



Renting in Seattle

BEING A RENTER

Renting can be complicated and there is a lot to know about your tenant rights and responsibilities. This brochure provides guidance on repair requests, reasonable accommodations, housing cost increases, and other types of notices you might receive from your landlord.

Visit www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle or call the **Renting in Seattle Helpline** at **(206) 684-5700**.



City of Seattle

It was fine this morning, but it was leaking when I got home...



Repair Requests

- Promptly alert your landlord when a repair is needed. In some cases, failure to report a repair could make you responsible for damage and repair costs. Leaky faucets or running toilets can significantly impact the water bill. Your landlord might argue you are responsible if you did not report it right away.
- You must submit your repair request in writing. Your landlord must respond within a specific timeframe depending on the nature of repair.
- Call the Renting in Seattle Helpline if your landlord fails to respond. An inspector will schedule a time for inspection and require your landlord to correct any code violations.
- Withholding rent because of repairs or deducting the cost of repairs from your rent can put you at risk of eviction if you do not have a prior written agreement with your landlord.

Landlord Access

- Your landlord has a right to access your unit for specific reasons with advance notice.
 - **1 day** is required when the landlord needs to show the unit to a prospective renter or purchaser, or to a contractor for an estimate.
 - **2 days** are required when the landlord needs to perform necessary or agreed-upon repairs or upgrades.
- You can deny access if you have a genuine reason like a scheduling conflict but make sure you provide alternative dates and times.
- The law requires both you and your landlord to be reasonable about access to the unit.
- Document your efforts to cooperate with your landlord's request for access. If you keep denying your landlord access, you could be issued a 10-Day Notice to Comply or Vacate.
- Your landlord may enter your unit without notice and consent when there is an emergency, such as a fire or major leak.



Housing Cost Increase

Housing cost includes rent, parking/storage fees or any reoccurring cost associated with your housing.

- In Seattle, housing cost increases of 10% or more require 60 days advance written notice. Increases less than 10% require 30 days advance written notice.
- Notices must include information about your tenant rights and meet requirements of both City and state regulations.
- If conditions in your rental unit do not meet basic standards on the checklist found at www.seattle.gov/rrio, your landlord must fix the problem before the increase can go into effect.
- You must notify your landlord in writing about the issue before the rent increase goes into effect. The City will inspect to verify the issue and/or the repair. Call the Renting in Seattle Helpline to schedule an inspection.



Other Common Notices

Pay close attention when you receive a notice from your landlord. It may be time sensitive and likely contains important information. Your landlord should try to hand the notice to you and if you're not available, conspicuously post it on your door and mail it by first class mail.

- **30 Day Notice of Change to Rental Agreement:** When you are renting month to month, your landlord can change the terms of your rental agreement with 30 days advance written notice. The notice must coincide with the end of a rental period.
- **10 Day Comply or Vacate:** This notice is for violations of your rental agreement. Common examples might include loud noise during quiet hours or smoking in a non-smoking building. If you don't comply, you could be at risk of eviction. If you dispute the facts of the notice, it's important to respond in writing.
- **3 Day Pay or Vacate:** This notice is for late rent. You must pay your rent within three days of getting the notice or risk being evicted. If you anticipate paying your rent late, it's better to let your landlord know in advance. Maybe your landlord can be flexible, especially if you usually pay your rent on time (see pledges of rent assistance below).
- **Termination notice:** If you receive a notice from your landlord requiring you to move out, go to www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle or see the Renting in Seattle Moving Out brochure (see pledges of rent assistance below).

If you need help understanding a notice you've received or need a referral for legal advice, contact the Renting in Seattle Helpline.

Pledges of Rent Assistance

If you need help with rent assistance call the 211 Community Information Line for a list of agencies that can help.

If you receive a 3 day pay rent or vacate notice and secure financial assistance from a third party, your landlord must accept a written pledge of payment. A third party can be a church, a non-profit or an individual.

- The pledge must in writing.
- It must be received before the 3 day notice expires.
- The third party must commit to paying the pledge within five days.
- The payment must be enough to bring the rent up to date by itself or in combination with other funds.



Time-sensitive



Reasonable Accommodation & Modification

If you are renting with a disability you can request a reasonable accommodation or modification.

- An accommodation is a change in rules or practices such as asking for an exception to an established parking policy to allow for a parking space closer to your unit, if your disability affects mobility.
- A modification is typically a physical alteration that improves accessibility, like a grab bar or a wheelchair ramp. You would be responsible for the cost unless the landlord receives federal funding.

Renter Protections

- It is unlawful for your landlord to retaliate against you because you assert your rights, make a complaint about discrimination, your housing or your landlord. Increasing rent, reducing services, or attempting to evict you are some examples of potential retaliation.
- Renters have a right to organize such as holding meetings, distributing leaflets or initiating contact with other tenants in the building to discuss rental issues.
- Your landlord is strictly prohibited from changing locks, shutting off utilities, removing doors/windows, equipment, or fixtures.



City of Seattle

Seattle.gov/rentinginseattle
Helpline (206) 684-5700



Seattle believes in inclusion and equity. Immigrants and refugees are welcome here. City employees do not ask about citizenship status and serve all residents regardless of immigration status.

If you have a disability and would like to receive information from us in an alternative format please call our helpline. Our TTY line is (206) 233-7156.



Interpretation is always available. This document is available in:

English • Español • Oromiffa • af Soomaali • አማርኛ • ភាសាខ្មែរ • 中文 • 한국어 • ພາສາລາວ
русский язык • ภาษาไทย • ትግርኛ • Tiếng Việt