

INFORMATION REGARDING A “NOTICE TO COMPLY OR VACATE”

The City of Tacoma is supplying this information sheet to assist tenants with understanding a “Notice to Comply or Vacate.” 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 bottom of this page.**

What is a Notice to Comply or Vacate?

Under Washington state law, a landlord must provide a tenant with a written ten (10) day “notice to comply or vacate” before starting a court proceeding for eviction based upon a tenant not following the rental agreement, lease, or other rules and regulations 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 can 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 landlord believes 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.

Can the Landlord Enforce Rules I Didn’t Know About?

In order 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 of obligation. 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 (10) days to fix whatever obligation the tenant is not keeping up with. If a tenant fixes the problem within ten (10) days, then the landlord cannot move forward with an eviction. If you fix the issue, notify the landlord that the problem has been corrected and keep whatever documentation you have 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 (10) days to save your tenancy, you must also make sure the problem does not happen again in the next few months.



RESOURCES

City of Tacoma—Landlord-Tenant Program

The Program provides information and referrals to both landlords and tenants on their rights and responsibilities according to the Washington State Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18) and the Rental Housing Code (TMC 1.95). This service is free and available to both property owners and tenants within the Tacoma city limits.

Landlord-Tenant Program
747 Market Street
Tacoma, WA 98402

Walk-In Wednesdays
9 AM - 1 PM
Located in the Customer Support Center

Landlord-Tenant Coordinator
311
(253) 591-5000

TACOMAPROBONO

Tacomaprobono provides low-income individuals with free legal advice. Do you need legal advice about a landlord-tenant problem (rental agreements, moving, deposits, repairs, eviction, etc.) or any other type of housing issue? Call the Tacomaprobono's Housing Justice Project at (253) 572-5134, or e-mail vls@tacomaprobono.org.

CLEAR

Do you need a telephone consultation with an attorney about your legal problem? If you are outside King County, call the [CLEAR intake line](#) first. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, please call our 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 services for low-income persons and seniors in Washington. This website provides legal education materials and tools that provides basic information on a number of legal problems, and in some cases, detailed instructions and forms to help you represent yourself in court.

