

SALSA

San Antonio Legal Services Association

Housing and Homelessness Program

1. **Abatement:** This is an action that can be taken in court by the person being sued (defendant) to request a change in how the plaintiff's complaint is made. It does not argue with what is in the complaint. Rather, the plea argues that the complaint was made in the wrong place, at the wrong time, or in the wrong way. If the plea is successful, it can stop the lawsuit and force the person making the complaint to start all over again.
2. **Appeal:** An appeal is the legal process to ask a higher court to review a decision by a judge in a lower court because you believe the judge made an error. In an eviction case, on an appeal, the County court reviews the Justice of the Peace court decision.
3. **Appeal Bond:** When someone wants to appeal a decision made by the court, they might have to pay a bond into the court first. The amount of the bond is determined by the court.
4. **Attorney's Fees:** If you have a lawyer who helps you with a legal case, they might ask you to pay them for their services. This payment is called "attorney fees," and it's the amount of money you owe to your lawyer. However, if you cannot afford a lawyer and get help from legal aid, you might not have to pay any attorney fees. In eviction lawsuits, the side that wins the case can ask the other side to pay their lawyer's fees.
5. **Court Costs:** When you go to court, there are some expenses you might have to pay. These expenses are called "court costs." They usually include fees for filing your case with the court and charges for making sure the other person knows about the case by delivering a summons to them.
6. **Default Judgment:** When someone does not come to court on their scheduled day (when they were supposed to go), the court might decide to give the person who made the complaint what they are demanding. This is called a "default judgment," and it is like saying the person who did not show up automatically loses. But even if this happens, the person who did not show up can still ask a higher court to take another look at the decision.
7. **Eviction Citation:** An eviction citation is a special notification from the court that tells the tenant that the landlord has filed a lawsuit to remove the tenant from the property. The paper also says when they have to go to court and where the court is located.
8. **Judgment:** A judgment is a decision from the court that resolves a dispute between parties, such as between a landlord and tenant. The decision is delivered in a court order that tells both parties what they have to do and what their rights are.
9. **Jury Trial:** In a jury trial, regular people come together to decide if the person who started the lawsuit should get what they want instead of just a judge deciding.

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10. **Legal Aid:** A provider of legal services that is dedicated to giving free legal assistance to people who qualify because they cannot afford legal assistance on their own income.
11. **Notice to Vacate:** A notice to vacate is a notice written by the landlord to tell the tenant that they have to leave the place they are living in by a certain time.
12. **Possession-only Judgment:** A possession-only judgment is when the court says the person who made the complaint wins and can take back the place they own. But in this judgment, the court does not give any extra money to the person who owns the place for the rent they did not get.
13. **Reset:** Resets are when the judge orders that the hearing be rescheduled to a later time.
14. **Take-nothing Judgment:** A take-nothing judgment is when the person being sued wins the case. The judge says that the person who started the lawsuit (plaintiff) did not show enough evidence to prove their case. So, the person being sued (defendant) does not have to give them anything.
15. **Writ of Possession:** A writ is an order from a judge that tells the sheriff or constable they can make the tenant leave the rental unit and remove all their belongings from the property.

DISCLAIMER: This handout is provided for educational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice. It is intended to offer general information and understanding of the subject matter. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you seek the guidance of a qualified legal professional or an appropriate expert in your jurisdiction before making any decisions or taking any actions based on the information in this handout.