

Washington Landlord-Tenant Laws: Rights and Duties for Both Sides

Summary for landlords and property managers. Last reviewed October 29, 2026. Full guide: <https://www.generationadvisory.com/laws/washington-landlord-tenant-rights>

Washington's Residential Landlord Tenant Act gives tenants detailed repair rights, requires two days of written notice before entry and sets a five day window before any late fee. Most terminations also require a listed cause.

Key points

- The landlord generally gives at least two days of written notice before entering, stating the date and time and a phone number, and one day to show the unit to buyers or renters.
- After written notice and the response time the statute sets for the type of problem, a tenant may use remedies such as repair and deduct within limits, or end the tenancy.
- A landlord may not raise rent, reduce services or start an eviction in retaliation for a tenant's good faith complaint or use of legal rights, and action soon after a complaint is presumed retaliatory.
- Late fees are allowed only if rent is more than five days past due; once it is, fees can run from the day after the due date.
- Rent paid within five days after the due date cannot be charged a late fee.

Washington at a glance

Rule	Washington	Law
Notice before entry	The landlord generally gives at least two days of written notice before entering, stating the date and time and a phone number, and one day to show the unit to buyers or renters.	RCW 59.18.150
Tenant repair remedies	After written notice and the response time the statute sets for the type of problem, a tenant may use remedies such as repair and deduct within limits, or end the tenancy.	RCW 59.18.070 and RCW 59.18.100
Retaliation protection	A landlord may not raise rent, reduce services or start an eviction in retaliation for a tenant's good faith complaint or use of legal rights, and action soon after a complaint is presumed retaliatory.	RCW 59.18.240 and RCW 59.18.250

Rule	Washington	Law
Late fees	Late fees are allowed only if rent is more than five days past due; once it is, fees can run from the day after the due date.	RCW 59.18.170
Grace period	Rent paid within five days after the due date cannot be charged a late fee.	RCW 59.18.170
Deadline to return the deposit	The landlord has 30 days after the tenancy ends and the tenant moves out to return the deposit or send a full and specific statement of the reasons for keeping any part.	RCW 59.18.280

Mistakes to avoid

- Entering a unit without the notice the lease or the law requires.
- Letting a written repair request sit without a reply or a plan.
- Leaving required disclosures out of the lease packet.
- Applying screening criteria differently from one applicant to the next.
- Raising rent or ending a tenancy soon after a complaint without a documented, unrelated reason.

Verify current law

Laws named in this summary:

- RCW 59.18.150
- RCW 59.18.070 and RCW 59.18.100
- RCW 59.18.240 and RCW 59.18.250
- RCW 59.18.170
- RCW 59.18.280
- Residential Landlord Tenant Act (RCW 59.18)
- Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act (42 U.S.C. 4852d)
- RCW 59.18.260

Official sources:

- Revised Code of Washington (Washington State Legislature): <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/>
- Washington State Department of Commerce: HB 1217 landlord resource center: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/housing-policy/hb1217-landlord-resource-center/>
- Washington Courts: <https://www.courts.wa.gov/>

General information, not legal advice. Check current law and talk to a Washington attorney before you act. Last reviewed October 29, 2026.