

CHAPTER 291.

UNLAWFUL DETAINER.

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291.01 Proceedings to remove tenant, etc., holding over. In the following cases any tenant or lessee at will, or by sufferance, or for any part of a year, or for one or more years of any real property, including a specific or undivided portion of a house or other dwelling, and the assigns, undertenants or legal representatives of such tenant or lessee may be removed therefrom in the manner prescribed in this chapter, except that nothing herein contained shall affect the provisions of section 234.19:

(1) When such person holds possession after the expiration of the term by lapse of time or after such tenancy at will or sufferance has been terminated by either party in the manner provided in sections 234.03 and 234.04, and without the permission of the landlord.

(2) When such person holds over without such permission after any default in the payment of rent pursuant to the agreement under which he holds and at least 3 days' notice in writing, requiring in the alternative the payment of the rent or the possession of the premises, has been served in behalf of the person entitled to such rent on the person in possession of the premises in the manner prescribed in s. 262.06 for the service of a summons, and such notice may be served by the lessor or any person in his behalf. In case the tenant of the demised premises cannot be found, nor any usual place of abode of said tenant and member of his family of suitable age and discretion upon whom to make such service, then such notice may be served on a person residing on the demised premises, if there is one, and if not then such notice may be served by affixing same in a conspicuous part of the premises, where it may be conveniently read for at least 10 days before an action is brought for the removal of such tenant under this section.

(3) When such person holds over without such permission, contrary to any other conditions or covenants of the agreement under which he holds, after at least 3 days' notice requiring the delivery of the possession of the premises has been served, as above required, on the person holding such possession.

Cross References: See 234.19 for provision excluding certain long-term leases from applicability of ch. 291.

See 291.15 for provision for stay of proceedings after judgment for removal.

Note: The amendment of sub. (2) by ch. 226, laws of 1959, is effective July 1, 1960 as to causes of action arising after that date.

291.02 Removal after foreclosure and of renter. In the following cases any person who holds possession of real property after demand of the possession thereof has been made, and the assigns, tenants or representatives of such person may be removed in like manner:

(1) When the property has been duly sold upon the foreclosure of a mortgage under the provisions of chapter 297, which was executed by such person or any person under whom he claims by title subsequent to the date of the recording of such mortgage, and the title under such foreclosure has been duly perfected.

(2) When such person occupies or holds the property under an agreement with the owner to occupy and cultivate the same upon shares or for a share of the crops and the time fixed in the agreement for such occupancy has expired.

291.03 Forcible entry, etc., forbidden. No person shall make any entry into real property but in cases where entry is given by law, and in such cases not with strong hand nor with a multitude of people, but only in a peaceable manner. Any person who shall make such unlawful or forcible entry and detain the same, or who, having peaceably entered upon any property, forcibly holds the possession thereof, may be removed therefrom and fined in the manner provided in this chapter.

291.04 Limitation of section 291.01. Section 291.01 shall not extend to any person who has or shall have continued in possession three years after the termination of the time for which the premises were demised or let to him or those under whom he claims, or to any person who continues in possession three years, quietly and peaceably by disseisin.

291.05 Action, how commenced. The plaintiff shall file with a justice of the county, or if the premises be within a city, then with a justice of such city, a complaint signed by him, his agent or attorney, giving therein a description of the premises of which possession is claimed, stating the facts which authorize the removal of the defendant, naming him, and praying for his removal. The justice shall thereupon issue a summons, directed to the sheriff or any constable of the county, commanding him to summon the defendant to appear before him on a day in such summons named, which shall not be less than 6 nor more than 15 days from the day of issuing the same and shall deliver the summons and complaint to such officer. The summons shall be in the form usually issued by justices of the peace in civil actions.

291.06 Summons and complaint, how served. (1) The summons and complaint shall be served at least 6 days before the return date by the sheriff or any constable of the county in which the property is located as provided for the exercise of personal jurisdiction under ch. 262 but if service cannot be made under that chapter, then on a competent person at least 14 years of age residing on the rented premises.

(2) If service cannot be made under sub. (1), then the officer having the summons for service shall make return of such facts on said summons on or before the return day mentioned therein, and if the defendant does not appear before said justice within the hour after the summons is made returnable, then the justice shall enter an order in his docket requiring the plaintiff to publish in a newspaper printed in the county and designated by the justice or if there is no newspaper printed in the county then in a newspaper of general circulation in the county, a notice to the defendant that a complaint in writing has been filed with said justice for the removal of said defendant from the premises, describing them, and that a summons has been issued thereon as provided by s. 291.05, and that unless he appears before said justice at a time and place mentioned in said order and notice, not less than 14 nor more than 30 days from the date of said order, judgment will be rendered against him as prayed for in the complaint in said action; and the justice shall thereupon continue the cause to the time and place mentioned in said order. Such notice shall be published at least once in each week for 2 successive weeks before the day to which the action has been adjourned. A copy of the notice shall be sent by mail to the defendant at his last known address, even if it is the premises, and a copy shall also be posted on the premises. Proof of such publication, mailing and posting shall be filed with said justice on or before the day to which the action is adjourned.

291.07 Proceedings and pleadings. After the return of the summons served as above provided, and at the time and place named therein, if the defendant appear he may answer the complaint; and all matters in excuse, justification or avoidance of the allegations of the complaint must be answered specially; and thereupon the justice shall proceed to hear and determine the action unless he shall adjourn the trial as provided in section 291.08; but either party may demand a trial by jury. The proceedings in such action shall be the same as in other civil actions in a justice's court except as in this chapter otherwise specially provided.

291.08 Adjournment and undertaking. The justice may, in his discretion, adjourn any such trial, but not beyond six days after the return day of the summons unless all the parties thereto agree to a longer adjournment; but in all cases brought against any person named in section 291.01, if the defendant, his agent or attorney shall make the oath required by section 301.40, and give an undertaking, with one or more sureties, to be approved by the justice, to the effect that the defendant will pay to the plaintiff all rent which may accrue to him during the pendency of such action upon the real estate described in the complaint and all costs and damages which the plaintiff may recover against him in such action, the said justice shall adjourn said cause for such reasonable time as may appear necessary, not exceeding ninety days from the return day of the summons.

291.09 Judgment; fine; execution. (1) If upon the trial of any such action the justice or jury shall find the defendant or any of several defendants guilty of the allegations in the complaint the justice shall thereupon enter judgment for the plaintiff to have restitution of the premises, and tax the costs for the plaintiff, and when the action is brought under the provisions of section 291.03 shall impose a fine, not exceeding one hundred dollars, against such defendant, as under all the circumstances he may deem just. Such justice shall issue execution in favor of the plaintiff for such costs as in other actions in tort, and also issue a writ of restitution.

(2) If any fine be imposed upon a defendant the justice may commit the person against whom it is imposed to the common jail of the county until such fine be paid or, in his discretion, direct the amount thereof to be collected upon the execution issued in favor of the plaintiff in such action, or upon a separate execution, so issued for the collection of such fine only, and in such case the officer having the execution shall pay the amount of such fine, when collected, to the justice for the use of the school fund.

(3) If the justice or jury shall find that the defendant is not guilty as aforesaid such justice shall enter judgment for the defendant and tax the costs against the plaintiff, and issue execution therefor. The justice shall tax, as a part of the costs to the prevailing party, ten dollars attorney fees, whenever an attorney of a court of record has appeared in such action on behalf of such party.

291.10 Treble damages. If the plaintiff shall recover in any action brought under the provisions of this chapter, except when brought for the nonpayment of rent, he shall be entitled to recover treble damages, with costs of suit, against the person found guilty, in a separate action, for any injury he shall have sustained by reason of any unlawful or forcible entry or detainer, or for holding any unlawful possession of the premises by such defendant.

291.11 Appeal; stay of proceedings. If either party shall feel aggrieved by the judgment rendered in such action he may appeal within ten days to the circuit court or other court having jurisdiction of such appeal as in other cases tried before justices of the peace; but no such appeal by a defendant shall stay proceedings on such judgment unless the appellant shall, within said ten days, execute and file with the justice his undertaking to the plaintiff, with two or more sureties, to be approved by the justice, to the effect that the appellant will pay all costs of such appeal which may be awarded against him, and abide the order of the court therein, and pay all rent and other damages justly accruing to the plaintiff during the pendency of such appeal. Upon taking such appeal and filing such undertaking all further proceedings in the case shall be thereby stayed and the appellate court shall thereafter issue all needful writs and processes to carry out any judgment which may be rendered thereon in such appellate court.

291.12 Stay of proceedings on certiorari. No proceedings by certiorari to such justice shall stay proceedings on a judgment rendered against the defendant in such action unless the defendant shall, at the time of the service of such writ, execute and file with the justice his undertaking to the plaintiff, with two or more sureties, to be approved by the justice, to the effect that the defendant will pay all costs of such proceedings on certiorari which shall be awarded against him, and abide the order of the court therein, and pay all rent and other damages justly accruing to the plaintiff during the pendency of such proceedings. Upon the issuance of such writ and filing of such undertaking all further proceedings in the case shall be thereby stayed.

291.13 Proceedings if writ of restitution issued. If a writ of restitution shall have been issued previous to the taking of any appeal, by which proceedings are stayed, the justice shall forthwith give the appellant a certificate of the allowance of such appeal, and upon the service of such certificate upon the officer having such writ the said officer shall forthwith cease all further proceedings thereon; and if such writ shall not have been completely executed the defendant shall remain in possession of the premises until the appeal shall be determined.

291.14 Trial on appeal. In all cases of appeal from a judgment in an action brought under this chapter a new trial shall be had in the appellate court, and the case shall be tried in the same manner as cases originally brought there, and such court shall not dismiss or quash the proceedings for want of form only.

291.15 Stay of proceedings by tenant. When a final judgment shall be rendered in favor of the plaintiff in any such action, brought against a person for holding over after default in the payment of rent, either in justice's court or in the appellate court, he may stay all proceedings on such judgment by paying all rent due at the date of the judgment and the costs of the action or by filing with the justice, or after judgment in the appellate court, with the clerk, his undertaking to the plaintiff, with such sureties as such justice or clerk shall approve, to the effect that he will pay such rent and costs within ten days; at the expiration of which time a writ of restitution may issue unless he produce to the justice or clerk satisfactory evidence of such payment.

291.16 Form of verdict. (1) The verdict of the jury or the finding of the court in favor of the plaintiff in an action under the provisions of this chapter shall be substantially in the following form:

At a court held at, on the day of, 19.., before, a justice of the peace in and for the county of, in an action between, plaintiff, and, defendant, the jury (or if the action be tried without a jury, the court) find that the facts alleged in the complaint are true and that the said, defendant, is guilty thereof, and the said, plaintiff, ought to have restitution of the premises therein described without delay.

(2) If the verdict or finding be for the defendant it shall be sufficient to find the defendant not guilty.

291.17 Form of writ of restitution. A writ of restitution may be substantially in the following form:

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }
County of } ss.

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, to the sheriff or any constable of the county aforesaid:

Whereas,, plaintiff, of, in an action for an unlawful or forcible entry and detainer (or for an unlawful detainer, as the case may be), at a court held at, in the county aforesaid, on the day of, 19.., before, a justice of the peace in and for the county aforesaid, by consideration of the court recovered a judgment against, of, to have restitution of (here describe the premises as in the complaint):

Therefore, you are hereby commanded that, taking with you the force of the county, if necessary, you cause the said to be immediately removed from the aforesaid premises and the said to have peaceable restitution of the same. You are also hereby commanded that of the goods and chattels of the said within said county you cause to be levied, and the same disposed of according to law, to be paid to the said the sum of, being the costs taxed against the said, for the said, at the court aforesaid, together with twenty-five cents for this writ, and also the sum of dollars, adjudged as aforesaid, to be returned to the undersigned, and thereof, together with this writ, make due return within thirty days from the date hereof, according to law.

Dated at, this day of, 19..

....., Justice.