

# Discovery

## Representing Yourself in an Eviction

### Get information to prepare for your trial

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**Discovery** is the way to get the information you need from your landlord to prepare your case. When you ask for Discovery, your landlord must:

- Answer your questions in writing.
- Swear that everything they write is true.
- Give you the documents that you need to prepare your case.

### Act fast to get Discovery

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You must ask for Discovery soon after you get the **Summons and Complaint**. See instructions on the next page about deadlines.

Sometimes, landlords do not answer your questions or provide the documents you ask for. **If your landlord does not give you the information you ask for** in your Discovery, you can file a **Motion to Compel**. The Motion to Compel asks the court to **order** your landlord to respond to your Discovery. A Motion to Compel form and directions for using it are at the end of this booklet. See page 23.

### Try to get help

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This booklet does not take the place of a lawyer. Some legal services offices have clinics that can help you with your Answer and Discovery. To find out more about these clinics and for information on how to get legal help, see [Find a Lawyer](#).

There are also **Court Service Centers** located across the state that can help you fill out forms and give you information about court rules. To learn more, see [Court Service Center](#) on mass.gov. <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/court-service-centers>

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BOOKLET

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# How to Use Discovery

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## Fill out the form in this booklet

Fill in the top of the Discovery form the same way you filled in the top of your **Answer** form in **Booklet 3**.

Read over your **Answer**. Think about the information you need from your landlord to prove each of the defenses and counterclaims you have checked off.

Look at the **Discovery** form.

- Check off questions in the **INTERROGATORIES** section that help you prove your case. **You can check up to 30 questions.** Some boxes are already checked because every tenant needs their landlord to answer these questions in an eviction case.
- Check off the documents you need in the **DOCUMENTS REQUEST** section. You can ask for as many documents as you want that will help you prove your case.

If you have questions or you need documents that are not listed, write them in the blank spaces at the end of the Discovery form.

## File Discovery with your Answer

After you check the boxes for all the questions and documents you want in the Discovery Request:

1. Fill in your name and address on the last page. Check the box next to the way you plan to get these forms to your landlord or their lawyer.
2. You must get your Discovery form to your landlord, or their lawyer, and the court by the deadline.
  - It is best to file and serve your Discovery Requests at the same time you file your Answer.
  - Your Answer is due 3 business days before the date of the “Housing Specialist Status Conference” also called the “First-Tier Court Event (in Housing Court) or the “Case Management Conference” (in District Court).
  - **If you are not sure when your Answer is due, call the court clerk.**
  - At the District Court event, you can ask the judge to establish discovery deadlines tailored to your specific case.
3. Make 2 copies of the Discovery form. **Do not include these instructions.**
4. File the **original, signed** Answer and Discovery forms with the court by the Answer deadline. **Call the clerk before you file and ask them what the best way is to file.** You can:
  - Take it to the clerk’s office. If you hand-deliver to the court, ask the court to stamp the date on your copy so you have proof that you filed it on time.

- Send it to the court electronically. Use the court’s online filing system or call and ask the court if you can email them. This is the best way if you can do it! To learn how to e-file, see [How do I register to use e-filing](#).
  - Mail it, but **only** if it is at least a week before the deadline to ensure that it arrives by the deadline. Mail is slow and not reliable. You will lose important rights if the documents are late.
5. Deliver a **copy** of your Discovery and Answer to your landlord’s lawyer or your landlord by the Answer deadline. If there is a number on the “BBO#” line, your landlord has a lawyer. To deliver a copy, you can:
- **Hand-deliver** it to your landlord's lawyer or your landlord.
  - **E-mail it.** Your landlord’s **lawyer** must accept the copy you email them. You can find their email at the bottom of the Summons and Complaint. If your **landlord doesn’t have a lawyer**, ask your landlord if they will accept your Answer and Discovery by email. If they agree **in writing** in an email or text, you can email it. If your landlord does not agree, you must get it to them a different way.
  - **Fax it.** You can fax your landlord’s lawyer or your landlord, but only if they agree in writing to accept it by fax. If they do not agree, you must get a copy to them in a different way.
  - Mail it, but **ONLY** if it is at least a week before the deadline to ensure that they arrive by the deadline. Mail is slow and not reliable.
6. **Keep a copy** for yourself. Keep it safe and bring it with you when you go to court.

## Get Discovery responses within 10 days

Your landlord must answer your questions and give you the documents you asked for in **10 days** or less from the date they got your Discovery Form.

You can ask the judge to order your landlord to answer your Discovery if your landlord:

- Does not respond to your Discovery.
- Does not give you **all** the information you asked for.

The last 3 pages of this booklet are a **Motion to Compel Discovery form**. Use this motion to ask the judge to postpone your hearing until the landlord answers or responds fully to your Discovery.

## **Prepare for court**

When the landlord gives you the information you asked for in your Discovery, read their answers and look at all documents. Look for statements or information that helps you prove your case. For example, your landlord may admit that:

- You offered to pay rent.
- They knew about bad conditions in your apartment.
- They did not put your security deposit in a special bank account.

Also watch for contradictions in your landlord's story. For example,

- Your landlord may say they did not know about the bad conditions. But they also say they were in your apartment, or they hired people to do repairs.

## **Use Discovery at your trial**

At your trial:

- Tell the court if your landlord admitted important facts in their responses to your Discovery.
- You may also ask the landlord the same questions you asked in the Discovery Form. If your landlord gives a different answer, point out the difference to the judge or jury.
- You can ask the judge to look at documents that support your side of the story, including the documents the landlord gave you in response to your Discovery Form.

**DISCOVERY FORM**  
(Please print or type)  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**TRIAL COURT**

a. \_\_\_\_\_, ss:  
County

e. \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Court

f. \_\_\_\_\_  
Docket No. Summary Process

b. Rescheduled Trial Date: To be determined by the court

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
Plaintiff(s) – Landlord(s)

vs.

**DEFENDANT’S REQUEST  
FOR DISCOVERY (INTERROGATORIES  
AND DOCUMENT REQUESTS)**

d. \_\_\_\_\_  
Defendant(s) – Tenant(s)

**Notice to Plaintiff**

- A.** Under current court standing orders, the Court will notify the plaintiff of the first court event (Case Management Conference in District Court or First-Tier Court Event in Housing Court) and the plaintiff must then arrange for service of that notice on the defendants. This court event will be 30-60 days from the entry of the complaint, with one purpose being to try to settle the case.
- B.** You are required by law to answer the interrogatories (questions) checked off below truthfully and fully, under the pains and penalties of perjury. Before each of your answers, you must re-state the interrogatory to which you are responding. Include all information that is available to you and to those who work with and for you. You must also provide any and all requested documents in your possession or that of your agents or employees.
- C.** No later than ten (10) days (plus three days where service is by email) after you or your attorney receives this Request for Discovery, the court and the defendant must receive your responses to these questions and documents requested. Answers should be mailed or delivered to the defendant’s apartment (or, if represented by counsel, then emailed to the defendant’s attorney).
- D.** You are also required to supplement and/or amend your responses to this Discovery if after you have responded you learn:
- a. the identity of other persons with information about the questions asked (including expert witnesses you intend to have testify at trial); and/or
  - b. that any of the information you gave in the responses was incorrect when made or is no longer correct.

- E.** If any documents that are responsive to the requests for production of documents checked off below are redacted (crossed out or deleted) or are not produced based on a claim of privilege or on any other grounds, please identify as to each such document or part of such document:
- a. The nature of the privilege claimed;
  - b. The factual and legal basis of the claim of privilege or ground for not producing the document;
  - c. The title of the document;
  - d. The author of the document;
  - e. Each person to whom an original or copy of the document was provided; and
  - f. The subject matter and a description of the material withheld, to the fullest extent possible short of waiving the claimed privilege.

### **DEFINITIONS**

- A.** The terms “you,” “plaintiff,” and “landlord” include the plaintiff named above and any and all other persons or entities with any ownership in the premises, as well as plaintiff’s agents, employees, relatives, attorneys, and anyone acting on their behalf.
- B.** The term “tenant” includes the defendant(s) named above and their agent(s), relative(s), attorney(s), and anyone else acting on the tenant’s behalf.
- C.** The term “apartment” refers to the house or unit that the tenant occupies, including the exterior and common areas. If the tenant has occupied more than one apartment under an arrangement with the plaintiff, this covers any and all apartments occupied by the tenant.
- D.** The term “building” refers to the building, common areas, grounds, and any and all other units at the address where the tenant’s apartment is located.
- E.** The term “document” includes: writings, videotapes, electronic mail or other documents electronically stored and/or transmitted, drawings, graphs, charts, photographs, digital images, recordings, contracts, agreements, correspondence, memoranda, reports, notes, requests, bills, orders, notices, writs, declarations, complaints, answers and other court pleadings, schedules, tabulations, checks, diary entries, telegrams, diagrams, films, newspaper clippings, and other writings and recordings of whatever nature. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of this term.
- F.** The term “concerning” means referring to, relating to, supporting, describing, reflecting, constituting, or in any other way referencing.
- G.** The term “person” means any natural person or any business, legal, or governmental entity.
- H.** The term “condition” means each (whether alleged or actual) need for repair, need for maintenance, need for extermination, and the like including any alleged problem in the apartment or common areas, any alleged or actual violation of the State Sanitary Code, Building Code, or any fire code, and any and all issues cited by any inspection, including the Board of Health or Inspectional Services Department, at the building or apartment including all allegations of

damages to the building or apartment in the Complaint, and any allegations of breach of the warranty of habitability in the Tenant's Answer.

- I. The term "including" means including, but not limited to.
- J. Unless otherwise specified, the *applicable time period* for these requests is the period of the tenant's occupancy of the apartment(s), plus one month before such occupancy and one month afterward if the tenant has vacated.

## INTERROGATORIES (Questions)

**Be sure to check no more than 30 questions**

### Tenancy

- 1. ☒ What is the name, address, email address, telephone number, occupation, and relationship to the tenant's apartment of the person answering these questions?
- 2. ☐ What is the name, address, email address, and telephone number of each owner of the apartment, and the date they acquired an ownership interest in the apartment or building?
- 3. ☐ Please describe all members of the tenant's household (including the tenant) by name, age, gender, and date of move-in.
- 4. ☒ Please describe all the terms of the tenancy, including, but not limited to:
  - a. The original rent;
  - b. The day of each month on which rent is due;
  - c. Whether the rental agreement was oral or in writing, and the time period of such an agreement;
  - d. The responsibility of each of the parties for payment of water, heat, hot water, electricity, cooking fuel for the apartment, and for any common area utilities and whether these responsibilities are in writing;
  - e. Any additional terms of the original tenancy; and
  - f. Any changes in the terms of the tenancy (including, but not limited to, changes in rent), including the date(s) of all such changes, whether the changed terms were in writing, and what the changed terms were.

## Landlord's Claims

5. ☒ State each and every one of your reasons for evicting the tenant, whether or not stated in the complaint. If you claim the tenant, household member, or guest has violated a provision of the lease or rental agreement, please describe each such violation in full and complete detail, including, but not limited to:
- a. What happened;
  - b. The dates of each such alleged violation;
  - c. When and how you learned of the alleged violation;
  - d. The names, addresses, and email addresses of anyone with knowledge of or information about such alleged violation;
  - e. The substance of the information known to each person; and
  - f. What if anything you did after becoming aware of each alleged violation, including the substance and date(s) of any written or oral communication to the tenant regarding such alleged violation and the tenant's response(s) to such communication(s).
6. ☐ Please state how much rent (including "use and occupancy"), if any, is owed, including the specific months and amounts in which such rent was not paid, and the total amount that you claim is owed.
7. ☒ For each person with knowledge of the facts alleged in the landlord's complaint and/or the tenant's answer/counterclaims, please state:
- a. Their name, current (or last known) address, email address, and telephone number;
  - b. The substance of the information known to such person; and
  - c. The expert training/qualifications of such person, if any.
8. ☒ For each person you intend to call as a witness at trial, please state:
- a. Their name, current (or last known) address, email address, and current (or last known) telephone number;
  - b. An overview of their anticipated testimony; and
  - c. The expert training/qualifications of such person, if any.
9. ☒ State the type of Notice to Quit (or notice of termination of tenancy), if any, relied on in this action, the method of service, the date of service, the name of the person who received the notice, and the name, email address, and address of the person who served the notice. If more than one copy of the notice was served on the tenant, please specify the information for each form of service. If the Notice to Quit was also served on any person or agency other than the tenant, please provide similar information regarding such service.
10. ☐ If the tenant has ever paid or offered to pay any rent, or use and occupancy, owed after receiving the Notice to Quit, please describe the payment or offer, the date of the offer, and your response, if any.



11. ☐ If the tenant has ever offered assistance from any third party, agency or person to pay the rent, or use and occupancy, please identify the agency, third party, or person assistance offered by the tenant or anyone on their behalf, the substance of the offer, the date on which it was made, and your response.
12. ☐ If you have requested an increase to the rent during the course of the tenancy, please describe any such request in full and complete detail, including, but not limited to:
- a. To whom the request was made;
  - b. The amount requested;
  - c. The basis for such request;
  - d. The date and manner of the request; and
  - e. The tenant's response, if any.

### **Public and Subsidized Housing**

13. ☐ If the tenant receives a subsidy or lives in a subsidized unit, please state:
- a. The name of the subsidy program and the administering agency;
  - b. The full contract rent under the subsidy program;
  - c. The tenant's portion of the rent; and
  - d. Any changes to the contract rent and/or the tenant's portion since the tenancy started, but not exceeding six years from when the action was commenced.
14. ☐ If you have requested an increase to the contract rent during the past twelve months, please describe any such request in full and complete detail, including, but not limited to:
- a. To whom the request was made;
  - b. The amount requested;
  - c. The basis for such request;
  - d. The date and manner of the request;
  - e. The agency's response, if any; and
  - f. The tenant's response, if any.
15. ☐ Please describe the steps you took to terminate the tenancy as required by the lease or program rules, including, but not limited to, an offer of an informal conference and/or grievance hearing. If the tenant requested a conference and/or hearing, for each such conference and/or hearing, state the date, who was present, what each person said, and the results of the conference/hearing.

## Problems with the Apartment/Building

16. ☐ Please describe in full and complete detail how you came to know of each and every need for repair, condition, or other problem in the tenant's apartment and/or common areas of the building at any point during the tenant's tenancy. (This includes both alleged and confirmed problems, including, but not limited to, each of the problems alleged in the tenant's answer and counterclaims.) For each such problem or condition, please state:
- The nature of the problem or condition;
  - The date you first became aware of such problem or condition ;
  - How you first became aware of such problem or condition—that is, who, if anyone, informed you and how (orally or in writing); and
  - What steps, if any, you took in response to being notified of such problem or condition, including whether your investigation confirmed that there was a need for repair, maintenance, extermination, or any other work to address the problem or condition.
17. ☐ Please describe in detail any and all inspections of the apartment or building conducted by the Board of Health, Inspectional Services Department, Housing Authority, or any person, during the period of two months prior the tenant occupying the apartment to the present including, but not limited to:
- The date of each inspection;
  - The identity of the agency, entity, or individual conducting each inspection;
  - The identity of who contacted the agency or person to perform each inspection and the date of each such contact;
  - The date you received each report;
  - The substance of each report;
  - The date and substance of any communications with the inspector or other representatives of the agency, entity, or individual concerning each inspection; and
  - What, if anything, you did in response to each inspection.
18. ☐ If the landlord before, at the time of, or immediately following the purchase or acquisition of and ownership interest in the apartment or building, obtained any inspections, assessments or evaluations of the apartment or building, for *each such inspection, assessment or evaluation* state:
- The date;
  - The name, address, and telephone number of the person or agency who/that performed it;
  - When you received or became aware of the inspection, assessment or evaluation;
  - The contents thereof, stating specifically what problems or conditions were noted; and
  - What, if anything, you did in response to such inspection, assessment, or evaluation.

19. ☐ If the landlord has made or attempted to make inspections and/or repairs (including exterminations) to the tenant's apartment and/or common areas, amenities, and systems of the building, (including HVAC, electrical, fire safety, elevators,) for each such inspection and/or repair (or attempt), including extermination, please state:
- A description of each inspection and/or repair;
  - How and when you let the tenant know of your plan to inspect and/or to repair (including whether there was written notice to the tenant);
  - The date of each inspection and/or repair;
  - The name, address, email address, and telephone number of the entity, company and/or person who made each inspection and/or repair; and
  - The cost of each repair, if applicable.
  - For repairs, how and when you first knew of the condition that needed to be repaired.
20. ☐ If you have ever learned of or tried to discover whether there is lead paint in the tenant's apartment and/or building, please provide:
- A full and complete description of your investigation and/or knowledge/information regarding the presence (or absence) of lead paint in the apartment and/or building, including, but not limited to:
    - The substance of any inspections, investigation or knowledge/information;
    - The name, address, email and telephone number of any person with information;
    - The date(s) that you conducted such investigation or otherwise acquired such knowledge/information;
  - A full and complete description of any steps you have taken regarding the presence of lead paint in the apartment and/or building (i.e., any and all inspections not identified above and/or abatement of any lead paint hazard), including, but not limited to:
    - The substance of all action taken or work performed;
    - The date(s) thereof;
    - Who did what work (name, address, company, telephone number, email address, and license number of the deleader);
    - The details of any arrangements for relocation of the tenant during the abatement process (including where the tenant was relocated, how the tenant was relocated, and the payment of any costs associated with such relocation).
21. ☐ If you claim that the tenant caused any damage to the apartment and/or building, please describe such damage in full and complete detail, including, but not limited to:
- The substance of such damage;
  - Why you believe the tenant caused the damage;
  - What if any repairs were made to such damage, the date(s) of such repairs, and the costs of such repairs; and
  - The name(s), address(es), email address(es) and telephone number(s) of anyone with knowledge of such damage allegedly caused by the tenant.

22. ☐ If you claim the tenant prevented or hindered you from inspecting the apartment and/or making repairs, for each attempt to inspect or make repairs, please describe:
- a. The date of the attempt;
  - b. How and when you let the tenant know of your plan to inspect and/or to repair;
  - c. What the tenant did or said to prevent or hinder the inspection or repair;
  - d. The name, address, email addresses, and telephone number of everyone present at the time who has information about the tenant's interference with the inspection or repair; and
  - e. Any financial or other loss suffered as a result of the tenant's actions or inactions.
23. ☐ If you or anyone on your behalf has been inside the tenant's apartment during the tenancy (or before the tenancy for the purpose of renting to/preparing the apartment for the tenant), please state who was inside the apartment, when, and why they were there.
24. ☐ Please describe in full and complete detail the maintenance and management of the apartment and/or building during the tenancy, including, the name of the management company, the identity (by name and address) of each responsible person, a description of each such person's duties, for how long they have managed and/or maintained the building, and their job training/experience/qualifications.

### **Security Deposit and Last Month's Rent**

25. ☐ If you ever received payment(s) for a security deposit and/or last month's rent from or on behalf of the tenant, or know that the tenant made such payment(s) to a former owner, please state:
- a. The amount of each payment and whether it was a security deposit or last month's rent;
  - b. The date each payment was received;
  - c. Whether you gave the tenant a receipt and what information was on the receipt;
  - d. Whether you asked the tenant to sign a statement about the condition of the apartment;
  - e. The amount, account title and number(s), the name(s) and address(es) of any bank(s) in which the security deposit and/or last month's rent has been kept, in whose social security or tax identification number the funds are held, and the date(s) of the initial deposit in a bank and of any transfer;
  - f. Whether the security deposit has at all times been kept in a separate, interest bearing, account protected from the landlord's creditors, and the facts on which you base your response.
  - g. Whether you have paid the tenant interest on the security deposit and/or last month's rent or credited the interest to the tenant's account and, if so, when and how much; and
  - h. A full and complete description of any notice(s) you provided to the tenant about the deposit(s) and/or payment(s) made to a former owner, including the date(s) of such notice(s).

## Utilities

26. ☐ If there is a written agreement requiring the tenant to pay for water, heat, hot water, oil, gas, or electricity, please describe the substance of the agreement, the date of the agreement, and the date the obligation to pay for any such utility took effect (specifying each utility).
27. ☐ If any of the tenant's utilities (water, gas or electricity) have ever been shut off, discontinued or threatened to be shut off/discontinued (by you, a utility company, or anyone else), state which utility and when, the reason for the shutoff or notice/threat of shutoff, and when the utility was turned back on.
28. ☐ Please describe any accounts that the landlord has or has had for common area utility usage (including gas, electric, water and sewer) in the building, including the date such account was established, the name of the utility company, the account number for each such account, and a description of the areas in the building covered by each such account.
29. ☐ If the tenant is or was at any time responsible for paying for any water, electricity, gas, or other utility outside the apartment, including, but not limited to, hallways, basement, and/or the exterior of the building, please describe what the tenant is responsible for, whether there is a written agreement between the parties reflecting this arrangement, and the date such arrangement first took effect.

## Facts About the Landlord

30. ☐ Please list all property, including the property involved in this case, that you own or have owned at any point during the tenant's tenancy in the apartment (including any property owned by trust or business entities with which you are associated) and for each such property:
- Identify the address;
  - State the number of apartments in each such property; and
  - State the purchase date and dates of ownership.
31. ☐ If you are a trust, please describe the trust in detail, including, but not limited to:
- The name and type of the trust;
  - The names of the trustees, and any changes thereto (including all applicable dates);
  - The names of the beneficiaries of the trust, and any changes thereto (including all applicable dates).

## Disability

32. ☐ Please describe in full detail your knowledge, belief, and/or information, at any time through and including the date of your interrogatory responses, that the tenant or a household member has a mental and/or physical disability of any kind, including, to the substance of, and the factual basis for, such knowledge, information, and/or belief (including, for example, reports, observations, and communications with others).

33. ☐ Please describe in detail any requests made by or on behalf of the tenant or household member for an accommodation or an accommodation otherwise considered (e.g., a change in rules or policy, a physical change to the apartment, not proceeding with an eviction, or other special treatment) due to their disability, including :
- a. When and how the tenant or other person asked you for an accommodation or any accommodation was otherwise considered (in relation to the Tenant's Answer or by other means);
  - b. What they requested that you do or not do on account of their disability or that you otherwise considered; and
  - c. Your response (and/or conclusion).
34. ☐ With respect to any disability-related request(s) for accommodation made by or on behalf of the tenant (or household member), please describe in full factual detail the date and substance of such request(s) and the date and substance of your response(s).
35. ☐ If you assert that the requested accommodation or any other accommodation that would permit the tenant and/or household member to continue occupying the Apartment would be unreasonable and/or would constitute an undue financial or administrative burden, please describe the reasons for such assertion(s) in full, factual detail.

### **Gender-Based Violence**

36. ☐ Please describe in full detail your knowledge, belief, and/or information, at any time through and including the date of your interrogatory responses, that the tenant or a household member has experienced domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, including the substance of, and the factual basis for, such knowledge, information, and/or belief (including, for example, reports, observations, and communications with others).
37. ☐ Please describe in full detail your knowledge, belief, and/or information, at any time through and including the date of your interrogatory responses, that police or emergency services were called to the tenant's apartment and/or building including your understanding of the reason emergency services were called and the date(s) that emergency services responded to the home.
38. ☐ Please describe in detail any requests made by or on behalf of the tenant or household member for protection due to their experience of gender-based violence including:
- a. A lock change;
  - b. Cooperation enforcing a restraining order;
  - c. A transfer to another apartment; or
  - d. Early termination of the tenancy.
39. ☐ If you identified a-d above, please describe in detail:
- a. When and how you became aware of the request;
  - b. What they requested you do or not do; and
  - c. Your response (and/or conclusion) including the substance of your response and the date of your response.
40. ☐ If you assert that the tenant's continued occupation of the apartment poses a dire threat, please describe the reasons for such assertion(s) in full, factual detail.

## CARES ACT

41. ☐ If you receive any government assistance (including but not limited to low-interest loans, rental or mortgage subsidies, HOME, and tax credits) for any of the apartments in the building or development where the apartment is located, please state the name of the government assistance program and the addresses covered by said program.
42. ☐ Please state whether there is any tenant in the building (or the housing development in which the building is located) with a tenant-based Section 8 voucher and if yes, please state each tenant's dates of occupancy since March 1, 2020.

## Other

43. ☐ If you knew or believed that the tenant went to a tenants' meeting or participated in a tenants' organization, or if you received any correspondence or communication from the tenant identifying themselves as part of a tenant organization, or filed or threatened to file a lawsuit or claim against you, describe such actions and state when and how you became aware of this.
44. ☐ If the tenant or any agency or person asked you to accept a subsidy or other financial assistance for the tenancy (for example, Section 8, or rental assistance from any source) or to fill out any forms concerning such assistance from a housing authority or other government or private agency, please describe such request in detail, including, but not limited to:
- a. What you were asked to do;
  - b. When;
  - c. How (orally or in writing) the request was made; and
  - d. Your response (including the factual basis for any refusal to accept assistance).
45. ☒ For each conversation you have had with the tenant about the reason(s) for eviction or that concerns your claims and/or the tenant's defenses or counterclaims in this action, please state when, who was present, and what was said.
46. ☐ Please state your opinion, if any, of the fair market monthly *rental* value of the apartment (i.e., for how much you could rent the apartment in good condition) for each year of the tenant's occupancy, and describe in detail the basis for your opinion.
47. ☐ If the building or the tenant's apartment has been converted to a condominium or cooperative form of ownership, or if there is an intent to do so, please state:
- a. When the conversion took place or will take place; and
  - b. The substance and date(s) of information or notices, if any, provided the tenant by the landlord or any other person or entity regarding any rights the tenant may have under applicable condominium conversion eviction laws.
48. ☐ Please state whether you had the tenant served with the City of Somerville's Housing Stabilization Notice, the City of Cambridge's notice of Tenants Rights and Resources or the City of Boston's Notice of Tenant's Rights and Resources and if so, the date and manner of service.

49. ☐

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## DOCUMENT REQUESTS

Check as many boxes as apply

### Tenancy and Termination

1. ☐ Any documents concerning the rental of the apartment and/or to terms of the tenancy, including, rental applications, credit checks, references, lease(s) or other written agreement(s) between the landlord and the tenant, and lease addenda, changes, or renewals.
2. ☐ All documents concerning the composition of the tenant's household (i.e., the identity of all people who occupy or who have lived at any time in the apartment).
3. ☒ All letters and other written communications between the landlord and the tenant.
4. ☐ All written records kept by the landlord concerning payments for rent/use and occupancy made by or on behalf of the tenant.
5. ☐ All written records kept by the landlord concerning all charges by the landlord to the tenant other than rent/use and occupancy, and all payments for such charges made by or on behalf of the tenant.
6. ☐ All documents received from any predecessor(s) in interest (People or business(es) that owned the building before you did) concerning the building, including, but not limited to, documents about:
  - a. The condition of the building;
  - b. Tenancies at the building;
  - c. Assignments of rights/obligations; and
  - d. A security deposit and/or last month's rent for the tenant's apartment.
7. ☐ All documents concerning the landlord's purchase, refinancing, mortgage, sale, marketing, and/or insurance of the apartment/building, including, but not limited to, inspection reports and other assessments/evaluations, purchase and sale agreements (and other documents concerning conditions of purchase/sale), broker or other marketing agreements, and the like.
8. ☐ All Notices to Quit ever served by the landlord on the tenant or on an agency providing a subsidy for the tenant and returns of service for each such notice.
9. ☐ All documents served with the Notice to Quit filed in this action.
10. ☐ All documents concerning any complaints received from any source about the tenant and/or members of the tenant's household or guests.

11. ☐ All documents concerning charitable or third-party payments made, requested, and/or applied for on behalf of the tenant, including, but not limited to, RAFT, fuel assistance, weatherization, rental arrears, prospective rental subsidy, and/or other assistance.
12. ☐ All documents concerning the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), including, but not limited to:
- a. Rental arrearage payments;
  - b. “Vendor” rental payments by the tenant through DTA; or
  - c. Other assistance concerning the tenant (e.g., applications, agreements, invoices, checks, or other documents).
13. ☒ All documents concerning in any way to any of your reasons for evicting the tenant.
14. ☒ All documents concerning in any way to the landlord’s claims and/or to the tenant’s defenses or counterclaims (to the extent not addressed elsewhere in your responses to these document requests).
15. ☒ All documents you plan to present at trial.

### **Public and Subsidized Housing/Governmental Assistance**

16. ☐ All written documents concerning the exact type or nature of any rental subsidy attached to the building or involved in the tenancy.
17. ☐ All documents concerning requests that you accept a subsidy, rental arrears or other financial assistance for the tenant’s rent for the tenancy **and** your response, if any.
18. ☐ All documents concerning determination of the tenant’s rent, determination of the contract rent, and/or recertification of the tenant household.
19. ☐ All documents, including in any tenant file, in the custody or control of the owner or manager concerning the Tenant.
20. ☐ All documents concerning any request you have made for an increase in the contract rent and responses to that request from the tenant and/or agency administering the tenant’s subsidy.
21. ☐ All documents concerning any informal conference and/or grievance hearings during the tenancy.
22. ☐ All letters and other written communications between the landlord and any housing authority, EOHLC (formerly DHCD), MassHousing, HUD, and any other relevant agency regarding the tenant or the apartment.

- 23. ☐ All documents concerning conditions or use restrictions for the apartment and/or building concerning your (or your predecessor's) receipt of any form of government assistance, including, but not limited to, low-interest loans, subsidies, tax credits, deleading and/or rehabilitation assistance, and the like.
- 24. ☐ All documents concerning any request the tenant or householders have made concerning the Violence Against Women Act or M.G.L. c. 186, § 24, § 26 including but not limited to: restraining orders, police reports, requests to stop the eviction, requests for emergency safety transfers, termination of the tenancy for safety reasons, or requests to change locks at the apartment.
- 25. ☐ Any police reports or evidence that police or emergency services responded to the tenant's home during the tenancy.

### **Problems with the Apartment/Building**

- 26. ☐ All documents notifying the tenant of inspections and/or repairs to the apartment or building.
- 27. ☐ All photographs, videos, and/or digital images of the tenant's apartment or of the building at any time during the tenancy, or within 2 weeks before the tenant moved in.
- 28. ☐ All documents concerning any investigation for or the presence of lead paint at any time in the tenant's apartment and in the building, including, but not limited to, notices to any tenants in the building, notices from any agency about lead paint, and documents concerning lead paint inspections, verifications of lead paint abatement or control of lead paint, and tenant relocation.
- 29. ☐ All documents concerning conditions in the tenant's apartment and/or in the common areas or systems of the building (including HVAC, electrical, fire safety, elevators), including complaints, inspection reports and requests for repairs by the tenant or any other current or former occupant of the Building, and any person or agency.
- 30. ☐ All documents concerning repairs of the apartment and/or common areas or systems of the building (including HVAC, electrical, fire safety, elevators), including, but not limited to, invoices, estimates, bills, work orders, receipts and records of payment.
- 31. ☐ All documents concerning the basis of the landlord's opinion regarding the fair market monthly *rental* value of the apartment.

## Other

- 32. ☐ All documents concerning the tenant's security deposit and/or last month's rent, including, but not limited to, receipts, bank records or statements for each month the tenant's security deposit or last month's rent was held in a bank account, documents reflecting whether any security deposit is/has been held in a separate, interest bearing bank account, protected from landlord's creditors, notices given to the tenant about the deposit/payment, conditions statement, and documents relating to payment and/or crediting of interest to the tenant.
- 33. ☐ All documents concerning who is or was at any time during the tenant's occupancy responsible for payment of water and sewer, heat, hot water, electricity, gas and/or other utilities in the apartment.
- 34. ☐ Any documents concerning the threatened or actual termination and/or re-connection of utilities (including water and sewer, electricity, and/or gas) in the apartment and/or building.
- 35. ☐ Any documents concerning accounts that the landlord has or has had for common area water, gas, electricity and other utility usage in the building.
- 36. ☐ Any documents concerning tenant responsibility for payment of any water, electricity, or other utility outside the apartment, including, but not limited to, hallways, basement, and/or exterior of the building at any time during occupancy.
- 37. ☐ Any documents concerning the tenant's or household member's disability and/or request for accommodation (i.e., a change in rules or policy, a physical change in the apartment and/or common areas, etc.) that the tenant or anyone on their behalf has made to you **and** your response to such request, and any offers of reasonable accommodation that you otherwise have made to the tenant or household member.
- 38. ☐ Any and all documents substantiating or concerning whether any request(s) for accommodation(s) made by or on behalf of the tenant or household member would constitute an undue financial or administrative burden on the landlord.
- 39. ☐ Any and all documents substantiating or concerning whether any request(s) for accommodation(s) made by or on behalf of the tenant would be otherwise unreasonable.
- 40. ☐ All documents regarding any policy of the landlord regarding persons with disabilities including any reasonable accommodation plans or policies, all attachments and/or appendices, and any forms or releases that are used in connection with such policies.
- 41. ☐ All documents concerning your language access policy for Limited English Proficient tenants.
- 42. ☐ Any documents concerning any incident(s) of domestic violence against the tenant or a household member in the apartment including but not limited to police reports, restraining orders, requests for lock changes for safety reasons and/or early termination of the tenancy agreement.

43. ☐ Any documents concerning in any way to the tenant's claim of sexual harassment.
44. ☐ Any and all documents concerning behavior on the part of the tenant or household member during the time period of their occupancy of the apartment that you consider a lease or tenancy violation not previously provided in response to other requests.
45. ☐ Any documents concerning actual or proposed condominium or cooperative conversion of the apartment or building.
46. ☐ Any documents concerning fire, property and/or liability insurance of the apartment/building, including, but not limited to, policies, binders, contracts, agreements, vouchers, checks, notices, correspondence, and notices to your insurer of claims concerning the apartment and/or building.
47. ☐ Any documents concerning the management of the apartment and/or building (including management contract(s) applicable to the time period of the tenant's occupancy and any other management documents concerning the tenancy).
48. ☐ Any documents concerning the maintenance of the apartment and/or building in relation to the tenancy.
49. ☐ Any documents concerning lawsuits or claims concerning the apartment and/or building and/or involving the landlord and the tenant.
50. ☐ All documents concerning the type and status of the mortgage on the building including but not limited to whether it is a federally backed mortgage .

51. ☐

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I hereby certify that I ☐ delivered or ☐ mailed or ☐ emailed (*check which one*) a copy of this Discovery Request to my landlord (who consented to service by email) or to \_\_\_\_\_ their lawyer (a lawyer is required to accept service by email) on \_\_\_\_\_(*date*).

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Signature of Tenant

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Signature of Tenant

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Tenant's Name (*print*)

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Tenant's Name (*print*)

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Address

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Address

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City State Zip

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City State Zip

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Telephone Number

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Telephone Number

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Email (if any)

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Email (if any)

# Compelling Discovery

## If your landlord does not respond to your Discovery, file a Motion to Compel

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Your landlord has **10 days** from the date they get your Discovery to answer your questions and give you the documents you ask for. **If you email the Discovery Requests, then the landlord has three more (business) days to respond.**

If they do **not** respond or give you the information or documents you need within the time frame stated above, or they object to your Discovery, you can file the **Motion to Compel form in the booklet.**

You have **5 business days** from the date your landlord's response is due to file your Motion to Compel.

### When do I file a Motion to Compel?

To figure out when to file and serve your Motion to Compel, fill in the following dates:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ = Date your landlord got your discovery requests
2. \_\_\_\_\_ = add **10 calendar** days after your landlord got your discovery requests
3. \_\_\_\_\_ = add **3 business days** if you emailed the discovery requests
4. \_\_\_\_\_ = add **5 business** days after #2 (or #3 if you emailed your discovery requests)  
**This is your deadline to file the Motion to Compel Discovery**

### What can the court do?

In your **Motion to Compel**, you can ask the judge to:

- Order the landlord to give you complete answers to your Discovery requests and put the case on hold until the landlord gives you answers to your Discovery requests.
- End or “dismiss” the landlord’s case and enter judgment in your favor.
- Stop the landlord from being able to give the court information or evidence related to your defenses or counterclaims.

## Fill in and file your Motion to Compel Discovery

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If your case is in **Housing Court** and your landlord's responses to your Discovery were incomplete, ask the court clerk if the Housing Court has any special requirements for filing a **Motion to Compel**.

**Important:** You must get the form to the court and your landlord or their lawyer within **5 business days** of the date your landlord's response to your Discovery was due.

Fill in the spaces at the top of the motion the same as you did in your **Answer** and **Discovery** forms.

1. Write in the date you mailed, delivered, or emailed your Discovery to the landlord or their lawyer. Copy this from the last page of your Discovery.
2. Check the boxes next to the reasons you are filing this motion.
3. On the bottom of the form check the box next to the way you plan to get the motion to your landlord or their lawyer.
4. Fill in the date, your name, address, and telephone number. Sign the motion.
5. Make 2 copies.
  - File the original with court. Call the clerk before you file and ask them what the best way is to file. You can:
    - Take it to the clerk's office. If you hand-deliver to the court, ask the court to stamp the date on your copy so you have proof that you filed it on time.
    - Send it to the court electronically. Use the court's online filing system or call and ask the court if you can email them. **This is the best way if you can do it!**
    - Do not mail it. There is not enough time.
  - Deliver a **copy** of your forms to your landlord's lawyer or your landlord. Look at the right side of the Summons and Complaint. If there is a number on the "BBO#" line, your landlord has a lawyer. To deliver a copy, you can:
    - You can deliver it by hand or email it to your landlord's lawyer. The lawyer's email address is at the bottom of the Summons and Complaint. If your landlord does not have a lawyer you need a written agreement from your landlord that says they agree to get your motion by email. **It is important to deliver this by hand or email it**, because the mail may be too slow.
  - **Keep a copy** for yourself. Keep it safe and bring it with you when you go to court.



## Prepare for Court

The Court will send you a letter that tells you the date and time of the hearing for your **Motion to Compel Discovery**.

When your case is called, tell the clerk you filed a **Motion to Compel Discovery**. When you go before the judge, **tell the judge that you requested Discovery**, and that your landlord **did not answer**, or did not answer fully. Tell the judge why you need the information you asked for.

You can ask the judge to do a number of things, including:

- Require the landlord to give you complete answers to your Discovery requests and put the case on hold until the landlord gives you answers to your Discovery requests.
- End or “dismiss” the landlord’s case and enter judgment in your favor.
- Stop the landlord from being able to give the court information or evidence related to your defenses or counterclaims.

**If you win this motion** and judge orders your landlord to answer your questions and give you all the documents you asked for in your Discovery, the judge will also probably postpone your eviction trial.

**If you lose this motion**, you may have your trial that day. But you can ask the judge to schedule it for a different day. If you lose at trial, you may have the right to appeal, ask the judge for more time to move or both. See **Booklets 8A and 8B: Appeals** and **Booklet 9: Stay**.

**Blank page.**  
**Form begins on the next page.**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
TRIAL COURT**

a. \_\_\_\_\_, ss:  
County

e. \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Court

f. \_\_\_\_\_  
Docket No. Summary Process

b. Trial Date: \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
Plaintiff(s) – Landlord(s)

vs.

**DEFENDANT/TENANT'S  
MOTION TO ENFORCE  
OR COMPEL DISCOVERY**

d. \_\_\_\_\_  
Defendant(s) – Tenant(s)

**To the Clerk:** Please schedule this motion for a hearing. The Tenant-Defendant seeks enforcement of Discovery under Uniform Summary Process Rule 7(d). In support, the Tenant states:

1. On \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*), the Tenant filed with the Court and delivered or mailed or emailed (*circle which one*) to the landlord a Request for Discovery.

2. The Landlord (*check all boxes that apply*):

- ☐ has failed to answer any questions.      ☐ has failed to give me any documents requested.  
☐ has failed to answer questions fully.      ☐ has failed to give me all of the documents requested.  
☐ objected to certain discovery requests and I disagree with the objection.

3. Accordingly, Tenant requests that the Court enter an order (*check boxes which apply*):

- ☐ Compelling Landlord to completely answer and respond to Discovery no later than 1 week from the hearing on this motion, and continuing the trial (or pre-trial if jury trial requested) until at least 1 week after the Tenant receives responses. USPR 7(e).  
☐ Dismissing this case and entering Judgment in Tenant's favor.  
☐ Prohibiting Landlord from introducing evidence opposing Tenant's claims and defenses.  
☐ Granting the Tenant any other relief that may be just and necessary.

4. I hereby certify that I ☐ delivered / ☐ emailed (*check which one*) a copy of this Discovery Motion to my landlord or to his/her lawyer on \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*).

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Signature of Tenant

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Tenant's Name *(print)*

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Address

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City State Zip

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Telephone Number

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Email (if any)

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Signature of Tenant

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Tenant's Name *(print)*

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Address

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City State Zip

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Telephone Number

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Email (if any)