

# How to complete a Month-to-Month Lease in California

Open-ended residential lease with notice-to-vacate clause and recurring monthly rent.

## What this form is for

A month-to-month lease is used by landlords and property owners who want flexibility to adjust terms or end the tenancy with proper notice, and by tenants who need short-term housing without a fixed-term commitment. In California, this agreement must comply with state rent-control laws and notice-period requirements.

## Before you start

- Complete property address including unit number if applicable
- Tenant names, phone numbers, and current mailing addresses for all adults who will occupy the unit
- Monthly rent amount, due date (typically first of the month), acceptable payment methods, and late-fee structure
- Security deposit amount and details about any pre-existing property damage or conditions
- California-required disclosures including lead-based paint notice (for pre-1978 buildings), registered sex offender database notice, and shared utility arrangement details if applicable

## Step-by-step

1. Fill in the effective start date of the lease and the complete property address at the top of the form.
2. List all adult tenants by full legal name. Only persons named here have legal tenancy rights.
3. Enter the monthly rent amount in both numbers and words, specify the due date, and identify where and how rent must be paid (check, online portal, etc.).
4. Document the security deposit amount. California limits this to two months' rent for unfurnished units or three months' for furnished units.
5. Complete the notice-to-vacate clause. California requires 30 days' written notice if the tenant has lived there less than one year, or 60 days if one year or longer. Verify current state requirements as these can change.
6. Specify which utilities and services the tenant pays versus those included in rent (water, gas, electric, trash, internet).
7. Outline house rules including pet policy, smoking restrictions, noise limits, and guest policies. If pets are allowed, note any additional pet deposit or monthly pet rent.

8. Add any California-required addendums such as bedbug disclosure, mold notice, or local rent-control registration numbers if the property is in a rent-controlled jurisdiction.
9. Both landlord and all tenants must sign and date the agreement. Provide each tenant with a fully executed copy.

## What lenders look for

- Banks reviewing your rental-property income want to see consistent monthly cash flow, so attach 12 months of deposit records and your tenant-payment ledger to demonstrate reliability and occupancy history.
- Underwriters flag month-to-month arrangements as higher risk than fixed-term leases because vacancy can happen with short notice, so be prepared to show tenant stability or explain your occupancy rate.
- Avoid handwritten changes or crossed-out sections, as lenders question enforceability and professionalism of amended contracts.