

**SAMPLE LETTER FOR ILLEGAL LOCKOUTS**  
**For Tenants In Suburban Cook County**

**Who should use this sample illegal lockout letter?**

Tenants in the Cook County suburbs (excluding Evanston and Mount Prospect) who have been illegally locked out of their unit by their landlord.

**What is an illegal lockout?**

An illegal lockout is when your landlord tries to prevent you from living in or accessing your unit. Your landlord can NOT:

- Change, remove or add locks;
- Remove or block doors and windows;
- Remove appliances or fixtures;
- Cut off utility services like electricity, gas, heat, & water;
- Remove personal property;
- Cause injury to you or your property;
- Threaten to do any of the above

**What do I do with this letter?**

Fill in the blanks, check the boxes that apply, sign it, and give it to your landlord. Keep a copy for yourself.

**What other options do I have if my landlord doesn't stop the illegal lockout?**

- Call your local police department or 911. You can show them a copy of this letter.
- Call your local building department or township.
- Call a legal services attorney or other housing advocate.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Landlord's Name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Landlord's Address)

\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Landlord),

I am a tenant at \_\_\_\_\_ (Address and unit #)  
and am writing this letter to inform you of an illegal lockout that happened on or around  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Date).

This lockout is against the law. Under the **Cook County Residential Tenant and Landlord Ordinance (RTLO), Section 42-813**, lockouts are illegal. Lockouts are any action (or threat of action) by a landlord that prevent a tenant from living in or accessing their unit.

The illegal lockout that happened included (*Check any that apply*):

- removing or adding locks
- removing or blocking doors and windows
- interfering with utilities such as electricity, gas, hot or cold water, plumbing, heat, telephone service, or internet
- removing personal property
- removing appliances
- causing injury to a tenant or their property
- threat to do any of the above
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

An illegal lockout is an offense that violates the Cook County Residential Tenant and Landlord Ordinance and can result in a money judgment of two months' rent or twice the actual damages that I've suffered and attorney's fees.

I am demanding that you immediately stop this illegal lockout and restore access to my unit.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ (Tenant Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Tenant Name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Phone)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Email)