



Script 1 - The Residential Tenancies Act & Board

Melody (tenant): "I don't know who to talk to! My landlord won't answer my calls, my sink is leaking, and I think my ceiling has mold."

Ryan (friend): "Did you try calling the landlord?"

Melody: "Yes, but I mean legally! Who makes sure landlords follow the rules?"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "The Residential Tenancies Program! They handle problems between landlords and tenants in Nova Scotia. It's part of Service Nova Scotia and follows the Residential Tenancies Act."

Melody: "Why are rental laws so confusing?"

Dahlia: "Most of Canada (except Quebec) uses a system called Common Law. This means past cases can affect how the law is applied. Some rules in the Residential Tenancies Act are clear, but others depend on the situation. The law also changes over time based on new cases and government decisions."

Ryan: "So the law isn't set in stone?"

Dahlia: "Exactly! That's why it's important to check with the Residential Tenancies Program. They have the latest rules. You can file complaints, ask for a hearing, or get help from Service Nova Scotia."

Melody: "So I don't just have to put up with my landlord ignoring me?"

Dahlia: "No! You have rights—make sure you use them!"

Know your rights! Get more information at:

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Script 2) When does the Tenancy Act Apply?

Jordan (tenant): "I was staying at a motel while looking for a place to live. The owner gave me a discount if I booked three months, so I did. But after one month, they told me to leave because they're tearing the building down. But I already paid for three months! Can they really do that?!"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Actually... NO! Since you've been there for more than 28 days and paying monthly, the motel might legally count as your landlord. They probably can't make you leave without proper notice and compensation."

Jordan: "So I don't have to sleep in my car?"

Dahlia: "No! File for a hearing with the Residential Tenancies Program to make sure your rights are protected."

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Script 3) Application Fees & Security Deposits

Chris (tenant): "I was looking for an apartment in Halifax for school. I found one on Facebook and contacted the landlord. They told me I had to send a damage deposit and first month's rent to 'hold' the apartment. So, I sent the money. But they never gave me a lease to sign. A few days before move-in, the landlord said I didn't make enough money to rent the place. They gave back my first month's rent but kept the security deposit as a 'holding fee.' Can they do that? What can I do?"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Some landlords think they can do whatever they want! But it's **ILLEGAL** to ask for a security deposit without a lease. Since you never signed a lease or moved in, they have to return your money. File for a hearing with Residential Tenancies so you don't pay for an apartment you never lived in!"

Chris: "That's a relief!"

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Script 4) Lease Types & Terms

Landlord: "Hi Taylor, your new landlord here! You need to sign a brand-new lease by Friday—it's company policy!"

Taylor (tenant): "I've lived here for years on a month-to-month lease. Do I really have to sign?"

Landlord: "Don't worry! I only changed the landlord's name. Trust me."

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "No! You're on a Periodic Lease, which renews automatically. A new landlord doesn't change that—you don't have to sign anything new!"

Taylor: "That's a relief."

Landlord: "Actually, remember when you signed a new lease last year? It was a Fixed-Term Lease, and we've decided not to renew it. You have to move out."

Taylor: "WHAT?! But this is my home!"

Dahlia: "Classic landlord trick! If you're on a Fixed-Term Lease, the landlord can just decide not to renew it. But since you were already on a Periodic Lease, they can't legally force you to change it!"

Landlord: "You have to listen to me, Taylor!"

Dahlia: "Not today, Mr. J.! Since he was already on a Periodic Lease, it was not legal for the landlord to trick you into changing the lease term. Taylor, file for a hearing with the Residential Tenancies Program—they'll see right through this! Never sign anything just because a landlord says it's 'policy.'"

Taylor: "That's a relief!"

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Script 5) Landlord Rules

Landlord: "Your girlfriend has been here too much. No overnight guests!"

Jamie (friend of tenant): "Seriously, no overnight guests? What is this, a boarding school from 1952? I'm not even here that much. I just really like pizza."

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Exactly, Jamie. That rule is unreasonable. The Residential Tenancies Act says landlords can't make rules that are unfair. Even if it's in your lease, a rule like this might not hold up. Your girlfriend staying over sometimes is NOT a problem."

Alex (tenant): "I think he's just mad because I'm paying less rent than the new tenants. He's trying to push me out."

Jamie: "Can he really do that? Evict someone over pizza nights?"

Dahlia: "No. You can't be evicted without a good reason, like not paying rent or damaging the property. A guest staying over once in a while is not a reason for eviction. Also, if the rule wasn't clearly explained in the lease, or if it's unreasonable, you can challenge it. Keep enjoying your pizza nights! Just make sure to keep track of when you have a guest. If the landlord tries to take action, you'll have proof that the rule is unreasonable."

Alex: "Thanks, Dahlia, the legal pizza hero!"

Dahlia: "Thanks, Alex. Now, off to my next pizza crisis!"

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Script 6) Roommates

Alex (roommate): "So, my roommate Evie went on 'vacation' six months ago... and never came back."

Mr. J. (Landlord): "You owe me six months' rent! And this month's rent, too!"

Alex (renter): "But I've been paying Evie every month!"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Ah, the classic disappearing roommate!

Unfortunately, both of you are responsible for the rent. Since you and Evie are jointly and severally liable, the landlord can go after either or both of you for the full amount. And since Evie disappeared, that means you're responsible for the full rent."

Alex: "But I didn't know Evie wasn't paying the landlord! I'm innocent!"

Dahlia: "It's always best to pay the landlord directly. Also, maybe get a roommate agreement next time—at least you'll have something in writing if a roommate vanishes."

Alex: "Well, I guess I better start a crowdfunding campaign... 'Help Me Pay a Magician's Rent'?"

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Script 7) Tenant Insurance

Jamie (tenant): "After last night's storm, my vinyl music collection and even my goldfish's bowl got water damage! I filed an insurance claim and got paid for the mess. But now there's mold, and the landlord wants me to leave so they can 'fix' it!"

Mr. J. (Landlord): "Dear tenant, your apartment is now under my renovation order! That mold can't stay, so you must leave immediately!"

Jamie: "Wait, what? I have tenant insurance! The repairs aren't that big—they don't even need a building permit!"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Calm down, Jamie. Tenant insurance is not just for your belongings—it also protects you if something bad happens. And yes, landlords can require it. But if the repairs are small, you don't have to leave your home just because of a little mold!"

Jamie: "So I can stay while they fix the place?"

Dahlia: "Exactly! The tenancy board says that if the repairs are minor and can be done while you're still living there, you have the right to stay in your apartment."

Jamie: "My insurance saved more than just my vinyl music collection today!"

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Script 8) Rent Increases

Casey (tenant): "So, my one-year lease is almost up, and I really don't want to move. Mr. J. Landlord says I can renew—if I pay 10% more in rent. I mean, it's expensive, but... I said yes because what else can I do?"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Casey, I think you forget about the 5% rent cap that's in effect from January 2024 to December 2027!"

Casey: "5% cap?! I thought that was only for month-to-month leases or something!"

Dahlia: "Actually, Casey, that cap applies to all tenants—fixed-term leases included, as long as you're staying in the same unit. Your landlord can't increase your rent by more than 5% per year during that period. You can apply to Residential Tenancies to get that overpayment back."

Mr. J. Landlord: "I am the Rule Maker! I can raise rent as I please—10%! 15%! Perhaps 37%!"

Landlord Tenant Board Adjudicator: "Overruled! There's a legal cap of 5%. The rent increase was unlawful! You must refund the tenant for the value of the rent increase and reduce the rent immediately!"

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Script 9) Repairs & Pest Control (1/2)

Jordan (tenant): "I love my space—it's got character and, yes, a bit of clutter, but it's clean and cozy!"

Mr. J. (Landlord): "Ah, Jordan! Your place is far too... untidy! I demand you get rid of those extra knick-knacks and free up space. This is a violation of the Statutory Conditions!"

Jordan: "My apartment is perfectly clean. I'm not hosting a hoarder convention here!"

Dahlia Legault (Legal Aid Worker): "Mr. J. Landlord, cleanliness doesn't mean a few personal touches are a violation. And if Jordan breaks something, yes, he has to pay to fix it—but general clutter is not grounds for eviction!"

Mr. J. (Landlord): "Well, perhaps a bit more order is needed..."

Dahlia Legault: "For a landlord to evict you for uncleanliness, they need to show that the apartment is not just untidy, but so messy that it's uninhabitable or causing significant damage to the unit. Stand up for your rights! Do your best to clean up the space or get help to do so, but don't let your landlord push you out!"

Jordan: "Guess I'll keep my charming decor and my rights intact—thanks to Dahlia!"

Morgan (tenant): "I just moved into this place for the 'city life,' but nobody mentioned sharing my kitchen with a family of mice! I told Mr. J. (Landlord) that I expect him to help..."

Mr. J. (Landlord): "Rodents?! That's clearly your problem. Please pay for the exterminator yourself."



Script 9) Repairs & Pest Control (2/2)

Morgan: "I'm pretty sure you're responsible for pest control. I just moved in last week! It's not like I invited these rodents over."

Mr. J. (Landlord): "Unbelievable! I'm the Rule Maker! Surely I can shift the blame—and the bill! I'm sure you packed them in your luggage."

Landlord Tenant Board Adjudicator: "I am the Rule Maker! And I'm here to tell you that, under the Residential Tenancies rules, landlords must keep the unit pest-free—unless the tenant caused the infestation. The cost is on you, Mr. J. Landlord. You cannot pass the cost to the tenant. Comply—or face further legal action!"

Morgan: "Guess the mice will have to find a new place to hang out. Thank you, Your Honor!"

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Script 10) Tenants' Responsibilities

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Dahlia Legault (Legal Aid Worker): "Mr. J. Landlord, cleanliness doesn't mean a few personal touches are a violation. And if Jordan breaks something, yes, he has to pay to fix it—but general mess is not grounds for eviction!"

Mr. J. (Landlord): "Well, perhaps a bit more order is needed..."

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Script 11) Pets

Pat (tenant): "Meet Max, my furry friend! When I moved in, my lease had a strict no-pets rule, but my landlord told me it was fine to have a dog. They've known I've had Max for years."

Mr. J. Landlord: "Stop right there, tenant! You're breaking the rules by having a pet! Eviction time!"

Pat: "Wait—you told me years ago it was fine to have a pet!"

Dahlia Legault (Legal Aid Worker): "Listen up, Pat. Even if your landlord gave you verbal permission, it doesn't count if it's not in writing. The no-pets rule still stands. Landlords can ban pets, unless it's a registered Service Dog."

Mr. J. Landlord: "Rules are rules! You need to follow them or leave immediately!"

Dahlia Legault: "Not so fast. If the landlord hasn't enforced the rule before, they might lose the right to enforce it—this is called promissory estoppel. However, they can still enforce the rule with proper notice, usually when the lease is up for renewal."

Pat: "So because I don't have it in writing, he can change his mind?"

Dahlia Legault: "Exactly. Without a written agreement, your landlord can enforce the pet ban and even try to evict you. Always get it in writing!"

Pat: "Looks like Max and I need to find a new home... one where I can get my pet approval in writing!"

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Script 12) Ending a Lease

Andy (tenant): "Big news, everyone! I just landed my dream job as a stage manager in another city. I'm moving on April 15—time to pack up and head out!"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Hold on, Andy. Before you go, did you give your landlord the proper notice?"

Andy: "I was just going to say goodbye and maybe give a two-week notice for good measure?"

Dahlia: "Two weeks? That's not enough. Since you're on a month-to-month lease, you need to give one full month's notice in writing, using Form C: Tenant's Notice to Quit."

Andy: "A month?! My new job starts in two weeks!"

Dahlia: "That's the rule. If you leave early, you might still have to pay the rent for the full month."

Andy: "I can't delay my start date..."

Dahlia: "Then you'll need to follow the rules. Fill out that Form C and give proper notice, or you might get stuck with another month's rent."

Andy: "Alright, I'll do it the right way! Thanks, Dahlia. Next stop: BC's best stages—no legal drama!"

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Script 13) Ending a Lease Early

Billie (tenant): "My dad fell seriously ill in Winnipeg, and I had to leave Nova Scotia immediately—there was no time to wait until the end of my lease!"

Dahlia Legault (Legal Aid Worker): "That's a tough situation, Billie. But remember, if you left without giving proper notice, you might still be responsible for rent!"

Billie: "I sent a quick email to my landlord saying I was moving out as soon as possible."

Dahlia: "That's what we call abandoning a lease. You can leave early, but you may still owe rent until they find a new tenant or until the lease ends. By notifying your landlord immediately, you've given them time to look for someone else."

Billie: "So if my landlord rents the unit to someone else, I don't owe rent beyond that date?"

Dahlia: "Exactly. The landlord has a duty to try to mitigate their damages. They can't collect rent from you and from a new tenant at the same time. If you leave early, you might want to check in with your landlord or even ask a neighbor if the unit is re-rented."

Billie: "What a relief! Crisis managed—hopefully, I won't be paying for March!"

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Script 14) Medical Notice to Quit a Tenancy (1/2)

Peter (tenant): "I'm in a crisis. My landlord refuses to do anything about this rat infestation—there's literally a rat in my bed right now! I can't sleep, I can't study, and I have exams coming up. My friend has an extra room I could move into, but I can't afford to pay rent in two places. I'm stuck!"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Have you documented everything?"

Peter: "Should I be writing it all down?"

Dahlia: "Absolutely. Keep all the messages you've sent to your landlord, photos, and even this video if you want. The more evidence, the better."

Peter: "That's great. I've already written several letters to my landlord telling them about the problem and how it's affecting my mental health. They don't even bother to respond! Even if I get out of this lease, I'm ruining my degree. I can't just move out during finals!"

Dahlia: "Consider filing a medical notice to quit. If your doctor confirms that the rodent issue is harming your mental health, you can submit Form G and H. The medical notice is effective with one month's notice. That way, you won't have to pay rent at two places."

Peter: "Okay, I'll talk to my doctor. The landlord keeps ignoring me, so maybe this'll finally make them take action—or let me leave. Either way, I'm done with these furry nightmares."



Script 14) Medical Notice to Quit a Tenancy (1/2)

Dahlia: "Just keep in mind, your landlord has the right to ask questions about your medical conditions and how they relate to the rental unit. Medical notices to quit should not be used lightly, as you may need to prove your case at a hearing. Consider talking to legal aid before serving a medical notice to quit."

Peter: "I got it. Looks like I can file a medical notice to quit—no more nights with whiskers in my face!"

Dahlia: "What did I tell you? Document everything, follow the process, and poof! (she vanishes, and Peter looks all around as he hears her voice fill the room) You're free from this rodent rodeo."

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Script 15) Notice to Quit vs. Eviction Orders

Tenant: "Okay, so yesterday, my neighbor decided their snow belonged on my walkway, and we had a... disagreement."

Friend: "Oh no, this doesn't sound good!"

Tenant: "Well, this morning, my landlord storms over, waving a paper and says, 'You're a danger to the building! Get out in five days!' Five days?! That's way too soon. I was freaking out. But turns out, this is just a Form F - Notice to Quit, not an actual Eviction Order. Translation: they can't force me to leave just yet. I can challenge this if I want to stay. Plus, they can't show my unit to anyone until we go to a hearing."

Friend: "What a relief!"

Tenant: "Moral of the story? Don't get freaked out by a fancy letter. A Notice to Quit sounds scary, but it's not the same as an Eviction Order! And you can't get an eviction order without having a hearing first!"

Friend: "Well, even if you don't have to leave, you might want to reconsider the name-calling next time. You could also let your landlord know that you don't plan to leave and that you'll change your behavior in the future."

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Script 16) Renovictions

Tenant: "My landlord just told me they're doing 'major renovations,' and I have to leave. I'm picturing bulldozers, wrecking balls... they said it'd be uninhabitable for months. Even the neighbors who've been here for 20 years packed up and moved out. But a few weeks after they left, nothing happens—no renovations, no wrecking balls, not even a hammer in sight! In fact, I think there's new tenants living in their old unit! So, I did some research on the Halifax Data Hub, checked for building permits... and found nothing.

That's when it hit me: this so-called 'renoviction' might be more like an 'I just want you out'-viction. So, I march over to Access Nova Scotia, file for a hearing, and guess what? Residential Tenancies says the eviction was fraudulent and orders the landlord to either get a building permit or let me stay in my unit!"

Moral of the story? "If your landlord is talking about big renovations but can't produce a building permit, check the city records and don't let anyone bulldoze your rights!"

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Script 17) All Other Evictions

Tenant: "I was just served a Form F Notice to Quit—my landlord says he needs my apartment for his mother. And they gave me only 7 days to pack up my life!"

Tenant: "I did some research and found out Mr. Landlord owns a whole portfolio of properties. So, why does his mom need to move into my unit? I also looked her up on social media, and it turns out she's living in a huge mansion in BC! Meanwhile, I'm in a mouse-infested basement—no way she's leaving her house by the ocean to live here. It's clear this eviction isn't exactly in 'good faith.'"

Tenant: "Instead of leaving, I filed a Form J to challenge the eviction at Residential Tenancies."

Tenant: "Fast-forward to the hearing, where the board listened to my story about why I'm not handing over my keys to someone's mom. And guess what? They ruled in my favor! So here I am, still in my apartment, safe from eviction—and with a great story to tell."

Moral of the story? If you get a notice that seems suspicious, challenge it. Your home isn't up for grabs just because someone claims their mom needs a new place!

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Script 18) Illegal Evictions

Tenant: "I just got a Notice to Quit from my landlord, and they want me out in 10 days. I don't know what to do."

Dahlia Legault (Legal Aid Worker): "Hold on, let's take a step back. First, did you get a Form F Notice to Quit, or something else?"

Tenant: "Yes, it's a Form F. The landlord says I have to leave because they want to move in, but 10 days isn't enough time!"

Dahlia Legault: "That's important. A Notice to Quit gives you notice, but it doesn't mean you have to leave right away. You have the right to challenge it if you think it's not fair."

Tenant: "So I don't have to leave in 10 days?"

Dahlia Legault: "Exactly. You have time to request a hearing with Residential Tenancies. It's important to file as soon as possible so you can present your case."

Tenant: "What if I don't leave and my landlord tries to evict me?"

Dahlia Legault: "If your landlord tries to force you out without following the legal process, that could be an illegal eviction. It's important to follow the proper steps to protect yourself."

Tenant: "Okay, I'll request a hearing and follow the process. Thanks for helping me understand my rights!"

If you receive a Notice to Quit, you have rights and the ability to challenge it. Always make sure your landlord follows the legal process!

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Script 19) Returning Security Deposits

Tenant: "Hi everyone! I just finished moving out of my apartment, and guess what? Mr. J. Landlord tried to charge me \$250 for 'deep cleaning'! But my carpet is so clean, you could practically eat off it! I left the place in perfect condition. Sure, there might be some normal wear and tear, but that's expected, right? The lease clearly states that my security deposit can only cover actual damages, unpaid rent, or lost keys—not for his idea of cleaning. And if he wants to keep any part of it, he needs my written consent.

Newsflash: I never signed off on that!

So, I did what any smart tenant would do: I told him, 'No way! You'll have to apply to Residential Tenancies within 10 days if you want to keep that money.' I challenged his claim, and at the hearing, I showed that my apartment was in great shape. His \$250 cleaning fee? Totally unreasonable! The Tenancy Officer ruled in my favor, and I got every single penny of my deposit back.

Moral of the story? Know your rights, document the condition of your home, and never let a landlord charge you for minor cleaning!"

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Script 20) Residential Tenancies Hearings

Sally (tenant): "My landlord's been causing problems, so I've filed for a hearing at Residential Tenancies, but I'm not sure how it works!"

Dahlia (Legal Aid Worker): "Don't worry, these hearings aren't as formal as a court. You don't need a lawyer unless you want one. You can also bring a tenant advocate. And the best part? Your landlord can't evict you while you're waiting for the hearing!"

Sally: "What's a tenant advocate?"

Dahlia: "A tenant advocate is someone who supports you during the process."

Sally: "So I'll get a Notice of Hearing with the date, instructions, and the Residential Tenancy Officer's contact info. It's all done by phone, no courtroom drama?"

Dahlia: "Exactly! It's more like a conference call where everyone promises to tell the truth. And if the officer offers mediation before the hearing, you could settle without a full hearing. Just don't miss the call, or the hearing might happen without you!"

Sally: "Got it. So, I just dial in, present my case, and the officer decides. If I don't like the decision, I have 10 days to appeal to Small Claims Court. Simple enough!"

Dahlia: "That's right! Just be prepared, have your evidence ready, and stay on the call. Your home is worth fighting for!"

- Dalhousie Legal Aid Service: <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas.html> Phone: 902-423-8105; Email: legalaid@dal.ca

- Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia, Legal Information Line: 1-800-665-9779 || 902-455-3135, email at questions@legalinfo.org, live chat at www.legalinfo.org