

Rental Housing Code

Tacoma Municipal Code 1.95

The City of Tacoma recognizes that the rental market in Tacoma is drastically changing. In an effort to gain and sustain housing stability and to protect the most vulnerable populations, the City of Tacoma, working in collaboration with stakeholder groups that included housing providers, tenants, realtors, and legal representatives, established Tacoma Municipal Code 1.95, “Rental Housing Code.”



What is the Rental Housing Code?

On November 20, 2018, the Tacoma City Council passed the Rental Housing Code providing protections for tenants and specific guidance to landlords who operate residential rental businesses in Tacoma. The Rental Housing Code also includes a provision for housing relocation assistance to qualifying tenants and allows the City to investigate complaints and enforce the code.

New Requirements for Landlords:

- 120-day notice to vacate and relocation assistance for low-income tenants when a landlord intends to change the use, substantially rehabilitate, or demolish a dwelling unit
- 60-day notice to vacate for no-cause termination of tenancy
- 60-day notice requirement for rent increases
- A requirement that landlords distribute information about tenant rights and Landlord-Tenant responsibilities

New Tenant Protections:

- Prohibits retaliation against tenants for exercising their rights under the Washington State Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18)
- Allows installment payments for various deposits and fees
- Codification of relocation assistance when the City declares a building uninhabitable
- Provides relocation assistance for qualifying termination of tenancy of low-income tenants
- Allows tenants to file a complaint and for the City of Tacoma to investigate and enforce the code

What does this new code apply to?

The new Rental Housing Code applies to all residential rental property within the Tacoma city limits regardless of property size or number of units.



When does the code go into effect?

December 7, 2018	60-day Notice Requirement for Rent Increases
February 1, 2019	Remainder of the Rental Housing Code (Including Relocation Assistance and Penalties)

Penalty Information:

Type of Violation	First Time*	Second and More**	
Distribution of Information	\$500	\$1,000	
Deposit Requirements & Installment Plan	\$500	\$1,000	
Notice Requirement	\$500	\$1,000	
	First 10 days of violation***	Day 11 & beyond of violation***	
Notice to Vacate	\$250	\$500	\$1,000 per unit
Tenant Relocation Assistance	\$250	\$500	
Retaliation	\$250	\$500	
	Per Violation		
Willful Violations	\$1,000		

*per each affected unit **per each affected unit within three-year period ***per day and affected unit

Relocation Assistance to Low-Income Tenants:

Landlords are required to pay relocation assistance to low-income tenants (50% median income adjusted for family size in Tacoma) who are displaced due to rental property being demolished, substantially rehabilitated or change of use.

The following apply:

- \$2,000 in relocation funds
- 50/50 split between City and landlord
- Relocation amount can be adjusted annually

We want to hear from you!

In order to track the impact of the Rental Housing Code, we are asking housing providers to go online and take our survey at cityoftacoma.org/RentalHousingCode.

For more information or to file a complaint, contact us at 311 or 253-591-5000 or online at cityoftacoma.org/RentalHousingCode.

