Hand a copy of the notice to a person of suitable age and discretion who resides in the tenant's unit AND
  - b. mail enough copies of the notice for each resident to the tenant's address.
3. Posting and mailing: If and only if you knocked on the tenant's door but nobody answers, the law permits service by posting and mailing as follows:
  - a. Conspicuously post the notice on the tenant's door AND
  - b. mail enough copies of the notice for each resident to the tenant's address.

**Tip on Posting:** Notices should be taped to the door with the wording facing out. Take a picture of the notice once you've posted it in case your tenant claims you did not post it conspicuously.

**Tip on Mailing:** Mail the notice by regular first-class mail with a certificate of mailing. Do not mail it via certified or registered mail, since the tenant can just refuse to sign for the letter and claim that notice is ineffective. Also, make sure to send enough copies of each notice for each adult resident in the unit. Each notice should list the names of all legal tenants, but does not need to list the names of all residents if they are not tenants.

**Info on the 20-Day Notice to Vacate Specifically:** Only use this notice if your tenant is currently renting periodically (usually month-by-month), or if the term of their lease is about to expire.

**Final Notes:** Do not serve this instructional page with the notice on the next page. This notice may not be sufficient in your jurisdiction. This notice does not constitute legal representation or legal advice.

**20-Day Notice to Terminate Tenancy**

To: \_\_\_\_\_,

AND TO ALL OTHER PERSONS IN POSSESSION of the premises located at:  
\_\_\_\_\_ :

You are hereby notified that your tenancy of the above-referenced premises is terminated on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ and on that day, you will be required to surrender possession of the premises to the landlord pursuant to RCW 59.18.200.

This notice does not necessarily mean you've done anything wrong. When you are in a month-to-month or other periodic tenancy, either party may terminate the tenancy by providing the other party with 20 day's written notice—with or without cause.

You must vacate the premises within 20 days or we will commence an unlawful detainer (eviction) action against you. If you do not vacate the premises within 20 days, we will file an unlawful detainer lawsuit against you and ask the court to require you to pay all damages allowed by law, including attorney's fees, court costs, and all rent and other fees that are past due.

For reference, attorney's fees alone often total more than \$1,000.00 for a contested unlawful detainer proceeding. Additionally, if we win the lawsuit, an eviction will show up on your record, which may impair your ability to rent in the future, obtain loan approval, or work for certain employers.

If you have been served with more than one type of notice, you must comply separately with each kind of notice. A different deadline mentioned in other notices does not alter the deadline for this notice. Each notice requires compliance with its terms.

DATED this day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Signature of Landlord or Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Landlord/Agent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord/Agent's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_