

Washington Rent Control Laws: Caps, Exemptions and Local Rules

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

Since May 2025 Washington limits how much most residential rents can rise in any 12 month period. The limit is 7 percent plus inflation, never more than 10 percent, and newer buildings and some owner occupied homes are exempt.

Key points

- Washington limits most residential rent increases to 7 percent plus the Seattle area consumer price index, or 10 percent, whichever is lower, in any 12 month period. The Department of Commerce publishes the limit for each year.
- No rent increase is allowed during the first 12 months of a tenancy, and after that increases are capped statewide, with exemptions for units whose first certificate of occupancy is 12 years old or newer, some owner occupied homes and certain public or nonprofit housing.
- Landlords must give at least 90 days of written notice before a rent increase, and an increase cannot take effect before a fixed term ends.
- For subsidized tenancies where rent is based on household income, the notice period is 30 days.

Washington at a glance

Rule	Washington	Law
Rent control status	Washington limits most residential rent increases to 7 percent plus the Seattle area consumer price index, or 10 percent, whichever is lower, in any 12 month period. The Department of Commerce publishes the limit for each year.	RCW 59.18.700
Statewide cap on increases	No rent increase is allowed during the first 12 months of a tenancy, and after that increases are capped statewide, with exemptions for units whose first certificate of occupancy is 12 years old or newer, some owner occupied homes and certain public or nonprofit housing.	RCW 59.18.700 and RCW 59.18.710
Notice before a rent increase	Landlords must give at least 90 days of written notice before a rent increase, and an increase cannot take effect before a fixed term ends.	RCW 59.18.140

Rule	Washington	Law
Notice before a rent increase	For subsidized tenancies where rent is based on household income, the notice period is 30 days.	RCW 59.18.140

Mistakes to avoid

- Assuming a unit is exempt without checking the exemption rules and any notice the exemption requires.
- Following state rules and missing a stricter city ordinance.
- Raising rent in the middle of a fixed term when the lease does not allow it.
- Giving less notice than the increase requires.

Verify current law

Laws named in this summary:

- RCW 59.18.700
- RCW 59.18.700 and RCW 59.18.710
- RCW 59.18.140

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.