

609.5317 REAL PROPERTY; SEIZURES.

Subdivision 1. **Rental property.** (a) When contraband or a controlled substance manufactured, distributed, or acquired in violation of chapter 152 is seized on residential rental property incident to a lawful search or arrest, the prosecuting authority shall give the notice required by this subdivision to (1) the landlord of the property or the fee owner identified in the records of the county assessor, and (2) the agent authorized by the owner to accept service pursuant to section 504B.181. The notice is not required during an ongoing investigation. The notice shall state what has been seized and specify the applicable duties and penalties under this subdivision. The notice shall state that the landlord who chooses to assign the right to bring an eviction action retains all rights and duties, including removal of a tenant's personal property following issuance of the writ of restitution and delivery of the writ to the sheriff for execution. The notice shall also state that the landlord may contact the prosecuting authority if threatened by the tenant. Notice shall be sent by certified letter, return receipt requested, within 30 days of the seizure. If receipt is not returned, notice shall be given in the manner provided by law for service of summons in a civil action.

(b) Within 15 days after notice of the first occurrence, the landlord shall bring, or assign to the prosecuting authority of the county in which the real property is located, the right to bring an eviction action against the tenant. The assignment must be in writing on a form prepared by the prosecuting authority. Should the landlord choose to assign the right to bring an eviction action, the assignment shall be limited to those rights and duties up to and including delivery of the writ of restitution to the sheriff for execution.

(c) Upon notice of a second occurrence on any residential rental property owned by the same landlord in the same county and involving the same tenant, and within one year after notice of the first occurrence, the property is subject to forfeiture under sections 609.531, 609.5311, 609.5313, and 609.5315, unless an eviction action has been commenced as provided in paragraph (b) or the right to bring an eviction action was assigned to the prosecuting authority as provided in paragraph (b). If the right has been assigned and not previously exercised, or if the prosecuting authority requests an assignment and the landlord makes an assignment, the prosecuting authority may bring an eviction action rather than an action for forfeiture.

(d) The Department of Corrections Fugitive Apprehension Unit shall not seize real property for the purposes of forfeiture as described in paragraphs (a) to (c).

Subd. 2. **Additional remedies.** Nothing in subdivision 1 prevents the prosecuting authority from proceeding under section 609.5311 whenever that section applies.

Subd. 3. **Defenses.** It is a defense against a proceeding under subdivision 1, paragraph (b), that the tenant had no knowledge or reason to know of the presence of the contraband or controlled substance or could not prevent its being brought onto the property.

It is a defense against a proceeding under subdivision 1, paragraph (c), that the landlord made every reasonable attempt to evict a tenant or to assign the prosecuting authority the right to bring an eviction action against the tenant, or that the landlord did not receive notice of the seizure.

Subd. 4. **Limitations.** This section shall not apply if the retail value of the controlled substance is less than \$100, but this section does not subject real property to forfeiture under section 609.5311 unless the retail value of the controlled substance is: (1) \$1,000 or more; or (2) there have been two previous controlled substance seizures involving the same tenant.

History: *1989 c 305 s 7; 1991 c 193 s 4; 1992 c 533 s 3; 1999 c 199 art 2 s 34; 2003 c 2 art 2 s 19,20; 2005 c 136 art 13 s 15; 2012 c 128 s 26*