

Evictions soar as banks foreclose on landlords during credit crisis

BY ROBERT GEARTY
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

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The staggering rise in foreclosures and home evictions across the outer boroughs has created a new group of innocent victims - renters.

A Daily News investigation shows that from [Staten Island](#) to [South Jamaica](#), renters have been given just weeks to find new digs, while unscrupulous landlords collect rents for homes they no longer own.

"There are a lot of innocent people being hurt by the foreclosure crisis," said Vicki Been, director of the [Furman Center](#) for Real Estate and Urban Policy at [New York University](#).

The center analyzed 2007 foreclosure numbers and estimated at least 38,000 people in foreclosed homes were renters.

These are people who, unlike their landlords, didn't get in over their heads by taking out loans they couldn't repay.

Housing Court calendars - especially in [Queens](#) - are clogged with eviction petitions from banks on foreclosed properties.

Alarmed by the ever-increasing number of foreclosures, court officials last spring began counting evictions - tallying 1,538 since mid-April in the outer boroughs. [Manhattan](#) only has a few.

"We've certainly seen increases, especially in Queens and Staten Island," said [Louise Seeley](#), executive director of the nonprofit advocacy group, the City-wide Task Force on Housing Court.

Queens remains eviction central. Banks there have filed 871 foreclosure-related evictions between April 21 and Oct. 17 involving 480 properties, records show.

Some Queens neighborhoods have had frequent visits from city marshals slapping eviction notices on their doors.

The hardest hit areas include [Rochdale](#) Village in South Jamaica (41 evictions), [Far Rockaway](#) (38) and [South Ozone Park](#) (32), court records show.

[Brooklyn](#) placed second with 351 foreclosure-related evictions filed between the end of April and Oct. 27, followed by Staten Island with 195 in the same period.

[The Bronx](#) had 121 evictions between the end of April and Oct. 23. Only a handful occurred in Manhattan, where a vastly different housing stock has been largely unaffected by the foreclosure virus.

Foreclosure-related evictions have kept city [Marshal Edward Guida](#), a 19-year veteran, busy. He's done 608 such evictions this year, compared to 279 in the same period last year.

None of the other 44 marshals in the city has done as many.

Guida said 80% of the foreclosed homes he takes possession of are empty - and many have been trashed.

"Actually today [when] you're finding them, they've removed a lot of the cabinets, the boiler, the pipes," he said. "You're finding animals left behind."

Guida said evictions can be dangerous. He was shot at once several years ago, and six months ago a woman grabbed a knife and tried to stab him. Neither incident involved a foreclosure.

"It's part of the job; you have to be very careful," Guida said.

These days the term "eviction" comes up frequently in Queens Housing Court. The other day, [Deutsche Bank](#) moved to evict tenants of four apartments at a foreclosed building on Astoria Blvd.

When the case was called, the occupants of three of the apartments stood up. They included two couples, two brothers and three small children.

Tenant Maria Perez, 34, told the judge she and the others weren't aware the house was in foreclosure or that [Maria Inga](#) no longer owned it.

She said they paid \$1,700 rent for September to Inga, who told them she would keep their security deposits as payment for October rent.

The judge instructed them not to give Inga any more money.

Outside of court, Deutsche Bank lawyer [Eileen Lin](#) told [Perez](#) the bank had bought the house at auction and was selling it to recoup its money. To do that, they needed it to be empty.

"You're pretty much the innocent people here," Lin told them.

Perez's husband, [Carlos Hernandez](#), 34, said he did not know what they would do. "We have two children," he said. "I don't want to lose my apartment."

rgearty@nydailynews.com