

INFORMATION REGARDING NOTICE TO COMPLY OR VACATE

The City of Tacoma is supplying this information sheet to assist tenants with understanding this notice. This information sheet is informative only and DOES NOT provide legal advice regarding your individual tenancy. **If you need to obtain legal advice regarding your individual tenancy, please contact the resources listed at the end of this information sheet.**

What is a Notice to Comply or Vacate?

Under Washington law, a landlord must provide a tenant with a written ten-day notice to comply or vacate before starting a court proceeding for eviction based on a tenant not following the rental agreement, lease, or other rules and obligations applying to the tenancy. In other words, a notice to comply or vacate is informing the tenant that the landlord believes the tenant has not met their obligations of the tenancy and now must take steps to fix the issues or the landlord may start the eviction process. To be valid, a notice to comply or vacate must inform the tenant of the specific rental agreement terms or rules that the tenant has not followed. The notice must also inform the tenant of which actions the tenant can take to cure the problems alleged in the notice. The notice cannot include any monetary damages owing such as unpaid rent, late fees, or attorney fees.

Can the Landlord Enforce Rules I Did Not Know About?

For a notice to comply or vacate to be valid, the problem alleged by the landlord must be a tenant obligation listed in the rental agreement or lease. If you have an oral agreement, then both the landlord and tenant had to agree to the rule or obligation at the beginning of the tenancy. If you have any question whether the notice to comply or vacate is valid, consult your lease or rental agreement. If you have difficulty interpreting the language of your lease or rental agreement, consult one of the resources listed at the end of this information sheet.

What if I Fix the Problem Within Ten Days?

A notice to comply or vacate gives a tenant ten days to fix whatever obligation the tenant is not keeping. If a tenant fixes the problem within ten days, then the landlord cannot move forward with an eviction. If you fix the issue, notify the landlord in writing that the problem has been corrected and keep some type of documentation to show you fixed the problem. Under Washington state law, a notice to comply or vacate expires after sixty (60) days. That means even if you fix the problem within ten days to save your tenancy, you must also make sure the problem does not happen again in the next two months.

What if I Receive Multiple Non-Compliance Notices? Under Washington state law, if a tenant receives four or more non-compliance notices within a 12-month period, the landlord can serve a 60-day written notice to terminate the tenancy. The notices must involve four or more separate incidents or occurrences.

RESOURCES

City of Tacoma—Landlord-Tenant Program

The Landlord-Tenant Program provides information and referrals to both landlords and tenants on their rights and responsibilities under the Washington State Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18), the Tacoma Rental Housing Code (TMC 1.95) and Landlord Fairness Code Initiative (TMC 1.100). The Landlord-Tenant Program also enforces violations of the Rental Housing Code.

Landlord-Tenant Program

747 Market Street
Room 1044
Tacoma, WA 98402

Landlord-Tenant Intake Process:

Phone: 311 or 253- 591-5000

Online: [TacomaFIRST 311 - City of Tacoma](#)

Rental Housing Code-TMC 1.95

www.cityoftacoma.org/rentalhousingcode

Landlord Fairness Code Initiative- TMC 1.100

www.cityoftacoma.org/rentalhousingcode

City of Tacoma’s Fair Housing Law- TMC 1.29

https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/equity_and_human_rights/fair_housing

Legal Advice:

TACOMAPROBONO Community Lawyers

Tacomaprobono provides low-income individuals with free legal advice on civil legal aid issues. If you need legal advice about a landlord-tenant problem (rental agreements, moving, deposits, repairs, eviction, etc.) or any other type of housing issue, call Tacomaprobono’s Housing Justice Project at (253) 572-5134, or e-mail hjp@tacomaprobono.org for an online application link.

Starting in 2021, if you are going through the eviction process in Washington, and you have a net income of 200% of the federal poverty line or below, you qualify for free legal representation in court. It’s your right—protected by law. You do not have to face your landlord alone.

Call the Eviction Defense line at 1-855-657-8387 or apply online at [Eviction Help | Northwest Justice Project \(nwjustice.org\)](#). Interpreters available.

CLEAR

If you reside outside of King County, the CLEAR Hotline provides telephone consultations with free attorneys for low-income persons and seniors. You can reach the CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 on weekdays between 9:15 am and 12:15 pm. Seniors (age 60 and over) can also call CLEAR*Sr at 1-888-387-7111. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, please call the CLEAR intake line at 1-888-201-1014 using your preferred TTY or video relay service.

WASHINGTONLAWHELP.ORG

WashingtonLawHelp is an online guide to free civil legal aid information for Washington. This website provides legal education materials and tools that provides basic information on numerous legal problems, and in some cases, detailed instructions and forms to help represent yourself in court.

Moderate Means Program

The Moderate Means Program offers referrals to attorneys who offer reduced-fee services in family, housing, consumer, and unemployment law for people who are low-income but do not qualify for the other services above. **Apply Online** or call 855-741-6930.

Rental Assistance/Funds:

Eviction Prevention Program

The Pierce County **Eviction Prevention** program supports eligible low-income households with their past due rent. For more information or to apply online visit <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7142/Eviction-Prevention>.

211 Washington

211 connects callers, at no cost to critical health and human services in their community. By simply dialing the number 211, searching the website (<https://wa211.org>), or texting 211WAOD to 898211, people can connect to help when they need help regardless of who provides the services or where the service is located.