



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

Rental Fees and Enforcement – CB 121254

HB HARPER, ANALYST

HOUSING, ARTS, AND CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE

JULY 22, 2026

Today's Briefing

- Regulatory Context
- Legislation Overview
 - Disclosure requirements
 - Records retention
 - Fees allowed
 - Optional fee requirements
 - Fees prohibited
 - Enforcement
 - Investigations
 - Remedies/Penalties
- Fiscal Impacts

Regulatory Context

- Chapter 59.18 RCW Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (1973)
- Ordinance 125222 (2016)
 - limits the amount of security deposits and non-refundable move-in fees
 - allows tenants to pay move-in fees in installments
 - established some enforcement provisions
- Ordinance 125337 (2017) – information packet
- Ordinance 126803 (2023) – capping late fees

Legislation Overview

- Disclosure requirements
- Records retention
- Fee Categories
- Implementation/enforcement

Fees Allowed

- Already regulated:
 - Late rent
 - Security deposits/move-in fees
 - Screening fees
 - Pet damage deposit
 - Utility charges
 - Repair of damages
- Proposed additional allowances:
 - Replacement keys
 - Lockout fees
 - Fee for payment returned for insufficient funds

Optional Fees

- Requirements for optional fees:
 - Clear disclosure
 - Affirmative opt-in
 - Opt-out method clear, no fee
 - Cannot exceed cost to landlord if contracted with third party

Prohibited Fees

- Use of in-unit appliance
 - *Exception: air conditioner rental per RCW*
- Access to common area
 - *Exception: exclusive reservation for private event*
- Accepting rent payments via check, money order, or ACH
- Mail/package collection/access to mailbox
- Performance of landlord duty
- Partial change of tenancy when adding/removing roommate
- Keeping a pet
 - *Exception: pet damage deposit*

Enforcement

- Investigations
- Subpoena power
- Appeal process
- CAO referral

Remedies/Penalties

- Raising existing penalties for citation/NOV
- \$750 for first violation \$1500 for subsequent violations
- Fines are cumulative
- Discretion for penalties

Fiscal Impacts

- 3.0 FTE
- Budget legislation
- Per unit fee to be assessed with RRIO fees
- Initial outreach costs
- No costs identified for CAO

Questions?