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## **Chapter 59.18 RCW Residential landlord-tenant act**

[Chapter Listing](#)

### **RCW Sections**

- [59.18.010](#) Short title.
- [59.18.020](#) Rights and remedies -- Obligation of good faith imposed.
- [59.18.030](#) Definitions.
- [59.18.040](#) Living arrangements exempted from chapter.
- [59.18.050](#) Jurisdiction of district and superior courts.
- [59.18.055](#) Notice -- Alternative procedure -- Court's jurisdiction limited -- Application to chapter 59.20 RCW.
- [59.18.060](#) Landlord -- Duties.
- [59.18.063](#) Landlord -- Provide written receipt upon request.
- [59.18.070](#) Landlord -- Failure to perform duties -- Notice from tenant -- Contents -- Time limits for landlord's remedial action.
- [59.18.075](#) Seizure of illegal drugs -- Notification of landlord.
- [59.18.080](#) Payment of rent condition to exercising remedies -- Exceptions.
- [59.18.085](#) Rental of condemned or unlawful dwelling -- Tenant's remedies -- Relocation assistance -- Penalties.
- [59.18.090](#) Landlord's failure to remedy defective condition -- Tenant's choice of actions.
- [59.18.100](#) Landlord's failure to carry out duties -- Repairs effected by tenant -- Procedure -- Deduction of cost from rent -- Limitations.
- [59.18.110](#) Failure of landlord to carry out duties -- Determination by court or arbitrator -- Judgment against landlord for diminished rental value and repair costs -- Enforcement of judgment -- Reduction in rent under certain conditions.
- [59.18.115](#) Substandard and dangerous conditions -- Notice to landlord -- Government certification -- Escrow account.
- [59.18.120](#) Defective condition -- Unfeasible to remedy defect -- Termination of tenancy.
- [59.18.130](#) Duties of tenant.
- [59.18.140](#) Reasonable obligations or restrictions -- Tenant's duty to conform.
- [59.18.150](#) Landlord's right of entry -- Purposes -- Searches by fire officials -- Conditions.
- [59.18.160](#) Landlord's remedies if tenant fails to remedy defective condition.
- [59.18.170](#) Landlord to give notice if tenant fails to carry out duties.
- [59.18.180](#) Tenant's failure to comply with statutory duties -- Landlord to give tenant written notice of noncompliance -- Landlord's remedies.
- [59.18.190](#) Notice to tenant to remedy nonconformance.
- [59.18.200](#) Tenancy from month to month or for rental period -- Termination -- Armed Forces exception -- Exclusion of children or conversion to condominium -- Notice.

RCW Chapter 59.18 – Residential landlord-tenant act

- [59.18.210](#) Tenancies from year to year except under written contract.
- [59.18.220](#) Termination of tenancy for a specified time -- Armed forces exception.
- [59.18.230](#) Waiver of chapter provisions prohibited -- Provisions prohibited from rental agreement -- Distress for rent abolished -- Detention of personal property for rent -- Remedies.
- [59.18.240](#) Reprisals or retaliatory actions by landlord -- Prohibited.
- [59.18.250](#) Reprisals or retaliatory actions by landlord -- Presumptions -- Rebuttal -- Costs.
- [59.18.253](#) Deposit to secure occupancy by tenant -- Landlord's duties -- Violation.
- [59.18.257](#) Screening of tenants -- Costs -- Notice to tenant -- Violation.
- [59.18.260](#) Moneys paid as deposit or security for performance by tenant -- Written rental agreement to specify terms and conditions for retention by landlord -- Written checklist required.
- [59.18.270](#) Moneys paid as deposit or security for performance by tenant -- Deposit by landlord in trust account -- Receipt -- Claims.
- [59.18.280](#) Moneys paid as deposit or security for performance by tenant -- Statement and notice of basis for retention -- Remedies for landlord's failure to make refund.
- [59.18.285](#) Nonrefundable fees not to be designated as deposit -- Written rental agreement required.
- [59.18.290](#) Removal or exclusion of tenant from premises -- Holding over or excluding landlord from premises after termination date.
- [59.18.300](#) Termination of tenant's utility services -- Tenant causing loss of landlord provided utility services.
- [59.18.310](#) Default in rent -- Abandonment -- Liability of tenant -- Landlord's remedies -- Sale of tenant's property by landlord.
- [59.18.312](#) Writ of restitution -- Storage and sale of tenant's property -- Use of proceeds from sale.
- [59.18.315](#) Mediation of disputes by independent third party.
- [59.18.320](#) Arbitration -- Authorized -- Exceptions -- Notice--Procedure.
- [59.18.330](#) Arbitration -- Application -- Hearings -- Decisions.
- [59.18.340](#) Arbitration -- Fee.
- [59.18.350](#) Arbitration -- Completion of arbitration after giving notice.
- [59.18.352](#) Threatening behavior by tenant -- Termination of agreement -- Written notice -- Financial obligations.
- [59.18.354](#) Threatening behavior by landlord -- Termination of agreement -- Financial obligations.
- [59.18.360](#) Exemptions.
- [59.18.365](#) Unlawful detainer action -- Summons -- Form.
- [59.18.370](#) Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions -- Writ of restitution -- Application -- Order -- Hearing.
- [59.18.375](#) Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions -- Payment of rent into court registry -- Writ of restitution -- Notice.
- [59.18.380](#) Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions -- Writ of restitution -- Answer -- Order -- Stay -- Bond.
- [59.18.390](#) Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions -- Writ of restitution -- Service -- Defendant's bond.
- [59.18.400](#) Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions -- Writ of restitution -- Answer of defendant.
- [59.18.410](#) Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions -- Writ of restitution -- Judgment -- Execution.
- [59.18.415](#) Applicability to certain single family dwelling leases.

RCW Chapter 59.18 – Residential landlord-tenant act

[59.18.420](#) RCW 59.12.090, 59.12.100, 59.12.121, and 59.12.170 inapplicable.

[59.18.430](#) Applicability to prior, existing or future leases.

[59.18.440](#) Relocation assistance for low-income tenants -- Certain cities, towns, counties, municipal corporations authorized to require.

[59.18.450](#) Relocation assistance for low-income tenants -- Payments not considered income -- Eligibility for other assistance not affected.

[59.18.500](#) Gang-related activity -- Legislative findings, declarations, and intent.

[59.18.510](#) Gang-related activity -- Notice and demand the landlord commence unlawful detainer action -- Petition to court -- Attorneys' fees.

[59.18.550](#) Drug and alcohol free housing -- Program of recovery -- Terms -- Application of chapter.

[59.18.570](#) Victim protection--Definitions.

[59.18.575](#) Victim protection--Notice to landlord--Termination of rental agreement--Procedures.

[59.18.580](#) Victim protection--Limitation on landlord's rental decisions.

[59.18.585](#) Victim protection--Possession of dwelling unit--Exclusion of others--New lock or key.

[59.18.900](#) Severability -- 1973 1st ex.s. c 207.

[59.18.910](#) Severability -- 1989 c 342.

[59.18.911](#) Effective date -- 1989 c 342.

**Notes:**

**Reviser's note:** This chapter was revised pursuant to *Washington Ass'n. of Apartment Ass'ns., Inc. vs. Evans*, 88 Wn. 2d. 563 (1977), which declared invalid the fourteen item and section vetoes to 1973 Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 2226 (1973 1st ex.s. c 207).

Filing fees for unlawful detainer actions: RCW 36.18.012.

Smoke detection devices in dwelling units required: RCW 43.44.110.

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**59.18.010**  
**Short title.**

RCW [59.18.010](#) through [59.18.420](#) and [59.18.900](#) shall be known and may be cited as the "Residential Landlord-Tenant Act of 1973", and shall constitute a new chapter in Title 59 RCW.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 1.]

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**59.18.020**  
**Rights and remedies — Obligation of good faith imposed.**

Every duty under this chapter and every act which must be performed as a condition precedent to the exercise of a right or remedy under this chapter imposes an obligation of good faith in its performance or enforcement.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 2.]

**59.18.030**

**Definitions.**

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Dwelling unit" is a structure or that part of a structure which is used as a home, residence, or sleeping place by one person or by two or more persons maintaining a common household, including but not limited to single family residences and units of multiplexes, apartment buildings, and mobile homes.

(2) "Landlord" means the owner, lessor, or sublessor of the dwelling unit or the property of which it is a part, and in addition means any person designated as representative of the landlord.

(3) "Person" means an individual, group of individuals, corporation, government, or governmental agency, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, or association, two or more persons having a joint or common interest, or any other legal or commercial entity.

(4) "Owner" means one or more persons, jointly or severally, in whom is vested:

(a) All or any part of the legal title to property; or

(b) All or part of the beneficial ownership, and a right to present use and enjoyment of the property.

(5) "Premises" means a dwelling unit, appurtenances thereto, grounds, and facilities held out for the use of tenants generally and any other area or facility which is held out for use by the tenant.

(6) "Rental agreement" means all agreements which establish or modify the terms, conditions, rules, regulations, or any other provisions concerning the use and occupancy of a dwelling unit.

(7) A "single family residence" is a structure maintained and used as a single dwelling unit. Notwithstanding that a dwelling unit shares one or more walls with another dwelling unit, it shall be deemed a single family residence if it has direct access to a street and shares neither heating facilities nor hot water equipment, nor any other essential facility or service, with any other dwelling unit.

(8) A "tenant" is any person who is entitled to occupy a dwelling unit primarily for living or dwelling purposes under a rental agreement.

(9) "Reasonable attorney's fees", where authorized in this chapter, means an amount to be determined including the following factors: The time and labor required, the novelty and difficulty of the questions involved, the skill requisite to perform the legal service properly, the fee customarily charged in the locality for similar legal services, the amount involved and the results obtained, and the experience, reputation and ability of the lawyer or lawyers performing the services.

(10) "Gang" means a group that: (a) Consists of three or more persons; (b) has identifiable leadership or an identifiable name, sign, or symbol; and (c) on an ongoing basis, regularly conspires and acts in concert mainly for criminal purposes.

(11) "Gang-related activity" means any activity that occurs within the gang or advances a gang purpose.

[1998 c 276 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 3.]

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**59.18.040**

**Living arrangements exempted from chapter.**

The following living arrangements are not intended to be governed by the provisions of this chapter, unless established primarily to avoid its application, in which event the provisions of this chapter shall control:

(1) Residence at an institution, whether public or private, where residence is merely incidental to detention or the provision of medical, religious, educational, recreational, or similar services, including but not limited to correctional facilities, licensed nursing homes, monasteries and convents, and hospitals;

(2) Occupancy under a bona fide earnest money agreement to purchase or contract of sale of the dwelling unit or the property of which it is a part, where the tenant is, or stands in the place of, the purchaser;

(3) Residence in a hotel, motel, or other transient lodging whose operation is defined in RCW 19.48.010;

(4) Rental agreements entered into pursuant to the provisions of chapter 47.12 RCW where occupancy is by an owner-condemnee and where such agreement does not violate the public policy of this state of ensuring decent, safe, and sanitary housing and is so certified by the consumer protection division of the attorney general's office;

(5) Rental agreements for the use of any single family residence which are incidental to leases or rentals entered into in connection with a lease of land to be used primarily for agricultural purposes;

(6) Rental agreements providing housing for seasonal agricultural employees while provided in conjunction with such employment;

(7) Rental agreements with the state of Washington, department of natural resources, on public lands governed by Title 79 RCW;

(8) Occupancy by an employee of a landlord whose right to occupy is conditioned upon employment in or about the premises.

[1989 c 342 § 3; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 4.]

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**59.18.050**

**Jurisdiction of district and superior courts.**

The district or superior courts of this state may exercise jurisdiction over any landlord or tenant with respect to any conduct in this state governed by this chapter or with respect to any claim arising from a transaction subject to this chapter within the respective jurisdictions of the district or superior courts as provided in Article IV, section 6 of the Constitution of the state of Washington.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 5.]

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**59.18.055**

**Notice — Alternative procedure — Court's jurisdiction limited — Application to chapter 59.20 RCW.**

(1) When the plaintiff, after the exercise of due diligence, is unable to personally serve the summons on the

defendant, the court may authorize the alternative means of service described herein. Upon filing of an affidavit from the person or persons attempting service describing those attempts, and the filing of an affidavit from the plaintiff, plaintiff's agent, or plaintiff's attorney stating the belief that the defendant cannot be found, the court may enter an order authorizing service of the summons as follows:

(a) The summons and complaint shall be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises unlawfully held, not less than nine days from the return date stated in the summons; and

(b) Copies of the summons and complaint shall be deposited in the mail, postage prepaid, by both regular mail and certified mail directed to the defendant's or defendants' last known address not less than nine days from the return date stated in the summons.

When service on the defendant or defendants is accomplished by this alternative procedure, the court's jurisdiction is limited to restoring possession of the premises to the plaintiff and no money judgment may be entered against the defendant or defendants until such time as jurisdiction over the defendant or defendants is obtained.

(2) This section shall apply to this chapter and chapter 59.20 RCW.

[1997 c 86 § 1; 1989 c 342 § 14.]

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**59.18.060**  
**Landlord — Duties.**

The landlord will at all times during the tenancy keep the premises fit for human habitation, and shall in particular:

(1) Maintain the premises to substantially comply with any applicable code, statute, ordinance, or regulation governing their maintenance or operation, which the legislative body enacting the applicable code, statute, ordinance or regulation could enforce as to the premises rented if such condition substantially endangers or impairs the health or safety of the tenant;

(2) Maintain the roofs, floors, walls, chimneys, fireplaces, foundations, and all other structural components in reasonably good repair so as to be usable and capable of resisting any and all normal forces and loads to which they may be subjected;

(3) Keep any shared or common areas reasonably clean, sanitary, and safe from defects increasing the hazards of fire or accident;

(4) Provide a reasonable program for the control of infestation by insects, rodents, and other pests at the initiation of the tenancy and, except in the case of a single family residence, control infestation during tenancy except where such infestation is caused by the tenant;

(5) Except where the condition is attributable to normal wear and tear, make repairs and arrangements necessary to put and keep the premises in as good condition as it by law or rental agreement should have been, at the commencement of the tenancy;

(6) Provide reasonably adequate locks and furnish keys to the tenant;

(7) Maintain all electrical, plumbing, heating, and other facilities and appliances supplied by him in reasonably good working order;

(8) Maintain the dwelling unit in reasonably weathertight condition;

(9) Except in the case of a single family residence, provide and maintain appropriate receptacles in common areas for the removal of ashes, rubbish, and garbage, incidental to the occupancy and arrange for the reasonable and regular removal of such waste;

RCW Chapter 59.18 – Residential landlord-tenant act

(10) Except where the building is not equipped for the purpose, provide facilities adequate to supply heat and water and hot water as reasonably required by the tenant;

(11)(a) Provide a written notice to all tenants disclosing fire safety and protection information. The landlord or his or her authorized agent must provide a written notice to the tenant that the dwelling unit is equipped with a smoke detection device as required in \*RCW 48.48.140. The notice shall inform the tenant of the tenant's responsibility to maintain the smoke detection device in proper operating condition and of penalties for failure to comply with the provisions of \*RCW 48.48.140(3). The notice must be signed by the landlord or the landlord's authorized agent and tenant with copies provided to both parties. Further, except with respect to a single-family residence, the written notice must also disclose the following:

(i) Whether the smoke detection device is hard-wired or battery operated;

(ii) Whether the building has a fire sprinkler system;

(iii) Whether the building has a fire alarm system;

(iv) Whether the building has a smoking policy, and what that policy is;

(v) Whether the building has an emergency notification plan for the occupants and, if so, provide a copy to the occupants;

(vi) Whether the building has an emergency relocation plan for the occupants and, if so, provide a copy to the occupants; and

(vii) Whether the building has an emergency evacuation plan for the occupants and, if so, provide a copy to the occupants.

(b) The information required under this subsection may be provided to a tenant in a multifamily residential building either as a written notice or as a checklist that discloses whether the building has fire safety and protection devices and systems. The checklist shall include a diagram showing the emergency evacuation routes for the occupants.

(c) The written notice or checklist must be provided to new tenants at the time the lease or rental agreement is signed, and must be provided to current tenants as soon as possible, but not later than January 1, 2004;

(12) Provide tenants with information provided or approved by the department of health about the health hazards associated with exposure to indoor mold. Information may be provided in written format individually to each tenant, or may be posted in a visible, public location at the dwelling unit property. The information must detail how tenants can control mold growth in their dwelling units to minimize the health risks associated with indoor mold. Landlords may obtain the information from the department's web site or, if requested by the landlord, the department must mail the information to the landlord in a printed format. When developing or changing the information, the department of health must include representatives of landlords in the development process. The information must be provided by the landlord to new tenants at the time the lease or rental agreement is signed, and must be provided to current tenants no later than January 1, 2006, or must be posted in a visible, public location at the dwelling unit property beginning July 24, 2005;

(13) The landlord and his or her agents and employees are immune from civil liability for failure to comply with subsection (12) of this section except where the landlord and his or her agents and employees knowingly and intentionally do not comply with subsection (12) of this section; and

(14) Designate to the tenant the name and address of the person who is the landlord by a statement on the rental agreement or by a notice conspicuously posted on the premises. The tenant shall be notified immediately of any changes by certified mail or by an updated posting. If the person designated in this section does not reside in the state where the premises are located, there shall also be designated a person who resides in the county who is authorized to act as an agent for the purposes of service of notices and process, and if no designation is made of a person to act as agent, then the person to whom rental payments are to be made shall be considered such agent;

No duty shall devolve upon the landlord to repair a defective condition under this section, nor shall any defense or remedy be available to the tenant under this chapter, where the defective condition complained of was caused by the

conduct of such tenant, his family, invitee, or other person acting under his control, or where a tenant unreasonably fails to allow the landlord access to the property for purposes of repair. When the duty imposed by subsection (1) of this section is incompatible with and greater than the duty imposed by any other provisions of this section, the landlord's duty shall be determined pursuant to subsection (1) of this section.

[2005 c 465 § 2; 2002 c 259 § 1; 1991 c 154 § 2; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 6.]

**Notes:**

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW 48.48.140 was recodified as RCW 43.44.110 pursuant to 2006 c 25 § 13.

**Finding -- 2005 c 465:** "The legislature finds that residents of the state face preventable exposures to mold in their homes, apartments, and schools. Exposure to mold, and the toxins they produce, have been found to have adverse health effects, including loss of memory and impairment of the ability to think coherently and function in a job, and may cause fatigue, nausea, and headaches.

As steps can be taken by landlords and tenants to minimize exposure to indoor mold, and as the reduction of exposure to mold in buildings could reduce the rising number of mold-related claims submitted to insurance companies and increase the availability of coverage, the legislature supports providing tenants and landlords with information designed to minimize the public's exposure to mold." [2005 c 465 § 1.]

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**59.18.063**

**Landlord — Provide written receipt upon request.**

A landlord shall provide, upon the request of a tenant, a written receipt for any payments made by the tenant.

[1997 c 84 § 1.]

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**59.18.070**

**Landlord — Failure to perform duties — Notice from tenant — Contents — Time limits for landlord's remedial action.**

If at any time during the tenancy the landlord fails to carry out the duties required by RCW [59.18.060](#) or by the rental agreement, the tenant may, in addition to pursuit of remedies otherwise provided him by law, deliver written notice to the person designated in \*RCW [59.18.060](#)(11), or to the person who collects the rent, which notice shall specify the premises involved, the name of the owner, if known, and the nature of the defective condition. The landlord shall commence remedial action after receipt of such notice by the tenant as soon as possible but not later than the following time periods, except where circumstances are beyond the landlord's control:

(1) Not more than twenty-four hours, where the defective condition deprives the tenant of hot or cold water, heat, or electricity, or is imminently hazardous to life;

(2) Not more than seventy-two hours, where the defective condition deprives the tenant of the use of a refrigerator, range and oven, or a major plumbing fixture supplied by the landlord; and

(3) Not more than ten days in all other cases.

In each instance the burden shall be on the landlord to see that remedial work under this section is completed



promptly. If completion is delayed due to circumstances beyond the landlord's control, including the unavailability of financing, the landlord shall remedy the defective condition as soon as possible.

[1989 c 342 § 4; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 7.]

**Notes:**

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW [59.18.060](#) was amended by 1991 c 154 § 2, changing subsection (11) to subsection (12). RCW [59.18.060](#) was subsequently amended by 2005 c 465 § 2, changing subsection (12) to subsection (14).

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**59.18.075**

**Seizure of illegal drugs — Notification of landlord.**

(1) Any law enforcement agency which seizes a legend drug pursuant to a violation of chapter 69.41 RCW, a controlled substance pursuant to a violation of chapter 69.50 RCW, or an imitation controlled substance pursuant to a violation of chapter 69.52 RCW, shall make a reasonable attempt to discover the identity of the landlord and shall notify the landlord in writing, at the last address listed in the property tax records and at any other address known to the law enforcement agency, of the seizure and the location of the seizure of the illegal drugs or substances.

(2) Any law enforcement agency which arrests a tenant for threatening another tenant with a firearm or other deadly weapon, or for some other unlawful use of a firearm or other deadly weapon on the rental premises, or for physically assaulting another person on the rental premises, shall make a reasonable attempt to discover the identity of the landlord and notify the landlord about the arrest in writing, at the last address listed in the property tax records and at any other address known to the law enforcement agency.

[1992 c 38 § 4; 1988 c 150 § 11.]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 1992 c 38:** See notes following RCW [59.18.352](#).

**Legislative findings -- Severability -- 1988 c 150:** See notes following RCW [59.18.130](#).

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**59.18.080**

**Payment of rent condition to exercising remedies — Exceptions.**

The tenant shall be current in the payment of rent including all utilities which the tenant has agreed in the rental agreement to pay before exercising any of the remedies accorded him under the provisions of this chapter: PROVIDED, That this section shall not be construed as limiting the tenant's civil remedies for negligent or intentional damages: PROVIDED FURTHER, That this section shall not be construed as limiting the tenant's right in an unlawful detainer proceeding to raise the defense that there is no rent due and owing.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 8.]

**59.18.085**

**Rental of condemned or unlawful dwelling — Tenant's remedies — Relocation assistance — Penalties.**

(1) If a governmental agency responsible for the enforcement of a building, housing, or other appropriate code has notified the landlord that a dwelling is condemned or unlawful to occupy due to the existence of conditions that violate applicable codes, statutes, ordinances, or regulations, a landlord shall not enter into a rental agreement for the dwelling unit until the conditions are corrected.

(2) If a landlord knowingly violates subsection (1) of this section, the tenant shall recover either three months' periodic rent or up to treble the actual damages sustained as a result of the violation, whichever is greater, costs of suit, or arbitration and reasonable attorneys' fees. If the tenant elects to terminate the tenancy as a result of the conditions leading to the posting, or if the appropriate governmental agency requires that the tenant vacate the premises, the tenant also shall recover:

- (a) The entire amount of any deposit prepaid by the tenant; and
- (b) All prepaid rent.

(3)(a) If a governmental agency responsible for the enforcement of a building, housing, or other appropriate code has notified the landlord that a dwelling will be condemned or will be unlawful to occupy due to the existence of conditions that violate applicable codes, statutes, ordinances, or regulations, a landlord, who knew or should have known of the existence of these conditions, shall be required to pay relocation assistance to the displaced tenants except that:

(i) A landlord shall not be required to pay relocation assistance to any displaced tenant in a case in which the condemnation or no occupancy order affects one or more dwelling units and directly results from conditions caused by a tenant's or any third party's illegal conduct without the landlord's prior knowledge;

(ii) A landlord shall not be required to pay relocation assistance to any displaced tenant in a case in which the condemnation or no occupancy order affects one or more dwelling units and results from conditions arising from a natural disaster such as, but not exclusively, an earthquake, tsunami, wind storm, or hurricane; and

(iii) A landlord shall not be required to pay relocation assistance to any displaced tenant in a case in which a condemnation affects one or more dwelling units and the tenant's displacement is a direct result of the acquisition of the property by eminent domain.

(b) Relocation assistance provided to displaced tenants under this subsection shall be the greater amount of two thousand dollars per dwelling unit or three times the monthly rent. In addition to relocation assistance, the landlord shall be required to pay to the displaced tenants the entire amount of any deposit prepaid by the tenant and all prepaid rent.

(c) The landlord shall pay relocation assistance and any prepaid deposit and prepaid rent to displaced tenants within seven days of the governmental agency sending notice of the condemnation, eviction, or displacement order to the landlord. The landlord shall pay relocation assistance and any prepaid deposit and prepaid rent either by making individual payments by certified check to displaced tenants or by providing a certified check to the governmental agency ordering condemnation, eviction, or displacement, for distribution to the displaced tenants. If the landlord fails to complete payment of relocation assistance within the period required under this subsection, the city, town, county, or municipal corporation may advance the cost of the relocation assistance payments to the displaced tenants.

(d) During the period from the date that a governmental agency responsible for the enforcement of a building, housing, or other appropriate code first notifies the landlord of conditions that violate applicable codes, statutes, ordinances, or regulations to the time that relocation assistance payments are paid to eligible tenants, or the conditions leading to the notification are corrected, the landlord may not:

(i) Evict, harass, or intimidate tenants into vacating their units for the purpose of avoiding or diminishing application of this section;

- (ii) Reduce services to any tenant; or

(iii) Materially increase or change the obligations of any tenant, including but not limited to any rent increase.

(e) Displaced tenants shall be entitled to recover any relocation assistance, prepaid deposits, and prepaid rent required by (b) of this subsection. In addition, displaced tenants shall be entitled to recover any actual damages sustained by them as a result of the condemnation, eviction, or displacement that exceed the amount of relocation assistance that is payable. In any action brought by displaced tenants to recover any payments or damages required or authorized by this subsection (3)(e) or (c) of this subsection that are not paid by the landlord or advanced by the city, town, county, or municipal corporation, the displaced tenants shall also be entitled to recover their costs of suit or arbitration and reasonable attorneys' fees.

(f) If, after sixty days from the date that the city, town, county, or municipal corporation first advanced relocation assistance funds to the displaced tenants, a landlord has failed to repay the amount of relocation assistance advanced by the city, town, county, or municipal corporation under (c) of this subsection, then the city, town, county, or municipal corporation shall assess civil penalties in the amount of fifty dollars per day for each tenant to whom the city, town, county, or municipal corporation has advanced a relocation assistance payment.

(g) In addition to the penalties set forth in (f) of this subsection, interest will accrue on the amount of relocation assistance paid by the city, town, county, or municipal corporation for which the property owner has not reimbursed the city, town, county, or municipal corporation. The rate of interest shall be the maximum legal rate of interest permitted under RCW 19.52.020, commencing thirty days after the date that the city first advanced relocation assistance funds to the displaced tenants.

(h) If the city, town, county, or municipal corporation must initiate legal action in order to recover the amount of relocation assistance payments that it has advanced to low-income tenants, including any interest and penalties under (f) and (g) of this subsection, the city, town, county, or municipal corporation shall be entitled to attorneys' fees and costs arising from its legal action.

(4) The government agency that has notified the landlord that a dwelling will be condemned or will be unlawful to occupy shall notify the displaced tenants that they may be entitled to relocation assistance under this section.

(5) No payment received by a displaced tenant under this section may be considered as income for the purpose of determining the eligibility or extent of eligibility of any person for assistance under any state law or for the purposes of any tax imposed under Title 82 RCW, and the payments shall not be deducted from any amount to which any recipient would otherwise be entitled under Title 74 RCW.

[2005 c 364 § 2; 1989 c 342 § 13.]

**Notes:**

**Purpose -- 2005 c 364:** "The people of the state of Washington deserve decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Certain tenants in the state of Washington have remained in rental housing that does not meet the state's minimum standards for health and safety because they cannot afford to pay the costs of relocation in advance of occupying new, safe, and habitable housing. In egregious cases, authorities have been forced to condemn property when landlords have failed to remedy building code or health code violations after repeated notice, and, as a result, families with limited financial resources have been displaced and left with nowhere to go.

The purpose of this act is to establish a process by which displaced tenants would receive funds for relocation from landlords who fail to provide safe and sanitary housing after due notice of building code or health code violations. It is also the purpose of this act to provide enforcement mechanisms to cities, towns, counties, or municipal corporations including the ability to advance relocation funds to tenants who are displaced as a result of a landlord's failure to remedy building code or health code violations and later to collect the full amounts of these relocation funds, along with interest and penalties, from landlords." [2005 c 364 § 1.]

**Construction -- 2005 c 364:** "The powers and authority conferred by this act are in addition and supplemental to powers or authority conferred by any other law or authority, and nothing contained herein shall be construed to preempt any local ordinance requiring relocation assistance to tenants displaced by a landlord's failure to remedy building code or health code violations." [2005 c 364 § 4.]

**59.18.090**

**Landlord's failure to remedy defective condition — Tenant's choice of actions.**

If, after receipt of written notice, and expiration of the applicable period of time, as provided in RCW [59.18.070](#), the landlord fails to remedy the defective condition within a reasonable time the tenant may:

(1) Terminate the rental agreement and quit the premises upon written notice to the landlord without further obligation under the rental agreement, in which case he shall be discharged from payment of rent for any period following the quitting date, and shall be entitled to a pro rata refund of any prepaid rent, and shall receive a full and specific statement of the basis for retaining any of the deposit together with any refund due in accordance with RCW [59.18.280](#);

(2) Bring an action in an appropriate court, or at arbitration if so agreed, for any remedy provided under this chapter or otherwise provided by law; or

(3) Pursue other remedies available under this chapter.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 9.]

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**59.18.100**

**Landlord's failure to carry out duties — Repairs effected by tenant — Procedure — Deduction of cost from rent — Limitations.**

(1) If at any time during the tenancy, the landlord fails to carry out any of the duties imposed by RCW [59.18.060](#), and notice of the defect is given to the landlord pursuant to RCW [59.18.070](#), the tenant may submit to the landlord or his designated agent by certified mail or in person a good faith estimate by the tenant of the cost to perform the repairs necessary to correct the defective condition if the repair is to be done by licensed or registered persons, or if no licensing or registration requirement applies to the type of work to be performed, the cost if the repair is to be done by responsible persons capable of performing such repairs. Such estimate may be submitted to the landlord at the same time as notice is given pursuant to RCW [59.18.070](#): PROVIDED, That the remedy provided in this section shall not be available for a landlord's failure to carry out the duties in \*RCW [59.18.060](#) (9), and (11): PROVIDED FURTHER, That if the tenant utilizes this section for repairs pursuant to RCW [59.18.060](#)(6), the tenant shall promptly provide the landlord with a key to any new or replaced locks. The amount the tenant may deduct from the rent may vary from the estimate, but cannot exceed the one-month limit as described in subsection (2) of this section.

(2) If the landlord fails to commence remedial action of the defective condition within the applicable time period after receipt of notice and the estimate from the tenant, the tenant may contract with a licensed or registered person, or with a responsible person capable of performing the repair if no license or registration is required, to make the repair, and upon the completion of the repair and an opportunity for inspection by the landlord or his designated agent, the tenant may deduct the cost of repair from the rent in an amount not to exceed the sum expressed in dollars representing one month's rental of the tenant's unit per repair: PROVIDED, That when the landlord must commence to remedy the defective condition within ten days as provided in RCW [59.18.070](#)(3), the tenant cannot contract for repairs for ten days after notice or five days after the landlord receives the estimate, whichever is later: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the total costs of repairs deducted in any twelve-month period under this subsection shall not exceed the sum expressed in dollars representing two month's rental of the tenant's unit.

(3) If the landlord fails to carry out the duties imposed by RCW [59.18.060](#) within the applicable time period, and if the cost of repair does not exceed one-half month's rent, including the cost of materials and labor, which shall be

computed at the prevailing rate in the community for the performance of such work, and if repair of the condition need not by law be performed only by licensed or registered persons, and if the tenant has given notice under RCW [59.18.070](#), although no estimate shall be necessary under this subsection, the tenant may repair the defective condition in a workmanlike manner and upon completion of the repair and an opportunity for inspection, the tenant may deduct the cost of repair from the rent: PROVIDED, That repairs under this subsection are limited to defects within the leased premises: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the cost per repair shall not exceed one-half month's rent of the unit and that the total costs of repairs deducted in any twelve-month period under this subsection shall not exceed one month's rent of the unit.

(4) The provisions of this section shall not:

(a) Create a relationship of employer and employee between landlord and tenant; or

(b) Create liability under the workers' compensation act; or

(c) Constitute the tenant as an agent of the landlord for the purposes of **\*\*RCW 60.04.010 and 60.04.040**.

(5) Any repair work performed under the provisions of this section shall comply with the requirements imposed by any applicable code, statute, ordinance, or regulation. A landlord whose property is damaged because of repairs performed in a negligent manner may recover the actual damages in an action against the tenant.

(6) Nothing in this section shall prevent the tenant from agreeing with the landlord to undertake the repairs himself in return for cash payment or a reasonable reduction in rent, the agreement thereof to be agreed upon between the parties, and such agreement does not alter the landlord's obligations under this chapter.

[1989 c 342 § 5; 1987 c 185 § 35; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 10.]

**Notes:**

**Reviser's note:** \*(1) RCW [59.18.060](#) was amended by 1991 c 154 § 2, changing subsection (11) to subsection (12). RCW [59.18.060](#) was subsequently amended by 2005 c 465 § 2, changing subsection (12) to subsection (14).

\*\* (2) RCW 60.04.010 and 60.04.040 were repealed by 1991 c 281 § 31, effective April 1, 1992.

**Intent -- Severability -- 1987 c 185:** See notes following RCW 51.12.130.

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**59.18.110**

**Failure of landlord to carry out duties — Determination by court or arbitrator — Judgment against landlord for diminished rental value and repair costs — Enforcement of judgment — Reduction in rent under certain conditions.**

(1) If a court or an arbitrator determines that:

(a) A landlord has failed to carry out a duty or duties imposed by RCW [59.18.060](#); and

(b) A reasonable time has passed for the landlord to remedy the defective condition following notice to the landlord in accordance with RCW [59.18.070](#) or such other time as may be allotted by the court or arbitrator; the court or arbitrator may determine the diminution in rental value of the premises due to the defective condition and shall render judgment against the landlord for the rent paid in excess of such diminished rental value from the time of notice of such defect to the time of decision and any costs of repair done pursuant to RCW [59.18.100](#) for which no deduction has been previously made. Such decisions may be enforced as other judgments at law and shall be available to the tenant as a set-off against any existing or subsequent claims of the landlord.

The court or arbitrator may also authorize the tenant to make or contract to make further corrective repairs: PROVIDED, That the court specifies a time period in which the landlord may make such repairs before the tenant may commence or contract for such repairs: PROVIDED FURTHER, That such repairs shall not exceed the sum expressed in dollars representing one month's rental of the tenant's unit in any one calendar year.

(2) The tenant shall not be obligated to pay rent in excess of the diminished rental value of the premises until such defect or defects are corrected by the landlord or until the court or arbitrator determines otherwise.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 11.]

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### 59.18.115

#### Substandard and dangerous conditions — Notice to landlord — Government certification — Escrow account.

(1) The legislature finds that some tenants live in residences that are substandard and dangerous to their health and safety and that the repair and deduct remedies of RCW [59.18.100](#) may not be adequate to remedy substandard and dangerous conditions. Therefore, an extraordinary remedy is necessary if the conditions substantially endanger or impair the health and safety of the tenant.

(2)(a) If a landlord fails to fulfill any substantial obligation imposed by RCW [59.18.060](#) that substantially endangers or impairs the health or safety of a tenant, including (i) structural members that are of insufficient size or strength to carry imposed loads with safety, (ii) exposure of the occupants to the weather, (iii) plumbing and sanitation defects that directly expose the occupants to the risk of illness or injury, (iv) lack of water, including hot water, (v) heating or ventilation systems that are not functional or are hazardous, (vi) defective, hazardous, or missing electrical wiring or electrical service, (vii) defective or inadequate exits that increase the risk of injury to occupants, and (viii) conditions that increase the risk of fire, the tenant shall give notice in writing to the landlord, specifying the conditions, acts, omissions, or violations. Such notice shall be sent to the landlord or to the person or place where rent is normally paid.

(b) If after receipt of the notice described in (a) of this subsection the landlord fails to remedy the condition or conditions within a reasonable amount of time under RCW [59.18.070](#), the tenant may request that the local government provide for an inspection of the premises with regard to the specific condition or conditions that exist as provided in (a) of this subsection. The local government shall have the appropriate government official, or may designate a public or disinterested private person or company capable of conducting the inspection and making the certification, conduct an inspection of the specific condition or conditions listed by the tenant, and shall not inspect nor be liable for any other condition or conditions of the premises. The purpose of this inspection is to verify, to the best of the inspector's ability, whether the tenant's listed condition or conditions exist and substantially endanger the tenant's health or safety under (a) of this subsection; the inspection is for the purposes of this private civil remedy, and therefore shall not be related to any other governmental function such as enforcement of any code, ordinance, or state law.

(c) The local government or its designee, after receiving the request from the tenant to conduct an inspection under this section, shall conduct the inspection and make any certification within a reasonable amount of time not more than five days from the date of receipt of the request. The local government or its designee may enter the premises at any reasonable time to do the inspection, provided that he or she first shall display proper credentials and request entry. The local government or its designee shall whenever practicable, taking into consideration the imminence of any threat to the tenant's health or safety, give the landlord at least twenty-four hours notice of the date and time of inspection and provide the landlord with an opportunity to be present at the time of the inspection. The landlord shall have no power or authority to prohibit entry for the inspection.

(d) The local government or its designee shall certify whether the condition or the conditions specified by the tenant do exist and do make the premises substantially unfit for human habitation or can be a substantial risk to the health and safety of the tenant as described in (a) of this subsection. The certification shall be provided to the tenant, and a copy shall be included by the tenant with the notice sent to the landlord under subsection (3) of this section. The certification may be appealed to the local board of appeals, but the appeal shall not delay or preclude the tenant from proceeding with the escrow under this section.

RCW Chapter 59.18 – Residential landlord-tenant act

(e) The tenant shall not be entitled to deposit rent in escrow pursuant to this section unless the tenant first makes a good faith determination that he or she is unable to repair the conditions described in the certification issued pursuant to subsection (2)(d) of this section through use of the repair remedies authorized by RCW [59.18.100](#).

(f) If the local government or its designee certifies that the condition or conditions specified by the tenant exist, the tenant shall then either pay the periodic rent due to the landlord or deposit all periodic rent then called for in the rental agreement and all rent thereafter called for in the rental agreement into an escrow account maintained by a person authorized by law to set up and maintain escrow accounts, including escrow companies under chapter 18.44 RCW, financial institutions, or attorneys, or with the clerk of the court of the district or superior court where the property is located. These depositories are hereinafter referred to as "escrow." The tenant shall notify the landlord in writing of the deposit by mailing the notice postage prepaid by first class mail or by delivering the notice to the landlord promptly but not more than twenty-four hours after the deposit.

(g) This section, when elected as a remedy by the tenant by sending the notice under subsection (3) of this section, shall be the exclusive remedy available to the tenant regarding defects described in the certification under subsection (2)(d) of this section: PROVIDED, That the tenant may simultaneously commence or pursue an action in an appropriate court, or at arbitration if so agreed, to determine past, present, or future diminution in rental value of the premises due to any defective conditions.

(3) The notice to the landlord of the rent escrow under this section shall be a sworn statement by the tenant in substantially the following form:

NOTICE TO LANDLORD OF RENT ESCROW

Name of tenant:

Name of landlord:

Name and address of escrow:

Date of deposit of rent into escrow:

Amount of rent deposited into escrow:

The following condition has been certified by a local building official to substantially endanger, impair, or affect the health or safety of a tenant:

That written notice of the conditions needing repair was provided to the landlord on . . . , and . . . days have elapsed and the repairs have not been made.

.....

(Sworn Signature)

(4) The escrow shall place all rent deposited in a separate rent escrow account in the name of the escrow in a bank or savings and loan association domiciled in this state. The escrow shall keep in a separate docket an account of each deposit, with the name and address of the tenant, and the name and address of the landlord and of the agent, if any.

(5)(a) A landlord who receives notice that the rent due has been deposited with an escrow pursuant to subsection (2) of this section may:

(i) Apply to the escrow for release of the funds after the local government certifies that the repairs to the conditions listed in the notice under subsection (3) of this section have been properly repaired. The escrow shall release the funds to the landlord less any escrow costs for which the tenant is entitled to reimbursement pursuant to this section, immediately upon written receipt of the local government certification that the repairs to the conditions listed in the notice under subsection (3) of this section have been properly completed.

(ii) File an action with the court and apply to the court for release of the rent on the grounds that the tenant did not comply with the notice requirement of subsection (2) or (3) of this section. Proceedings under this subsection shall be governed by the time, service, and filing requirements of RCW [59.18.370](#) regarding show cause hearings.

(iii) File an action with the court and apply to the court for release of the rent on the grounds that there was no violation of any obligation imposed upon the landlord or that the condition has been remedied.

(iv) This action may be filed in any court having jurisdiction, including small claims court. If the tenant has vacated the premises or if the landlord has failed to commence an action with the court for release of the funds within sixty days after rent is deposited in escrow, the tenant may file an action to determine how and when any rent deposited in escrow shall be released or disbursed. The landlord shall not commence an unlawful detainer action for nonpayment of rent by serving or filing a summons and complaint if the tenant initially pays the rent called for in the rental agreement that is due into escrow as provided for under this section on or before the date rent is due or on or before the expiration of a three-day notice to pay rent or vacate and continues to pay the rent into escrow as the rent becomes due or prior to the expiration of a three-day notice to pay rent or vacate; provided that the landlord shall not be barred from commencing an unlawful detainer action for nonpayment of rent if the amount of rent that is paid into escrow is less than the amount of rent agreed upon in the rental agreement between the parties.

(b) The tenant shall be named as a party to any action filed by the landlord under this section, and shall have the right to file an answer and counterclaim, although any counterclaim shall be dismissed without prejudice if the court or arbitrator determines that the tenant failed to follow the notice requirements contained in this section. Any counterclaim can only claim diminished rental value related to conditions specified by the tenant in the notice required under subsection (3) of this section. This limitation on the tenant's right to counterclaim shall not affect the tenant's right to bring his or her own separate action. A trial shall be held within sixty days of the date of filing of the landlord's or tenant's complaint.

(c) The tenant shall be entitled to reimbursement for any escrow costs or fees incurred for setting up or maintaining an escrow account pursuant to this section, unless the tenant did not comply with the notice requirements of subsection (2) or (3) of this section. Any escrow fees that are incurred for which the tenant is entitled to reimbursement shall be deducted from the rent deposited in escrow and remitted to the tenant at such time as any rent is released to the landlord. The prevailing party in any court action or arbitration brought under this section may also be awarded its costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

(d) If a court determines a diminished rental value of the premises, the tenant may pay the rent due based on the diminished value of the premises into escrow until the landlord makes the necessary repairs.

(6)(a) If a landlord brings an action for the release of rent deposited, the court may, upon application of the landlord, release part of the rent on deposit for payment of the debt service on the premises, the insurance premiums for the premises, utility services, and repairs to the rental unit.

(b) In determining whether to release rent for the payments described in (a) of this subsection, the court shall consider the amount of rent the landlord receives from other rental units in the buildings of which the residential premises are a part, the cost of operating those units, and the costs which may be required to remedy the condition contained in the notice. The court shall also consider whether the expenses are due or have already been paid, whether the landlord has other financial resources, or whether the landlord or tenant will suffer irreparable damage. The court may request the landlord to provide additional security, such as a bond, prior to authorizing release of any of the funds in escrow.

[1989 c 342 § 16.]



**59.18.120**

**Defective condition — Unfeasible to remedy defect — Termination of tenancy.**

If a court or arbitrator determines a defective condition as described in RCW [59.18.060](#) to be so substantial that it is unfeasible for the landlord to remedy the defect within the time allotted by RCW [59.18.070](#), and that the tenant should not remain in the dwelling unit in its defective condition, the court or arbitrator may authorize the termination of the tenancy: PROVIDED, That the court or arbitrator shall set a reasonable time for the tenant to vacate the premises.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 12.]

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**59.18.130**

**Duties of tenant.**

Each tenant shall pay the rental amount at such times and in such amounts as provided for in the rental agreement or as otherwise provided by law and comply with all obligations imposed upon tenants by applicable provisions of all municipal, county, and state codes, statutes, ordinances, and regulations, and in addition shall:

- (1) Keep that part of the premises which he or she occupies and uses as clean and sanitary as the conditions of the premises permit;
- (2) Properly dispose from his or her dwelling unit all rubbish, garbage, and other organic or flammable waste, in a clean and sanitary manner at reasonable and regular intervals, and assume all costs of extermination and fumigation for infestation caused by the tenant;
- (3) Properly use and operate all electrical, gas, heating, plumbing and other fixtures and appliances supplied by the landlord;
- (4) Not intentionally or negligently destroy, deface, damage, impair, or remove any part of the structure or dwelling, with the appurtenances thereto, including the facilities, equipment, furniture, furnishings, and appliances, or permit any member of his or her family, invitee, licensee, or any person acting under his or her control to do so. Violations may be prosecuted under chapter 9A.48 RCW if the destruction is intentional and malicious;
- (5) Not permit a nuisance or common waste;
- (6) Not engage in drug-related activity at the rental premises, or allow a subtenant, sublessee, resident, or anyone else to engage in drug-related activity at the rental premises with the knowledge or consent of the tenant. "Drug-related activity" means that activity which constitutes a violation of chapter 69.41, 69.50, or 69.52 RCW;
- (7) Maintain the smoke detection device in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, including the replacement of batteries where required for the proper operation of the smoke detection device, as required in \*RCW 48.48.140(3);
- (8) Not engage in any activity at the rental premises that is:
  - (a) Imminently hazardous to the physical safety of other persons on the premises; and
  - (b)(i) Entails physical assaults upon another person which result in an arrest; or
  - (ii) Entails the unlawful use of a firearm or other deadly weapon as defined in RCW 9A.04.110 which results in an arrest, including threatening another tenant or the landlord with a firearm or other deadly weapon under RCW

[59.18.352](#). Nothing in this subsection (8) shall authorize the termination of tenancy and eviction of the victim of a physical assault or the victim of the use or threatened use of a firearm or other deadly weapon;

(9) Not engage in any gang-related activity at the premises, as defined in RCW [59.18.030](#), or allow another to engage in such activity at the premises, that renders people in at least two or more dwelling units or residences insecure in life or the use of property or that injures or endangers the safety or health of people in at least two or more dwelling units or residences. In determining whether a tenant is engaged in gang-related activity, a court should consider the totality of the circumstances, including factors such as whether there have been a significant number of complaints to the landlord about the tenant's activities at the property, damages done by the tenant to the property, including the property of other tenants or neighbors, harassment or threats made by the tenant to other tenants or neighbors that have been reported to law enforcement agencies, any police incident reports involving the tenant, and the tenant's criminal history; and

(10) Upon termination and vacation, restore the premises to their initial condition except for reasonable wear and tear or conditions caused by failure of the landlord to comply with his or her obligations under this chapter: PROVIDED, That the tenant shall not be charged for normal cleaning if he or she has paid a nonrefundable cleaning fee.

[1998 c 276 § 2; 1992 c 38 § 2; 1991 c 154 § 3; 1988 c 150 § 2; 1983 c 264 § 3; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 13.]

**Notes:**

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW 48.48.140 was recodified as RCW 43.44.110 pursuant to 2006 c 25 § 13.

**Intent -- Effective date -- 1992 c 38:** See notes following RCW [59.18.352](#).

**Legislative findings -- 1988 c 150:** "The legislature finds that the illegal use, sale, and manufacture of drugs and other drug-related activities is a statewide problem. Innocent persons, especially children, who come into contact with illegal drug-related activity within their own neighborhoods are seriously and adversely affected. Rental property is damaged and devalued by drug activities. The legislature further finds that a rapid and efficient response is necessary to: (1) Lessen the occurrence of drug-related enterprises; (2) reduce the drug use and trafficking problems within this state; and (3) reduce the damage caused to persons and property by drug activity. The legislature finds that it is beneficial to rental property owners and to the public to permit landlords to quickly and efficiently evict persons who engage in drug-related activities at rented premises." [1988 c 150 § 1.]

**Severability -- 1988 c 150:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1988 c 150 § 15.]

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**59.18.140**

**Reasonable obligations or restrictions — Tenant's duty to conform.**

The tenant shall conform to all reasonable obligations or restrictions, whether denominated by the landlord as rules, rental agreement, rent, or otherwise, concerning the use, occupation, and maintenance of his dwelling unit, appurtenances thereto, and the property of which the dwelling unit is a part if such obligations and restrictions are not in violation of any of the terms of this chapter and are not otherwise contrary to law, and if such obligations and restrictions are brought to the attention of the tenant at the time of his initial occupancy of the dwelling unit and thus become part of the rental agreement. Except for termination of tenancy, after thirty days written notice to each affected tenant, a new rule of tenancy including a change in the amount of rent may become effective upon completion of the term of the rental agreement or sooner upon mutual consent.

[1989 c 342 § 6; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 14.]

**59.18.150**

**Landlord's right of entry — Purposes — Searches by fire officials — Conditions.**

(1) The tenant shall not unreasonably withhold consent to the landlord to enter into the dwelling unit in order to inspect the premises, make necessary or agreed repairs, alterations, or improvements, supply necessary or agreed services, or exhibit the dwelling unit to prospective or actual purchasers, mortgagees, tenants, workers, or contractors.

(2) Upon written notice of intent to seek a search warrant, when a tenant or landlord denies a fire official the right to search a dwelling unit, a fire official may immediately seek a search warrant and, upon a showing of probable cause specific to the dwelling unit sought to be searched that criminal fire code violations exist in the dwelling unit, a court of competent jurisdiction shall issue a warrant allowing a search of the dwelling unit.

Upon written notice of intent to seek a search warrant, when a landlord denies a fire official the right to search the common areas of the rental building other than the dwelling unit, a fire official may immediately seek a search warrant and, upon a showing of probable cause specific to the common area sought to be searched that a criminal fire code violation exists in those areas, a court of competent jurisdiction shall issue a warrant allowing a search of the common areas in which the violation is alleged.

The superior court and courts of limited jurisdiction organized under Titles 3, 35, and 35A RCW have jurisdiction to issue such search warrants. Evidence obtained pursuant to any such search may be used in a civil or administrative enforcement action.

(3) As used in this section:

(a) "Common areas" means a common area or those areas that contain electrical, plumbing, and mechanical equipment and facilities used for the operation of the rental building.

(b) "Fire official" means any fire official authorized to enforce the state or local fire code.

(4) The landlord may enter the dwelling unit without consent of the tenant in case of emergency or abandonment.

(5) The landlord shall not abuse the right of access or use it to harass the tenant. Except in the case of emergency or if it is impracticable to do so, the landlord shall give the tenant at least two days' notice of his or her intent to enter and shall enter only at reasonable times. The tenant shall not unreasonably withhold consent to the landlord to enter the dwelling unit at a specified time where the landlord has given at least one day's notice of intent to enter to exhibit the dwelling unit to prospective or actual purchasers or tenants. A landlord shall not unreasonably interfere with a tenant's enjoyment of the rented dwelling unit by excessively exhibiting the dwelling unit.

(6) The landlord has no other right of access except by court order, arbitrator or by consent of the tenant.

(7) A landlord or tenant who continues to violate the rights of the tenant or landlord with respect to the duties imposed on the other as set forth in this section after being served with one written notification alleging in good faith violations of this section listing the date and time of the violation shall be liable for up to one hundred dollars for each violation after receipt of the notice. The prevailing landlord or tenant may recover costs of the suit or arbitration under this section, and may also recover reasonable attorneys' fees.

(8) Nothing in this section is intended to abrogate or modify in any way any common law right or privilege.

[2002 c 263 § 1. Prior: 1989 c 342 § 7; 1989 c 12 § 18; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 15.]

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**59.18.160**

**Landlord's remedies if tenant fails to remedy defective condition.**

If, after receipt of written notice, as provided in RCW [59.18.170](#), the tenant fails to remedy the defective condition within a reasonable time, the landlord may:

(1) Bring an action in an appropriate court, or at arbitration if so agreed for any remedy provided under this chapter or otherwise provided by law; or

(2) Pursue other remedies available under this chapter.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 16.]

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**59.18.170**

**Landlord to give notice if tenant fails to carry out duties.**

If at any time during the tenancy the tenant fails to carry out the duties required by RCW [59.18.130](#) or [59.18.140](#), the landlord may, in addition to pursuit of remedies otherwise provided by law, give written notice to the tenant of said failure, which notice shall specify the nature of the failure.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 17.]

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**59.18.180**

**Tenant's failure to comply with statutory duties — Landlord to give tenant written notice of noncompliance — Landlord's remedies.**

(1) If the tenant fails to comply with any portion of RCW [59.18.130](#) or [59.18.140](#), and such noncompliance can substantially affect the health and safety of the tenant or other tenants, or substantially increase the hazards of fire or accident that can be remedied by repair, replacement of a damaged item, or cleaning, the tenant shall comply within thirty days after written notice by the landlord specifying the noncompliance, or, in the case of emergency as promptly as conditions require. If the tenant fails to remedy the noncompliance within that period the landlord may enter the dwelling unit and cause the work to be done and submit an itemized bill of the actual and reasonable cost of repair, to be payable on the next date when periodic rent is due, or on terms mutually agreed to by the landlord and tenant, or immediately if the rental agreement has terminated. Any substantial noncompliance by the tenant of RCW [59.18.130](#) or [59.18.140](#) shall constitute a ground for commencing an action in unlawful detainer in accordance with the provisions of chapter 59.12 RCW, and a landlord may commence such action at any time after written notice pursuant to such chapter. The tenant shall have a defense to an unlawful detainer action filed solely on this ground if it is determined at the hearing authorized under the provisions of chapter 59.12 RCW that the tenant is in substantial compliance with the provisions of this section, or if the tenant remedies the noncomplying condition within the thirty day period provided for above or any shorter period determined at the hearing to have been required because of an emergency: PROVIDED, That if the defective condition is remedied after the commencement of an unlawful detainer action, the tenant may be liable to the landlord for statutory costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

(2) If drug-related activity is alleged to be a basis for termination of tenancy under RCW [59.18.130](#)(6), [59.12.030](#)(5), or [59.20.140](#)(5), the compliance provisions of this section do not apply and the landlord may proceed directly to an unlawful detainer action.

(3) If activity on the premises that creates an imminent hazard to the physical safety of other persons on the premises as defined in RCW [59.18.130](#)(8) is alleged to be the basis for termination of the tenancy, and the tenant is arrested as a result of this activity, then the compliance provisions of this section do not apply and the landlord may proceed directly to an unlawful detainer action against the tenant who was arrested for this activity.

(4) If gang-related activity, as prohibited under RCW [59.18.130](#)(9), is alleged to be the basis for termination of the tenancy, then the compliance provisions of this section do not apply and the landlord may proceed directly to an unlawful detainer action in accordance with chapter 59.12 RCW, and a landlord may commence such an action at any time after written notice under chapter 59.12 RCW.

(5) A landlord may not be held liable in any cause of action for bringing an unlawful detainer action against a tenant for drug-related activity, for creating an imminent hazard to the physical safety of others, or for engaging in gang-related activity that renders people in at least two or more dwelling units or residences insecure in life or the use of property or that injures or endangers the safety or health of people in at least two or more dwelling units or residences under this section, if the unlawful detainer action was brought in good faith. Nothing in this section shall affect a landlord's liability under RCW [59.18.380](#) to pay all damages sustained by the tenant should the writ of restitution be wrongfully sued out.

[1998 c 276 § 3; 1992 c 38 § 3; 1988 c 150 § 7; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 18.]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 1992 c 38:** See notes following RCW [59.18.352](#).

**Legislative findings -- Severability -- 1988 c 150:** See notes following RCW [59.18.130](#).

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**59.18.190**

**Notice to tenant to remedy nonconformance.**

Whenever the landlord learns of a breach of RCW [59.18.130](#) or has accepted performance by the tenant which is at variance with the terms of the rental agreement or rules enforceable after the commencement of the tenancy, he may immediately give notice to the tenant to remedy the nonconformance. Said notice shall expire after sixty days unless the landlord pursues any remedy under this chapter.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 19.]

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**59.18.200**

**Tenancy from month to month or for rental period — Termination — Armed Forces exception — Exclusion of children or conversion to condominium — Notice.**

(1)(a) When premises are rented for an indefinite time, with monthly or other periodic rent reserved, such tenancy shall be construed to be a tenancy from month to month, or from period to period on which rent is payable, and shall be terminated by written notice of twenty days or more, preceding the end of any of the months or periods of tenancy, given by either party to the other.

(b) Any tenant who is a member of the armed forces, including the national guard and armed forces reserves, or that tenant's spouse or dependant, may terminate a rental agreement with less than twenty days' notice if the tenant receives reassignment or deployment orders that do not allow a twenty-day notice.

(2) Whenever a landlord plans to change any apartment or apartments to a condominium form of ownership or plans to change to a policy of excluding children, the landlord shall give a written notice to a tenant at least ninety days before termination of the tenancy to effectuate such change in policy. Such ninety-day notice shall be in lieu of the notice required by subsection (1) of this section. However, if after giving the ninety-day notice the change in policy is delayed, the notice requirements of subsection (1) of this section shall apply unless waived by the tenant.

[2003 c 7 § 1; 1979 ex.s. c 70 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 20.]

**Notes:**

**Effective date -- 2003 c 7:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 24, 2003]." [2003 c 7 § 4.]

Unlawful detainer, notice requirement: RCW 59.12.030(2).

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**59.18.210**  
**Tenancies from year to year except under written contract.**

Tenancies from year to year are hereby abolished except when the same are created by express written contract. Leases may be in writing or print, or partly in writing and partly in print, and shall be legal and valid for any term or period not exceeding one year, without acknowledgment, witnesses or seals.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 21.]

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**59.18.220**  
**Termination of tenancy for a specified time — Armed forces exception.**

(1) In all cases where premises are rented for a specified time, by express or implied contract, the tenancy shall be deemed terminated at the end of such specified time.

(2) Any tenant who is a member of the armed forces, including the national guard and armed forces reserves, or that tenant's spouse or dependent, may terminate a tenancy for a specified time if the tenant receives reassignment or deployment orders. The tenant shall provide notice of the reassignment or deployment order to the landlord no later than seven days after receipt.

[2003 c 7 § 2; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 22.]

**Notes:**

**Effective date -- 2003 c 7:** See note following RCW [59.18.200](#).

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**59.18.230**

**Waiver of chapter provisions prohibited — Provisions prohibited from rental agreement — Distress for rent abolished — Detention of personal property for rent — Remedies.**

(1) Any provision of a lease or other agreement, whether oral or written, whereby any section or subsection of this chapter is waived except as provided in RCW 59.18.360 and shall be deemed against public policy and shall be unenforceable. Such unenforceability shall not affect other provisions of the agreement which can be given effect without them.

(2) No rental agreement may provide that the tenant:

(a) Agrees to waive or to forego rights or remedies under this chapter; or

(b) Authorizes any person to confess judgment on a claim arising out of the rental agreement; or

(c) Agrees to pay the landlord's attorney's fees, except as authorized in this chapter; or

(d) Agrees to the exculpation or limitation of any liability of the landlord arising under law or to indemnify the landlord for that liability or the costs connected therewith; or

(e) And landlord have agreed to a particular arbitrator at the time the rental agreement is entered into.

(3) A provision prohibited by subsection (2) of this section included in a rental agreement is unenforceable. If a landlord deliberately uses a rental agreement containing provisions known by him to be prohibited, the tenant may recover actual damages sustained by him and reasonable attorney's fees.

(4) The common law right of the landlord of distress for rent is hereby abolished for property covered by this chapter. Any provision in a rental agreement creating a lien upon the personal property of the tenant or authorizing a distress for rent is null and void and of no force and effect. Any landlord who takes or detains the personal property of a tenant without the specific written consent of the tenant to such incident of taking or detention, and who, after written demand by the tenant for the return of his personal property, refuses to return the same promptly shall be liable to the tenant for the value of the property retained, actual damages, and if the refusal is intentional, may also be liable for damages of up to one hundred dollars per day but not to exceed one thousand dollars, for each day or part of a day that the tenant is deprived of his property. The prevailing party may recover his costs of suit and a reasonable attorney's fee.

In any action, including actions pursuant to chapters 7.64 or 12.28 RCW, brought by a tenant or other person to recover possession of his personal property taken or detained by a landlord in violation of this section, the court, upon motion and after notice to the opposing parties, may waive or reduce any bond requirements where it appears to be to the satisfaction of the court that the moving party is proceeding in good faith and has, prima facie, a meritorious claim for immediate delivery or redelivery of said property.

[1989 c 342 § 8; 1983 c 264 § 4; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 23.]

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**59.18.240**

**Reprisals or retaliatory actions by landlord — Prohibited.**

So long as the tenant is in compliance with this chapter, the landlord shall not take or threaten to take reprisals or retaliatory action against the tenant because of any good faith and lawful:

(1) Complaints or reports by the tenant to a governmental authority concerning the failure of the landlord to substantially comply with any code, statute, ordinance, or regulation governing the maintenance or operation of the premises, if such condition may endanger or impair the health or safety of the tenant; or

(2) Assertions or enforcement by the tenant of his rights and remedies under this chapter.

"Reprisal or retaliatory action" shall mean and include but not be limited to any of the following actions by the landlord when such actions are intended primarily to retaliate against a tenant because of the tenant's good faith and lawful act:

- (a) Eviction of the tenant;
- (b) Increasing the rent required of the tenant;
- (c) Reduction of services to the tenant; and
- (d) Increasing the obligations of the tenant.

[1983 c 264 § 9; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 24.]

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### **59.18.250**

#### **Reprisals or retaliatory actions by landlord — Presumptions — Rebuttal — Costs.**

Initiation by the landlord of any action listed in RCW [59.18.240](#) within ninety days after a good faith and lawful act by the tenant as enumerated in RCW [59.18.240](#), or within ninety days after any inspection or proceeding of a governmental agency resulting from such act, shall create a rebuttable presumption affecting the burden of proof, that the action is a reprisal or retaliatory action against the tenant: PROVIDED, That if at the time the landlord gives notice of termination of tenancy pursuant to chapter 59.12 RCW the tenant is in arrears in rent or in breach of any other lease or rental obligation, there is a rebuttable presumption affecting the burden of proof that the landlord's action is neither a reprisal nor retaliatory action against the tenant: PROVIDED FURTHER, That if the court finds that the tenant made a complaint or report to a governmental authority within ninety days after notice of a proposed increase in rent or other action in good faith by the landlord, there is a rebuttable presumption that the complaint or report was not made in good faith: PROVIDED FURTHER, That no presumption against the landlord shall arise under this section, with respect to an increase in rent, if the landlord, in a notice to the tenant of increase in rent, specifies reasonable grounds for said increase, which grounds may include a substantial increase in market value due to remedial action under this chapter: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the presumption of retaliation, with respect to an eviction, may be rebutted by evidence that it is not practical to make necessary repairs while the tenant remains in occupancy. In any action or eviction proceeding where the tenant prevails upon his claim or defense that the landlord has violated this section, the tenant shall be entitled to recover his costs of suit or arbitration, including a reasonable attorney's fee, and where the landlord prevails upon his claim he shall be entitled to recover his costs of suit or arbitration, including a reasonable attorney's fee: PROVIDED FURTHER, That neither party may recover attorney's fees to the extent that their legal services are provided at no cost to them.

[1983 c 264 § 10; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 25.]

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### **59.18.253**

#### **Deposit to secure occupancy by tenant — Landlord's duties — Violation.**

(1) It shall be unlawful for a landlord to require a fee from a prospective tenant for the privilege of being placed on a waiting list to be considered as a tenant for a dwelling unit.

(2) A landlord who charges a prospective tenant a fee or deposit to secure that the prospective tenant will move



into a dwelling unit, after the dwelling unit has been offered to the prospective tenant, must provide the prospective tenant with a receipt for the fee or deposit, together with a written statement of the conditions, if any, under which the fee or deposit is refundable. If the prospective tenant does occupy the dwelling unit, then the landlord must credit the amount of the fee or deposit to the tenant's first month's rent or to the tenant's security deposit. If the prospective tenant does not occupy the dwelling unit, then the landlord may keep up to the full amount of any fee or deposit that was paid by the prospective tenant to secure the tenancy, so long as it is in accordance with the written statement of conditions furnished to the prospective tenant at the time the fee or deposit was charged. A fee charged to secure a tenancy under this subsection does not include any cost charged by a landlord to use a tenant screening service or obtain background information on a prospective tenant.

(3) In any action brought for a violation of this section a landlord may be liable for the amount of the fee or deposit charged. In addition, any landlord who violates this section may be liable to the prospective tenant for an amount not to exceed one hundred dollars. The prevailing party may also recover court costs and a reasonable attorneys' fee.

[1991 c 194 § 2.]

**Notes:**

**Findings -- 1991 c 194:** "The legislature finds that tenant application fees often have the effect of excluding low-income people from applying for housing because many low-income people cannot afford these fees in addition to the rent and other deposits which may be required. The legislature further finds that application fees are frequently not returned to unsuccessful applicants for housing, which creates a hardship on low-income people. The legislature therefore finds and declares that it is the policy of the state that certain tenant application fees should be prohibited and guidelines should be established for the imposition of other tenant application fees.

The legislature also finds that it is important to both landlords and tenants that consumer information concerning prospective tenants is accurate. Many tenants are unaware of their rights under federal fair credit reporting laws to dispute information that may be inaccurate. The legislature therefore finds and declares that it is the policy of the state for prospective tenants to be informed of their rights to dispute information they feel is inaccurate in order to help prevent denials of housing based upon incorrect information." [1991 c 194 § 1.]

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**59.18.257**  
**Screening of tenants — Costs — Notice to tenant — Violation.**

(1) If a landlord uses a tenant screening service, then the landlord may only charge for the costs incurred for using the tenant screening service under this section. If a landlord conducts his or her own screening of tenants, then the landlord may charge his or her actual costs in obtaining the background information, but the amount may not exceed the customary costs charged by a screening service in the general area. The landlord's actual costs include costs incurred for long distance phone calls and for time spent calling landlords, employers, and financial institutions.

(2) A landlord may not charge a prospective tenant for the cost of obtaining background information under this section unless the landlord first notifies the prospective tenant in writing of what a tenant screening entails, the prospective tenant's rights to dispute the accuracy of information provided by the tenant screening service or provided by the entities listed on the tenant application who will be contacted for information concerning the tenant, and the name and address of the tenant screening service used by the landlord.

(3) Nothing in this section requires a landlord to disclose information to a prospective tenant that was obtained from a tenant screening service or from entities listed on the tenant application which is not required under the federal fair credit reporting act, 15 U.S.C. Sec. 1681 et seq.

(4) Any landlord who violates this section may be liable to the prospective tenant for an amount not to exceed one hundred dollars. The prevailing party may also recover court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

[1991 c 194 § 3.]

**Notes:**

**Findings -- 1991 c 194:** See note following RCW [59.18.253](#).

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**59.18.260**

**Moneys paid as deposit or security for performance by tenant — Written rental agreement to specify terms and conditions for retention by landlord — Written checklist required.**

If any moneys are paid to the landlord by the tenant as a deposit or as security for performance of the tenant's obligations in a lease or rental agreement, the lease or rental agreement shall be in writing and shall include the terms and conditions under which the deposit or portion thereof may be withheld by the landlord upon termination of the lease or rental agreement. If all or part of the deposit may be withheld to indemnify the landlord for damages to the premises for which the tenant is responsible, the rental agreement shall be in writing and shall so specify. No deposit may be collected by a landlord unless the rental agreement is in writing and a written checklist or statement specifically describing the condition and cleanliness of or existing damages to the premises and furnishings, including, but not limited to, walls, floors, countertops, carpets, drapes, furniture, and appliances, is provided by the landlord to the tenant at the commencement of the tenancy. The checklist or statement shall be signed and dated by the landlord and the tenant, and the tenant shall be provided with a copy of the signed checklist or statement. No such deposit shall be withheld on account of normal wear and tear resulting from ordinary use of the premises.

[1983 c 264 § 6; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 26.]

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**59.18.270**

**Moneys paid as deposit or security for performance by tenant — Deposit by landlord in trust account — Receipt — Claims.**

All moneys paid to the landlord by the tenant as a deposit as security for performance of the tenant's obligations in a lease or rental agreement shall promptly be deposited by the landlord in a trust account, maintained by the landlord for the purpose of holding such security deposits for tenants of the landlord, in a financial institution as defined by RCW 30.22.041 or licensed escrow agent located in Washington. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the landlord shall be entitled to receipt of interest paid on such trust account deposits. The landlord shall provide the tenant with a written receipt for the deposit and shall provide written notice of the name and address and location of the depository and any subsequent change thereof. If during a tenancy the status of landlord is transferred to another, any sums in the deposit trust account affected by such transfer shall simultaneously be transferred to an equivalent trust account of the successor landlord, and the successor landlord shall promptly notify the tenant of the transfer and of the name, address, and location of the new depository. The tenant's claim to any moneys paid under this section shall be prior to that of any creditor of the landlord, including a trustee in bankruptcy or receiver, even if such moneys are commingled.

[2004 c 136 § 1; 1975 1st ex.s. c 233 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 27.]

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**59.18.280**

**Moneys paid as deposit or security for performance by tenant — Statement and notice of basis for retention — Remedies for landlord's failure to make refund.**

Within fourteen days after the termination of the rental agreement and vacation of the premises or, if the tenant abandons the premises as defined in RCW [59.18.310](#), within fourteen days after the landlord learns of the abandonment, the landlord shall give a full and specific statement of the basis for retaining any of the deposit together with the payment of any refund due the tenant under the terms and conditions of the rental agreement. No portion of any deposit shall be withheld on account of wear resulting from ordinary use of the premises. The landlord complies with this section if the required statement or payment, or both, are deposited in the United States mail properly addressed with first class postage prepaid within the fourteen days.

The notice shall be delivered to the tenant personally or by mail to his last known address. If the landlord fails to give such statement together with any refund due the tenant within the time limits specified above he shall be liable to the tenant for the full amount of the deposit. The landlord is also barred in any action brought by the tenant to recover the deposit from asserting any claim or raising any defense for retaining any of the deposit unless the landlord shows that circumstances beyond the landlord's control prevented the landlord from providing the statement within the fourteen days or that the tenant abandoned the premises as defined in RCW [59.18.310](#). The court may in its discretion award up to two times the amount of the deposit for the intentional refusal of the landlord to give the statement or refund due. In any action brought by the tenant to recover the deposit, the prevailing party shall additionally be entitled to the cost of suit or arbitration including a reasonable attorney's fee.

Nothing in this chapter shall preclude the landlord from proceeding against, and the landlord shall have the right to proceed against a tenant to recover sums exceeding the amount of the tenant's damage or security deposit for damage to the property for which the tenant is responsible together with reasonable attorney's fees.

[1989 c 342 § 9; 1983 c 264 § 7; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 28.]

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#### **59.18.285**

#### **Nonrefundable fees not to be designated as deposit — Written rental agreement required.**

No moneys paid to the landlord which are nonrefundable may be designated as a deposit or as part of any deposit. If any moneys are paid to the landlord as a nonrefundable fee, the rental agreement shall be in writing and shall clearly specify that the fee is nonrefundable.

[1983 c 264 § 5.]

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#### **59.18.290**

#### **Removal or exclusion of tenant from premises — Holding over or excluding landlord from premises after termination date.**

(1) It shall be unlawful for the landlord to remove or exclude from the premises the tenant thereof except under a court order so authorizing. Any tenant so removed or excluded in violation of this section may recover possession of the property or terminate the rental agreement and, in either case, may recover the actual damages sustained. The prevailing party may recover the costs of suit or arbitration and reasonable attorney's fees.

(2) It shall be unlawful for the tenant to hold over in the premises or exclude the landlord therefrom after the termination of the rental agreement except under a valid court order so authorizing. Any landlord so deprived of possession of premises in violation of this section may recover possession of the property and damages sustained by him, and the prevailing party may recover his costs of suit or arbitration and reasonable attorney's fees.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 29.]

**59.18.300**

**Termination of tenant's utility services — Tenant causing loss of landlord provided utility services.**

It shall be unlawful for a landlord to intentionally cause termination of any of his tenant's utility services, including water, heat, electricity, or gas, except for an interruption of utility services for a reasonable time in order to make necessary repairs. Any landlord who violates this section may be liable to such tenant for his actual damages sustained by him, and up to one hundred dollars for each day or part thereof the tenant is thereby deprived of any utility service, and the prevailing party may recover his costs of suit or arbitration and a reasonable attorney's fee. It shall be unlawful for a tenant to intentionally cause the loss of utility services provided by the landlord, including water, heat, electricity or gas, excepting as resulting from the normal occupancy of the premises.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 30.]

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**59.18.310**

**Default in rent — Abandonment — Liability of tenant — Landlord's remedies — Sale of tenant's property by landlord.**

If the tenant defaults in the payment of rent and reasonably indicates by words or actions the intention not to resume tenancy, the tenant shall be liable for the following for such abandonment: PROVIDED, That upon learning of such abandonment of the premises the landlord shall make a reasonable effort to mitigate the damages resulting from such abandonment:

(1) When the tenancy is month-to-month, the tenant shall be liable for the rent for the thirty days following either the date the landlord learns of the abandonment, or the date the next regular rental payment would have become due, whichever first occurs.

(2) When the tenancy is for a term greater than month-to-month, the tenant shall be liable for the lesser of the following:

(a) The entire rent due for the remainder of the term; or

(b) All rent accrued during the period reasonably necessary to rerent the premises at a fair rental, plus the difference between such fair rental and the rent agreed to in the prior agreement, plus actual costs incurred by the landlord in rerenting the premises together with statutory court costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

In the event of such abandonment of tenancy and an accompanying default in the payment of rent by the tenant, the landlord may immediately enter and take possession of any property of the tenant found on the premises and may store the same in any reasonably secure place. A landlord shall make reasonable efforts to provide the tenant with a notice containing the name and address of the landlord and the place where the property is stored and informing the tenant that a sale or disposition of the property shall take place pursuant to this section, and the date of the sale or disposal, and further informing the tenant of the right under RCW [59.18.230](#) to have the property returned prior to its sale or disposal. The landlord's efforts at notice under this subsection shall be satisfied by the mailing by first class mail, postage prepaid, of such notice to the tenant's last known address and to any other address provided in writing by the tenant or actually known to the landlord where the tenant might receive the notice. The landlord shall return the property to the tenant after the tenant has paid the actual or reasonable drayage and storage costs whichever is less if the tenant makes a written request for the return of the property before the landlord has sold or disposed of the property. After forty-five days from the date the notice of such sale or disposal is mailed or personally delivered to the tenant, the landlord may sell or dispose of such property, including personal papers, family pictures, and keepsakes. The landlord may apply any income derived therefrom against moneys due the landlord, including actual or reasonable costs whichever is less of drayage and storage of the property. If the property has a cumulative

value of fifty dollars or less, the landlord may sell or dispose of the property in the manner provided in this section, except for personal papers, family pictures, and keepsakes, after seven days from the date the notice of sale or disposal is mailed or personally delivered to the tenant: PROVIDED, That the landlord shall make reasonable efforts, as defined in this section, to notify the tenant. Any excess income derived from the sale of such property under this section shall be held by the landlord for the benefit of the tenant for a period of one year from the date of sale, and if no claim is made or action commenced by the tenant for the recovery thereof prior to the expiration of that period of time, the balance shall be the property of the landlord, including any interest paid on the income.

[1991 c 220 § 1; 1989 c 342 § 10; 1983 c 264 § 8; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 31.]

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### 59.18.312

#### Writ of restitution — Storage and sale of tenant's property — Use of proceeds from sale.

(1) A landlord may, upon the execution of a writ of restitution by the sheriff, enter and take possession of any property of the tenant found on the premises and store the property in any reasonably secure place. If, however, the tenant or the tenant's representative objects to the storage of the property, the property shall be deposited upon the nearest public property and may not be moved and stored by the landlord. If the tenant is not present at the time the writ of restitution is executed, it shall be presumed that the tenant does not object to the storage of the property as provided in this section. RCW [59.18.310](#) shall apply to the moving and storage of a tenant's property when the premises are abandoned by the tenant.

(2) Property moved and stored under this section shall be returned to the tenant after the tenant has paid the actual or reasonable drayage and storage costs, whichever is less, or until it is sold or disposed of by the landlord in accordance with subsection (3) of this section.

(3) Prior to the sale or disposal of property stored pursuant to this section with a cumulative value of over fifty dollars, the landlord shall notify the tenant of the pending sale or disposal. After forty-five days from the date the notice of the sale or disposal is mailed or personally delivered to the tenant, the landlord may sell or dispose of the property, including personal papers, family pictures, and keepsakes.

If the property that is being stored has a cumulative value of fifty dollars or less, then the landlord may sell or dispose of the property in the manner provided in this section, except for personal papers, family pictures, and keepsakes. Prior to the sale or disposal of property stored pursuant to this section with a cumulative value of fifty dollars or less, the landlord shall notify the tenant of the pending sale or disposal. The notice shall either be mailed or personally delivered to the tenant. After seven days from the date the notice is mailed or delivered to the tenant, the landlord may sell or dispose of the property.

The landlord may apply any income derived from the sale of the tenant's property against moneys due the landlord for drayage and storage of the property. The amount of sale proceeds that the landlord may apply towards such costs may not exceed the actual or reasonable costs for drayage and storage of the property, whichever is less. Any excess income derived from the sale of such property shall be held by the landlord for the benefit of the tenant for a period of one year from the date of the sale. If no claim is made or action commenced by the tenant for the recovery of the excess income prior to the expiration of that period of time, then the balance shall be treated as abandoned property and deposited by the landlord with the department of revenue pursuant to chapter 63.29 RCW.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed as creating a right of distress for rent.

(5) When serving a tenant with a writ of restitution pursuant to RCW 59.12.100 and [59.18.410](#), the sheriff shall provide written notice to the tenant that: (a) Upon execution of the writ, the landlord may store the tenant's property; (b) if the property is stored, it may not be returned to the tenant unless the tenant pays the actual or reasonable costs of drayage and storage, whichever is less; (c) if the tenant objects to storage of the property, it will not be stored but will be placed on the nearest public property; and (d) if the tenant is not present at the time of the execution of the writ, it shall be presumed the tenant does not object to storage of the property.

[1992 c 38 § 8.]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 1992 c 38:** See notes following RCW [59.18.352](#).

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**59.18.315**  
**Mediation of disputes by independent third party.**

The landlord and tenant may agree in writing to submit any dispute arising under the provisions of this chapter or under the terms, conditions, or performance of the rental agreement, to mediation by an independent third party. The parties may agree to submit any dispute to mediation before exercising their right to arbitration under RCW [59.18.320](#).

[1983 c 264 § 11.]

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**59.18.320**  
**Arbitration — Authorized — Exceptions — Notice — Procedure.**

(1) The landlord and tenant may agree, in writing, except as provided in RCW [59.18.230](#)(2)(e), to submit to arbitration, in conformity with the provisions of this section, any controversy arising under the provisions of this chapter, except the following:

(a) Controversies regarding the existence of defects covered in subsections (1) and (2) of RCW [59.18.070](#): PROVIDED, That this exception shall apply only before the implementation of any remedy by the tenant;

(b) Any situation where court action has been started by either landlord or tenant to enforce rights under this chapter; when the court action substantially affects the controversy, including but not limited to:

(i) Court action pursuant to subsections (2) and (3) of RCW [59.18.090](#) and subsections (1) and (2) of RCW [59.18.160](#); and

(ii) Any unlawful detainer action filed by the landlord pursuant to chapter 59.12 RCW.

(2) The party initiating arbitration under subsection (1) of this section shall give reasonable notice to the other party or parties.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the arbitration process shall be administered by any arbitrator agreed upon by the parties at the time the dispute arises: PROVIDED, That the procedures shall comply with the requirements of chapter 7.04A RCW (relating to arbitration) and of this chapter.

[2005 c 433 § 45; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 32.]

**Notes:**

**Application -- Captions not law -- Savings -- Effective date -- 2005 c 433:** See RCW 7.04A.290 through 7.04A.310 and 7.04A.900.

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**59.18.330**

**Arbitration — Application — Hearings — Decisions.**

(1) Unless otherwise mutually agreed to, in the event a controversy arises under RCW [59.18.320](#) the landlord or tenant, or both, shall complete an application for arbitration and deliver it to the selected arbitrator.

(2) The arbitrator so designated shall schedule a hearing to be held no later than ten days following receipt of notice of the controversy, except as provided in RCW [59.18.350](#).

(3) The arbitrator shall conduct public or private hearings. Reasonable notice of such hearings shall be given to the parties, who shall appear and be heard either in person or by counsel or other representative. Hearings shall be informal and the rules of evidence prevailing in judicial proceedings shall not be binding. A recording of the proceedings may be taken. Any oral or documentary evidence and other data deemed relevant by the arbitrator may be received in evidence. The arbitrator shall have the power to administer oaths, to issue subpoenas, to require the attendance of witnesses and the production of such books, papers, contracts, agreements, and documents as may be deemed by the arbitrator material to a just determination of the issues in dispute. If any person refuses to obey such subpoena or refuses to be sworn to testify, or any witness, party, or attorney is guilty of any contempt while in attendance at any hearing held hereunder, the arbitrator may invoke the jurisdiction of any superior court, and such court shall have jurisdiction to issue an appropriate order. A failure to obey such order may be punished by the court as a contempt thereof.

(4) Within five days after conclusion of the hearing, the arbitrator shall make a written decision upon the issues presented, a copy of which shall be mailed by certified mail or otherwise delivered to the parties or their designated representatives. The determination of the dispute made by the arbitrator shall be final and binding upon both parties.

(5) If a defective condition exists which affects more than one dwelling unit in a similar manner, the arbitrator may consolidate the issues of fact common to those dwelling units in a single proceeding.

(6) Decisions of the arbitrator shall be enforced or appealed according to the provisions of chapter 7.04A RCW.

[2005 c 433 § 46; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 33.]

**Notes:**

**Application -- Captions not law -- Savings -- Effective date -- 2005 c 433:** See RCW 7.04A.290 through 7.04A.310 and 7.04A.900.

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**59.18.340**

**Arbitration — Fee.**

The administrative fee for this arbitration procedure shall be established by agreement of the parties and the arbitrator and, unless otherwise allocated by the arbitrator, shall be shared equally by the parties: PROVIDED, That upon either party signing an affidavit to the effect that he is unable to pay his share of the fee, that portion of the fee may be waived or deferred.

[1983 c 264 § 12; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 34.]

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**59.18.350**

**Arbitration — Completion of arbitration after giving notice.**

When a party gives notice pursuant to subsection (2) of RCW [59.18.320](#), he must, at the same time, arrange for arbitration of the grievance in the manner provided for in this chapter. The arbitration shall be completed before the rental due date next occurring after the giving of notice pursuant to RCW [59.18.320](#): PROVIDED, That in no event shall the arbitrator have less than ten days to complete the arbitration process.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 35.]

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**59.18.352**

**Threatening behavior by tenant — Termination of agreement — Written notice — Financial obligations.**

If a tenant notifies the landlord that he or she, or another tenant who shares that particular dwelling unit has been threatened by another tenant, and:

- (1) The threat was made with a firearm or other deadly weapon as defined in RCW 9A.04.110; and
- (2) The tenant who made the threat is arrested as a result of the threatening behavior; and
- (3) The landlord fails to file an unlawful detainer action against the tenant who threatened another tenant within seven calendar days after receiving notice of the arrest from a law enforcement agency;

then the tenant who was threatened may terminate the rental agreement and quit the premises upon written notice to the landlord without further obligation under the rental agreement.

A tenant who terminates a rental agreement under this section is discharged from payment of rent for any period following the quitting date, and is entitled to a pro rata refund of any prepaid rent, and shall receive a full and specific statement of the basis for retaining any of the deposit together with any refund due in accordance with RCW [59.18.280](#).

Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a landlord to terminate a rental agreement or file an unlawful detainer action.

[1992 c 38 § 5.]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- 1992 c 38:** "The legislature recognizes that tenants have a number of duties under the residential landlord tenant act. These duties include the duty to pay rent and give sufficient notice before terminating the tenancy, the duty to pay drayage and storage costs under certain circumstances, and the duty to not create a nuisance or common waste. The legislature finds that tenants are sometimes threatened by other tenants with firearms or other deadly weapons. Some landlords refuse to evict those tenants who threaten the well-being of other tenants even after an arrest has been made for the threatening behavior. The legislature also finds that some tenants who hold protective orders are still subjected to threats and acts of domestic violence. These tenants with protective orders must sometimes move quickly so that the person being restrained does not know where they reside. Tenants who move out of dwelling units because they fear for their safety often forfeit their damage deposit and last month's rent because they did not provide the requisite notice to terminate the tenancy. Some tenants remain in unsafe situations because they cannot afford to lose the money held as a deposit by the



landlord. There is no current mechanism that authorizes the suspension of the tenant's duty to give the requisite notice before terminating a tenancy if they are endangered by others. There also is no current mechanism that imposes a duty on the tenant to pay drayage and storage costs when the landlord stores his or her property after an eviction. It is the intent of the legislature to provide a mechanism for tenants who are threatened to terminate their tenancies without suffering undue economic loss, to provide additional mechanisms to allow landlords to evict tenants who endanger others, and to establish a mechanism for tenants to pay drayage and storage costs under certain circumstances when the landlord stores the tenant's property after an eviction." [1992 c 38 § 1.]

**Effective date -- 1992 c 38:** "This act shall take effect June 1, 1992." [1992 c 38 § 11.]

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### 59.18.354

#### Threatening behavior by landlord — Termination of agreement — Financial obligations.

If a tenant is threatened by the landlord with a firearm or other deadly weapon as defined in RCW 9A.04.110, and the threat leads to an arrest of the landlord, then the tenant may terminate the rental agreement and quit the premises without further obligation under the rental agreement. The tenant is discharged from payment of rent for any period following the quitting date, and is entitled to a pro rata refund of any prepaid rent, and shall receive a full and specific statement of the basis for retaining any of the deposit together with any refund due in accordance with RCW [59.18.280](#).

[1992 c 38 § 6.]

#### Notes:

**Intent -- Effective date -- 1992 c 38:** See notes following RCW [59.18.352](#).

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### 59.18.360

#### Exemptions.

A landlord and tenant may agree, in writing, to exempt themselves from the provisions of RCW [59.18.060](#), [59.18.100](#), [59.18.110](#), [59.18.120](#), [59.18.130](#), and [59.18.190](#) if the following conditions have been met:

- (1) The agreement may not appear in a standard form lease or rental agreement;
- (2) There is no substantial inequality in the bargaining position of the two parties;
- (3) The exemption does not violate the public policy of this state in favor of the ensuring safe, and sanitary housing; and
- (4) Either the local county prosecutor's office or the consumer protection division of the attorney general's office or the attorney for the tenant has approved in writing the application for exemption as complying with subsections (1) through (3) of this section.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 36.]

**59.18.365**

**Unlawful detainer action — Summons — Form.**

(1) The summons must contain the names of the parties to the proceeding, the attorney or attorneys if any, the court in which the same is brought, the nature of the action, in concise terms, and the relief sought, and also the return day; and must notify the defendant to appear and answer within the time designated or that the relief sought will be taken against him or her. The summons must contain a street address for service of the notice of appearance or answer and, if available, a facsimile number for the plaintiff or the plaintiff's attorney, if represented. The summons must be served and returned in the same manner as a summons in other actions is served and returned.

(2) A defendant may serve a copy of an answer or notice of appearance, and if required by the summons, the sworn statement regarding nonpayment of rent described in RCW [59.18.375](#), by any of the following methods:

(a) By delivering a copy of the answer or notice of appearance to the person who signed the summons at the street address listed on the summons;

(b) By mailing a copy of the answer or notice of appearance addressed to the person who signed the summons to the street address listed on the summons;

(c) By facsimile to the facsimile number listed on the summons. Service by facsimile is complete upon successful transmission to the facsimile number listed upon the summons;

(d) As otherwise authorized by the superior court civil rules.

(3) The summons for unlawful detainer actions for tenancies covered by this chapter shall be substantially in the following form. In unlawful detainer actions based on nonpayment of rent, the summons may contain the provisions authorized by RCW [59.18.375](#).

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE  
STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR . . . . . COUNTY

Plaintiff, | NO.  
vs. | EVICTION SUMMONS  
Defendant. | (Residential)  
>  
|  
|  
|

THIS IS NOTICE OF A LAWSUIT TO EVICT YOU.  
PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. THE DEADLINE FOR YOUR WRITTEN  
RESPONSE IS: 5:00 p.m., on . . . . .

RCW Chapter 59.18 – Residential landlord-tenant act

TO: ..... (Name)

..... (Address)

This is notice of a lawsuit to evict you from the property which you are renting. Your landlord is asking the court to terminate your tenancy, direct the sheriff to remove you and your belongings from the property, enter a money judgment against you for unpaid rent and/or damages for your use of the property, and for court costs and attorneys' fees.

If you want to defend yourself in this lawsuit, you must respond to the eviction complaint in writing on or before the deadline stated above. You must respond in writing even if no case number has been assigned by the court yet.

You can respond to the complaint in writing by delivering a copy of a notice of appearance or answer to your landlord's attorney (or your landlord if there is no attorney) by personal delivery, mailing, or facsimile to the address or facsimile number stated below **TO BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN THE DEADLINE STATED ABOVE**. Service by facsimile is complete upon successful transmission to the facsimile number, if any, listed in the summons.

The notice of appearance or answer must include the name of this case (plaintiff(s) and defendant(s)), your name, the street address where further legal papers may be sent, your telephone number (if any), and your signature.

If there is a number on the upper right side of the eviction summons and complaint, you must also file your original notice of appearance or answer with the court clerk by the deadline for your written response.

You may demand that the plaintiff file this lawsuit with the court. If you do so, the demand must be in writing and must be served upon the person signing the summons. Within fourteen days after you serve the demand, the plaintiff must file this lawsuit with the court, or the service on you of this summons and complaint will be void.

If you wish to seek the advice of an attorney in this matter, you should do so promptly so that your written response, if any, may be served on time.

You may also be instructed in a separate order to appear for a court hearing on your eviction. If you receive an order to show cause you must personally appear at the hearing on the date indicated in the order to show cause **IN ADDITION** to delivering and filing your notice of appearance or answer by the deadline stated above.

IF YOU DO NOT RESPOND TO THE COMPLAINT IN WRITING BY THE DEADLINE STATED ABOVE YOU WILL LOSE BY DEFAULT. YOUR LANDLORD MAY PROCEED WITH THE LAWSUIT, EVEN IF YOU HAVE MOVED OUT OF THE PROPERTY.

The notice of appearance or answer must be delivered to:

.....

Name

.....

Street Address

.....

Telephone Number

.....

Facsimile Number (Required if Available)

[2006 c 51 § 1; 2005 c 130 § 3; 1989 c 342 § 15.]

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**59.18.370**

**Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions — Writ of restitution — Application — Order — Hearing.**

The plaintiff, at the time of commencing an action of forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer, or at any time afterwards, upon filing the complaint, may apply to the superior court in which the action is pending for an order directing the defendant to appear and show cause, if any he or she has, why a writ of restitution should not issue restoring to the plaintiff possession of the property in the complaint described, and the judge shall by order fix a time and place for a hearing of the motion, which shall not be less than seven nor more than thirty days from the date of service of the order upon defendant. A copy of the order, together with a copy of the summons and complaint if not previously served upon the defendant, shall be served upon the defendant. The order shall notify the defendant that if he or she fails to appear and show cause at the time and place specified by the order the court may order the sheriff to restore possession of the property to the plaintiff and may grant such other relief as may be prayed for in the complaint and provided by this chapter.

[2005 c 130 § 2; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 38.]

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**59.18.375**

**Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions — Payment of rent into court registry — Writ of restitution — Notice.**

(1) The remedies provided by this section are in addition to other remedies provided by this chapter.

(2) In an action of forcible entry, detainer, or unlawful detainer, commenced under this chapter which is based upon nonpayment of rent as provided in RCW 59.12.030(3), the defendant shall pay into the court registry the amount alleged due in the complaint and continue to pay into the court registry the monthly rent as it becomes due under the terms of the rental agreement while the action is pending. If the defendant submits to the court a written statement signed and sworn under penalty of perjury denying that the rent alleged due in the complaint is owing based upon a legal or equitable defense or set-off arising out of the tenancy, such payment shall not be required.

(3) A defendant must comply with subsection (2) of this section within seven days after completed service of a filed summons and complaint or, in the case of service of an unfiled summons and complaint, seven days after delivering written notice to the defendant, in the manner provided in RCW 59.12.040, advising the defendant of the date of filing, the cause number for the action, and the date by which the defendant must comply with this section to avoid the immediate issuance of a writ of restitution. Failure of the defendant to comply with this section shall be grounds for the immediate issuance of a writ of restitution without bond directing the sheriff to deliver possession of the premises to the plaintiff. Issuance of a writ of restitution under this section shall not affect the defendant's right to a hearing to contest the amount of rent alleged to be due.

(4) The defendant shall send written notice that the rent has been paid into the court registry or send a copy of the sworn statement referred to in subsection (2) of this section to the person whose name is signed on the unlawful detainer summons. A defendant may serve the written notice or a copy of the sworn statement by any of the methods described in RCW [59.18.365](#).

(5) Before applying to the court for a writ of restitution under this section, the plaintiff must check with the clerk of the court to determine if the defendant has complied with subsection (2) of this section.

(6) If the plaintiff intends to use the procedures in this section, the summons must contain notice to the defendant of the payment requirements of this section and be substantially in the following form:

NOTICE

This unlawful detainer action is based upon nonpayment of rent in an amount alleged to be \$. . . . . The plaintiff is entitled to an order from the court directing the sheriff to evict you without a hearing unless you pay into the court registry the amount of delinquent rent alleged to be due in the complaint and continue paying into the court registry the monthly rent as it becomes due while this lawsuit is pending. If you deny that you owe the rent claimed to be due and you do not want to be evicted immediately without a hearing, you must file with the clerk of the court a written statement signed and sworn under penalty of perjury setting forth why you do not owe the amount claimed in the complaint to be due. The sworn statement must be filed IN ADDITION TO your written answer to the complaint.

Payment or the sworn statement must be submitted to the clerk of the superior court within seven days after you have been served with this summons or, if the summons has not yet been filed, within seven days after service of written notice that the lawsuit has been filed.

You must also deliver written notice that the rent has been paid into the court registry or send a copy of your sworn statement to the person whose signature appears below by personal delivery, mail, or facsimile.

This complaint:

( ) is filed with the superior court;

( ) is not filed. The plaintiff must notify you in writing when it is filed.

IMPORTANT

If you intend to contest this action, you must also file a written answer as indicated above on this summons.

[2006 c 51 § 2; 1983 c 264 § 13.]

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**59.18.380  
Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions — Writ of restitution — Answer — Order — Stay — Bond.**

At the time and place fixed for the hearing of plaintiff's motion for a writ of restitution, the defendant, or any person in possession or claiming possession of the property, may answer, orally or in writing, and assert any legal or equitable defense or set-off arising out of the tenancy. If the answer is oral the substance thereof shall be endorsed on the complaint by the court. The court shall examine the parties and witnesses orally to ascertain the merits of the complaint and answer, and if it shall appear that the plaintiff has the right to be restored to possession of the property, the court shall enter an order directing the issuance of a writ of restitution, returnable ten days after its date, restoring to the plaintiff possession of the property and if it shall appear to the court that there is no substantial issue of material fact of the right of the plaintiff to be granted other relief as prayed for in the complaint and provided for in this chapter, the court may enter an order and judgment granting so much of such relief as may be sustained by the proof, and the court may grant such other relief as may be prayed for in the plaintiff's complaint and provided for in this chapter, then the court shall enter an order denying any relief sought by the plaintiff for which the court has determined that the

plaintiff has no right as a matter of law: PROVIDED, That within three days after the service of the writ of restitution the defendant, or person in possession of the property, may, in any action for the recovery of possession of the property for failure to pay rent, stay the execution of the writ pending final judgment by paying into court or to the plaintiff, as the court directs, all rent found to be due and all the costs of the action, and in addition by paying, on a monthly basis pending final judgment, an amount equal to the monthly rent called for by the lease or rental agreement at the time the complaint was filed: PROVIDED FURTHER, That before any writ shall issue prior to final judgment the plaintiff shall execute to the defendant and file in the court a bond in such sum as the court may order, with sufficient surety to be approved by the clerk, conditioned that the plaintiff will prosecute his action without delay, and will pay all costs that may be adjudged to the defendant, and all damages which he may sustain by reason of the writ of restitution having been issued, should the same be wrongfully sued out. The court shall also enter an order directing the parties to proceed to trial on the complaint and answer in the usual manner.

If it appears to the court that the plaintiff should not be restored to possession of the property, the court shall deny plaintiff's motion for a writ of restitution and enter an order directing the parties to proceed to trial within thirty days on the complaint and answer. If it appears to the court that there is a substantial issue of material fact as to whether or not the plaintiff is entitled to other relief as is prayed for in plaintiff's complaint and provided for in this chapter, or that there is a genuine issue of a material fact pertaining to a legal or equitable defense or set-off raised in the defendant's answer, the court shall grant or deny so much of plaintiff's other relief sought and so much of defendant's defenses or set-off claimed, as may be proper.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 39.]

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#### **59.18.390**

#### **Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions — Writ of restitution — Service — Defendant's bond.**

(1) The sheriff shall, upon receiving the writ of restitution, forthwith serve a copy thereof upon the defendant, his or her agent, or attorney, or a person in possession of the premises, and shall not execute the same for three days thereafter, and the defendant, or person in possession of the premises within three days after the service of the writ of restitution may execute to the plaintiff a bond to be filed with and approved by the clerk of the court in such sum as may be fixed by the judge, with sufficient surety to be approved by the clerk of the court, conditioned that they will pay to the plaintiff such sum as the plaintiff may recover for the use and occupation of the premises, or any rent found due, together with all damages the plaintiff may sustain by reason of the defendant occupying or keeping possession of the premises, together with all damages which the court theretofore has awarded to the plaintiff as provided in this chapter, and also all the costs of the action. The plaintiff, his or her agent or attorneys, shall have notice of the time and place where the court or judge thereof shall fix the amount of the defendant's bond, and shall have notice and a reasonable opportunity to examine into the qualification and sufficiency of the sureties upon the bond before the bond shall be approved by the clerk. After the issuance of a writ of restitution, acceptance of a payment by the landlord or plaintiff that only partially satisfies the judgment will not invalidate the writ unless pursuant to a written agreement executed by both parties. The eviction will not be postponed or stopped unless a copy of that written agreement is provided to the sheriff. It is the responsibility of the tenant or defendant to ensure a copy of the agreement is provided to the sheriff. Upon receipt of the agreement the sheriff will cease action unless ordered to do otherwise by the court. The writ of restitution and the notice that accompanies the writ of restitution required under RCW [59.18.312](#) shall conspicuously state in bold face type, all capitals, not less than twelve points information about partial payments as set forth in subsection (2) of this section. If the writ of restitution has been based upon a finding by the court that the tenant, subtenant, sublessee, or a person residing at the rental premises has engaged in drug-related activity or has allowed any other person to engage in drug-related activity at those premises with his or her knowledge or approval, neither the tenant, the defendant, nor a person in possession of the premises shall be entitled to post a bond in order to retain possession of the premises. The writ may be served by the sheriff, in the event he or she shall be unable to find the defendant, an agent or attorney, or a person in possession of the premises, by affixing a copy of the writ in a conspicuous place upon the premises: PROVIDED, That the sheriff shall not require any bond for the service or execution of the writ. The sheriff shall be immune from all civil liability for serving and enforcing writs of restitution unless the sheriff is grossly negligent in carrying out his or her duty.

(2) The notice accompanying a writ of restitution required under RCW [59.18.312](#) shall be substantially similar to the following:

**IMPORTANT NOTICE - PARTIAL PAYMENTS**

**YOUR LANDLORD'S ACCEPTANCE OF A PARTIAL PAYMENT FROM YOU AFTER SERVICE OF THIS WRIT OF RESTITUTION WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY POSTPONE OR STOP YOUR EVICTION. IF YOU HAVE A WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH YOUR LANDLORD THAT THE EVICTION WILL BE POSTPONED OR STOPPED, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A COPY OF THE AGREEMENT TO THE SHERIFF. THE SHERIFF WILL NOT CEASE ACTION UNLESS YOU PROVIDE A COPY OF THE AGREEMENT. AT THE DIRECTION OF THE COURT THE SHERIFF MAY TAKE FURTHER ACTION.**

[1997 c 255 § 1; 1989 c 342 § 11; 1988 c 150 § 3; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 40.]

**Notes:**

**Legislative findings -- Severability -- 1988 c 150:** See notes following RCW [59.18.130](#).

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**59.18.400**

**Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions — Writ of restitution — Answer of defendant.**

On or before the day fixed for his appearance the defendant may appear and answer. The defendant in his answer may assert any legal or equitable defense or set-off arising out of the tenancy. If the complaint alleges that the tenancy should be terminated because the defendant tenant, subtenant, sublessee, or resident engaged in drug-related activity, or allowed any other person to engage in drug-related activity at the rental premises with his or her knowledge or consent, no set-off shall be allowed as a defense to the complaint.

[1988 c 150 § 4; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 41.]

**Notes:**

**Legislative findings -- Severability -- 1988 c 150:** See notes following RCW [59.18.130](#).

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**59.18.410**

**Forcible entry or detainer or unlawful detainer actions — Writ of restitution — Judgment — Execution.**

If upon the trial the verdict of the jury or, if the case be tried without a jury, the finding of the court be in favor of the plaintiff and against the defendant, judgment shall be entered for the restitution of the premises; and if the proceeding be for unlawful detainer after neglect or failure to perform any condition or covenant of a lease or agreement under which the property is held, or after default in the payment of rent, the judgment shall also declare the forfeiture of the lease, agreement or tenancy. The jury, or the court, if the proceedings be tried without a jury, shall also assess the damages arising out of the tenancy occasioned to the plaintiff by any forcible entry, or by any forcible or unlawful detainer, alleged in the complaint and proved on the trial, and, if the alleged unlawful detainer be after default in the payment of rent, find the amount of any rent due, and the judgment shall be rendered against the defendant guilty of the forcible entry, forcible detainer or unlawful detainer for the amount of damages thus assessed and for the rent, if any, found due, and the court may award statutory costs and reasonable attorney's fees. When the proceeding is for an unlawful detainer after default in the payment of rent, and the lease or agreement under which the rent is payable

has not by its terms expired, execution upon the judgment shall not be issued until the expiration of five days after the entry of the judgment, within which time the tenant or any subtenant, or any mortgagee of the term, or other party interested in the continuance of the tenancy, may pay into court for the landlord the amount of the judgment and costs, and thereupon the judgment shall be satisfied and the tenant restored to his tenancy; but if payment, as herein provided, be not made within five days the judgment may be enforced for its full amount and for the possession of the premises. In all other cases the judgment may be enforced immediately. If writ of restitution shall have been executed prior to judgment no further writ or execution for the premises shall be required.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 42.]

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**59.18.415**  
**Applicability to certain single family dwelling leases.**

The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to any lease of a single family dwelling for a period of a year or more or to any lease of a single family dwelling containing a bona fide option to purchase by the tenant: PROVIDED, That an attorney for the tenant must approve on the face of the agreement any lease exempted from the provisions of this chapter as provided for in this section.

[1989 c 342 § 12; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 43.]

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**59.18.420**  
**RCW 59.12.090, 59.12.100, 59.12.121, and 59.12.170 inapplicable.**

The provisions of RCW 59.12.090, 59.12.100, 59.12.121, and 59.12.170 shall not apply to any rental agreement included under the provisions of chapter 59.18 RCW.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 44.]

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**59.18.430**  
**Applicability to prior, existing or future leases.**

RCW [59.18.010](#) through [59.18.360](#) and [59.18.900](#) shall not apply to any lease entered into prior to July 16, 1973. All provisions of this chapter shall apply to any lease or periodic tenancy entered into on or subsequent to July 16, 1973.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 47.]

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**59.18.440**  
**Relocation assistance for low-income tenants — Certain cities, towns, counties, municipal corporations authorized to require.**



(1) Any city, town, county, or municipal corporation that is required to develop a comprehensive plan under RCW 36.70A.040(1) is authorized to require, after reasonable notice to the public and a public hearing, property owners to provide their portion of reasonable relocation assistance to low-income tenants upon the demolition, substantial rehabilitation whether due to code enforcement or any other reason, or change of use of residential property, or upon the removal of use restrictions in an assisted-housing development. No city, town, county, or municipal corporation may require property owners to provide relocation assistance to low-income tenants, as defined in this chapter, upon the demolition, substantial rehabilitation, upon the change of use of residential property, or upon the removal of use restrictions in an assisted-housing development, except as expressly authorized herein or when authorized or required by state or federal law. As used in this section, "assisted housing development" means a multifamily rental housing development that either receives government assistance and is defined as federally assisted housing in RCW 59.28.020, or that receives other federal, state, or local government assistance and is subject to use restrictions.

(2) As used in this section, "low-income tenants" means tenants whose combined total income per dwelling unit is at or below fifty percent of the median income, adjusted for family size, in the county where the tenants reside.

The department of community, trade, and economic development shall adopt rules defining county median income in accordance with the definitions promulgated by the federal department of housing and urban development.

(3) A requirement that property owners provide relocation assistance shall include the amounts of such assistance to be provided to low-income tenants. In determining such amounts, the jurisdiction imposing the requirement shall evaluate, and receive public testimony on, what relocation expenses displaced tenants would reasonably incur in that jurisdiction including:

(a) Actual physical moving costs and expenses;

(b) Advance payments required for moving into a new residence such as the cost of first and last month's rent and security and damage deposits;

(c) Utility connection fees and deposits; and

(d) Anticipated additional rent and utility costs in the residence for one year after relocation.

(4)(a) Relocation assistance provided to low-income tenants under this section shall not exceed two thousand dollars for each dwelling unit displaced by actions of the property owner under subsection (1) of this section. A city, town, county, or municipal corporation may make future annual adjustments to the maximum amount of relocation assistance required under this subsection in order to reflect any changes in the housing component of the consumer price index as published by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics.

(b) The property owner's portion of any relocation assistance provided to low-income tenants under this section shall not exceed one-half of the required relocation assistance under (a) of this subsection in cash or services.

(c) The portion of relocation assistance not covered by the property owner under (b) of this subsection shall be paid by the city, town, county, or municipal corporation authorized to require relocation assistance under subsection (1) of this section. The relocation assistance may be paid from proceeds collected from the excise tax imposed under RCW 82.46.010.

(5) A city, town, county, or municipal corporation requiring the provision of relocation assistance under this section shall adopt policies, procedures, or regulations to implement such requirement. Such policies, procedures, or regulations shall include provisions for administrative hearings to resolve disputes between tenants and property owners relating to relocation assistance or unlawful detainer actions during relocation, and shall require a decision within thirty days of a request for a hearing by either a tenant or property owner.

Judicial review of an administrative hearing decision relating to relocation assistance may be had by filing a petition, within ten days of the decision, in the superior court in the county where the residential property is located. Judicial review shall be confined to the record of the administrative hearing and the court may reverse the decision only if the administrative findings, inferences, conclusions, or decision is:

(a) In violation of constitutional provisions;

(b) In excess of the authority or jurisdiction of the administrative hearing officer;

(c) Made upon unlawful procedure or otherwise is contrary to law; or

(d) Arbitrary and capricious.

(6) Any city, town, county, or municipal corporation may require relocation assistance, under the terms of this section, for otherwise eligible tenants whose living arrangements are exempted from the provisions of this chapter under RCW [59.18.040](#)(3) and if the living arrangement is considered to be a rental or lease not defined as a retail sale under RCW 82.04.050.

(7)(a) Persons who move from a dwelling unit prior to the application by the owner of the dwelling unit for any governmental permit necessary for the demolition, substantial rehabilitation, or change of use of residential property or prior to any notification or filing required for condominium conversion shall not be entitled to the assistance authorized by this section.

(b) Persons who move into a dwelling unit after the application for any necessary governmental permit or after any required condominium conversion notification or filing shall not be entitled to the assistance authorized by this section if such persons receive written notice from the property owner prior to taking possession of the dwelling unit that specifically describes the activity or condition that may result in their temporary or permanent displacement and advises them of their ineligibility for relocation assistance.

[1997 c 452 § 17; 1995 c 399 § 151; 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 § 49.]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Severability -- 1997 c 452:** See notes following RCW 67.28.080.

**Savings -- 1997 c 452:** See note following RCW 67.28.181.

**Severability -- Part, section headings not law -- 1990 1st ex.s. c 17:** See RCW 36.70A.900 and 36.70A.901.

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**59.18.450**

**Relocation assistance for low-income tenants — Payments not considered income — Eligibility for other assistance not affected.**

Relocation assistance payments received by tenants under \*RCW [59.18.440](#) shall not be considered as income or otherwise affect the eligibility for or amount of assistance paid under any government benefit program.

[1990 1st ex.s. c 17 § 50.]

**Notes:**

**\*Reviser's note:** The reference in 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 § 50 to "section 50 of this act" is apparently erroneous and has been translated to RCW [59.18.440](#), which was 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 § 49.

**Severability -- Part, section headings not law -- 1990 1st ex.s. c 17:** See RCW 36.70A.900 and 36.70A.901.

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**59.18.500**

**Gang-related activity — Legislative findings, declarations, and intent.**

The legislature finds and declares that the ability to feel safe and secure in one's own home and in one's own community is of primary importance. The legislature recognizes that certain gang-related activity can affect the safety of a considerable number of people in the rental premises and dwelling units. Therefore, such activity, although it may be occurring within an individual's home or the surrounding areas of an individual's home, becomes the community's concern.

The legislature intends that the remedy provided in RCW [59.18.510](#) be used solely to protect the health and safety of the community. The remedy is not a means for private citizens to bring malicious or unfounded actions against fellow tenants or residential neighbors for personal reasons. In determining whether the tenant's activity is the type prohibited under RCW [59.18.130\(9\)](#), the court should consider the totality of the circumstances, including factors such as whether there have been numerous complaints to the landlord, damage to property, police or incident reports, reports of disturbance, and arrests. An absence of any or all of these factors does not necessarily mean gang activity is not occurring. In determining whether the tenant is engaging in gang-related activity, the court should consider the purpose and intent of RCW [59.18.510](#). The legislature intends to give people in the community a tool that will help them restore the health and vibrance of their community.

[1998 c 276 § 4.]

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**59.18.510**

**Gang-related activity — Notice and demand the landlord commence unlawful detainer action — Petition to court — Attorneys' fees.**

(1)(a) Any person whose life, safety, health, or use of property is being injured or endangered by a tenant's gang-related activity, who has legal standing and resides, works in, or owns property in the same multifamily building, apartment complex, or within a one-block radius may serve the landlord with a ten-day notice and demand that the landlord commence an unlawful detainer action against the tenant. The notice and demand must set forth, in reasonable detail, facts and circumstances that lead the person to believe gang-related activity is occurring. The notice and demand shall be served by delivering a copy personally to the landlord or the landlord's agent. If the person is unable to personally serve the landlord after exercising due diligence, the person may deposit the notice and demand in the mail, postage prepaid, to the landlord's or the landlord's agent's last known address.

(b) A copy of the notice and demand must also be served upon the tenant engaging in the gang-related activity by delivering a copy personally to the tenant. However, if the person is prevented from personally serving the tenant due to threats or violence, or if personal service is not reasonable under the circumstances, the person may deposit the notice and demand in the mail, postage prepaid, to the tenant's address, or leave a copy of the notice and demand in a conspicuous location at the tenant's residence.

(2)(a) Within ten days from the time the notice and demand is served, the landlord has a duty to take reasonable steps to investigate the tenant's alleged noncompliance with RCW [59.18.130\(9\)](#). The landlord must notify the person who brought the notice and demand that an investigation is occurring. The landlord has ten days from the time he or she notifies the person in which to conduct a reasonable investigation.

(b) If, after reasonable investigation, the landlord finds that the tenant is not in compliance with RCW [59.18.130\(9\)](#), the landlord may proceed directly to an unlawful detainer action or take reasonable steps to ensure the tenant discontinues the prohibited activity and complies with RCW [59.18.130\(9\)](#). The landlord shall notify the person who served the notice and demand of whatever action the landlord takes.

(c) If, after reasonable investigation, the landlord finds that the tenant is in compliance with RCW [59.18.130\(9\)](#), the landlord shall notify the person who served the notice and demand of the landlord's findings.

(3) The person who served the notice and demand may petition the appropriate court to have the tenancy terminated and the tenant removed from the premises if: (a) Within ten days of service of the notice and demand, the tenant fails to discontinue the gang-related activity and the landlord fails to conduct a reasonable investigation; or (b) the landlord notifies the person that the landlord conducted a reasonable investigation and found that the tenant was not engaged in gang-related activity as prohibited under RCW [59.18.130\(9\)](#); or (c) the landlord took reasonable steps to have the tenant comply with RCW [59.18.130\(9\)](#), but the tenant has failed to comply within a reasonable time.

(4) If the court finds that the tenant was not in compliance with RCW [59.18.130\(9\)](#), the court shall enter an order terminating the tenancy and requiring the tenant to vacate the premises. The court shall not issue the order terminating the tenancy unless it has found that the allegations of gang-related activity are corroborated by a source other than the person who has petitioned the court.

(5) The prevailing party shall recover reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. The court may impose sanctions, in addition to attorneys' fees, on a person who has brought an action under this chapter against the same tenant on more than one occasion, if the court finds the petition was brought with the intent to harass. However, the court must order the landlord to pay costs and reasonable attorneys' fees to the person petitioning for termination of the tenancy if the court finds that the landlord failed to comply with the duty to investigate, regardless of which party prevails.

[1998 c 276 § 5.]

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#### **59.18.550**

#### **Drug and alcohol free housing — Program of recovery — Terms — Application of chapter.**

(1) For the purpose of this section, "drug and alcohol free housing" requires a rental agreement and means a dwelling in which:

(a) Each of the dwelling units on the premises is occupied or held for occupancy by at least one tenant who is a recovering alcoholic or drug addict and is participating in a program of recovery;

(b) The landlord is a nonprofit corporation incorporated under Title 24 RCW, a corporation for profit incorporated under Title 23B RCW, or a housing authority created under chapter 35.82 RCW, and is providing federally assisted housing as defined in chapter 59.28 RCW;

(c) The landlord provides:

(i) A drug and alcohol free environment, covering all tenants, employees, staff, agents of the landlord, and guests;

(ii) An employee who monitors the tenants for compliance with the requirements of (d) of this subsection;

(iii) Individual and group support for recovery; and

(iv) Access to a specified program of recovery; and

(d) The rental agreement is in writing and includes the following provisions:

(i) The tenant may not use, possess, or share alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or prescription drugs without a medical prescription, either on or off the premises;

(ii) The tenant may not allow the tenant's guests to use, possess, or share alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or prescription drugs without a medical prescription, on the premises;

(iii) The tenant must participate in a program of recovery, which specific program is described in the rental agreement;

(iv) On at least a quarterly basis the tenant must provide written verification from the tenant's program of recovery

that the tenant is participating in the program of recovery and the tenant has not used alcohol or illegal drugs;

(v) The landlord has the right to require the tenant to take a urine analysis test regarding drug or alcohol usage, at the landlord's discretion and expense; and

(vi) The landlord has the right to terminate the tenant's tenancy by delivering a three-day notice to terminate with one day to comply, if a tenant living in drug and alcohol free housing uses, possesses, or shares alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or prescription drugs without a medical prescription.

(2) For the purpose of this section, "program of recovery" means a verifiable program of counseling and rehabilitation treatment services, including a written plan, to assist recovering alcoholics or drug addicts to recover from their addiction to alcohol or illegal drugs while living in drug and alcohol free housing. A "program of recovery" includes Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and similar programs.

(3) If a tenant living for less than two years in drug and alcohol free housing uses, possesses, or shares alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or prescription drugs without a medical prescription, the landlord may deliver a written notice to the tenant terminating the tenancy for cause as provided in this subsection. The notice must specify the acts constituting the drug or alcohol violation and must state that the rental agreement terminates in not less than three days after delivery of the notice, at a specified date and time. The notice must also state that the tenant can cure the drug or alcohol violation by a change in conduct or otherwise within one day after delivery of the notice. If the tenant cures the violation within the one-day period, the rental agreement does not terminate. If the tenant does not cure the violation within the one-day period, the rental agreement terminates as provided in the notice. If substantially the same act that constituted a prior drug or alcohol violation of which notice was given reoccurs within six months, the landlord may terminate the rental agreement upon at least three days' written notice specifying the violation and the date and time of termination of the rental agreement. The tenant does not have a right to cure this subsequent violation.

(4) Notwithstanding subsections (1), (2), and (3) of this section, federally assisted housing that is occupied on other than a transient basis by persons who are required to abstain from possession or use of alcohol or drugs as a condition of occupancy and who pay for the use of the housing on a periodic basis, without regard to whether the payment is characterized as rent, program fees, or other fees, costs, or charges, are covered by this chapter unless the living arrangement is exempt under RCW [59.18.040](#).

[2003 c 382 § 1.]

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**59.18.570**  
**Victim protection — Definitions.**

The definitions in this section apply throughout this section and RCW [59.18.575](#) through [59.18.585](#) unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

- (1) "Domestic violence" has the same meaning as set forth in RCW 26.50.010.
- (2) "Sexual assault" has the same meaning as set forth in RCW 70.125.030.
- (3) "Stalking" has the same meaning as set forth in RCW 9A.46.110.
- (4) "Qualified third party" means any of the following people acting in their official capacity:
  - (a) Law enforcement officers;
  - (b) Persons subject to the provisions of chapter 18.120 RCW;
  - (c) Employees of a court of the state;

(d) Licensed mental health professionals or other licensed counselors;

(e) Employees of crime victim/witness programs as defined in RCW 7.69.020 who are trained advocates for the program; and

(f) Members of the clergy as defined in RCW 26.44.020.

(5) "Household member" means a child or adult residing with the tenant other than the perpetrator of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault.

(6) "Tenant screening service provider" means any nongovernmental agency that provides, for a fee, background information on prospective tenants to landlords.

(7) "Credit reporting agency" has the same meaning as set forth in RCW 19.182.010(5).

[2004 c 17 § 2.]

**Notes:**

**Findings -- Intent--2004 c 17:** "The legislature finds and declares that:

(1) Domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are widespread societal problems that have devastating effects for individual victims, their children, and their communities. Victims of violence may be forced to remain in unsafe situations because they are bound by residential lease agreements. The legislature finds that the inability of victims to terminate their rental agreements hinders or prevents victims from being able to safely flee domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The legislature further finds that victims of these crimes who do not have access to safe housing are more likely to remain in or return to abusive or dangerous situations. Also, the legislature finds that victims of these crimes are further victimized when they are unable to obtain or retain rental housing due to their history as a victim of these crimes. The legislature further finds that evidence that a prospective tenant has been a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking is not relevant to the decision whether to rent to that prospective tenant.

(2) By this act, the legislature intends to increase safety for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking by removing barriers to safety and offering protection against discrimination." [2004 c 17 § 1.]

**Effective date -- 2004 c 17:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 15, 2004]." [2004 c 17 § 7.]

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**59.18.575**

**Victim protection — Notice to landlord — Termination of rental agreement — Procedures.**

(1)(a) If a tenant notifies the landlord in writing that he or she or a household member was a victim of an act that constitutes a crime of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and either (a)(i) or (ii) of this subsection applies, then subsection (2) of this section applies:

(i) The tenant or the household member has a valid order for protection under one or more of the following: Chapter 7.90, 26.50, or 26.26 RCW or RCW 9A.46.040, 9A.46.050, 10.14.080, 10.99.040 (2) or (3), or 26.09.050; or

(ii) The tenant or the household member has reported the domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a qualified third party acting in his or her official capacity and the qualified third party has provided the tenant or the household member a written record of the report signed by the qualified third party.

RCW Chapter 59.18 – Residential landlord-tenant act

(b) When a copy of a valid order for protection or a written record of a report signed by a qualified third party, as required under (a) of this subsection, is made available to the landlord, the tenant may terminate the rental agreement and quit the premises without further obligation under the rental agreement or under chapter 59.12 RCW. However, the request to terminate the rental agreement must occur within ninety days of the reported act, event, or circumstance that gave rise to the protective order or report to a qualified third party. A record of the report to a qualified third party that is provided to the tenant or household member shall consist of a document signed and dated by the qualified third party stating: (i) That the tenant or the household member notified him or her that he or she was a victim of an act or acts that constitute a crime of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; (ii) the time and date the act or acts occurred; (iii) the location where the act or acts occurred; (iv) a brief description of the act or acts of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and (v) that the tenant or household member informed him or her of the name of the alleged perpetrator of the act or acts. The record of the report provided to the tenant or household member shall not include the name of the alleged perpetrator of the act or acts of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The qualified third party shall keep a copy of the record of the report and shall note on the retained copy the name of the alleged perpetrator of the act or acts of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The record of the report to a qualified third party may be accomplished by completion of a form provided by the qualified third party, in substantially the following form:

.....

[Name of organization, agency, clinic, professional service provider]

I and/or my ..... (household member) am/is a victim of  
... domestic violence as defined by RCW 26.50.010.  
... sexual assault as defined by RCW 70.125.030.  
... stalking as defined by RCW 9A.46.110.

Briefly describe the incident of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking: .....

.....

The incident(s) that I rely on in support of this declaration occurred on the following date(s) and time(s) and at the following location(s): .....

The incident(s) that I rely on in support of this declaration were committed by the following person(s): .....

..

.....

I state under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct. Dated at ..... (city) .., Washington, this ... day of ....., 20 ..

.....

Signature of Tenant or

Household Member

I verify that I have provided to the person whose signature appears above the statutes cited in RCW [59.18.575](#) and that the individual was a victim of an act that constitutes a crime of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and that the individual informed me of the name of the alleged perpetrator of the act.

Dated this ... day of ....., 20 ..

.....

Signature of authorized officer/employee of (Organization, agency, clinic, professional service provider)

(2) A tenant who terminates a rental agreement under this section is discharged from the payment of rent for any period following the last day of the month of the quitting date. The tenant shall remain liable for the rent for the month

in which he or she terminated the rental agreement unless the termination is in accordance with RCW [59.18.200](#)(1). Notwithstanding lease provisions that allow for forfeiture of a deposit for early termination, a tenant who terminates under this section is entitled to the return of the full deposit, subject to RCW [59.18.020](#) and [59.18.280](#). Other tenants who are parties to the rental agreement, except household members who are the victims of sexual assault, stalking, or domestic violence, are not released from their obligations under the rental agreement or other obligations under this chapter.

(3) The provision of verification of a report under subsection (1)(b) of this section does not waive the confidential or privileged nature of the communication between a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking with a qualified third party pursuant to RCW 5.60.060, 70.123.075, or 70.125.065. No record or evidence obtained from such disclosure may be used in any civil, administrative, or criminal proceeding against the victim unless a written waiver of applicable evidentiary privilege is obtained, except that the verification itself, and no other privileged information, under subsection (1)(b) of this section may be used in civil proceedings brought under this section.

[2006 c 138 § 27; 2004 c 17 § 3.]

**Notes:**

**Short title -- 2006 c 138:** See RCW 7.90.900.

**Findings -- Intent--Effective date--2004 c 17:** See notes following RCW [59.18.570](#).

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**59.18.580**

**Victim protection — Limitation on landlord's rental decisions.**

(1) A landlord may not terminate a tenancy, fail to renew a tenancy, or refuse to enter into a rental agreement based on the tenant's or applicant's or a household member's status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or based on the tenant or applicant having terminated a rental agreement under RCW [59.18.575](#).

(2) A landlord who refuses to enter into a rental agreement in violation of this section may be liable to the tenant or applicant in a civil action for damages sustained by the tenant or applicant. The prevailing party may also recover court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

(3) It is a defense to an unlawful detainer action under chapter 59.12 RCW that the action to remove the tenant and recover possession of the premises is in violation of subsection (1) of this section.

(4) This section does not prohibit adverse housing decisions based upon other lawful factors within the landlord's knowledge.

[2004 c 17 § 4.]

**Notes:**

**Findings -- Intent--Effective date--2004 c 17:** See notes following RCW [59.18.570](#).

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**59.18.585**

**Victim protection — Possession of dwelling unit — Exclusion of others — New lock or key.**



(1) A tenant who has obtained a court order from a court of competent jurisdiction granting him or her possession of a dwelling unit to the exclusion of one or more cotenants may request that a lock be replaced or configured for a new key at the tenant's expense. The landlord shall, if provided a copy of the order, comply with the request and shall not provide copies of the new keys to the tenant restrained or excluded by the court's order. This section does not release a cotenant, other than a household member who is the victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, from liability or obligations under the rental agreement.

(2) A landlord who replaces a lock or configures for a new key of a residential housing unit in accordance with subsection (1) of this section shall be held harmless from liability for any damages that result directly from the lock change.

[2004 c 17 § 5.]

**Notes:**

**Findings -- Intent--Effective date--2004 c 17:** See notes following RCW [59.18.570](#).

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**59.18.900**  
**Severability — 1973 1st ex.s. c 207.**

If any provision of this chapter, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act, or its application to other persons or circumstances, is not affected.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 37.]

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**59.18.910**  
**Severability — 1989 c 342.**

If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

[1989 c 342 § 18.]

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**59.18.911**  
**Effective date — 1989 c 342.**

This act shall take effect on August 1, 1989, and shall apply to landlord-tenant relationships existing on or entered into after the effective date of this act.

[1989 c 342 § 19.]

