#### **Volunteer Legal Services**

Lawyer Referral 206-623-2551 TTY 206-623-2766 King County Bar Assoc. Community Legal Services Program 900 Fourth Ave, Suite 600 Seattle, WA 98164-1060

Web Address: http://www.kcba.org

Refers low-income people with civil legal problems (including housing issues) to volunteer attorneys. All attorneys are in good standing with the Washington State Bar Association and are required to carry errors and omissions insurance.

**Hours/Days:** 8a.m. - 5p.m. (M - F)

How to Apply: Call for screening and referral.

#### **Neighborhood Legal Clinics**

206-340-2593

King County Bar Association Community Legal Services Program **Web Address:** http://www.kcba.org

The 16 Neighborhood Legal Clinics offer the public a free half-hour consultation with an attorney. These clinics address a wide variety of general civil legal topics including landlord/tenant issues. Attorneys determine whether the client has a legal problem, suggest possible options and provide appropriate sources for referral. However, attorneys do not represent clients in court or draft legal documents.

**Hours/Days:** 9a.m.-Noon (M – Th)

How to Apply: Call to schedule an appointment

Phone consultations may be available for seniors without

the ability to travel to appointments.

### **Catholic Community Services**

Legal Action Center 206-324-6890 1229 W. Smith St. Kent, WA 98032-4317 Web Address: http://southkingcounty-center. catholiccharitiesseattlearch.org/

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

**Hours/Days:** 9a.m.-noon and 2p.m. - 5p.m. (M - F) Clients are usually seen on Tuesdays, Thursdays or

Saturdays at outreach sites.

How to Apply: Call for appointment.

**Eligibility:** Clients must be at or below approximately 125% of poverty level. Call to determine eligibility.

#### **DISCLAIMER**

The City of Kent makes no representations or warranties as to the truth, accuracy or completeness of any statements, information or materials concerning the information that may be contained in this brochure. Referrals to external resources do not constitute endorsements by the City of Kent. In no event will the City of Kent be liable for any direct, indirect, punitive, special, incidental or consequential damages, however they may arise, and even if the City of Kent has been advised of the possibility of such damages. This information is only provided as a resource tool for tenants.



# A Guide to Landlord and Tenant Issues

## **Rights of All Tenants**

Renters who are not covered by the Landlord-Tenant Act do have these basic rights under other state laws:



Right to a livable dwelling





Right to hold the landlord liable for damage caused by the landlord's negligence



Protection against lockouts and seizure of personal property by the landlord

Provided as a Service for the City of Kent as a Resource Tool for Tenants. Material is based on information from the Attorney General's Office and has been modified by the City of Kent.

#### Resources

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

#### **Tenants Union**

**Hotline** 206-723-0500 **Office/Members** 206-722-6848 902 S. Ferdinand Seattle, WA 98118

#### Web Address:

http://www.tenantsunion.org/

Maintains phone line and walk-in service to provide information on landlord-tenant laws for tenants with immediate housing problems. Assists in organizing groups of tenants to bring about landlord compliance with the Landlord-Tenant Act and existing housing codes. Provides



community information on tenant issues and advocates for tenants rights. Does not provide legal counsel, but does provide referrals to appropriate counsel.

**Hours/Days:** Office, Hotline & Walk-in Hours: 11a.m. – 5p.m. (M, TU, W, F) 11a.m. – 7p.m. (TH) **Eligibility:** Any tenant in Washington State.

How to Apply: Call or Walk In.

#### Fremont Public Association

Housing Services - Landlord-Tenant Hotline 206-694-6767

1501 N. 45th St Seattle, WA 98103

Web Address: http://www.fremontpublic.org/



Informs clients about the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants provided under the State of Washington's Landlord-Tenant Act. Provides advocacy and referral for tenants facing eviction. Mediates between landlords and tenants on eviction, repair, and deposit disputes, as

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

**Hours/Days:** Office: 8:30a.m. – 5p.m. (M – F) **Eligibility:** No restrictions, but services are targeted to households at or below 80% of

the state median income level. **How to Apply:** Call or Walk In.

## King County Dispute Resolution Center

Conflict Resolution - Hotline 206-443-9603

Web Address: http://www.kcdrc.org

Services include problem solving, conciliation, and mediation. Types of problems the center will handle include: Neighborhood problems (noise, pets other nuisances), landlord-tenant issues (deposits, repairs, damages, etc.) Types of problems the center

will not handle include: Any problem requiring legal assistance, problems involving violence of any kind, or problems in which one of the parties chooses not to participate.

**Hours/Days:** 8:30a.m.-5:30p.m. (M – F)

Eligibility: Persons who work or reside in King County.

How to Apply: Call.

#### **Mobile Homeowners of America**

Consumer Assistance Program 425-485-4343 10137 Main St. Bothell, WA 98011

Provides information and referral services for persons living in mobile homes. Advises on landlord/tenant, manufacturer/dealer, and consumer issues. Staffs a consumer complaint hotline and provides referrals to agencies that do mediations for mobile home issues.

**Hours/Days:** 9a.m. – 3:30p.m. (M – F)

Eligibility: Rent, own, or be interested in owning a

mobile or manufactured home. **How to Apply:** Call or Write.

#### Washington State Attorney General's Office

Consumer Resource Center Consumer Line 1-800-692-5082 Spanish 1-509-734-7140 900 4th Ave Suite 2000 Seattle, WA 98164 Web Address:

http://www.wa.gov/ago/ Over 100 brief taped phone messages

are available including: landlord/ tenant info, condominiums, and moving.

**Hours/Days:** Touch Tone Callers: 24 hours Daily - Rotary Callers: 9a.m. – 4p.m. (M – F)

Eligibility: Statewide. Information relates to Washington state.

How to Apply: Call.

## Washington State Bar Association

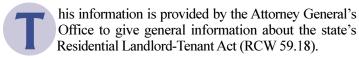
Consumer Information Pamphlet Program 206-443-9722 2101 4th Ave, Fourth Floor Seattle, WA 98121-2330 Web Address: http://www.wsba.org



Publishes a series of consumer information pamphlets on various legal topics to educate citizens about their legal rights and responsibilities, answer frequently asked questions, and explain basic aspects of Washington State laws. Pamphlet topics include: Landlord/Tenant Rights and Alternatives to Court

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





This is a lengthy and complicated law which continues to be interpreted by the courts. Contacting an attorney when dealing with your specific landlord-tenant question is highly recommended.

\*Renters of a space in a mobile home park are generally not covered by the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act. They are usually covered by the state's Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.20). However, renters of both a space and a mobile home are usually covered by the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act.

# Landlord's Responsibilities

**Under the Landlord- Tenant Act, the landlord must:** 

- Maintain the dwelling so it does not violate state and local codes in ways which endanger the tenant's health and safety.
- Maintain structural components, such as roofs, floors and chimneys, in reasonably good repair.
- Maintain the dwelling in reasonably weather-tight condition.
- Provide reasonably adequate locks and keys.
- Provide the necessary facilities to supply heat, electricity and hot and cold water.
- Provide garbage cans and arrange for removal of garbage, except in single family dwellings.
- Keep common areas, such as lobbies, stairways and halls, reasonably clean and free from hazards.
- Control pests before the tenant moves in. The landlord must continue to control infestations except in single family dwellings, or when the infestation was caused by the tenant.
- Make repairs to keep the unit in the same condition as when the tenant moved in (except for normal wear and tear).
- Keep electrical, plumbing and heating systems in good repair, and maintain any appliances which are provided with the rental.
- Inform the tenant of the name and address of the landlord or landlord's agent.
- Provide smoke detectors, and ensure they work properly when a new tenant moves in. (Tenants are responsible for maintaining detectors.)

\*Important Note: A landlord is not responsible for the cost of correcting problems which were caused by the tenant.

# Tenant's Responsibilities

Under the Landlord-Tenant Act, a tenant is required to:

- Pay rent, and any utilities agreed upon.
- Comply with any requirements of city, county or state regulations.
- Keep the rental unit clean and sanitary.
- Dispose of garbage properly.
- Pay for fumigation of infestations caused by the tenant.
- Properly operate plumbing, electrical and heating systems.
  - Not intentionally or carelessly damage the dwelling.
    - Not engage in or allow any gang-related activity.
      - Not permit "waste" (substantial damage to the property) or "nuisance" (substantial interference with other tenants' use of their property).
      - Maintain smoke detector device, including replacement of batteries.
      - When moving out, restore the dwelling to the same condition as when the tenant moved in, except for normal wear and tear.



# If the Rental Needs Repairs

#### **Required Notice**

When something in the rental unit needs to be repaired, the first step is for the tenant to give written notice of the problem to the landlord or person who collects the rent.

The notice must include the address and apartment number of the rental, the name of the owner, if known, and a description of the problem.

It is a good idea to deliver the notice personally. If the landlord lives out of town use certified mail and get a return receipt from the post office. The timeframe will begin once the landlord receives the notification.

After giving notice, the tenant must wait the required time for the landlord to begin the process of making repairs. Begin the process does not necessarily mean complete the process. Those required waiting times are:

- 24 hours for no hot or cold water, heat, or electricity, or for a condition which is imminently hazardous to life.
- 72 hours for repair of refrigerator, range and oven, or a major plumbing fixture supplied by landlord.
- 10 days for all other repairs.

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

#### **Tenant's Options**

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

# **City of Kent - Code Enforcement** 253-856-5409

#### If Your Landlord Will Not Make Required Repairs

If you have given written notice of the problem and the landlord will not make required repairs, call City of Kent Code Enforcement to determine if your situation is enforceable in any of the following categories:

My apartment has no heat.

My apartment has no water.

My apartment has an unsafe deck or balcony.

My apartment has rotten floor boards.

The ceiling or roof of my apartment is leaking.

I have a broken window in my apartment.

I am having plumbing problems.

I am concerned about sewer problems.

I am concerned about other problems with the structure of my rental unit.

# **City of Kent - Police Department**

#### **Emergency 911**

In the City of Kent, you need to dial 911 whenever you need an officer to respond. This includes when you just need to report a suspicious person or situation. You must dial 911 even when you just need to file a telephone report on a minor crime.

#### **Records Unit**

Call the Records Unit with general crime tip information such as narcotic or prostitution activity that is not occurring at the time of your call. Records Unit staff will forward you to the appropriate officer or detective for the type of report. You can reach the Records Unit at 253-856-5800.

**City of Kent - Fire Prevention** 

Contact your landlord FIRST if you have concerns about the fire alarm or fire sprinkler system in your building. If you need more information, contact Fire Prevention at 253-856-4400.

Emergency: 911

Fire and Life Safety (Business

Line): 253-856-4300

Fire Prevention: 253-856-4400 Public Education: 253-856-4480 For information on events, classes,

handouts or programs offered by Fire and Life

Safety Education call 253-856-4480.

# **City of Kent - Crime Prevention**

253-856-5877

#### Rental housing crime prevention program:

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

#### **Tenant Crime Prevention Training:**

Training will be offered to residents of rental housing with the intent to build community feeling and form partnerships with the community. Crime Prevention is the focus of this training. It is facilitated by the manager/landlord, and provided by the Kent Police Crime Prevention Team.

For apartment selection tips, personal safety training, or registration for training opportunities, contact the Kent Police Crime Prevention team at 253-856-5877.

Apartment Selection Tips are also available at the Kent Police web site at: www.ci.kent.wa.us/Police/default.htm

#### **Health Related Concerns**

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

#### My rental has a problem with rats.

Call Alder Square Public Health Environmental Health Services 206-296-4708

#### I am concerned about the septic tank.

Call Alder Square Public Health -Environmental Health Services 206-296-4708

#### I am concerned about sewage problems.

Call Alder Square Public Health -

Environmental Health Services 206-296-4708 OR call City of Kent Public Works 253-856-5500 OR call City of Kent Code Enforcement 253-856-5409

#### I need information on asbestos.

Call Puget Sound Clear Air Agency 206-343-8800

I need information on household waste.

Call King County Health Department Household Hazards Line 206-296-4692

# I have questions about mold, mildew or other indoor air quality problems.

Call King County Health Department Indoor Air Specialists 206-296-4632

# I have questions about lead or lead-based paint.

Call National Lead Information Center 1-800-424-5323

Visit their Web Site at: http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/lead/nlic.htm

OR call the EPA Public Environmental Resource Center 206-553-1200

