

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2019 SESSION

CHAPTER 43

An Act to amend and reenact § 55-248.34:1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; tenant's right of redemption.

[S 1445]

Approved February 19, 2019

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 55-248.34:1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 55-248.34:1. Landlord's acceptance of rent with reservation.

A. The landlord may accept full or partial payment of all rent and receive an order of possession from a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to an unlawful detainer action filed under Article 13 (§ 8.01-124 et seq.) of Chapter 3 of Title 8.01 and proceed with eviction under § 55-248.38:2, provided that the landlord has stated in a written notice to the tenant that any and all amounts owed to the landlord by the tenant, including payment of any rent, damages, money judgment, award of attorney fees, and court costs, would be accepted with reservation and would not constitute a waiver of the landlord's right to evict the tenant from the dwelling unit. Such notice may be included in a written termination notice given by the landlord to the tenant in accordance with § 55-248.31, and if so included, nothing herein shall be construed by a court of law or otherwise as requiring such landlord to give the tenant subsequent written notice. If the dwelling unit is a public housing unit or other housing unit subject to regulation by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, nothing herein shall be construed to require that written notice be given to any public agency paying a portion of the rent under the rental agreement. If a landlord enters into a new written rental agreement with the tenant prior to eviction, an order of possession obtained prior to the entry of such new rental agreement is not enforceable.

B. However, the tenant may pay or present to the court a redemption tender for payment of all rent due and owing as of the return date, including late charges, attorney fees and court costs, at or before the first return date on an action for unlawful detainer. For purposes of this section, "redemption tender" means a written commitment to pay all rent due and owing as of the return date, including late charges, attorney fees, and court costs, by a local government or nonprofit entity within 10 days of said return date.

C. If the tenant presents a redemption tender to the court at the return date, the court shall continue the action for unlawful detainer for 10 days following the return date for payment to the landlord of all rent due and owing as of the return date, including late charges, attorney fees, and court costs and dismissal of the action upon such payment. Should the landlord not receive full payment of all rent due and owing as of the return date, including late charges, attorney fees, and court costs, within 10 days of the return date, the court shall, without further evidence, grant to the landlord judgment for all amounts due and immediate possession of the premises.

D. In cases of unlawful detainer, a tenant may pay the landlord or ~~his attorney~~ *the landlord's attorney*, or pay into court, all (i) rent due and owing as of the court date as contracted for in the rental agreement, (ii) other charges and fees as contracted for in the rental agreement, (iii) late charges contracted for in the rental agreement, (iv) reasonable attorney fees as contracted for in the rental agreement or as provided by law, and (v) costs of the proceeding as provided by law, at which time the unlawful detainer proceeding shall be dismissed. *If such payment has not been made as of the return date for the unlawful detainer, the tenant may pay to the landlord, the landlord's attorney, or the court all amounts claimed on the summons in unlawful detainer, including current rent, damages, late fees, costs of court, any civil recovery, attorney fees, and sheriff fees, no less than two business days before the date scheduled by the officer to whom the writ of eviction has been delivered to be executed. Any payments made by the tenant shall be by cashier's check, certified check, or money order.* A tenant may invoke the rights granted in this section no more than one time during any 12-month period of continuous residency in the dwelling unit, regardless of the term of the rental agreement or any renewal term thereof.