

Can my landlord raise my rent? By how much?

❖ You can find all the fact sheets we link to here at [WashingtonLawHelp.org](https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org).

Tenants in Washington State: Read this!

The eviction moratorium in Washington State ended June 30, 2021. During the moratorium, landlords in Washington could not raise the rent.

Starting July 1, 2021, some tenants have gotten rent increase notices. Keep reading to find out what the law says about rent increases.

I recently got a 60-Day Notice of a rent increase. Is this legal? Can my landlord raise my rent?

If you live anywhere in Washington besides Seattle, any notice of the rent going up needs to be delivered to the tenant at least 60 days in advance.

If you live in Seattle, the landlord needs to give you at least 180 days' written notice.

Example: Your landlord wants to raise the rent starting October 1. The landlord must send you the notice by August 1.

Can my landlord send me the rent increase notice by text or email?

Maybe. The law only requires written notice. It does not specify if that means on a piece of paper or electronically.

If your rental agreement specifies, you should follow that. If it does not, you should talk with a lawyer about whether an email or text increase of rent is legal.

I got a rent increase notice. I got it with only 30 days advance written notice. Do I still have to pay the new amount?

State law at [RCW 59.18.140](#) clearly states that the landlord must give you 60 days' notice. Seattle law requires the landlord to give you 180 days' notice. See [Seattle Code 7.24.030](#).

The only exception to state law is if your rent is set based on how much money you make and changes when your income changes.

If you get a rent increase notice that gives you less time than you are entitled to, talk to a lawyer right away. Contact info is below.

I am in the middle of a lease or written agreement with my landlord. I just got a notice of rent increase. Do I need to pay the new amount?

No. If your agreement or written lease was for a certain amount of rent per month, your landlord cannot try to raise your rent during the middle of the agreement. Your landlord must wait until your agreement is almost over.

Example: Your written agreement ends in December. Your landlord must notify you by October 1 to raise your rent starting in December.

My landlord is raising my rent more than \$200 per month. Is this legal?

There is no rent control in Washington State. A landlord can raise the rent as much as they want in most situations.

In any situation, **you can try to negotiate with the landlord not to raise the rent for a certain period of time. If you and the landlord do agree to this, try to get it in writing.**

I cannot afford the rent increase my landlord sent me. What can I do?

You should **talk to a lawyer right away** about these options:

- You can **ask the landlord to change the date your rent is due** if it would help sync when you get income with your ability to pay rent. This will also limit the landlord's ability to charge you late fees. Read [Can I change the date my rent is due?](#) to learn more.
- If you believe **the landlord is raising your rent to try to get you to move out because your income comes from government assistance**, you may have grounds to sue the landlord and ask for 4 and one-half times the monthly rent of the place, and court costs and attorneys' fees. "Government assistance" here

means SSI, TANF, and so on. You can read the state law about this at [RCW 59.18.255](#).

You might also have other options. Ask a lawyer if the Washington Law against Discrimination ([RCW 49.60](#)), the [Fair Housing Act \(42 U.S.C. 3601\)](#), or the good faith requirement in the state Landlord Tenant Act ([RCW 59.18.020](#)) can help you at all.

I got a rent increase during the moratorium. Can I get some of my money back?

Maybe. The state eviction moratorium banned rent increases. Talk to a lawyer right away.

You can also ask for help from the Washington State Attorney General's Office by visiting the [WA Office of the Attorney General](#) and filling the [COVID-19 Tenancy Proclamation](#) form. You can get the form at bit.ly/3QiVXfF.

I complained about my landlord not repairing my rental. Then I got a rent increase. Is this retaliation?

It could be.

If your landlord takes an adverse action against you **within 90 days** of legal action you took against the landlord, it may count as retaliation and be illegal.

Talk to a lawyer right away. Read [Can My Landlord Do That?](#) to learn more.

Get Legal Help

- **Apply online:** nwjustice.org/apply-online
- **Facing Eviction?** Call 1-855-657-8387
- **Facing Foreclosure?** Call 1-800-606-4819
- **Facing a legal issue in King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call 211 (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) weekdays 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. They will refer you to a legal aid provider.
- **Facing a legal issue outside of King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call the CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays between 9:15 am and 12:15 pm or apply online at nwjustice.org/apply-online.
- **Seniors (age 60 and over)** with a legal issue outside of King County can also call CLEAR*Sr at 1-888-387-7111

Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired callers can call any of these numbers using the relay service of your choice.

Interpreters provided.

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