

Rent Filings During the Federal Shutdown: What DC, VA & MD Landlords Need to Know

October 9, 2025

By Sidney Washington, Letecia Rollins and Gwen Roy-Harrison



With the federal shutdown underway, landlords in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia are asking: Should we pause filings for federal workers? The short answer — no, and here's why.

As the federal government shutdown begins, landlords across the region are understandably concerned about the potential impact on tenants who are federal employees or contractors. While certain state laws provide limited relief for furloughed tenants, landlords should not pause nonpayment filings or alter their standard procedures.

Virginia

Under Va. Code § 44-209, tenants who are federal employees, independent contractors for the federal government, or employees of companies under contract with the federal government may be eligible for a 60-day continuance of an unlawful detainer case for rent due after the shutdown began.

To qualify, the tenant must:

- Appear in court on the initial hearing date, and
- Provide written proof that they were furloughed or otherwise not receiving wages or payments due to the shutdown.

Importantly, this continuance applies only when the case is for nonpayment of rent, not for other lease violations. Landlords should continue to file nonpayment cases as usual; the court will decide whether a tenant meets the statutory criteria for a continuance.

Maryland

Under Md. Real Property § 8-401(d), courts may stay (temporarily pause) eviction proceedings for tenants who show that:

- The property is their primary residence
- They are a federal, state, or local government employee
- They were involuntarily furloughed without pay because of the shutdown

The stay lasts for a period the court deems reasonable, generally not exceeding 30 days after the end of the shutdown, unless a longer delay is justified.

Again, this is a court-granted stay, not a reason for landlords to delay filing.

Washington, D.C.

D.C. previously enacted the Federal Worker Housing Relief Act of 2019, which temporarily allowed furloughed workers to request up to a 90-day stay of eviction proceedings. That law expired in early 2020 and is no longer in effect.

Today, landlords should note that under the D.C. Human Rights Act, treating tenants differently based on their source of income, including federal employment, may constitute discrimination.

Overall Takeaway

Landlords in Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. should continue handling nonpayment matters in the normal course, allowing courts to determine whether tenants qualify for relief.

- Do not delay filings or make selective accommodations.
- Do allow the courts to apply the applicable continuance or stay provisions if a tenant demonstrates eligibility.
- Avoid differential treatment of tenants based on employment type or source of income.

In short: issue notices, file as usual — we will handle the rest in court.