

An illustration of a row of colorful houses in shades of orange, grey, and yellow. The houses have various windows and doors. In the windows, there are illustrations of diverse people: a man with a beard and a purple turban, a woman with curly hair, and a family consisting of a man, a woman in a red hijab, a child in a blue shirt, and a woman in a purple hijab. In front of the houses, there are green bushes, a blue recycling bin, and a green trash bin. A person wearing a red beanie, glasses, a red vest, and a backpack is walking towards the right, holding a phone and a green cup. A brown dog is running to the right in the foreground.

# Renting in Seattle

## TOP 10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Presented by  
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections & Seattle Office for Civil Rights

# Presentation Overview

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10. Rental Registration
9. Fair Housing Protected Classes
8. Who can rent?
7. What can be charged?
6. The Rental Agreement
5. Repairs
4. Notices
3. Service Animals
2. Ending a rental agreement
1. Covid-19



# #10 Registration

- Since 2014 all rental units (with some exceptions) must be registered
- Registration renewed every 2 years
- Rental inspections every 5-10 years
- Minimum standards exist for:
  - Space & Occupancy (floor area)
  - Light & Ventilation (windows, air flow)
  - Sanitation (kitchen, bathrooms, plumbing)
  - Structural (roofs, foundations, chimneys)
  - Mechanical (heating, electrical)
  - Fire & Safety (stairs, exits, egress, alarms)
  - Security (entry locks, observation ports)

RRIO checklist is found at [www.seattle.gov/RRIO](http://www.seattle.gov/RRIO)



# #9 Fair Housing Protected Classes

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Fair housing is the right of everyone to have equitable access to housing and housing services.

Everyone is a member of a protected class.

## Protected Classes in Seattle

- |                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Race               | • Gender Identity                    |
| • Color              | • Veteran/Military Status            |
| • National Origin    | • Age                                |
| • Religion           | • Ancestry                           |
| • Sex                | • Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) |
| • Disability         | • Political Ideology                 |
| • Familial Status    | • Creed                              |
| • Marital Status     | • Alternative Source of Income       |
| • Sexual Orientation | • Other Subsidies                    |



## #8 Who can rent?

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- Consider the list of protected classes and think how those translate in real life renting situations.
- Seattle's *First in Time* ordinance requires landlords to offer a rental unit to the first person who submits a complete and qualified application.
- *Fair Chance Housing* means that it is illegal to ban applicants with criminal histories, or screen applicants for criminal history.
- Applicants may be screened against sexual offender registry but cannot be refused housing for that reason alone.



# #7 What Can Be Charged?

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- Application fee (strictly the actual cost)
- Holding Deposit (limited to 25% one month's rent)
- Security Deposit
- Cleaning fee
- Application fee + Cleaning fee = maximum 10% of one month's rent
- Security Deposit + Application fee + Cleaning fee = maximum one month's rent
- Pet Deposit = maximum 25% of one month's rent
- No other fees allowed
- Installment payments are required if the renter chooses to pay over a schedule.



# #6 The Rental Agreement

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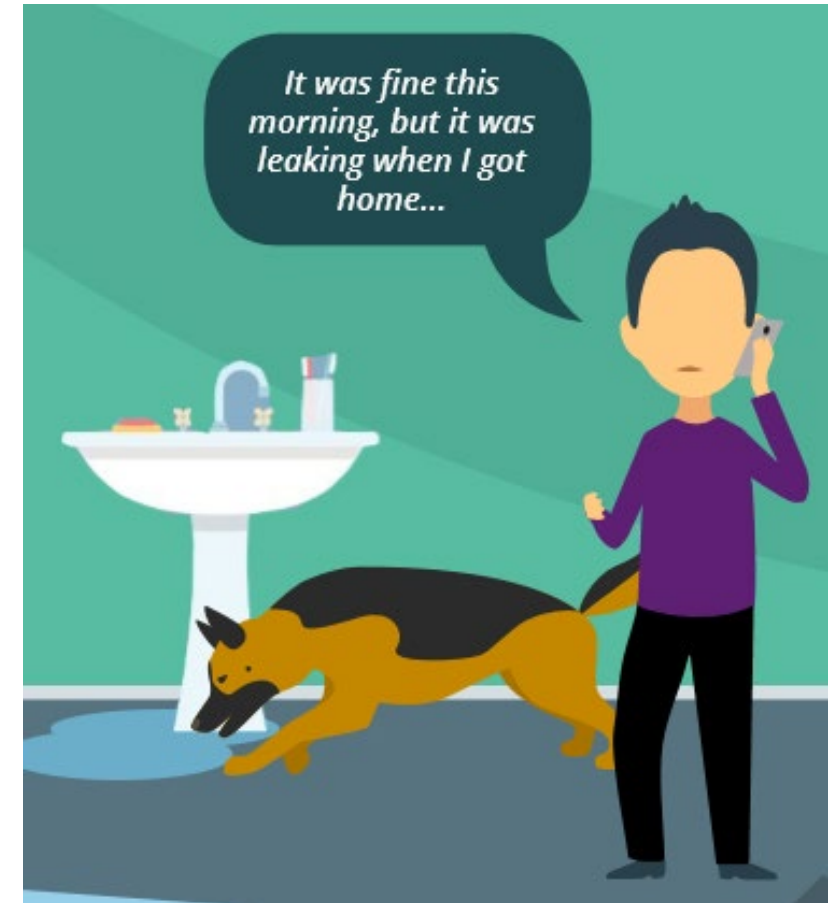
- The rental agreement is a legally binding contract
- Seattle has many regulations specific to the City
- State Landlord Tenant Act also has requirements
- 3 Main Types – Term, Terminating, Month-to-Month
- Most important provisions
- Move-in Checklist



# #5 Repairs

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- Repair requests must be in writing.
- Respond to issues promptly.
- Document efforts.
- Landlords have a specific time frame in which to respond depending on the repair
- If a landlord fails to respond and the tenant complains to code compliance - An Inspector will schedule a day and time to inspect the unit and require the landlord to correct any housing violations.
- Lack of water, power and heat are considered emergency conditions by the City.





# #4 Notices

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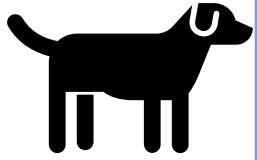
- **Housing Cost Increase** 60 Days advance written notice.
- \* **14 Day Pay or Vacate** Rent is not received by the due date, can include utilities and late installment, payments of move-in costs.
- **10 Day Comply or Vacate** When a tenant violates the rental agreement
- **30 Day Change to Terms** Month- to-month agreements or the expiration of a lease term
- Notices in Seattle must include information about where renters can locate information on their rights.

*If you need help understanding this notice or information about your renter rights, call the Renting in Seattle Helpline at (206) 684- 5700 or visit the web site at [www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle](http://www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle).*



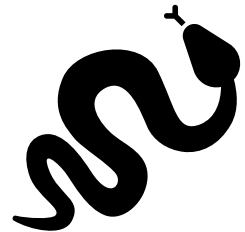
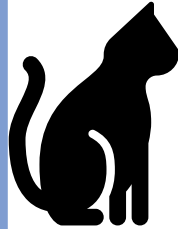
# #3 Service Animals

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**The definition of service animal is broad in Seattle**

**No training or certification required**



**“No pet” policies do not apply**

## **When can verification be requested?**

When the disability is not known or obvious

When the need for accommodation is not known or obvious

## **What verification be requested?**

Verification of disability & disability related need

## **Who can provide verification?**

Qualified 3<sup>rd</sup> party with knowledge of the person's disability



## #2 Ending a Rental Agreement

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- Termination of tenancy vs Eviction
- Must have [Just Cause](#) to terminate a tenancy in Seattle
- Must provide proper notice and serve notice properly
- Eviction is the filing of a lawsuit in Superior Court to restore an owner's right to possess the property
- Both landlord and tenant should have legal representation
- Deposit return – 21 days

# #1 COVID-19 Impact

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- State of Emergency declared in March 2020
- State, City eviction moratoriums in force currently until March 31, 2021
- The **ONLY** reason a tenant can be evicted in Seattle during moratorium is if they present a clear hazard to health and safety
- **No exceptions**
- Additional protections include:
  - No housing cost increases
  - No interest or penalties for unpaid rent
  - No harassment/threats
  - Payment plans are required
  - Definition of tenant is expanded

# Final Thoughts

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- A simple rule of thumb is to always consider how you would feel as the other party in any given situation and respond accordingly!
- When in doubt, reach out! Call the Renting in Seattle Helpline for guidance. We are here to help.
- Be informed. Both landlords and tenants can find information on every stage of the renting experience at [www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle](http://www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle).
- Check out our new Renter's Handbook in this peek preview!  
<http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDCI/Renting/RentersHandbook.pdf>



Questions?

Renting in Seattle

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