

## RRIO Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance (RRIO) program?

The RRIO program was established by the Seattle City Council in 2014 to ensure that all rental housing in Seattle is safe and meets basic housing maintenance requirements. Rental property owners in Seattle must register their properties with the City. Inspectors will make sure all registered properties comply with minimum housing and safety standards at least once every 5-10 years. The RRIO program benefits Seattle residents by:

- Preserving neighborhoods and quality of life
- Educating property owners, inspectors, and renters about the RRIO program and encouraging proper maintenance of rental housing
- Ensuring all rental properties meet the same minimum standards through periodic inspections
- Creating clear communication methods between rental property owners and the City in the event of emergencies

### What types of rentals need to be registered with the RRIO program?

Rental properties (with a few exceptions) must be registered with the RRIO program. This includes multi-family apartment buildings, single family homes for rent, boarding houses, fraternity/sorority houses, micro-housing facilities, floating on-water residences for rent, and vacation home rentals that are not-owner occupied. There are some exceptions such as hotels, nursing homes, religious housing, government housing, or emergency housing. If you are unsure of your property's applicability with the program, call the RRIO helpline at 206-684-4110 or refer to [www.seattle.gov/RRIO](http://www.seattle.gov/RRIO)

### How do I register my property?

You can register your property online through the Seattle Services Portal or by mailing in a paper application. You may also call the RRIO Helpline at 206-684-4110 or email [RRIO@seattle.gov](mailto:RRIO@seattle.gov) to request an application to fill out electronically.

### What does it cost to register my property?

Your rental registration is valid for two years. Beginning January 2026, the fee is \$126 for each property including the first rental unit, plus \$31.50 for each additional unit. Fees are subject to future changes. See the example below:

Number of Rental Housing Units	Base Fee + Unit Fee	Total for Two Years
1	\$126 + \$0	\$126
2	\$126 + \$31.50	\$157.50
20	\$126 + \$598.50	\$724.50

Note: fees above include the RRIO fees and a 5% SDCI technology fee. The RRIO fees and technology fees are itemized separately on invoices and receipts.

Online payment can be made by credit or debit card. To pay by check, you will need to fill out and submit a paper registration form or contact the RRIO team at 206-684-4110 or [RRIO@seattle.gov](mailto:RRIO@seattle.gov) to request an invoice be sent to you. Checks should be made out to the *City of Seattle*.

## **Do I need to renew my registration?**

Your rental registration is valid for two years and must be renewed at the end of each two-year period. The renewal process requires property owners to verify or update contact and property information, declare that all units meet minimum housing standards, and pay the renewal fee. The RRIO program sends out reminder letters and emails as each property's renewal due date approaches. You may renew your registration online through the Seattle Services Portal or by contacting the RRIO team at 206-684-4110 or [RRIO@seattle.gov](mailto:RRIO@seattle.gov)

## **When will my property be inspected? How often will my property be inspected?**

All properties, but not all units, will be inspected at least once every 10 years after they register. The number of units to be inspected depends on the number of units at a property. Multi-unit properties will have 20 percent of the units inspected in addition to exterior and common areas. There is a 10 percent chance a property will be chosen a second time within the following five years for a reinspection. Properties are randomly selected or may be selected because of past rental housing violations.

RRIO will issue a Notice of Inspection to the owner at least 60 days prior to the inspection due date. Property owners are required to complete the RRIO inspection and any required repairs by this deadline. Property owners will receive a RRIO Certificate of Compliance after the property passes the RRIO inspection. The inspection must be completed by the due date or enforcement action may be taken by the City.

## **What are the criteria being used for inspections? What are you looking for?**

The items which are being evaluated in the inspection are detailed on the RRIO Checklist. The RRIO Checklist is a subset of the City of Seattle Housing and Building Maintenance Code, and focuses on basic life, health, and safety concerns. The RRIO Checklist can be found at [www.seattle.gov/RRIO](http://www.seattle.gov/RRIO).

## **What if I fail an inspection?**

If an inspection fails a significant maintenance checklist item, this item must be repaired and reinspected by the due date to meet the inspection requirement. The due date may be extended if a property owner is working in good faith to make the required repairs. The inspector will issue a RRIO Certificate of Compliance after the property passes the RRIO inspection.

Some deficiencies may be noted through the inspection process and should be repaired but are not required in order to pass the RRIO inspection. See the RRIO checklist for details about what items are mandatory and what items are advisory. Property owners should be aware that if a tenant were to later call and complain about non-mandatory items on the RRIO checklist, they are required to be repaired under the Seattle Housing and Building Maintenance Code.

## **Can I move my tenants out to make repairs? Can I move my tenants out and make it a non-rentable unit?**

The City of Seattle Municipal Code requires "just cause" for eviction of tenants. A summary of valid reasons for which tenancy may be terminated is provided in [TIP 604](#). If you need to find housing for your current tenants, they may qualify for payment of relocation assistance (if low income) and advance notice of the planned development under the [City's Tenant Relocation Ordinance](#).

## **What if my rental unit is a floating on-water residence (FOWR)?**

You must register your property with the RRIO program and will need to complete periodic inspections. There are a few things about FOWRs to consider regarding the RRIO inspection checklist standards. For example, many floating residences have toilet systems that differ from on-land plumbing that hooks up to the City sewer system. Your FOWR may have a composting toilet or a marine toilet that connects to a blackwater holding tank and is pumped out periodically. You should be prepared to provide your inspector documentation explaining how your toilet system works and showing that it is working as designed, such as installation records or manuals and other materials from the manufacturer. Your FOWR may have other features that differ from those found on a land-based structure. If you have questions about how your structure can meet RRIO checklist standards, please contact the RRIO helpline at 206-684-4110 and ask to speak to an inspector for technical assistance.

## **I'm renting a room in the house I live in. Do I need to register?**

If you are renting a room in the home or unit that you own, the property is considered owner-occupied and does not need to register. Renting a room generally means that you and your tenant share common living areas, the kitchen, and entryways. If you are renting a separate residential unit in your property, then you must register the unit. Separate units generally have their own kitchens, independent entryways, and the tenant has exclusive control over the living spaces. If you are unsure if your rental must register, you can call the RRIO helpline at 206-684-4110 for further clarification.

## **I have a vacation rental. Do I need to register?**

Vacation rentals that are not the primary residential unit of the property owner must register. If you occasionally rent out your own home or rent out part of your home that is not a separate unit, then you do not need to register. If your vacation rental is a separate property or separate unit on your property (such as an accessory dwelling unit), then you must register the unit with RRIO. You must also obtain a license from the Seattle Department of Financial and Administrative Services and follow a number of other rules. You can find more information at [www.seattle.gov/business-regulations/short-term-rentals](http://www.seattle.gov/business-regulations/short-term-rentals).

## **How do I become a private inspector for the RRIO Program?**

You must create a Seattle Services Portal account, register with the program, pay the registration and training fee, and attend City-provided training. You can find a link to register along with instructions at [www.seattle.gov/RRIO](http://www.seattle.gov/RRIO). You may request a training session as part of your online registration. You must also hold a current City of Seattle business license and possess one of the following credentials:

- American Association of Code Enforcement Property Maintenance and Housing Inspector certification
- International Code Council Property Maintenance and Housing Inspector certification
- International Code Council Residential Building Inspector certification
- Washington State home inspector under RCW 18.280.