

Protect Maryland Dogs and Our Communities

The highest court in Maryland recently held that pit bull dogs are "inherently dangerous," making owners and their landlords automatically financially liable for bites or other incidents. As a result, landlords may try to remove pit bull-type dogs from their properties.

It is critical that renters understand their legal rights.

Establish what kind of dog you have. The court's decision applies only to purebred pit bulls, not mixed breeds. If your dog is a mix, make sure his records accurately reflect his breed makeup.

Know your rights. Your landlord cannot just show up and force you or your dog out. Landlords have to follow laws, give notice of intent to evict, and go through a formal process to remove tenants or their pets. Please don't panic or immediately give up your dog.

Read your lease carefully. Contracts like leases cannot be changed without both sides agreeing, unless there is already language in the document that allows the change.

Be prepared. This ruling may make it more difficult for you to find another rental property that allows your dog. If you anticipate moving, start looking for a new place right away.

Consult an attorney: If you are facing giving up your dog or giving up your home, contact a Maryland attorney who specializes in landlord/tenant law. If you cannot afford an attorney, there are free or reduced cost legal services available.

If you have questions about this ruling, call The HSUS helpline at 1-855-MDDOGS1 (1-855-633-6471)

Visit **humanesociety.org/protectmddogs** for more information.

Sign up for HSUS text alerts so we can keep you updated about new resources and ways you can Protect Maryland Dogs. **Text HSUSMD to 30644.**

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