

STATE OF NEW YORK

1336

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 8, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. L. ROSENTHAL -- read once and referred to the
Committee on Housing

AN ACT to amend the real property actions and proceedings law, in
relation to proceedings to recover possession

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assem-
bly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The opening paragraph of section 711 of the real property
2 actions and proceedings law, as amended by section 12 of part M of chap-
3 ter 36 of the laws of 2019, is amended to read as follows:

4 [A] No tenant in a residential dwelling shall be removed from
5 possession except in a special proceeding or through other judicial
6 process. For the purposes of this article, a tenant shall include an
7 occupant of one or more rooms in a rooming house or a resident, not
8 including a transient occupant, of one or more rooms in a hotel who has
9 been in possession for thirty consecutive days or longer~~[. No tenant or~~
10 ~~lawful occupant of a dwelling or housing accommodation shall be removed~~
11 ~~from possession except in a special proceeding]~~. A special proceeding
12 may be maintained under this article upon the following grounds:

13 § 2. Subdivision 1 of section 721 of the real property actions and
14 proceedings law, as added by chapter 312 of the laws of 1962, is amended
15 to read as follows:

16 1. The landlord or lessor, provided, however, that no person may
17 institute a proceeding pursuant to this article with respect to premises
18 located in a multiple dwelling until such time as the owner of the
19 multiple dwelling has registered properly with the agency responsible
20 for code enforcement, in accordance with the provisions of section three
21 hundred of the multiple residence law or section three hundred of the
22 multiple dwelling law.

23 § 3. Subdivision 1 of section 731 of the real property actions and
24 proceedings law, as amended by chapter 563 of the laws of 1994, is
25 amended to read as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1. The special proceeding prescribed by this article shall be commenced by petition and a notice of petition prepared in accordance with rules approved by the appellate division with jurisdiction over the proceedings. Such rules shall provide for the use of language that is designed to be understood by the respondent in the proceeding. The petition shall include such other notice of the rights of the respondent as may be deemed appropriate, including a statement that a form answer is available from the clerk of the court. A notice of petition may be issued only by an attorney, judge or the clerk of the court; it may not be issued by a party prosecuting the proceeding in person.

§ 4. Section 741 of the real property actions and proceedings law, as added by chapter 312 of the laws of 1962, the opening paragraph as amended by chapter 583 of the laws of 1979 and subdivision 5 as amended by chapter 302 of the laws of 1976, is amended to read as follows:

§ 741. Contents of petition. The petition shall be verified by the person authorized by section seven hundred twenty-one of this article to maintain the proceeding; or by a legal representative, attorney or agent of such person pursuant to subdivision (d) of section [~~thirty hundred~~] three thousand twenty of the civil practice law and rules. An attorney of such person may verify the petition on information and belief notwithstanding the fact that such person is in the county where the attorney has his or her office. Every petition shall:

1. State the interest of the petitioner in the premises from which removal is sought.

2. State the respondent's interest in the premises and his relationship to petitioner with regard thereto.

3. Describe the premises from which removal is sought.

4. State whether there are any violations of any state or local housing codes which remain outstanding on the premises or common areas. In cities with a population of one million or more, or in any municipality in which housing code violations are classified by degree of threat to health and safety, the petition shall itemize any such violations which have been identified by the applicable code enforcement agency in its notice of violation as being "hazardous", "immediately hazardous" or which have been otherwise categorized as constituting a serious, or imminent, threat to health and safety or requiring immediate repair.

5. State whether the petitioner has been notified by the local department of social services that payment for rent is being withheld pursuant to section one hundred forty-three-b of the social services law for any portion of the premises.

6. With respect to premises subsidized directly or indirectly under a state or federal program which requires that conditions be met in connection with lease termination or eviction, state the name of the program, the name of the agency charged with supervision and whether the petitioner has complied with all applicable rules, regulations and administrative hearing requirements and has served all notices required in connection with lease termination or eviction from that public or subsidized housing program.

7. State the facts upon which the special proceeding is based.

~~5-~~ 8. State the relief sought. The relief may include a judgment for rent due, and for a period of occupancy during which no rent is due, for the fair value of use and occupancy of the premises if the notice of petition contains a notice that a demand for such a judgment has been made.

Any willful material misstatement or omission by the petitioner with respect to the requirements of this section shall subject the petitioner

1 to a civil penalty, not to exceed one thousand dollars, to be assessed
2 in the eviction proceeding or in a subsequent plenary action. The peti-
3 tioner may request leave of the court to amend the petition for the
4 purpose of correcting material misstatements or curing omissions. In the
5 event leave to amend is granted, the respondent shall be provided an
6 adjournment to respond of not less than ten days from the date of
7 service of the amended petition. A petitioner shall be deemed to have
8 made a material misstatement or omission with respect to the require-
9 ments of subdivision four of this section upon submission to the court
10 of certified records, or otherwise properly authenticated records, of
11 the local agency or agencies charged with code compliance that
12 violations of applicable codes, other than tenant caused or housekeeping
13 as determined by the court, were outstanding at the time of the verifi-
14 cation of the petition which were not described therein. A material
15 misstatement shall be deemed willful unless the petitioner can establish
16 by a preponderance of the evidence that such misstatement was not will-
17 ful. In addition to the foregoing, in the event that an eviction warrant
18 is executed in a proceeding in which a willful material misstatement is
19 made, the respondent shall be entitled to damages not exceeding three
20 times the costs incurred as a result of the eviction unless the peti-
21 tioner can establish that the eviction would have been justified regard-
22 less of the misstatement.

23 § 5. Section 743 of the real property actions and proceedings law, as
24 amended by section 16 of part M of chapter 36 of the laws of 2019, is
25 amended to read as follows:

26 § 743. Answer. Except as provided in section seven hundred thirty-two
27 of this article, relating to a proceeding for non-payment of rent, at
28 the time when the petition is to be heard the respondent, or any person
29 in possession or claiming possession of the premises, may answer, orally
30 or in writing. If the answer is oral the substance thereof shall be
31 recorded by the clerk or, if a particular court has no clerk, by the
32 presiding judge or justice of such court, and maintained in the case
33 record. A form answer, in a form approved by the appellate division
34 with jurisdiction over the proceeding, shall be made available to the
35 respondent by the clerk of the court. The form answer shall include
36 possible defenses to the proceeding, including but not limited to
37 defenses established by sections two hundred twenty-three and two
38 hundred thirty-five-b of the real property law, section one hundred
39 forty-three-b of the social services law and section three hundred five-a
40 of the multiple residence law. The answer may contain any legal or equi-
41 table defense, or counterclaim. The court may render affirmative judg-
42 ment for the amount found due on the counterclaim.

43 § 6. Subdivision 1 of section 745 of the real property actions and
44 proceedings law, as amended by section 17 of part M of chapter 36 of the
45 laws of 2019, is amended to read as follows:

46 1. Where triable issues of fact are raised, they shall be tried by the
47 court unless, at the time the petition is noticed to be heard, a party
48 demands a trial by jury, in which case trial shall be by jury. When the
49 petition indicates pursuant to subdivision four of section seven hundred
50 forty-one of this article, that there are outstanding code violations,
51 the court shall inquire regarding the duration and severity of the
52 outstanding violations and may stay the proceeding pending removal of
53 the violations in accordance with section seven hundred fifty-five of
54 this article, or make other disposition of the proceeding including
55 granting a total or partial abatement of rent, or dismissal of the
56 proceeding, as appropriate. At the time when issue is joined the court,

1 at the request of either party shall adjourn the trial of the issue, not
2 less than fourteen days, except by consent of all parties. A party's
3 second or subsequent request for adjournment shall be granted in the
4 court's sole discretion.

5 § 7. Section 749 of the real property actions and proceedings law is
6 amended by adding two new subdivisions 4 and 5 to read as follows:

7 4. The notice described in subdivision two of this section shall
8 include a statement advising the respondent that assistance to prevent
9 the eviction or otherwise to prevent the respondent from becoming home-
10 less may be available from the local department of social services and
11 shall include the phone number provided to the enforcement officer by
12 any private or public agency providing such assistance at the request of
13 such agency. Referral to legal aid, legal services or other legal
14 assistance offices shall also be included on such notices at the request
15 of such offices. In a proceeding based upon non-payment, such notice
16 shall also advise the respondent of the rent determined due together
17 with taxes, assessments, interest, penalties and costs in accordance
18 with the provision of subdivision one of section seven hundred fifty-one
19 of this article, and shall advise the respondent of the amount required
20 and procedure for payment.

21 5. Upon written or oral notification to the officer by an authorized
22 representative of the local department of social services that an appli-
23 cation for assistance to prevent eviction is pending on behalf of the
24 respondent household, the officer shall refrain from execution of the
25 warrant until such time as that officer is advised by the social
26 services official of the determination of such application, provided,
27 however, that the social services district shall guarantee payment to
28 the petitioner for any additional rent accruing during this period to be
29 calculated on a pro-rata basis for the number of days delay occasioned
30 by the operation of this provision.

31 § 8. The opening paragraph and subdivision 1 of section 751 of the
32 real property actions and proceedings law, as added by chapter 312 of
33 the laws of 1962, are amended to read as follows:

34 The respondent may, at any time before a warrant is [~~issued~~]
35 executed, stay the [~~issuing~~] execution thereof and also stay an
36 execution to collect the costs, as follows:

37 1. Where the lessee or tenant holds over after a default in the
38 payment of rent, or of taxes or assessments, he or she may effect a stay
39 by depositing the amount of the rent due or of such taxes or assess-
40 ments, and interest and penalty, if any thereon due, and the costs of
41 the special proceeding, with the clerk of the court, or where the office
42 of clerk is not provided for, with the court, who shall thereupon, upon
43 demand, pay the amount deposited to the petitioner or his or her duly
44 authorized agent; or by delivering to the court or clerk [~~his~~] a written
45 assurance by an authorized representative of the local department of
46 social services or an undertaking to the petitioner in such sum as the
47 court approves to the effect that [~~he will pay~~] the rent [~~, or~~] due will
48 be paid together with such taxes or assessments, and interest and penal-
49 ty and costs within ten days, at the expiration of which time a warrant
50 may issue, unless [~~he~~] the respondent produces to the court satisfactory
51 evidence of the payment.

52 § 9. This act shall take effect on the first of February next succeed-
53 ing the date on which it shall have become a law and shall apply to
54 actions and proceedings commenced on or after such effective date,
55 provided, however, that effective immediately, all actions and proce-
56 dures with respect to the proposed adoption, amendment, suspension or

1 repeal of any rule or regulation necessary to the timely implementation
2 of this act on its effective date are directed and authorized to be made
3 and completed on or before such effective date.