

29A.101A Termination of lease by service member penalty.

1. For purposes of this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

a. "Premises lease" means a lease of premises occupied, or intended to be occupied, by a service member or a service member's dependents for a residential, professional, business, agricultural, or similar purpose if either of the following applies:

(1) The lease is executed by or on behalf of a person who thereafter and during the term of the lease enters military service.

(2) The service member, while in military service, executes the lease and thereafter receives military orders for a permanent change of station or to deploy with a military unit, or as an individual in support of a military operation, for a period of not less than ninety days.

b. "Vehicle lease" means a lease of a motor vehicle used, or intended to be used, by a service member or a service member's dependents for personal or business transportation if either of the following applies:

(1) The lease is executed by or on behalf of a person who thereafter and during the term of the lease enters military service under a call or order specifying a period of service of not less than ninety days, or who enters military service under a call or order specifying a period of ninety days of service or less and who, without a break in service, receives orders extending the period of military service to a period of not less than ninety days.

(2) The service member, while in military service, executes the lease and thereafter receives military orders to deploy with a military unit, or as an individual in support of a military operation, for a period of not less than ninety days.

2. A service member may terminate a premises lease or vehicle lease pursuant to the requirements of this section. Termination of a premises lease or vehicle lease shall be made as follows:

a. By delivery by the lessee of written notice of such termination, and a copy of the service member's military orders, to the lessor or the lessor's grantee, or to the lessor's agent or the agent's grantee. A lessee's termination of a lease pursuant to this subsection shall terminate any obligation a dependent of the lessee may have under the lease. For purposes of this paragraph, written notice may be accomplished by hand delivery, by private business carrier, or by placing the written notice in an envelope with sufficient postage and with return receipt requested, and addressed as designated by the lessor or the lessor's grantee or to the lessor's agent or the agent's grantee, and depositing the written notice in the United States mail.

b. In the case of a vehicle lease, by return of the motor vehicle by the lessee to the lessor or the lessor's grantee, or to the lessor's agent or the agent's grantee, not later than fifteen days after the date of the delivery of written notice under paragraph "*a*". A lessee's termination of a lease pursuant to this subsection shall terminate any obligation a dependent of the lessee may have under the lease.

3. In the case of a premises lease that provides for monthly payment of rent, termination of the lease is effective thirty days after the first date on which the next rental payment is due and payable after the date on which the notice is delivered. In the case of any other premises lease, termination of the lease is effective on the last day of the month following the month in which the notice is delivered.

4. In the case of a vehicle lease, termination of the lease is effective on the day on which the vehicle is delivered to the lessor or the lessor's grantee.

5. Rents or lease amounts unpaid for the period preceding the effective date of the lease termination shall be

paid on a prorated basis. In the case of a vehicle lease, the lessor may not impose an early termination charge, but any taxes, summonses, and title and registration fees and any other obligation and liability of the lessee in accordance with the terms of the lease, including reasonable charges to the lessee for excess wear, use, and mileage, that are due and unpaid at the time of termination of the lease shall be paid by the lessee.

6. Rents or lease amounts paid in advance for a period after the effective date of the termination of the lease shall be refunded to the lessee by the lessor or the lessor's assignee or the assignee's agent within thirty days of the effective date of the termination of the lease.

7. Upon application by the lessor to a court before the termination date provided in the written notice, relief granted by this section to a service member may be modified as justice and equity require.

8. *a.* Any person who knowingly seizes, holds, or detains the personal effects, security deposit, or other property of a service member or a service member's dependent who lawfully terminates a lease covered by this section, or who knowingly interferes with the removal of such property from premises covered by such lease, for the purpose of subjecting or attempting to subject any of such property to a claim for rent accruing subsequent to the date of termination of such lease, or attempts to do so, commits a simple misdemeanor.

b. The remedy and rights provided under this section are in addition to and do not preclude any remedy for wrongful conversion otherwise available under law to the person claiming relief under this section.

2003 Acts, ch 154, §1; 2006 Acts, ch 1143, §3