Volunteer Legal Services

Lawyer Referral (206) 623-2551
TTY (206) 623-2766
King County Bar Association Community Legal Services Program
Web Address: www.kcba.org
OR Email your questions to: lrs@kcba.org

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.

Hours/Days: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (M – F)
How to Apply: Call for screening and referral.

Neighborhood Legal Clinics

(206) 267-7070
King County Bar Association Community Legal Services Program
Web Address: http://www.kcba.org

The 22 Neighborhood Legal Clinics 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. All King County residents are eligible regardless of income.

Hours/Days: The hours of the clinics vary.
How to Apply: To schedule an appointment, call from 9 a.m. to Noon - Monday - Thursday.
Phone consultations may be available for seniors without the ability to travel to appointments.

Catholic Community Services

Legal Action Center (206) 324-6890
Web Address: www.ccsww.org

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

Hours/Days: 9 a.m.- Noon & 2 p.m. – 5 p.m. (M – F)
Clients are usually seen on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and one Wednesday evening per month at outreach sites.
How to Apply: Call for appointment.
Eligibility: Clients must be low income.
Call to determine eligibility.

The City of Renton 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 Renton. In no event will the City of Renton be liable for any direct, indirect, punitive, special, incidental or consequential damages, however they may arise, even if the City of Renton has been advised of the possibility of such damages. This information is only provided as a resource tool for tenants.

City of Renton

A Guide to Landlord/Tenant Issues

RIGHTS OF ALL TENANTS

Renters who are not covered by the Landlord-Tenant Act do have the following 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

Provided as a service for the City of Renton as a Resource Tool for Tenants. Material is based on information from the Attorney General's Office and has been modified by the City of Renton in August 2006.

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

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.

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 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 caused by the tenant.

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:

- ✓ Twenty-four hours for no hot or cold water, heat, or electricity, or for a condition that is imminently hazardous to life.
- ✓ Seventy-two hours for repair of refrigerator, range, and oven, or a major plumbing fixture supplied by landlord.
- ✓ Ten days for all other repairs.

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

Tenant's Options:

If the landlord has not made any attempt to start the repairs in the appropriate timeframe, contact Code Enforcement or the Tenants Union Hotline at (206) 723-0500 for the most complete information on how to proceed.

CITY OF RENTON - CODE COMPLIANCE

Information, help, questions, inquiries?
Phone (425) 430-7373 (24 Hour Message Phone)
email: codecompliance@ci.renton.wa.us

Contact Code Compliance to report violations of the Renton Municipal Code including:

- ✓ Accumulation of garbage, trash, and litter
- ✓ Unlicensed and inoperative junk vehicles stored on private property
- ✓ Construction or grading without a permit
- ✓ Illegal operation of a business in a residential zone
- ✓ Vacant buildings open to unauthorized entry
- ✓ Tree branches hanging low over a sidewalk or street
- ✓ Excessive growth of weeds

CITY OF RENTON – POLICE DEPARTMENT

EMERGENCY 911

In the City of Renton, you need to dial 911 whenever you need an officer to respond. This includes reports of suspicious persons or suspicious activity. If you call the Renton Police Department Business Line, you will be directed to call 911 to have an officer dispatched. Some types of police reports that do not involve an in-progress crime can be reported via the Internet by going to www.ci.renton.wa.us.

Drug and prostitution activity that is occurring at the time of your call should be reported to 911. These activities, when not occurring at the time of your call, can be reported to the Narcotics Tip Line at (425) 430-7539.

CITY OF RENTON – FIRE PREVENTION

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 (425) 430-7000.

Emergency	911
Fire Prevention	(425) 430-7000
Public Education	(425) 430-7080

For information on classes, events, handouts, programs, or services offered by the Renton Fire Department, call (425) 430-7000 or **www.ci.renton.wa.us.**

CITY OF RENTON – CRIME PREVENTION

Crime Resistant Multi-Housing Program:

Training, assistance, and problem solving assistance are offered to landlords. If tenants feel that their living situation could be helped if the landlord used solid crime prevention methods to stop criminal activity on the property, they may call and provide their landlord's name. The Police Crime Prevention Unit will contact the owner or manager directly.

Tenant Crime Prevention Training:

Block Watch is offered to residents of rental housing with the intent of preventing crime and forming partnerships between the community and the Police Department. Crime Prevention is the focus of this training. It is facilitated by the manager/landlord, and provided by the City of Renton Police Crime Prevention Unit.

For apartment selection tips, crime statistics within the City of Renton, or to request training, contact the Renton Police Crime Prevention Unit at (425) 430-7520 or (425) 430-7521 or **www.ci.renton.wa.us.**

HEALTH-RELATED CONCERNS

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

My rental has a problem with rats.
Call the Rat & Squirrel Hotline (206) 205-4394
I am concerned about the septic tank.
Call Public Health Environmental Health Services (206) 296-4932
I am concerned about sewage problems.
Call Public Health Environmental Health Services (206) 296-4932 **or** Call City of Renton Code Enforcement (425) 430-7373
I need information on asbestos.
Call Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (206) 343-8800
I need information on hazardous waste.
Call King County Health Department Household Hazards Line (206) 296-4692
I need information on household waste.
Call Renton-Meridian Disposal (Rabanco) (206) 682-9735
I have questions about mold, mildew, or other indoor air quality problems.
Call King County Health Department Indoor Air Specialists (206) 296-4394
I have questions about lead or lead-based paint.
Call National Lead Information Center (800) 424-5323
Visit their Web Site at www.epa.gov
EPA Public Environmental Resource Center (206) 553-1200

RESOURCES

The following is a list of resources not associated with the City of Renton who provide information or assistance regarding landlord/tenant issues.

Tenants Union

Hotline (206) 723-0500 TDD: (206) 723-0523
3902 S. Ferdinand, Seattle, WA 98118
Web Address: http://www.tenantsunion.org

Maintains telephone 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.

Hours/Days: Office, hotline & walk-in hours:
3 p.m. – 6 p.m. (M, W) Noon – 4 p.m. (TH)
Eligibility:Income at or below 80% of the median income.
How to Apply: Call or walk-in.
Consultations in Spanish are also available by appointment.

Fremont Public Association

Housing Services Landlord/Tenant Hotline
(206) 694-6767 1501 N. 45th St., Seattle, WA 98103
Web Address: http://www.fremontpublic.org

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, as well as provides information for tenants on retrieving deposits through small claims court.

Hours/Days: Office 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (M, W, TH)
Eligibility: Services are targeted to households at or below 80% of the median income level.
How to Apply: Call or walk-in.

King County Dispute Resolution Center

Conflict Resolution - Hotline (206) 443-9603 and press 1 or (888) 803-4696 and press 1
Web Address: http://www.kcdrc.org

Services include problem solving, conciliation, and mediation. Types of problems the center will handle include: Neighborhood problems (noise, pets, other nuisances), landlord/tenant issues (deposits, repairs, damages, etc.). Types of problems the center will not handle include: any problem requiring legal assistance, problems involving violence of any kind, or problems in which one of the parties chooses not to participate.
Hours/Days: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (M - F),
How to Apply: Call

Mobile Home Owners of America, Inc.

Consumer Assistance Program (360) 373-2436
3421 Kitsap Way, Suite #H,
Bremerton, WA 98312
Web Address: http://www.mhoa.net

Mobile/Manufactured Housing advocates. Assist tenants in dealing with problems with park owners – lobby Olympia for fair treatment under the Washington State RCW 59.20 and enforcement of the laws.

Hours/Days: 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (M – F)
Eligibility: Rent, own, or be interested in owning a mobile or manufactured home.
How to Apply: Call or write

Washington State Attorney General's Office

Consumer Protection Division (800) 551-4636
Consumer Line (800) 692-5082
900 4th Ave., Suite 2000, Seattle, WA 98164
Web Address: www.atg.wa.gov

Over 100 brief taped phone messages are available including: landlord/tenant info (tape #048), condominiums (tape #037), moving (tape #052), and mobile homes (tape #051).

Hours/Days: 24 hours Daily
Eligibility: State wide. Information relates to Washington state.
How to Apply: Call

Washington State Bar Association

Consumer Information Pamphlet Program
(206) 443-9722
2101 Fourth Ave., Fourth Floor,
Seattle, WA 98121-2330
Web Address: http://www.wsba.org

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.

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

2006 HUD Income Guidelines	
Family size	80% Median
1	$41,700
2	$47,700
3	$53,650
4	$59,600