



California Tenants – California Tenants – Use this letter if you are a tenant whose rent was increased more than 10% during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instructions:

1. [Click here to open a Microsoft Word version of this sample letter](#)
2. The Microsoft Word-version will have the same blank spaces as this version, but will not have the comments in the margin. Fill out the blanks in the Microsoft Word-version using the comments on the margins of this version as a guide.
3. Use this sample letter if you are a tenant whose landlord is increasing the rent more than 10% during the pandemic caused by COVID-19 (from March 4, 2020 until 30 days after the local, county and California state of emergencies end)
4. Please note that you should **tailor this letter to the facts in your case**. This template is **not a substitute for legal advice**. If you need help finding a tenant attorney, please see the [Tenants Together Directory](#).
5. Once filled out with your information and sent to your landlord, keep a copy for your records.

Sent via Certified Mail- Return Receipt Requested

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Commented [MC1]: Date

()
()

Commented [MC2]: Full name of landlord and/or property manager

Commented [MC3]: Address of landlord and/or property manager

Dear (),

Commented [MC4]: Full name of landlord and/or property manager

I () am a tenant at (). On (), I received a notice from you of a rent increase to () per month from () per month, an increase of () percent. I am writing to inform you that this rent increase does not comply with California Penal Code section 396, which prohibits price gouging during a state of emergency.

Commented [MC5]: Your/tenant's name(s)

Commented [MC6]: Address, City, State, Zip

Commented [MC7]: Date

Commented [MC8]: Insert new rent amount

Commented [MC9]: Insert old rent amount

Commented [MC10]: Increase percent change in rent (note: percent change is calculated by taking the new rent subtracting the old rent and then dividing the amount by the old rent and multiplying by 100. For example if your old rent was 100 and your new rent was 125, the percent change would be $(125-100/100) \times 100 = 25\%$)

On March 4, 2020 the Governor of California declared a Statewide Emergency due to the emergence and spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19, and this State of Emergency remains in effect in all counties in California. California Penal Code section 396 prohibits price gouging (increases over 10 percent) for necessary goods and services after the Governor declares a state of emergency. Housing is specifically enumerated as one of the services for which the price cannot be raised over 10 percent.

The notice of the rent increase you provided me on () does not comply with the above California Penal Code, and therefore it is not valid. Please be informed that price gouging a tenant is not just a civil violation, but a criminal misdemeanor under the law. Anyone convicted of violating the statewide anti-price-gouging law can face a year in county jail, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both, as well as civil penalties. Local ordinances may impose additional penalties.

Commented [MC11]: Insert date of notice of rent increase

Please confirm immediately that you are withdrawing the notice of the rent increase and that I should continue to pay my existing rent amount of \$().

Commented [MC12]: Current rent

Sincerely,

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()

Commented [MC13]: Your signature

Commented [MC14]: Your full name