

Track E

RENTAL OPERATIONS

Navigating Laws & Strategies



Track E

RENTAL OPERATIONS

Untangling Local Rental Regulations

A Practical Workshop

Christopher Cutting | Rooms 407-8 | 10:15am – 11am





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Christopher Cutting

Attorney, Cutting Law Office,
RHAWA Board Vice President

Christopher Cutting has over a decade of experience in landlord-tenant law, judgment enforcement, and appeals. He founded Cutting Law Office PC in 2017. Christopher currently serves as Board of Directors VP for RHAWA and is Co-Chairman of their Legislative Committee. He has provided expert testimony on landlord-tenant relations to the State Legislature and multiple city councils. He is a licensed real estate clock hours instructor and frequently teaches legal seminars for state and local bar associations, trade groups, and private companies.



OBJECTIVES

Untangling Local Rental Regulations

A Practical Workshop

1. **Learn to access RHAWA members-only crowd-sourced local law chart.**
2. **Review and discuss several policy issues that are complicated by several variations of local laws.**
3. **Become aware of which municipalities have unique laws.**
4. **Understand the subtle differences between local policy variations.**

RHAWA does not guarantee the accuracy of this chart. We rely upon our members to notify us of changes to any local codes or statutes governing rental housing in Washington. Please report any errors or omissions to dmyers@rhawa.org.

GOVERNMENTS + POLICIES +	Rental Inspections	Screening	Information Distribution	Tenant Remedies Protection	Move-In Cost Limits	Move-In Cost Installments	Additional Occupants	Rent Controls	Rent Due Date	Late Fee Regs	No Notices w/Defects	Accommodations	Terminations	Non-Renewal	Seasonal Eviction Bans	Economic Relocation	Reno Relocation	Intent to Sell	Enforcement	Other
Aberdeen Municipal Code (AMC)	15.1																			
Auburn City Code (ACC)	5.22.057		5.23.030		5.23.040	5.23.040		5.23.040		5.23.040		5.23.50	5.23.070 (repealed)				5.23.060	5.23.80		
Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC)	5.15	5.11			5.16			5.12					5.13 (preempt)			5.14				
Burien Municipal Code (BMC)	5.62	5.63.120	5.63.030		5.63.040	5.63.040		5.63.100						5.63.070			5.63.060	5.63.140		
Federal Way Revised Code (FWRC)				20.05.060									20.05					20.05.060		
Issaquah Municipal Code (IMC)				5.52.050																
Kenmore Municipal Code (KMC)		8.55.070		8.55.090	8.55.040	8.55.040							8.55.075 (repealed)							8.55.078 (repealed)
Kent Municipal Code (KMC)	10.02	10.01											10.03 (repealed)							
King County Code (KCC)			12.25.140		12.25.050	12.25.050							12.25.030				12.25.030			
Kirkland Municipal Code (KMC)				7.75.055	7.75.040	7.75.040														
Mountlake Terrace Municipal Code (MTMC)	15.45.050																			
Olympia Municipal Code (OMC)	5.82.090				5.82.060								5.82.030			5.82.040				
Port Townsend Municipal Code (PTMC)																		9.60.040		
Redmond Municipal Code (BMC)		9.54.065		9.54.080	9.54.040	9.54.040														
Renton (BMC)	4-5-125																	4-5-125		
SeaTac (SMC)		4.05.100	4.05.040		4.05.050	4.05.050							4.05.090				4.05.090	4.05.110		
Seattle (SMC) 7.24, 7.25, 14.08, 14.09, 22.14, 22.200-220)	22.214.050	14.08.050	14.08.050	7.24.100	7.24.035	7.24.035							22.205	22.205	22.205.080 22.205.110	22.212	22.210	22.907.030	14.08.185	7.25.010-050
Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC)		9.35.060		9.35.080	9.35.040	9.35.040														5.35.065
Spokane Municipal Code (SMC)	10.57.040	10.57.080														10.57.100	10.57.120			10.57.100
Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC 1.95)			1.95.030		1.95.040	1.95.040		1.95.060				1.95.050	1.95.070			1.95.080	1.95.070	1.95.090		
Tacoma Initiative (TMC 1.100)				1.100.080	1.100.040			1.100.050		1.100.040					1.100.060	1.100.050				
Tukwila Municipal Code (TMC)	5.06.050																			
Tumwater Municipal Code (TMC)			5.75.030					5.75.070					5.75.090					5.75.130		
Vancouver Municipal Code (VMC)		8.45		8.46.040				8.46 (preempted)					8.47 (preempted)							8.44
Woodinville Municipal Code (WMC)		8.16.060		8.16.090	8.16.040	8.16.040		8.16.030						8.16.050						



<https://www.rhawa.org/file/secure/localawschart.pdf>

Information Distribution



- Requires landlords to distribute information provided by the jurisdiction to educate tenants and landlords on rental housing laws or other information.
- Distributions are required with the offering of a lease, with each renewal or at least each year, and when the city revises the information.

AUBURN

[Renting in Auburn](#)

BELLINGHAM

[Bellingham Rent & Fee Summary](#)

BURIEN

[Renting in Burien Handbook](#)

SEATAC

[Renting in SeaTac Guide](#)

SEATTLE

- [Renter's Handbook](#)
- [Seattle - Residential Parking Agreement / Addendum & Instructions](#)
- [Seattle - Resident Billing Utility Notice](#)

SPOKANE

[Spokane Property Disclosures](#)

TACOMA

- [Renting in Tacoma](#)
- [Installment Payment Plan Request](#)
- [Tacoma Required Lease Clause Addendum](#)

TUMWATER

- [Renting in Tumwater: A Guide for Landlords](#)
- [Tenants and Your Rights as a Tenant in Washington State: An Overview](#)

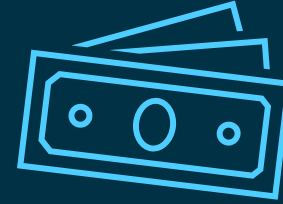
TUKWILA

[A Guide to landlord and Tenant Issues](#)

WOODINVILLE

[Notice of Tenant Rights](#)

Move-In Cost Caps



Move costs, including security deposit and any non-refundable fees may not exceed the first month's rent.

Auburn

Burien

Kenmore

King County

Kirkland

Olympia

+ Pet deposit
capped at 25%.
Nonrefundable
fees prohibited.

Redmond

SeaTac

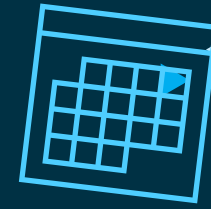
Seattle

+ Pet dep. 25% cap.
Nonrefundable screening
and cleaning only, 10%
cap.

Shoreline

Tacoma

Move-In Cost Installments



Must agree to accept move-in costs on installments if requested by incoming tenant:

Terms for WA State & many city codes:

Extended terms in King County, Kenmore, Kirkland, Redmond, SeaTac, Shoreline, & Seattle:

Tacoma has a unique schedule & mandatory form.

- Payment plan not required if deposit + fees \leq 25% of rent and no prepayment of last month's rent is required.

- 3 installments for terms \geq 3 months.
- 2 installments for terms $<$ 3 months.

- 6 installments for terms \geq 6 months.
- 2 installments for terms $<$ 6 months.

- Tacoma Landlord Resources:
tacoma.gov/government/departments/community-and-economic-development/housing-division/renting-in-tacoma/#landlord-resources

Rent Increase Notices

WA STATE LAW

[RCW 59.18.140](#) + [HB 1217](#)

- Give notice 90 days prior to the first day of the term/month when the increase will go into effect.
- Notice must be served per RCW 59.12.040, certified mail + 5 days.
- Statutory form (like RHAWA) must be used.
- No increase in the first 12 months; only one increase each 12 months thereafter.
- When incentivizing a longer term (or lease over MTM), the only legal option is a rent discount up to 5%, with the higher offer under the rent cap.
- Cap set each year = 7% plus Seattle CPI. 2025 cap = 10%; 2026 cap = 9.683%.
- **MHLTA** cap = 5%.

Issaquah, King County, Kenmore, Kirkland, Redmond, SeaTac, Woodinville

Port Townsend

Shoreline

Tumwater

Olympia

Auburn

Bellingham

Spokane

Seattle

Tacoma

+ LOCAL LAW ADDITIONS

City limits superseded by WA State law are not shown.

120 days > 3% (RLTA and **MHLTA**)

120 days > 3%

120 days > 3%; 90 days for optional rent

120 days > 5% or 180 days = 10%

120 days > 5% or 180 days = 10% (≥ 7% EDRA)

120 days > 5%

120 days any amount (≥ 8% EDRA)

120 days ≤ 3% or 180 days > 3%

180 days any amount (10% EDRA)

210-180 days + 120-90 days (≥ 5% EDRA)

Late Rent Fee Limits



FEES

Capped Fee Only

- Burien: \$10 cap
- Kenmore: 1.5% cap
- King County: 1.5% cap
- Redmond: 1.5% cap

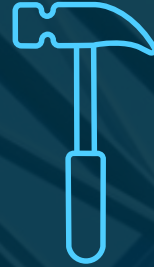
+ No Other Charges

No interest, notice service fee, etc.

- Auburn: \$10 cap
- Olympia: \$10 cap
- SeaTac: 2% cap
- Seattle: \$10 cap
- Tacoma: \$10 cap



NO Notices with Defects



Prohibits rent increases and sometimes end-of-tenancy notices on properties with defective conditions or those that are not registered with the city.

- King County: Based on Landlord Duties - RCW 59.18.060
- Seattle: Based on standards in the RRIO Checklist
- SeaTac: Based on Landlord Duties - RCW 59.18.060
- Tacoma: Based on city business license requirements.
- Olympia
- Spokane (Registration required)

Just Cause/Termination of Tenancies



- Seattle started “Just Cause” laws over 40 years ago, where no-cause terminations of month-to-month tenancies are prohibited.
 - All term leases were exempt until 2019 (see Mandatory Lease Renewal).
- WA State adopted in 2021.
- Several “Just Causes” are defined in the law, each with specific notice requirements, and each city has different details.
- Give End of Tenancy Notice with Cause
 - Check the box for the state cause.
 - Copy/paste the city cause into the box on the form.

CITIES WITH JUST CAUSE LAWS

- Seattle
- Federal Way
- Burien*
- ~~Auburn (repealed)~~
- King County (unincorporated)
- ~~Kenmore (repealed)~~
- SeaTac
- Tacoma (same as WA)



Mandatory Lease Renewal



- More than sixty days before the end of a fixed-term tenancy, the landlord must offer the tenant a reasonable/fair renewal unless they have a just cause to end the tenancy.
- WA State allows an exception if tenancy has always been maintained in a fixed term, proper 60-day notices for the end of term/renewal have been properly served throughout tenancy, and before ending the tenancy without cause.

If the tenant does not accept the offered renewal, in most cases, the tenancy ends.

- ~~Auburn (repealed)~~
- Burien
- Federal Way
- ~~Kenmore (repealed)~~
- King County
- SeaTac
- Seattle



Relocation Assistance

When a property closes:

Housing providers may be required to contribute to tenant relocation costs when closing a multifamily building for demolition, renovation, or change of use.

Always required in Seattle, a “Relocation License” can take 6 months or longer.

- Seattle (TRAO)
- Bellevue Relocation Assistance
- Tacoma Rental Regulations

When a tenant is priced out:

If tenants move due to an increase, housing providers may need to pay from 2 to 3 times the rent to cover relocation costs.

Seattle: Tenants can apply for assistance if they move out due to a 10% increase of 10%. If City approves based on means, the owner may need to pay up to 3 months’ rent.

Tacoma, Bellingham & Olympia: Tenant can submit a request directly to the housing provider for relocation assistance **regardless of their income level**. All requests where the criteria are met must be granted.



- **SEATTLE:**
Increase of 10%, reimbursed up to 3 x rent.
- **TACOMA:**
Increase $\geq 5\%$, reimbursed up to 2-3 x rent.
- **BELLINGHAM:**
Increase $\geq 8\%$, reimbursed up to 3 x rent.
- **OLYMPIA:**
Increase $\geq 7\%$, reimbursed up to 2.5 x rent.

Seasonal Eviction Restrictions

- Both **Seattle AND Tacoma**.
- Physical evictions will need to be scheduled so as not to displace tenants during the winter or school year.
- School year ban applies only to tenants who are students or employees (broadly defined).



Key Takeaways



- ➔ Reference and contribute to RHAWA local chart... “It takes a village!”
- ➔ Understand how subtle variations in local codes can have major consequences.
- ➔ Become familiar with policies that have become complicated and confused from city to city across the state of Washington.

CONTACT



Christopher Cutting

Attorney, Cutting Law Office and
RHAWA Board Vice President

<https://www.cuttinglaw.com/>