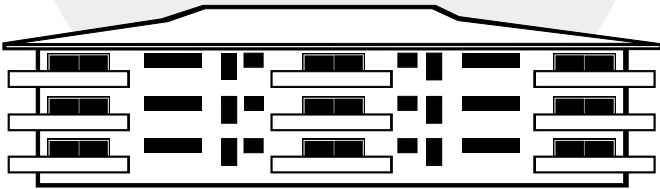




# A GUIDE TO LANDLORD AND TENANT ISSUES



## Rights of All Tenants

Renters who are not covered by the Landlord-Tenant Act do have these basic rights under other state laws:

- Right to a livable dwelling
- Protection from unlawful discrimination
- Right to hold the landlord liable for damage caused by the landlord's negligence
- Protection against lockouts and seizure of personal property by the landlord

This information is provided by the Washington State Attorney General's Office to give general information about the State's Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18).

*This brochure is provided as a service by the City of Tukwila, as a resource tool for tenants. Material is based on information from the Washington State Attorney General's office, with additional information from the City of Tukwila.*

## Health Related Concerns

Contact your landlord FIRST if you have health concerns with your rental unit. The following is a general guide for who to call if you need more information regarding health issues.

*My rental has a problem with rats.*

Call Public Health, Environmental Health Division -  
Environmental Health Services ..... 206-205-4394

*I am concerned about the septic tank.*

Call Eastgate District Office -  
Environmental Health Services ..... 206-296-4932

*I am concerned about sewage problems.*

If the issue is within your residence or its property,  
contact the landlord.

If the issue is on a public street,  
contact Tukwila Public Works ..... 206-433-0179

*I need information on asbestos.*

Call Puget Sound Clear Air Agency ..... 206-343-8800

*I need information on household waste.*

Call King County Health Dept. Household Hazards Line 206-296-4692

*I have questions about mold,  
mildew or other indoor air quality problems.*

Call King County Health Dept. Indoor Air Specialists ..... 206-296-4632

*I have questions about lead or lead-based paint.*

Call National Lead Information Center ..... 1-800-424-5323  
(Website: <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/lead/nlic.htm>)

OR

Call the EPA Public Environmental Resource Center ..... 206-553-1200

### Disclaimer

The City of Tukwila makes no representations or warranties as to the truth, accuracy or completeness of any statements, information or materials concerning the information that may be contained in this brochure. Referrals to external resources do not constitute endorsements by the City of Tukwila. In no event will the City of Tukwila be liable for any direct, indirect, punitive, special, incidental or consequential damages, however they may arise and even if the City of Tukwila has been advised of the possibility of such damages. This information is only provided as a resource tool for tenants.

# Tenant's Responsibilities

Under the Landlord-Tenant Act, a tenant is required to:

- Pay rent, and any utilities agreed upon.
- Comply with any requirements of City, County or State regulations.
- Keep the rental unit clean and sanitary.
- Dispose of garbage properly.
- Pay for fumigation of infestations caused by the tenant.
- Properly operate plumbing, electrical and heating systems.
- Not intentionally or carelessly damage the dwelling.
- Not engage in or allow any gang-related activity.
- Not permit "waste" (substantial damage to the property) or "nuisance" (substantial interference with other tenants' use of their property).
- Maintain smoke detector device, including replacement of batteries.
- When moving out, restore the dwelling to the same condition as when the tenant moved in, except for normal wear and tear.

# If the Rental Needs Repairs

## Required Notice

When something in the rental unit needs to be repaired, the first step is for the tenant to give written notice of the problem to the landlord or person who collects the rent. The notice must include the address and apartment number of the rental, the name of the owner, if known, and a description of the problem.

It is a good idea to deliver the notice personally. If the landlord lives out of town, use certified mail and get a return receipt from the post office. The timeframe will begin once the landlord receives the notification.

After giving notice, the tenant must wait the required time for the landlord to begin the process of making repairs. BEGIN the process does not necessarily mean COMPLETE the process. Those required waiting times are:

- 24 hours for no hot or cold water, heat, or electricity, or for a condition which is imminently hazardous to life.
- 72 hours for repair of refrigerator, range and oven, or a major plumbing fixture supplied by landlord.
- 10 days for all other repairs.

The burden is on the landlord to see that repairs are completed promptly.

# Landlord's Responsibilities

Under the Landlord- Tenant Act, the landlord must:

- Maintain the dwelling so it does not violate state and local codes in ways which endanger the tenant's health and safety.
  - Maintain structural components, such as roofs, floors and chimneys, in reasonably good repair.
  - Maintain the dwelling in reasonably weather-tight condition.
  - Provide reasonably adequate locks and keys.
  - Provide the necessary facilities to supply heat, electricity and hot and cold water.
  - Provide garbage cans and arrange for removal of garbage, except in single family dwellings.
  - Keep common areas, such as lobbies, stairways and halls, reasonably clean and free from hazards.
  - Control pests before the tenant moves in. The landlord must continue to control infestations except in single family dwellings, or when the infestation was caused by the tenant.
  - Make repairs to keep the unit in the same condition as when the tenant moved in (except for normal wear and tear).
  - Keep electrical, plumbing and heating systems in good repair, and maintain any appliances which are provided with the rental.
  - Inform the tenant of the name and address of the landlord or landlord's agent.
  - Provide smoke detectors, and ensure they work properly when a new tenant moves in. (Tenants are responsible for maintaining detectors.)
- \* Important Note: A landlord is not responsible for the cost of correcting problems which were caused by the tenant.

This is a lengthy and complicated law which continues to be interpreted by the courts. Contacting an attorney when dealing with your specific landlord-tenant question is highly recommended.

- \* Renters of a space in a mobile home park are generally not covered by the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act. They are usually covered by the state's Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.20). However, renters of both a space and a mobile home are usually covered by the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act.

## TUKWILA RESOURCES

### *Code Enforcement, City of Tukwila*

206-431-3682

If you have given written notice of the problem and the landlord will not make required repairs, call the City of Tukwila Code Enforcement office to determine if your situation is enforceable in any of the following categories:

- My apartment has no heat.
- My apartment has no water.
- My apartment has an unsafe deck or balcony.
- My apartment has rotten floor boards.
- The ceiling or roof of my apartment is leaking.
- I have a broken window in my apartment.
- I am having plumbing problems.
- I am concerned about sewer problems.
- I am concerned about other problems with the structure of my rental unit.



Welcome to  
Tukwila's Guide to  
Landlord and Tenant Issues.  
In many cases, landlords  
and tenants resolve  
problems effectively with  
good communication.  
The information presented  
here serves as next step  
resources for tenants who  
don't know where to turn.

## OTHER RESOURCES

THESE ARE AGENCIES NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THE CITY OF TUKWILA WHO PROVIDE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE REGARDING LANDLORD-TENANT ISSUES.

### *Tenants Union*

Maintains phone line and walk-in service to provide information on landlord-tenant laws for tenants with immediate housing problems. Assists in organizing groups of tenants to bring about landlord compliance with the Landlord-Tenant Act and existing housing codes. Provides community information on tenant issues and advocates for tenants rights. Does not provide legal counsel, but does provide referrals to appropriate counsel.

Phone: Hotline – 206-723-0500; office – 206-722-6848

Address: 3902 S. Ferdinand, Seattle, WA 98118

Web Address: <http://www.tenantsunion.org>

Hours/Days: Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri – 11:00AM to 5:00PM;  
Thur – 11:00AM to 7:00PM

Eligibility: Any tenant in Washington State.

How to Apply: Call or walk in.

### *Fremont Public Association Housing Services*

Informs clients about the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants provided under the State of Washington's Landlord-Tenant Act. Provides advocacy and referral for tenants facing eviction. Mediates between landlords and tenants on eviction, repair and deposit disputes. Provides information for tenants on retrieving deposits through small claims court.

Phone: Landlord/Tenant Hotline – 206-694-6767

Address: 1501 N. 45th St Seattle, WA 98103

Web Address: <http://www.fremontpublic.org>

Hours/Days: Monday thru Friday, 8:30AM – 5:00PM

Eligibility: No restrictions, but services are targeted to households at or below 80% of the State median income level.

How to Apply: Call or walk in.

### *King County Dispute Resolution Center*

Services include problem solving, conciliation and mediation. Issues handled by the Center include neighborhood problems (noise, pets, other nuisances), and landlord-tenant issues (deposits, repairs, damages, etc.). Issues not handled by the Center include any problem requiring legal assistance, problems involving violence of any kind, or problems in which one of the parties chooses not to participate.

Phone: Conflict Resolution Hotline – 206-443-9603

Web Address: <http://www.kcdrc.org>

Hours/Days: Monday thru Friday, 8:30AM–5:00PM

Eligibility: Persons who work or reside in King County.

How to Apply: Call.

### *WA State Attorney General's Office, Consumer Resource Center*

Over 100 brief phone recordings are available, including landlord/tenant information, condominiums, and moving.

Phone: Consumer Line – 1-800-692-5082  
Spanish – 1-509-734-7140

Address: 900 - 4th Avenue, Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98164

Web Address: <http://www.wa.gov/ago>

Hours/Days: Touch-tone callers – 24 hours daily  
Rotary callers – Monday thru Friday, 9:00AM–4:00PM

Eligibility: Statewide. Information relates to Washington State.

How to Apply: Call.

## ***Police Department, City of Tukwila***

Emergency: 911

In the City of Tukwila, you need to dial 911 whenever you need an officer to respond. This includes when you just need to report a suspicious person or situation. You must dial 911 even when you just need to file a telephone report on a minor crime.

### **Anti-Crime Unit**

Call the Tukwila Police Department Tip Line with general crime tip information such as narcotic or prostitution activity that is not occurring at the time of your call. Your information will be forwarded to the appropriate officer or detective for investigation. You can reach the Tip Line at 206-431-3689.

### **Fire Prevention, City of Tukwila**

Contact your landlord FIRST if you have concerns about the fire alarm or fire sprinkler system in your building. If you need more information, contact Fire Prevention at 206-575-4404.

Emergency: 911

## ***Crime Prevention, City of Tukwila***

Crime Prevention Office – 206-242-8084

Neighborhood Resource Center – 206-243-6506

The Crime-free Multi-Family Housing program has been shown to drastically reduce criminal activity in apartment communities, increase tenant satisfaction, and reduce property damage. This three-phase certification program includes manager training in crime prevention methods to and applying proven safety standards to the property. Training courses are offered several times a year. Call for more information. For a list of Tukwila's certified properties, go to <http://www.ci.tukwila.wa.us/police/pdcrimemp.htm>.

### **Training and Services**

Members of the Crime Prevention Unit are available to conduct safety inspections of home or businesses to help identify potential problem areas so that homes and businesses are more secure. Crime Prevention Unit members also conduct other training sessions for residents (through Block Watch meetings) and for businesses (such as armed robbery prevention and workplace violence).



## ***Washington State Bar Association***

The Consumer Information Pamphlet Program publishes a series of consumer information pamphlets on various legal topics to educate citizens about their legal rights and responsibilities, answer frequently asked questions, and explain basic aspects of Washington State laws. Pamphlet topics include Landlord/Tenant Rights and Alternatives to Court.

Phone: 206-443-9722

Address: 2101 - 4th Avenue, Fourth Floor  
Seattle, WA 98121-2330

Web Address: <http://www.wsba.org>

How to Apply: Request single copies of pamphlets in writing; include a long (#10 business size) self-addressed, stamped envelope for each title requested.

## ***Volunteer Legal Services Lawyer Referral***

The King County Bar Association Community Legal Services Program refers low-income people with civil legal problems (including housing issues) to volunteer attorneys. All attorneys are in good standing with the Washington State Bar Association and are required to carry errors and omissions insurance.

Phone: 206-623-2551  
TTY – 206-623-2766

Address: 900 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600, Seattle, WA 98164-1060

Web Address: <http://www.kcba.org>

Hours/Days: Monday thru Friday, 8:00AM–5:00PM

How to Apply: Call for screening and referral

## ***Neighborhood Legal Clinics***

The King County Bar Association Community Legal Services Program has Neighborhood Legal Clinics which offer the public a free half-hour consultation with an attorney. These clinics address a wide variety of general civil legal topics including landlord/tenant issues. Attorneys determine whether the client has a legal problem, suggest possible options, and provide appropriate sources for referral. However, attorneys do not represent clients in court or draft legal documents.

Phone: 206-340-2593

Web Address: <http://www.kcba.org>

Hours/Days: Monday thru Friday, 9:00AM–NOON

How to Apply: Call to schedule an appointment. Phone consultations may be available for seniors without the ability to travel to appointments.

## ***Catholic Community Services Legal Action Center***

Legal services are provided for low-income people throughout Seattle/King County. Handles landlord-tenant problems (including eviction) and consumer protection and debtor-creditor issues. The program uses volunteer and staff attorneys.

Phone: 206-324-6890

Address: 1229 W. Smith St. Kent, WA 98032-4317

Web Address: <http://southkingcounty-center.catholiccharitiesseattlearch.org>

Hours/Days: Monday thru Friday, 9:00AM–NOON and 2:00–5:00PM

Clients are usually seen on Tuesdays, Thursdays or Saturdays at outreach sites.

Eligibility: Clients must be at or below approximately 125% of poverty level. Call to determine eligibility.

How to Apply: Call for appointment.