

PAY MY INVOICE

Notice of Intent to Lien + "What Kills Your Lien" Checklist

The two documents every unpaid contractor, subcontractor, and supplier needs first — before spending a dollar on filing. Fill-in-the-blank template, sending instructions, and the 10-point checklist that keeps you from blowing your own case.

[FREE DOWNLOAD](#)

paymyinvoice.com · You did the work. Get paid for it.

General information only — not legal advice. Confirm your state's requirements with a construction attorney.

How to use this file

You're holding two tools. Use them in this order:

1. **The kill-checklist (page 6–7) first.** Run through all ten items before you do anything else. Most contractors who lose lien cases lose them on one of these ten — usually a notice they never sent or a deadline they counted wrong.
2. **The notice of intent template (pages 3–5) second.** If the checklist clears you, send this letter. In some states it's legally required before you can file; in every other state it's the step that settles a large share of disputes without a courthouse.

One rule above all: lien deadlines are measured in *days*, and missing one by a single day can extinguish your rights entirely. If any deadline below feels close, stop and talk to a construction attorney in your state *today* — not next week.

What this file is not

This is general information, not legal advice, and it doesn't create an attorney-client relationship. Lien laws are state-specific and they change. The full 50-state deadline table — every state's notice, filing, and enforcement deadlines, each cell sourced to the statute and attorney-reviewed — lives in **The 50-State Lien Deadline + Notice Pack (\$49)**, currently under construction-lien attorney review at paymyinvoice.com/pack.html.

Notice of Intent to Lien — template

Copy this onto your company letterhead, fill in the bracketed fields, and send it as described on page 5. Keep every word professional — this letter may one day be read by a judge.

[YOUR COMPANY NAME]

[Street address] · [City, ST ZIP]

[Phone] · [Email]

[Date]

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

[Property owner name]

[Owner address]

[City, ST ZIP]

Re: Notice of Intent to Claim a Mechanics Lien

Property: [street address or legal description of the property]

Project: [brief description of the project]

Amount claimed: \$[AMOUNT]

Dear [Owner name]:

This letter is to notify you that **[Your Company Name]** furnished [labor / materials / equipment — describe briefly, e.g. "framing labor and lumber"] for the improvement of the property described above, at the request of [name of the party who hired you — general contractor, owner, etc.].

As of the date of this letter, the amount of **\$[AMOUNT]** remains unpaid and past due, despite [number] invoices sent on [dates] and [describe follow-up: calls, emails, meetings].

Unless full payment is received within [10–30] days of the date of this letter, we intend to record a mechanics lien against the property in accordance with the lien laws of the State of [STATE]. Recording a lien places a claim against the property's title, which can affect the owner's ability to sell or refinance the property until the claim is resolved.

We prefer to resolve this without filing. Payment should be made payable to **[Your Company Name]** and delivered to [address] no later than [DATE — the deadline above].

If you believe any portion of this claim is disputed, please contact us immediately at [phone/email] so we can address it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Your printed name], [Title]

[Your Company Name]

Enclosures: copies of unpaid invoices [list invoice numbers]. Keep the certified-mail receipt and the green return-receipt card with your project file.

Sending instructions — do this exactly

1. **Fill in every bracket.** No blanks, no "TBD." An incomplete notice is worse than no notice — it signals you don't know the rules.
2. **Set a real deadline.** 10 days for small amounts and clear-cut cases; up to 30 for larger or messier ones. The deadline must be a calendar date, not "soon."
3. **Send it certified mail, return receipt requested** — to the property owner *and* to the general contractor if you're a sub or supplier. Some states require service on additional parties; check your state's rule.
4. **Keep everything:** a copy of the signed letter, the certified-mail receipt, the green card when it comes back, and copies of every unpaid invoice referenced. This paper trail is your evidence.
5. **Calendar two dates the day you mail it:** (a) the payment deadline in the letter, and (b) your state's lien *filing* deadline, counted from your last day of work. If the letter's deadline passes with no payment, you must already know your filing deadline — not start researching it then.
6. **If they pay partially** to "make you go away," get any agreement in writing before you stand down — and re-calendar your filing deadline from the new facts, because the clock usually doesn't pause for negotiations.

State variance warning: a handful of states *require* a notice of intent (or equivalent) a set number of days before you may record a lien — miss that window and the lien fails. Other states don't require it at all, but it still settles cases. Know which kind of state you're in *before* you mail this: the 50-state table in the \$49 pack lists it per state.

"What Kills Your Lien" — the 10-point checklist

Run through every item *before* you file anything. Check each box honestly.

- ☐ **1. The preliminary notice you never sent.** Many states require a prelim notice within days or weeks of *starting* work — not when payment goes bad. If your state requires one and you didn't send it, you may have no lien rights at all. (California: 20 days. Other states vary wildly.)
- ☐ **2. The deadline you counted from the wrong date.** "90 days" from what? Last day on site? Substantial completion? Final invoice date? Warranty callbacks usually don't count. Count from the wrong event and you're late.
- ☐ **3. The wrong claimant form.** Some states have different claim forms for GCs vs. subs vs. suppliers. File on the wrong form and the claim can be thrown out.
- ☐ **4. A defective property description.** "The big house on Elm" isn't a legal description. The claim must identify the property the way the county records do — get the legal description from the county assessor or recorder.
- ☐ **5. The blown enforcement deadline.** Recording the lien isn't the finish line — most states give you a fixed window (commonly one year, some much shorter) to file suit to enforce it, or the lien expires by operation of law.
- ☐ **6. The unlicensed-contractor bar.** Several states deny lien rights entirely to unlicensed contractors, or require your license number on the claim. Know your state's rule before you file.
- ☐ **7. The homestead trap.** Residential homestead properties carry extra requirements in some states (Texas is the famous one) — additional notices, stricter deadlines, sometimes a written contract requirement.
- ☐ **8. Serving the wrong people — or nobody.** Many states require you to serve a copy of the recorded lien on the owner (and sometimes the GC or lender) within days of recording. Recording without serving can invalidate the claim.
- ☐ **9. Liening the wrong property interest.** Public projects generally can't be liened the same way private ones can (bond claims instead). Leased property, condos, and multi-parcel developments each have their own traps.

- **10. Waiting until the deadline to learn the deadline.** The meta-killer. Every item above is a research task that takes days — and the clock doesn't pause while you learn. Know your state's rules *before* payment goes bad, not after.

What to do next

If the checklist cleared you and the notice of intent is in the mail, you're ahead of most contractors in your position. Your next step is knowing your **exact filing deadline** — the date by which the lien claim itself must be recorded — because that's the one that ends cases.

The 50-State Lien Deadline + Notice Pack

\$49 one-time · yours forever

Every state's preliminary-notice, filing, and enforcement deadlines on one page — each cell sourced to the state statute. Notice templates by role. The step-by-step filing walkthrough. The deadline calculator worksheet. And the chapter no filing service can publish: **when a lien is the wrong move.**

Currently under construction-lien attorney review — on sale at paymemoryinvoice.com/pack.html the moment it clears. The free guides at paymemoryinvoice.com are yours in the meantime.

© 2026 Pay My Invoice · paymemoryinvoice.com · General information only — not legal advice. Lien laws are state-specific and change; confirm deadlines with a construction attorney in your state.