

INFORMATION SHEET FOR **NOTICE TO TERMINATE**

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 on the back of this page.**

Can a Landlord End a Tenancy Whenever the Landlord Wants?

No. Starting in 2021, under the Washington State Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18, RLTA) and City of Tacoma's Rental Housing Code (TMC 1.95), a landlord must have a "just cause" or legal reason for ending (terminating) a tenancy, not renewing a tenancy, or evicting a tenant. The landlord must provide one of 17 good reasons for ending a tenancy or evicting a tenant. The legal reasons can be found in RCW 59.18.650 and TMC 1.95.070. **This means that a landlord can no longer serve a tenant with a no cause notice to terminate tenancy.** There are other times when a landlord CANNOT terminate a tenancy. See "When is a landlord prohibited from terminating a tenancy?" below.

Can a Landlord End a Tenancy Without One of the 17 "Just Cause" Reasons?

Yes, but only under two very specific circumstances.

Situation #1: If a tenancy is for a **fixed term of 6-12 months, then rolls over into a periodic or month-to-month tenancy**, the landlord can serve a 60-day NO CAUSE notice at the end of the initial 6–12-month term. If the landlord does not terminate at the end of first term, then the landlord must have a "just cause" to terminate tenancy any time after that.

Situation #2: If a tenancy is for a **fixed term and DOES NOT roll over into a periodic or month-to-month tenancy afterwards**, then the landlord can issue a 60-day termination notice with NO CAUSE. **BUT ONLY IF:** The original fixed term was 12 months or more or the tenancy was for two or more consecutive 6-month fixed terms and the tenancy never became a periodic or month-to-month at any point.

If neither of these two situations applies, then the landlord must provide one of the 17 "just cause" reasons for ending the tenancy.

There are other times when a landlord CANNOT terminate a tenancy. See "When is a landlord prohibited from terminating a tenancy?" below.

Can the Landlord Evict Me Before the Terminate Date on the Notice?

Yes and no. In general, if you keep up the rules of the tenancy and continue paying your rent, then the landlord cannot try to evict you until after the termination date listed on the notice passes. However, if you do not follow the rules of the tenancy or continue paying your rent, then the landlord can provide you with a separate, shorter notice that may cause an eviction proceeding to begin before the termination date in the notice (a 14-day notice to pay rent, a 3-day notice for waste or nuisance, or a 10-day notice to comply with the rental agreement, or others).

Make sure you also understand “When is a landlord prohibited from terminating a tenancy?” below.

Can I Challenge the Notice to Terminate Tenancy?

Yes, if you believe you were improperly given a notice to terminate tenancy, dispute the notice in writing and ask the landlord to rescind the notice to terminate tenancy. If the landlord does not comply with your request, it is important that you seek legal advice. It is very important that you **DO NOT IGNORE THE NOTICE** and contact the resources listed on the back of this page to obtain information specific to your tenancy.

When is a Landlord Prohibited from Terminating a Tenancy?

Starting December 8, 2023, it is a defense to eviction if the eviction qualifies as a student/school year eviction or a cold weather eviction.

Student/School year eviction. An eviction qualifies as a student/school-year eviction if it would require the tenant to vacate their dwelling unit during the school year and the tenant or any resident of the dwelling unit is, a child or student; a person having legal custody of a child or student, including but not limited to the child’s or student’s parent, step-parent, adoptive parent, guardian, foster parent, or custodian; or an educator. See TMC 1.100.090 for related definitions.

Winter eviction. An eviction qualifies as a prohibited cold-weather eviction if it would require the tenant to vacate their dwelling unit between November 1 and April 1.

EXCEPTIONS: There are some exceptions to these rules, such as if the owner wants to occupy the unit, or a tenant fails to comply with a 3 or 10-day notice to vacate. See TMC 1.100.060(4) for a full list of exceptions.

Prohibiting evictions based on status. It is a defense to eviction for a landlord to evict a tenant based upon the tenant’s status as a member of the military, first responder, senior, family member, health care provider, or educator. See TMC 1.100.070 for more information and 1.100.090 for related definitions.

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.