



2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Results

CITY OF BELLINGHAM

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Executive summary

Background

In June 2025, the Bellingham City Council approved Ordinance 2025-06-10 and Ordinance 2025-06-11, which regulate unfair and excessive fees for residential rental units and manufactured/mobile home parks. During the development of the two ordinances, the City conducted public engagement through a survey and focus groups. Through those engagement opportunities, we learned that many landlords want more opportunities to share their experiences with the City Council. Additionally, at the time of adoption of the ordinances, Council requested data collection about the implementation of the new fee regulations with a particular interest in pet policies. In order to help achieve both of those goals, providing more opportunities to hear from landlords about their experiences with fee regulations and gathering data on the impact of the new ordinances, City staff launched a survey directed at landlords and property managers in Bellingham.

This survey asked about landlord/property manager practices, preferences, and changes over the last year and also provided a venue for open-ended feedback. It includes questions focused on rental fees regulations, as well as the City's Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program. The rental fee ordinances were adopted in June 2025 and went into effect on Aug. 1, 2025. The survey was sent out in October 2025. The results of this survey provide early data about the impacts of the new ordinances. Given the timing of the survey, many indicated their rentals were still under leases that started before Aug. 1, 2025, and were therefore not required to comply with new regulations. A follow-up survey to gather further insights after more than a year of implementation is recommended.

Residential rental regulatory context

The following are relevant local and state regulations that have been implemented or updated in the last two years that impact landlords.

- **Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program** – The City created the Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program (RRSIP) in 2015 which requires all residential rental units to be registered with the City on an annual basis and comply with life and safety standards as outlined in [BMC 6.15](#).
 - In February 2024, the City updated the program to eliminate declarations of compliance and require inspections every three years unless exempt.
 - In October 2024, the City added a requirement for rentals to have a locking mailbox.

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- **Unfair and excessive fees regulations** – Starting Aug. 1, 2025, [BMC 6.16](#) and [BMC 6.19](#) regulate rental fees for residential rentals and manufactured home communities respectively. These limit the amount landlords can charge for some fees such as applications, security deposits, late fees, pet deposits, and pet rent. They prohibit certain fees including administrative fees and in-unit appliance fees. Finally, they require transparency; all fees must be listed in ads, listings, and on the first page of the lease.
- **State rent stabilization law** – In May 2025, the State enacted [House Bill 1217](#), which limits most annual rent increases to the lesser of 10% or 7% plus the consumer price index (CPI) with some exemptions.

How the survey was administered

- The Bellingham City Council office sent out an email invitation to 2,351 landlords and property managers using the Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program (RRSIP) contact list. Staff sent out the first email invitation on Oct. 8, 2025, and a reminder email on Oct. 28, 2025.
- The City Council office also worked with City staff in the Planning Department to include a flyer in the annual rental registration notices, which were mailed to approximately 2,500 landlords and property managers. The flyer included a QR code and link to the survey. The notices were mailed between Oct. 13-17, 2025.

Metrics

- A total of 626 respondents took the survey: 586 landlords, 35 property managers, and five respondents who did not identify their role.
- It took respondents an average of 7.5 minutes to complete the survey.
- Over 90% of recipients who clicked on the link to the survey responded.
- 85% of respondents used the email invitation and 15% used the link/QR code to complete the survey.

Interpreting survey results

- The survey included a total of 20 questions. All respondents were asked to answer 18 questions, and depending on their answers, some respondents were asked two follow-up questions. The first question asked for contact information, which is excluded from the results.
- All questions were voluntary; respondents could skip questions. This resulted in different response rates for each question. Response rates are noted by question.

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- Each result is presented in this report in one of two ways – all respondents combined, or broken up by landlords and property managers to highlight results with notable differences between the two groups.
- For questions where respondents could select more than one answer, totals may exceed 100%.
- The majority of the questions were multiple choice or select all that apply. Questions that asked about changes in practices included opportunities to explain what changes they made and why they made the changes. Written responses are summarized in the results below and full responses are included in Appendix A.
- A copy of the survey instrument is attached as Appendix B.
- This survey was not intended to be statistically valid. The survey data can be used to identify trends but should not be used for fine distinctions between responses.
- We encourage Council Members to read written responses in Appendix A and review the observations in this executive summary.
- The survey data can be used to identify trends but should not be used for fine distinctions between responses.

Survey observations

- **Rental fee laws caused operational changes.** New rental fee regulations have triggered lease and operational changes. Nearly all property managers indicated that they made changes to their leases due to new state or local regulations compared to just over a quarter of landlords. Early results show new rental fee regulations resulted in changes to the way respondents charge utilities, pet fees, and other fees.
- **Landlords and property managers charge different pet fees.** Since implementation of new fee regulations, a majority of individual landlords who allow pets have opted to charge a pet deposit or not charge any pet fees, whereas a majority of property managers have opted to charge pet rent or a pet deposit. Some respondents have also made changes to whether they accept pets or the type of pets they allow, such as only cats or only dogs.
- **Landlords and property managers face increasing costs.** Landlords and property managers feel the cumulative impact of new regulations, taxes and fees. In addition to the new rental fee regulations, landlords and property managers also identified property taxes, utility costs, state rent stabilization laws, and locking mailbox requirements as factors that have impacted their practices and business decisions over the last year.

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- **Property managers struggled with new rental fee laws.** More property managers found it difficult to understand and comply with the new rental fee regulations compared to landlords.
- **New rental fee regulations are challenging to navigate.** Overall, more respondents found it difficult to understand and comply with the new rental fee regulations than found it easy. Meanwhile, more respondents found it easy to understand and comply with the rental registration and inspection process than found it difficult.
- **Rent stabilization triggered anticipatory rent increases.** Some respondents stated that they fear not being able to keep up with future costs because they are restricted by the State's new rent stabilization law. In response, some respondents have increased rents or plan to do so as a preventative or anticipatory measure.
- **Complex regulatory environment.** Landlords and property managers are facing an increasingly complex regulatory environment. Respondents expressed challenges understanding and complying with the many layered regulations they are required to follow. Respondents commented that the regulatory environment is confusing, it is difficult to understand the new rental fee and rent stabilization laws, and frequent changes in local and state regulations cause confusion and concern of being out of compliance.

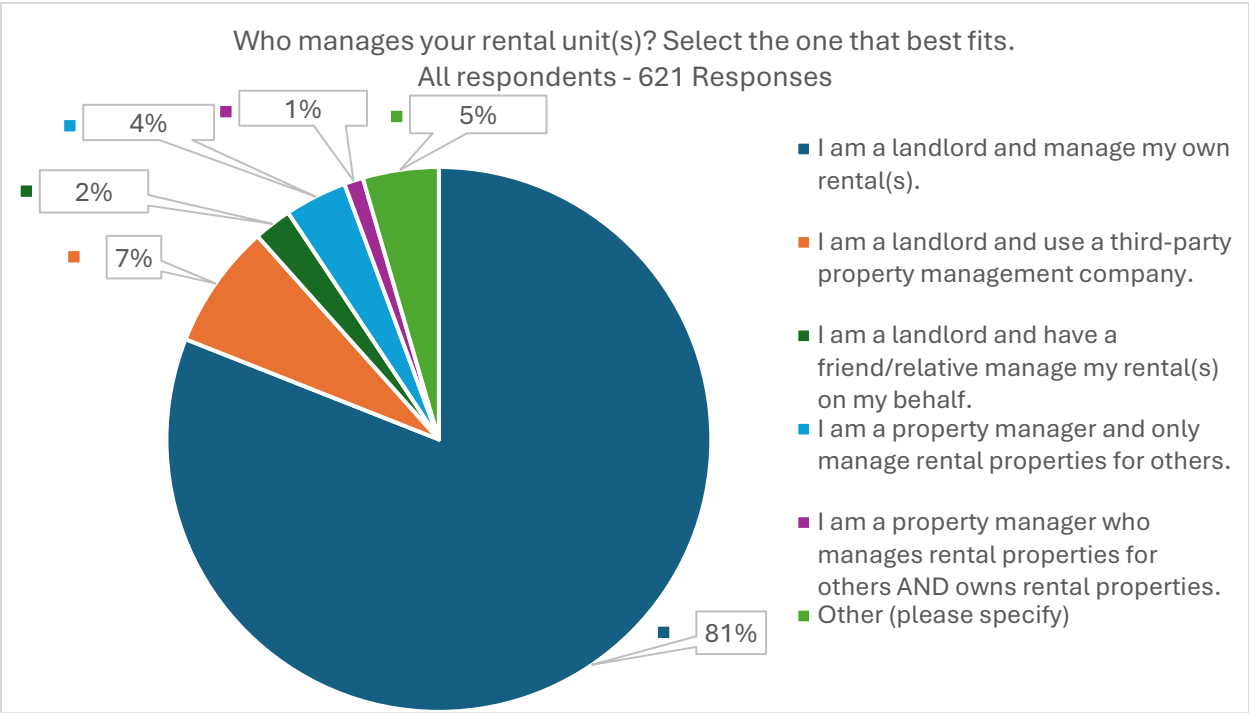
Survey results

Basic information

The first few questions provided an understanding of who responded to the survey. Respondents were asked to identify who manages their rentals. The majority of respondents are small landlords who self-manage between one and five rental units.

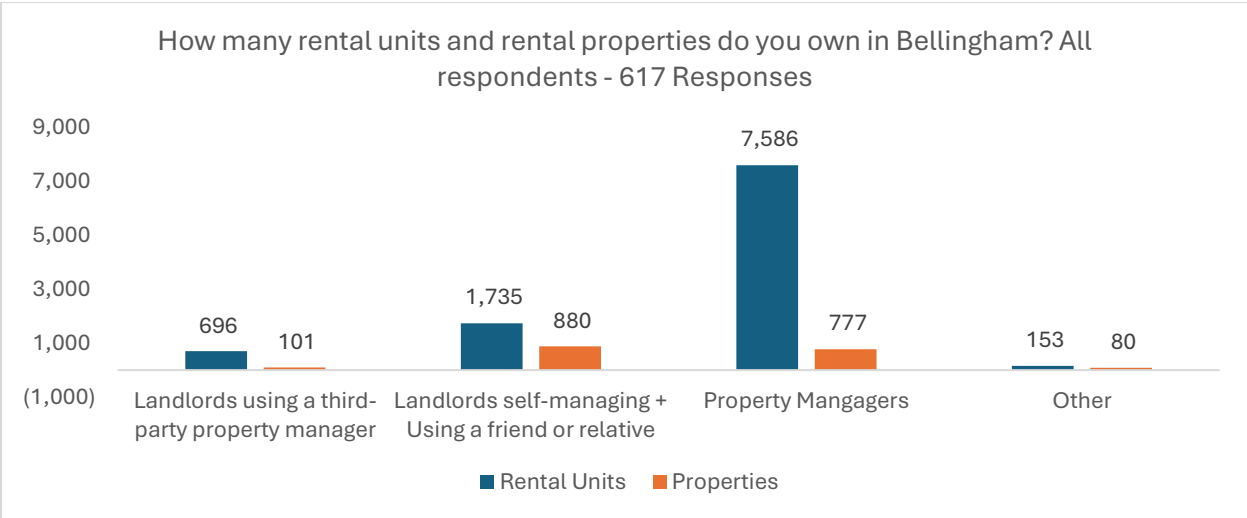
Individual landlords make up the overwhelming majority of respondents. A total of 81% of respondents identified as landlords who manage their own properties, 7% were landlords who use a third-party property management company, and 2% were landlords who have a friend or relative manage their rentals. Property managers account for approximately 5% of respondents, with 4% who only manage rentals for others and 1% who manage for others and own rentals. Finally, 5% selected “other”.

Twenty-eight respondents selected “other” as their response and, for the purposes of this report, were categorized as landlords or property managers based on their written explanations – five were categorized as property managers and 23 as landlords. Many of the 23 “other” respondents who were classified as landlords indicated that they self-manage some properties and use a property management company or condo association for others; a few stated they are former landlords. Those classified as property managers included respondents who only manage properties for one landlord, such as for a developer who then rents the property out.

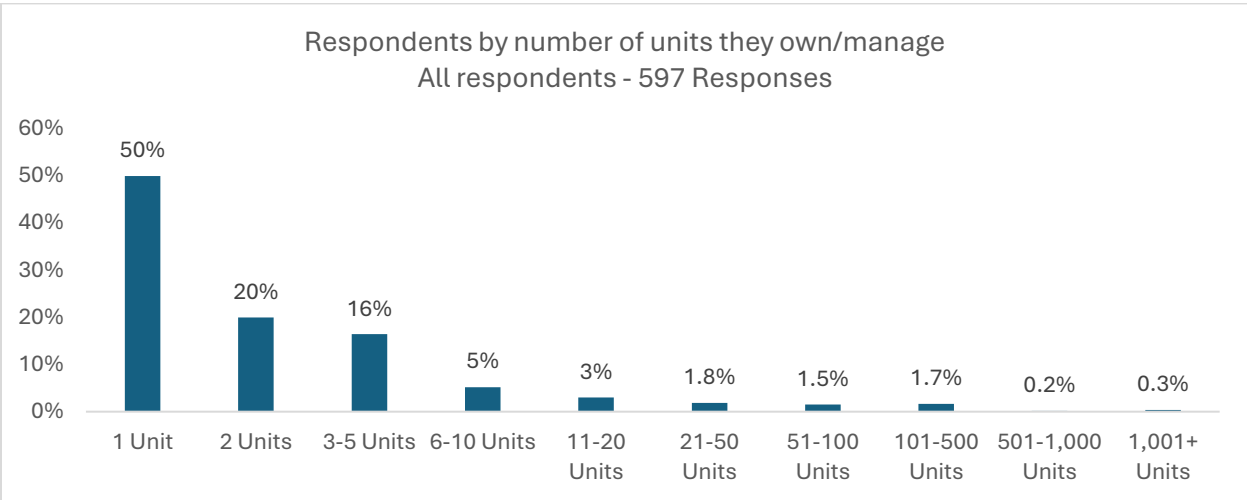


City of Bellingham 2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Results

The survey asked how many rental units and properties each respondent owns. Results showed that while most respondents are landlords who manage their own properties, the comparatively small group of property managers who responded collectively manages far more properties than the landlords who participated. Respondents that are landlords who self-manage or have a friend or relative manage their property own just over 1,700 rental units in the city, respondents who are landlords and use a third-party property manager own just under 700 rental units and “other” respondents own just over 150 rental units. While there were only 35 property managers who responded to the survey, they accounted for the largest number of rental units compared to all other respondent groups with over 7,500 rental units. These numbers represent survey respondent data, not all landlords in the city.

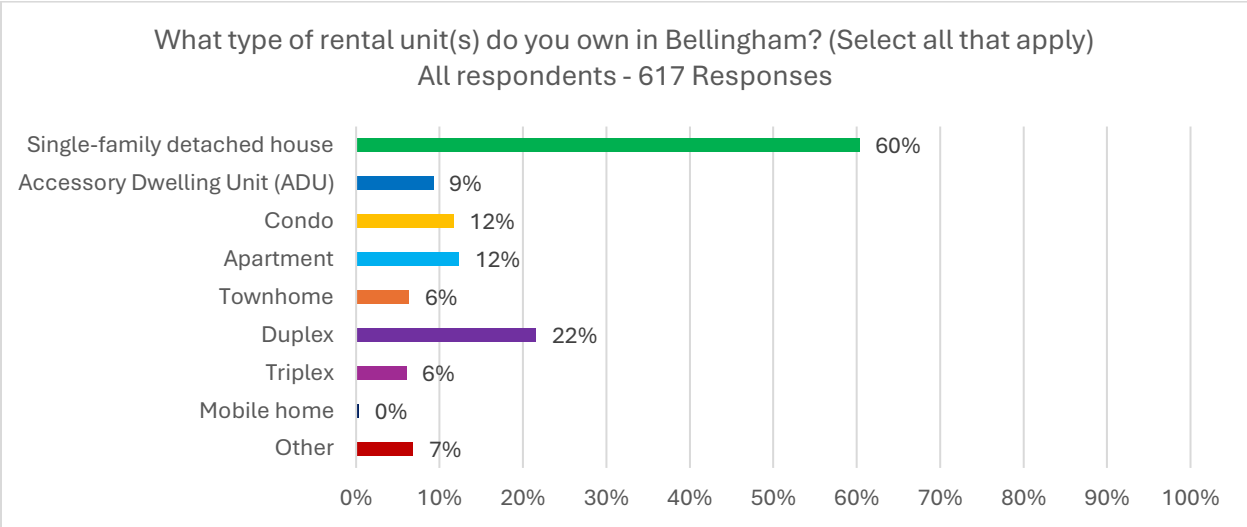


Small landlords who own five or fewer rentals account for more than 85% of all respondents with half of all respondents owning just one rental unit.

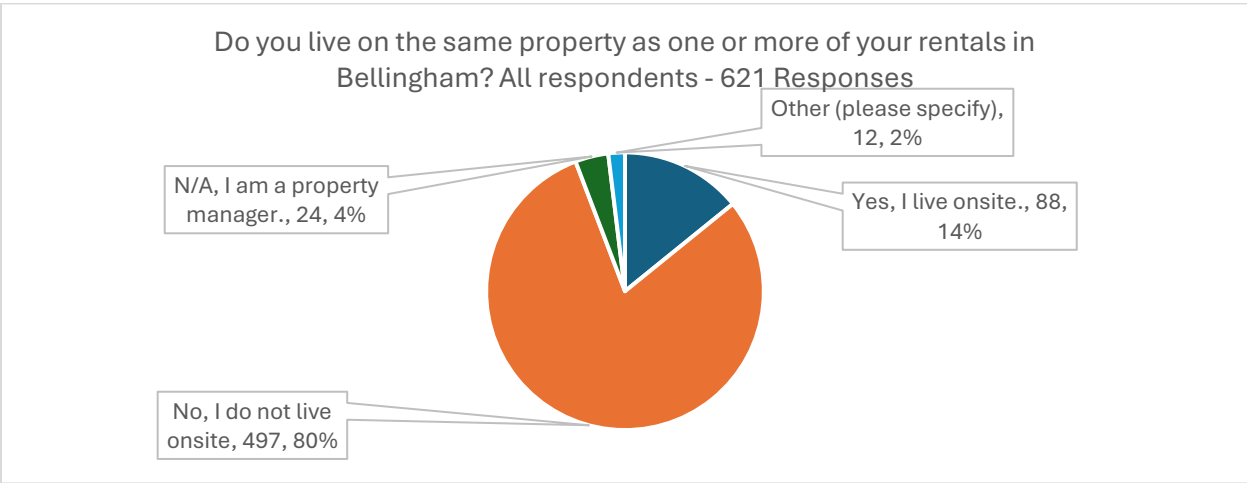


City of Bellingham 2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Results

When asked what types of rental units respondents own in Bellingham, most stated they own at least one single-family house and nearly a quarter said they own at least one duplex. Those who responded “other” included owners of 4-plexes, 5-plexes, and DADUs. This question only represents the types of rental units people own, not how many units. The survey did not ask people to list how many rentals of each type a respondent owns.



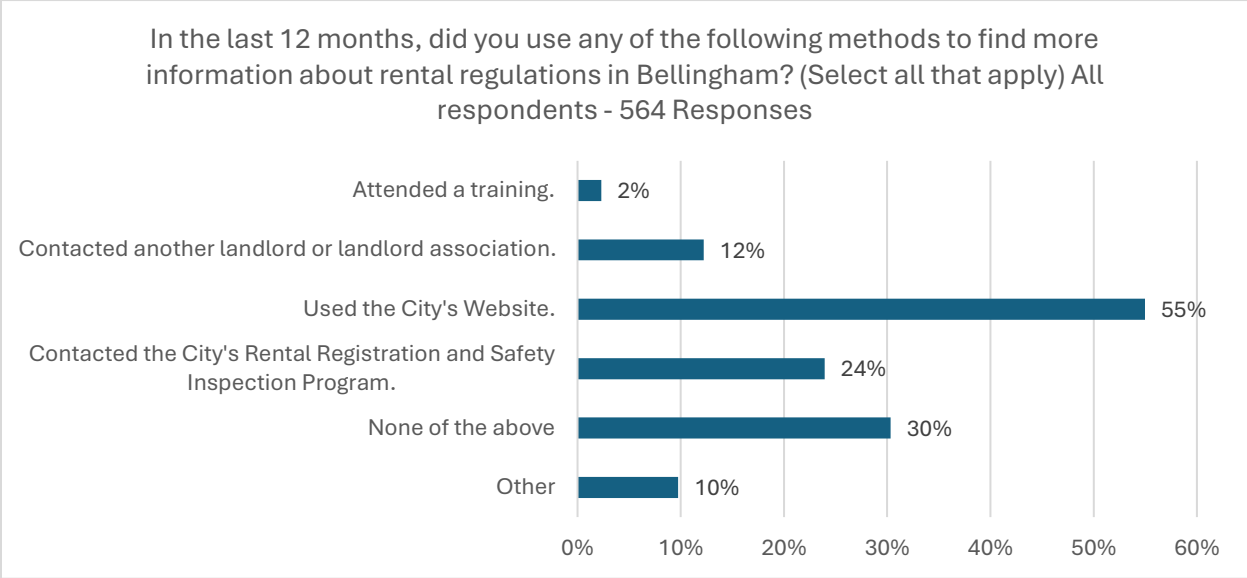
Most respondents (80%) do not live on the same property as their rentals. Only 14% stated that they live on-site. Those who responded “other” included owners who live on-site part-time in another unit or have a family member living on-site, and those who rent their unit out half of the year and live in it the other half.



When asked what methods respondents used in the last 12 months to find out more about rental regulations in Bellingham, more than half of respondents used the City’s website. A quarter of respondents contacted the Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program and 12% said they contacted another landlord or a landlord association for information.

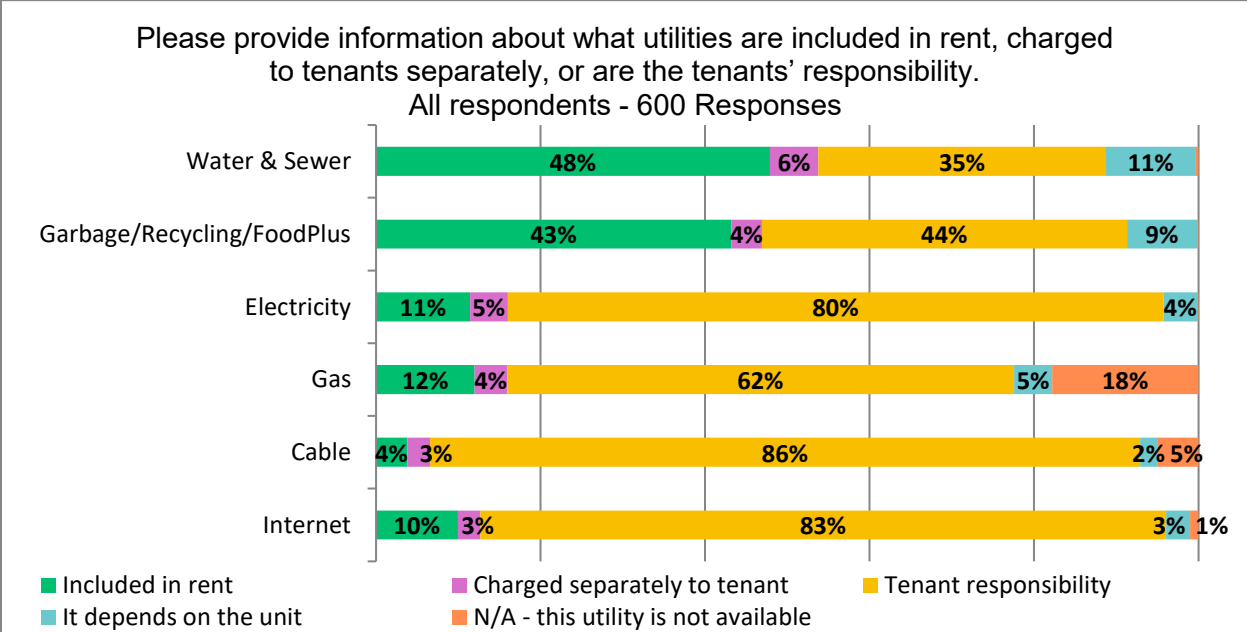
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Nearly a third said they did not use any method and 10% selected “other”. Written responses for those responding “other” included consulting lawyers, relying on property managers, web searches and AI.

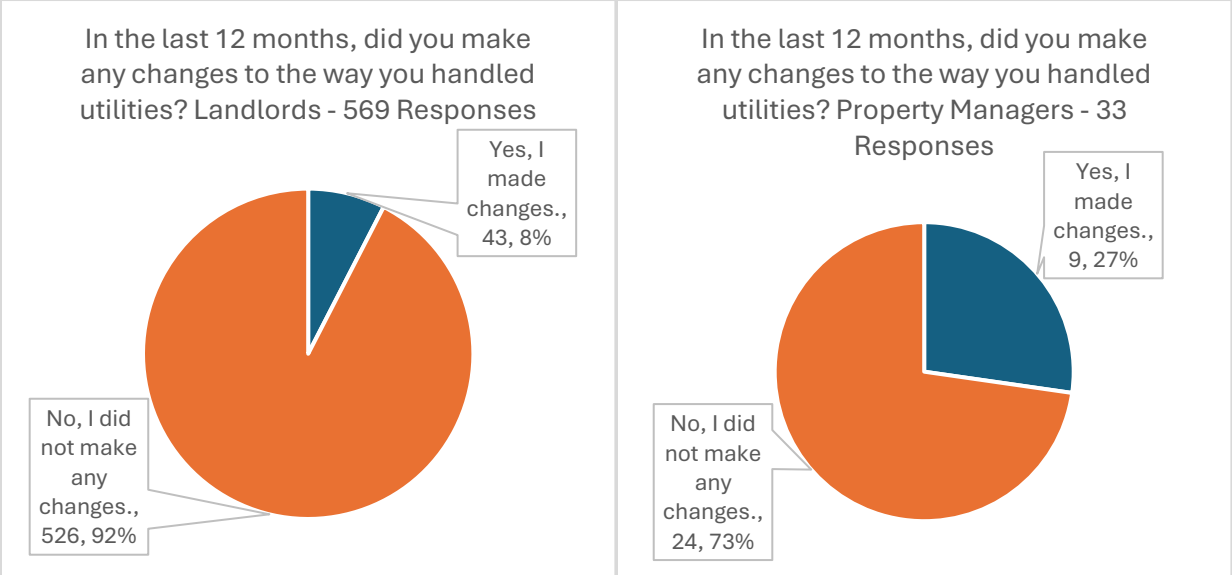


Utilities

The majority of respondents indicated that electricity, gas, cable, and internet are the tenant’s responsibility to pay. Meanwhile, respondents are more evenly split on whether they include water & sewer and garbage service in rent or whether those are the tenant’s responsibility. A small number of respondents indicated that they use the charge back method or that it depends on the unit for each utility.



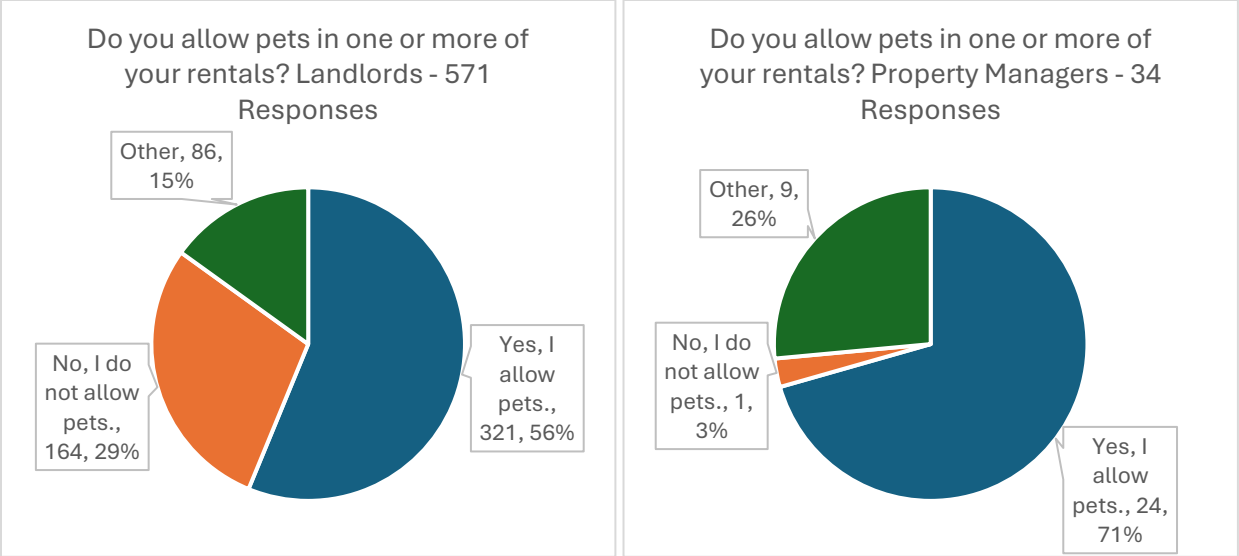
Only 8% of landlords indicated that they had changed the way they handle utilities in the last 12 months compared to 27% of property managers. When asked what changes were made, respondents wrote that they began to include utilities in the rent, switched utilities to the tenant, or started to use a charge back process. Some respondents attributed the change to the new rental fee regulations or increased utility costs, while others indicated that they made a change to make things simpler or easier for them or for their tenants. See Appendix A for complete written responses.



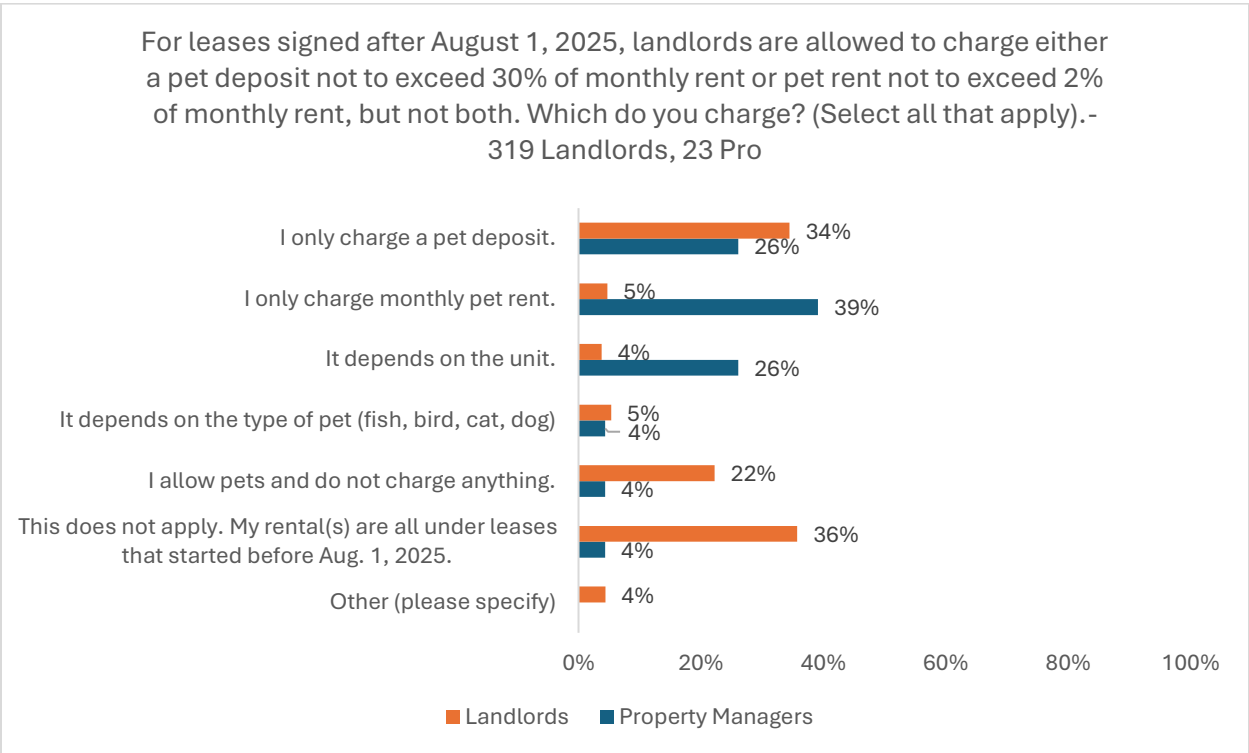
Pets

Respondents were asked whether they allow pets in one or more rentals. More than half of landlords and nearly three quarters of property managers allow pets. Over a quarter of landlords said they do not allow pets in their rentals compared to just 3% of property managers. Many respondents selected “other” and were asked to explain their choice. Common responses were that they allowed pets on a case-by-case basis, or they only accepted emotional support animals (ESAs)/service animals when required by law. See Appendix A for complete written responses. Note, ESAs and service animals are not pets and are regulated under federal law.

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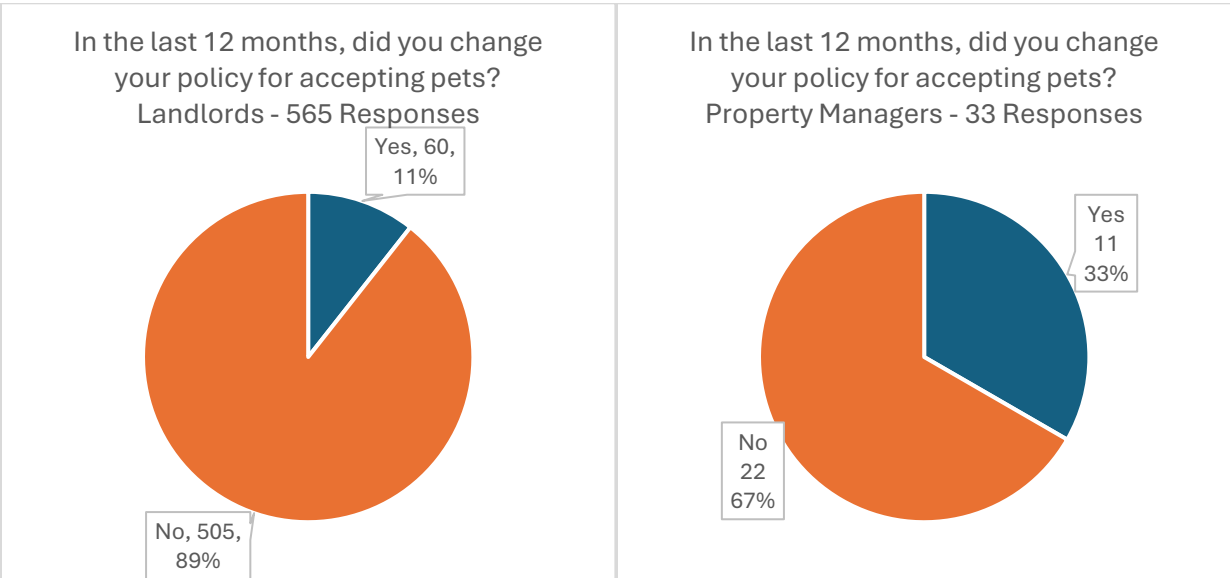


Respondents who said they allow pets were asked a follow-up question about pet fees. Results show that many property managers are charging pet rent while very few landlords are and that many overall only charge a pet deposit. A notable number of landlords do not charge any fee at all, compared to a very small number of property managers who forego pet fees. This question may prove even more informative if the survey is repeated in the future, as many landlords reported that they have not had to comply with this regulation as their leases began before the ordinance took effect.



City of Bellingham 2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Results

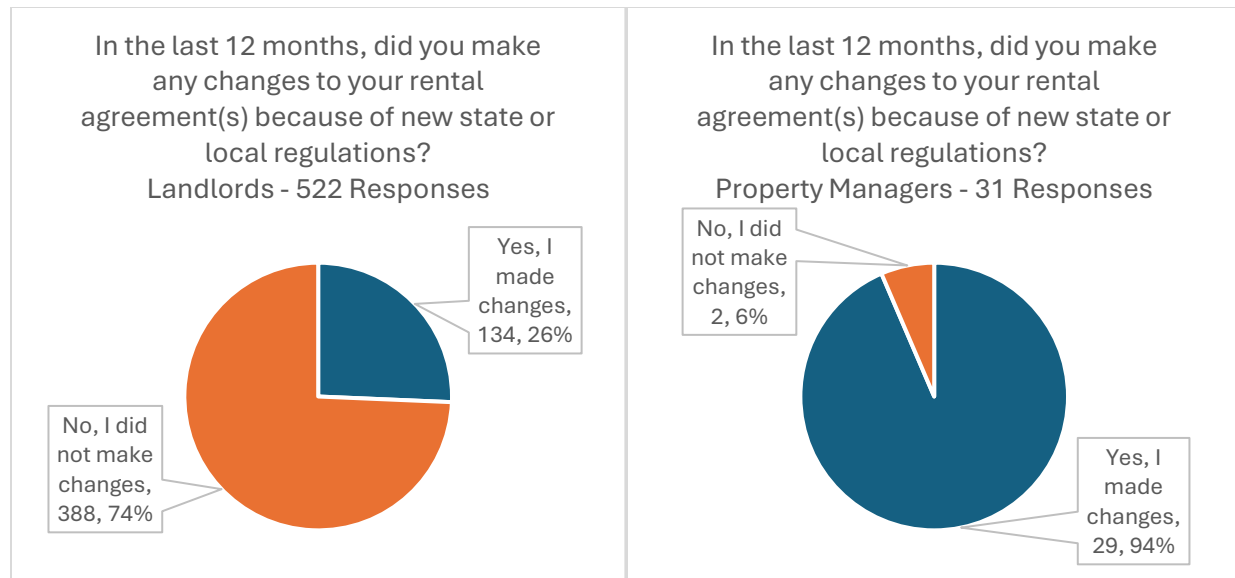
The majority of landlords and property managers did not make any changes to their pet policies in the last 12 months. Those who did were asked to describe the change they made. Responses varied from changing the number or type of pets they allow, to allowing or prohibiting pets, to changing what they charge for pets because of the City’s new rental fee regulations. At least two property managers said some of their property owners stopped allowing pets and at least ten landlords wrote that they stopped or will stop allowing pets. A handful of respondents stated they are now limiting the number of pets allowed because the new pet rent and pet deposit caps are absolute caps regardless of the number of pets, rather than charged per pet. Allowing pets was also a common comment from landlords; this was attributed to knowing and trusting their tenant or choosing to allow pets because they feel they either allow pets or their tenants will declare their animal an ESA. See Appendix A for full written responses.



Leases

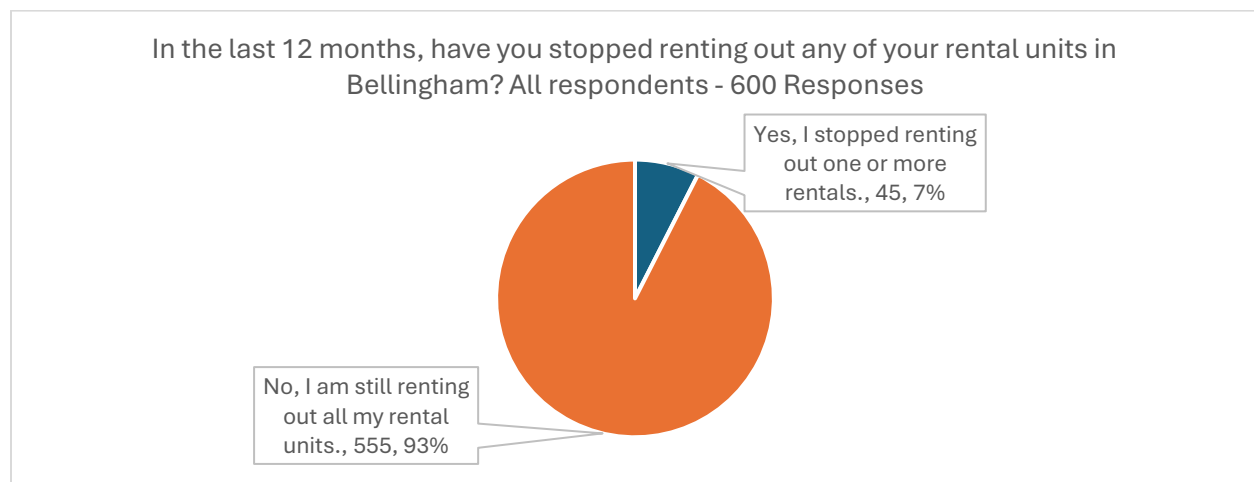
Nearly all property managers indicated that they made changes to their rental agreements because of new state or local rental regulations compared to just a quarter of landlords. Written explanations attribute changes to both the state’s new rent stabilization law and the rental fee regulations. Changes included eliminating or capping fees, changing leases to list fees, or incorporating previously separate costs into rent. Multiple respondents stated they raised rates to accommodate increased costs, bundle previously separate expenses into rent, or in anticipation of expenses that may be more than the allowed annual rent increase limits in the future. See Appendix A for written responses.

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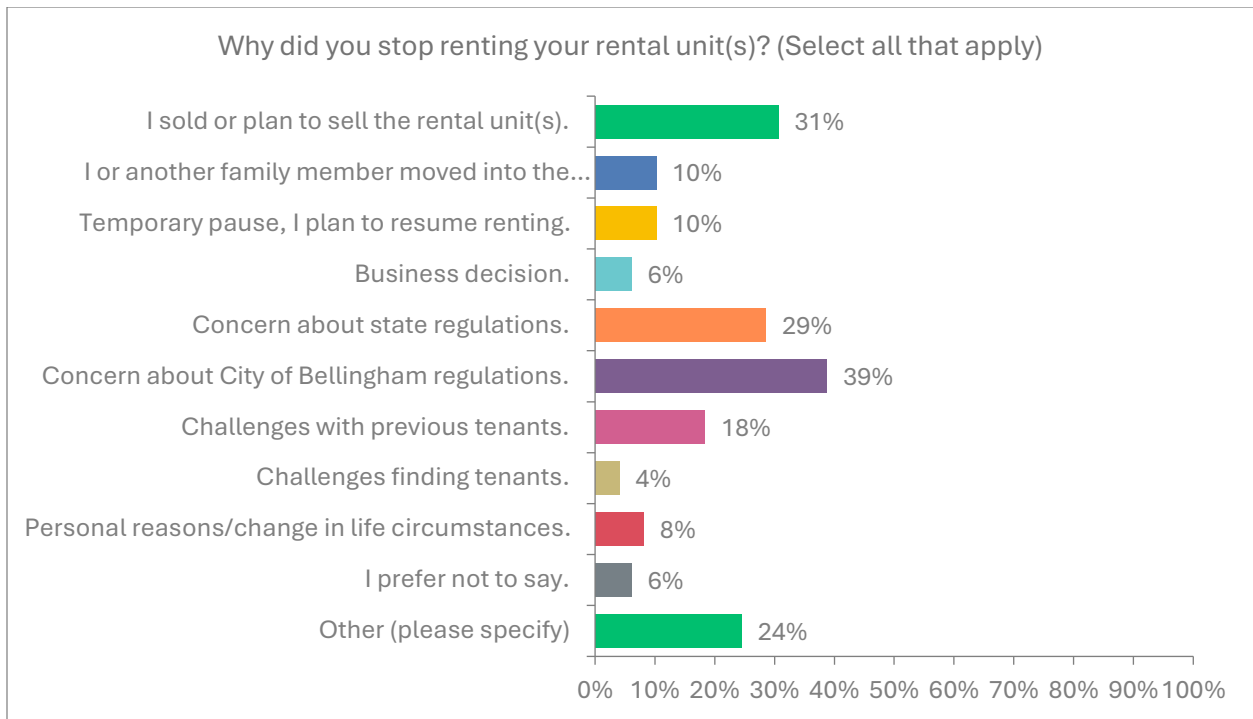
Rent/sell/purchase

In the last 12 months, only 7% of respondents (six property managers and 39 landlords) stopped renting out one or more rental units. The survey did not ask respondents to list the number of rental units they stopped renting but did ask a follow-up question of why.

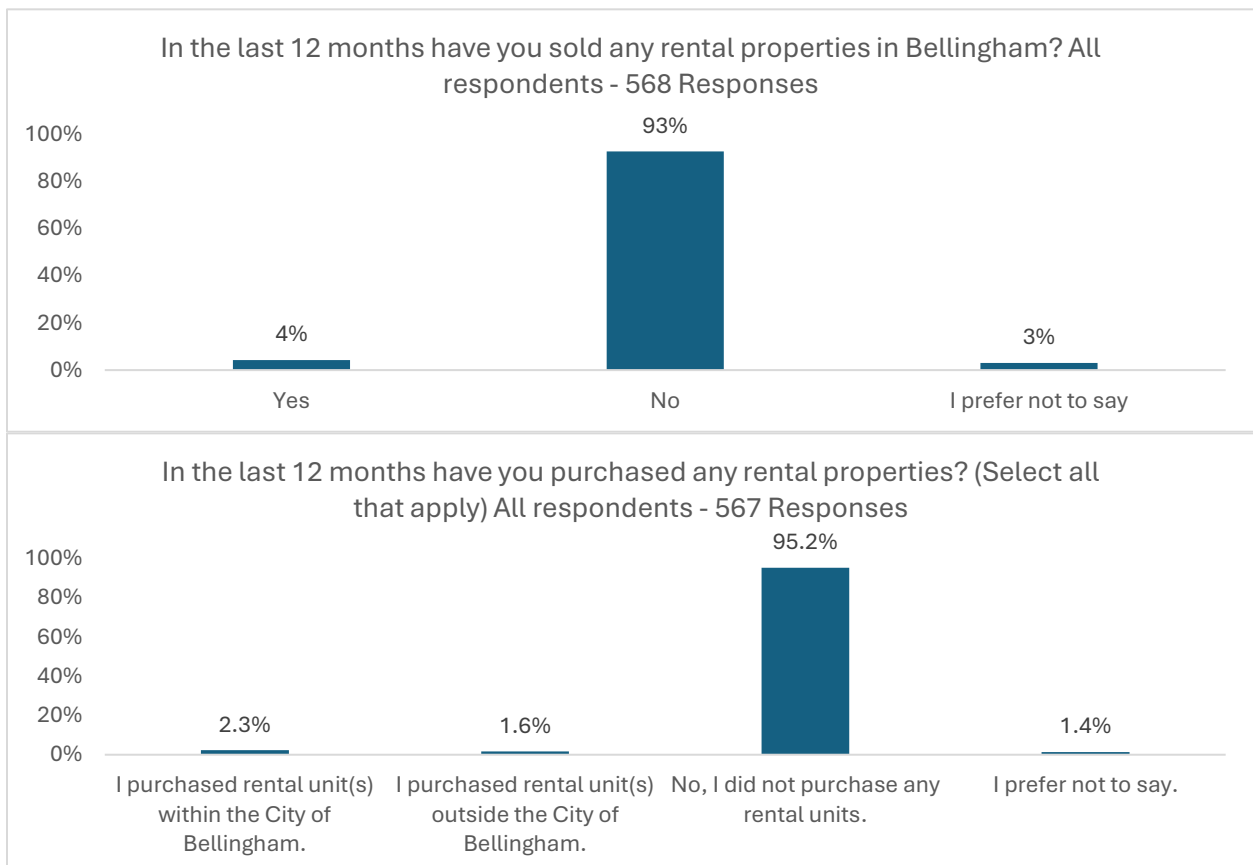


The top three answers were concern about Bellingham regulations (39%), sold or plan to sell the unit(s) (31%), and concern about state regulations (29%). Written explanations for those who selected "other" included remodels, property taxes and more detailed responses that explained challenges with City and state regulations. See Appendix A for full written explanations.

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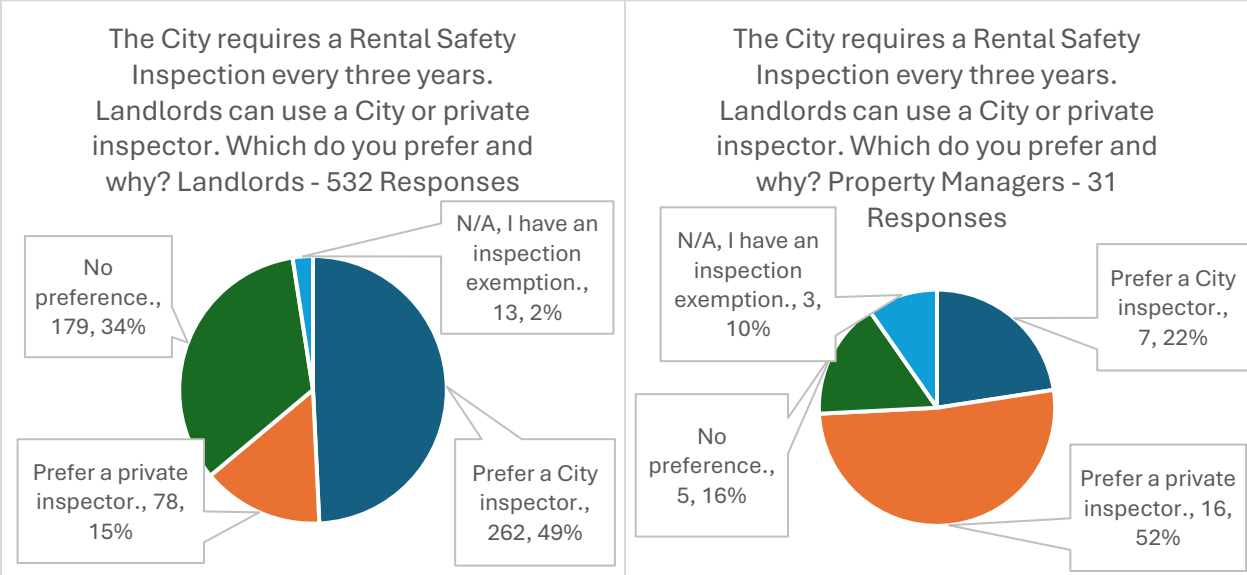


Less than 5% of respondents said they either bought or sold a property in the last 12 months.



Inspector preference

Property managers and landlords who responded to the survey have different rental inspector preferences. A slight majority of property managers prefer to use private inspectors and nearly a half of landlords prefer city inspectors. A third of landlords have no preference. Written explanations from those who prefer city inspectors included convenience, cost, consistency and that having a city inspector for a city program makes sense. Written comments from those who prefer a private inspector also included convenience and cost, as well as easier/flexible scheduling, more inspectors to choose from, not wanting city employees on their property, and more impartial inspections if the inspector is not from the city. Some also wrote that they switched from city inspectors to private inspectors. Comments from respondents with no preference included that they choose whichever is cheaper or easier to schedule and some who indicated they didn't know they had the option of private or city inspector.



Understanding and complying with rental regulations and programs

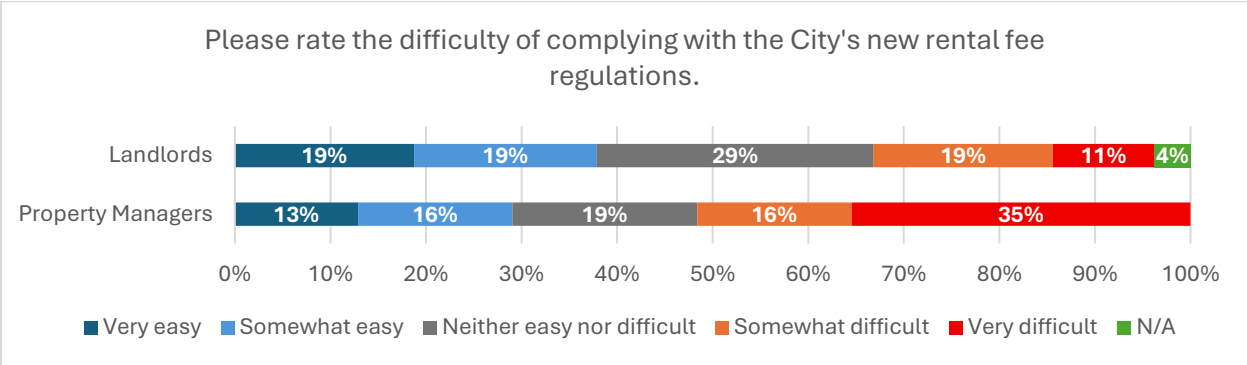
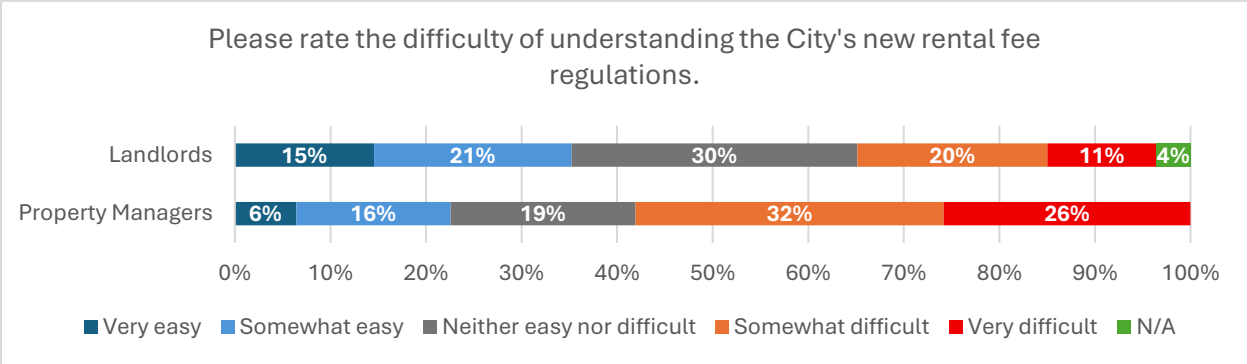
Respondents were asked to rate the difficulty of both *understanding* and *complying* with the City's rental fee regulations, rental registration process, and rental safety inspection process.

Rental Fee Regulations

Nearly 60% of property managers found it somewhat or very difficult to *understand* the new rental fee regulations compared to 31% of landlords. Just over half (51%) of property

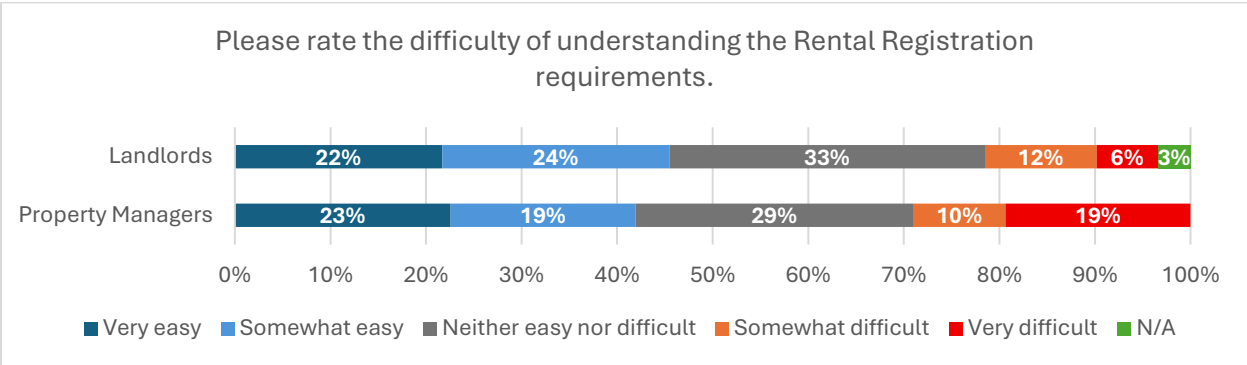
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managers found it somewhat or very difficult to *comply* with the new rental fee regulations compared to 30% of landlords.

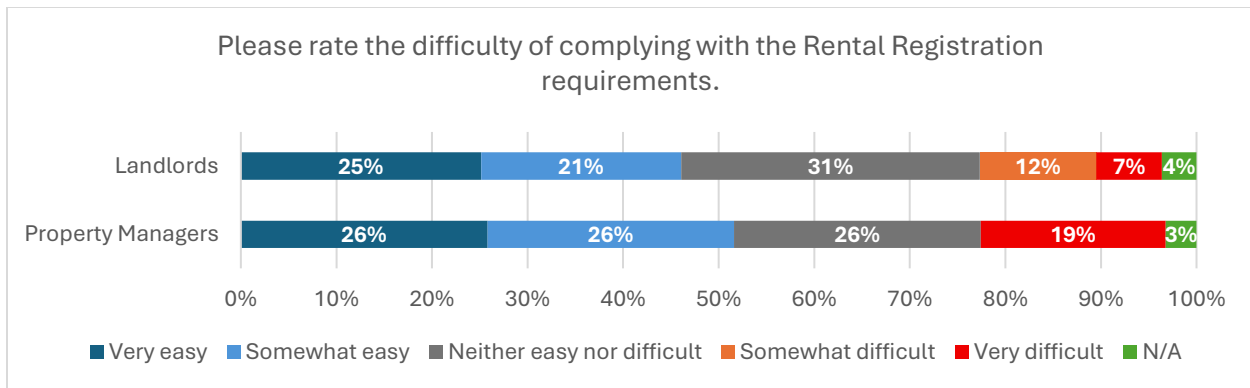


Rental registration requirements

When asked to rate the difficulty of *understanding* the City’s rental registration requirements, 46% of landlords and 42% of property managers said it was somewhat or very easy to *understand* the requirements. When asked about *complying* with the registration requirements, 46% of landlords and 52% of property managers found it somewhat or very easy to *comply*. Between a quarter and a third of both landlords and property managers indicated that *understanding* and *complying* with the rental registration requirements was neither easy nor difficult.

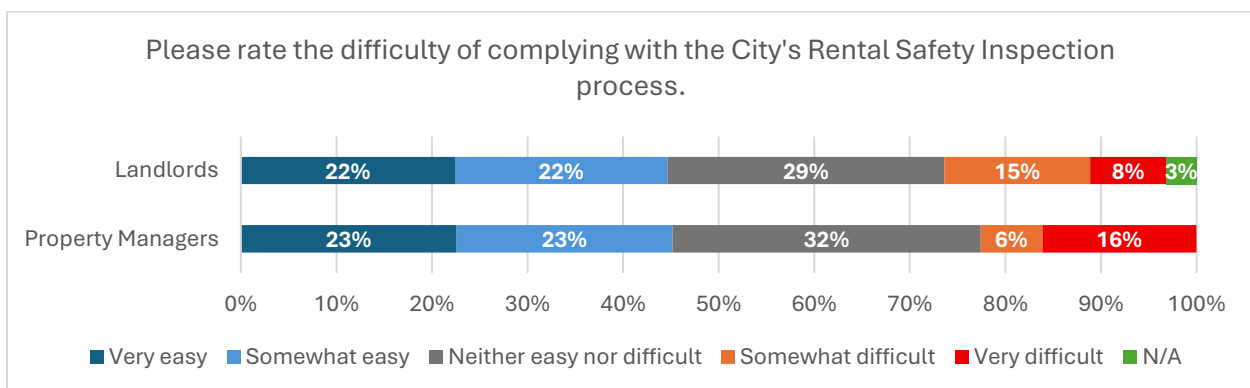
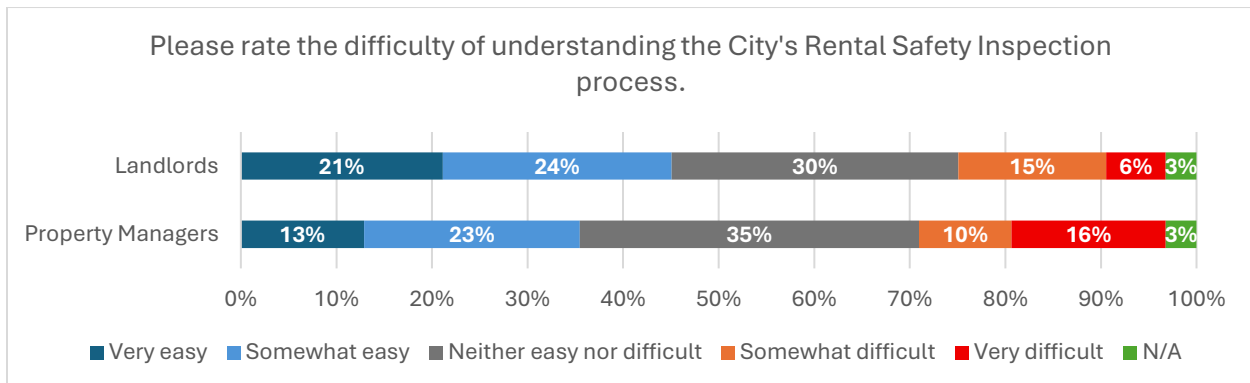


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Rental safety inspection process

More landlords and property managers found it somewhat or very easy to *understand* the rental safety inspection process than found it difficult; 45% of landlords and 36% of property managers. Similarly, more landlords and property managers found it somewhat or very easy to *comply* with the rental safety inspection process than found it difficult, with 44% and 46% respectively. Around a third of both landlords and property managers indicated that *understanding* and *complying* with the rental safety inspection process was neither easy nor difficult.



Additional comments and feedback

The final question of the survey asked respondents if they have any additional comments or feedback. Nearly 300 respondents provided a written comment. The complete responses are available in Appendix A. General themes are summarized below, but Council Members are encouraged to read the full comments to fully understand the nuance of respondent experiences and feedback. Staff created 11 tags to help identify common themes and topics throughout written responses. Tags used keywords and phrases to give an estimate of the number of times respondents mentioned each topic; they are not an exact count.

Tag	Comments Tagged	Tag	Comments Tagged
Insurance	6	Rental Inspections	76
Mailboxes	11	Rental Registration	41
Pet Policies	21	Rent Increase	34
Property Tax	30	Rent Stabilization	29
Rental Fee Regulations	37	Suggestions	64
Utilities	16		

Open-ended comment takeaways

- Respondents critical of regulatory framework.** There were a handful of respondents who generally approve of the City’s regulations and like things as they are. On the other hand, there were a few who think the City should get rid of all rental regulations. However, most respondents fell somewhere in the middle. Many acknowledged that there should be some regulations that target bad actors, but feel the existing regulations are overly broad, complex, and don’t account for differences between large landlords/property management firms and small self-managing landlords.
- Complex regulatory environment.** Landlords and property managers are facing an increasingly complex regulatory environment. Respondents expressed challenges understanding and complying with the many layered regulations they are required to follow. Common comments were that the regulatory environment is confusing, it is difficult to understand the new rental fee laws and the state’s new rent stabilization law, and frequent changes in local and state regulations cause fear of being out of compliance.
- Increasing costs impact property owners and tenants.** Landlords and property managers are experiencing increased costs due to rising utility fees, property taxes, insurance, and increased rental registration fees and are passing these on to tenants. Some also faced increased administrative or one-time costs to comply

with new rental fee regulations such as updating leases. A handful of respondents mentioned costs related to the requirement to install new locking mailboxes. Many have passed these expenses on to their tenants.

- **Rent stabilization triggered anticipatory rent increases.** Respondents stated that they fear not being able to keep up with future costs because they are restricted by the State's new rent stabilization law. In response, some have chosen to increase rents as a preventative or anticipatory measure.
- **Reduce burden on small landlords and good actors.** Written responses recognize the need to deal with bad actors, but do not want a one-size-fits-all approach. Many suggested that City regulations, especially the rental inspection process, should be updated and improved to reduce the burden on small landlords and good actors. Specific suggestions included changing or extending the inspection schedule for small landlords and for landlords who have received a clean inspection with no violations, and to make it easier to provide proof of remedies for minor violations without follow-up inspections (such as providing photos).
- **More education and training is desired.** Respondents expressed a desire for more education for both landlords and tenants, including easy to use website resources and training opportunities and materials that can be provided to tenants and landlords, such as a guide to renting in Bellingham.

Appendix A – complete written responses

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Introduction

This appendix includes the complete written responses to the 2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey. The survey frequently asked respondents to explain their choice and required respondents to explain their response when they selected “other” as their answer. The final question was an open-ended opportunity to provide any feedback about rental regulations. The survey results report includes written summaries, while this appendix includes the complete raw responses. Responses are identified by respondent type: landlord, property manager, or unknown respondent (there were only five unknown out of 626 respondents).

Who manages your rental unit(s)?

Who manages your rental unit(s)? Other (please specify)	Respondent
Property manager who manages rental properties for others	Property Manager
I am a property manager who only manages properties for one owner.	Property Manager
I represent owners of affordable housing properties and am a property manager.	Property Manager
I own a management company and my employee manages it	Property Manager
I am a property manager who only manages rentals for a development company who retains the residential properties they build	Property Manager
I manage family properties	Landlord
Landlord using property manager and self manage.	Landlord
I am a property manager and manage for 1 owner (owns my company as well)	Landlord
I USED to be a landlord.	Landlord
I am an assistant to a landlord and we manage the rentals with guidance from WA Landlords Association	Landlord
I manage and a property manager manages some as well	Landlord
I manage some by myself and use a property management company for most	Landlord
Use management and myself	Landlord
Half self manage plus management services	Landlord
I am landlord and manage my own unit but I also work with Windermere property management through the Fir Ridge 2 condo association	Landlord
two properties are managed and two I manage	Landlord
I use a prop management co for one and I manage the other one myself	Landlord
i use Airbnb	Landlord
we manage the house and one condo-the second condo is managed by a property management co.	Landlord
self as well as Property Management	Landlord
I manage 3 units and a property management company manages 2	Landlord
I am a landlord and manage my own units with my two sons and daughter-in-law	Landlord
I manage some of my own and use property management for others	Landlord
We have an ADU we manage but are not planning to rent again for a while.	Landlord

Who manages your rental unit(s)? Other (please specify)	Respondent
I am a landlord and use a third-party management company to manage my vacation rental	Landlord
Landlord manages one and prp mgmt co manages 1	Landlord
I manage some myself and hire a property manager for others	Landlord
I no longer rent my property out because of the housing laws in whatcom county.	Landlord

What type of rental unit(s) do you own in Bellingham?

What type of rental unit(s) do you own in Bellingham?	Respondent
We do not own them but rent them on behalf of the owner	Property manager
0. We are a property management company and do not own any of the rentals we manage.	Property manager
I'm a property manager. I do not own any property.	Property manager
Bone	Property manager
larger multi-family	Property manager
We do not own any of the rentals that we manage.	Property manager
All four rental units are regular homes	Landlord
two duplexes and one 5 unit bldg	Landlord
Single-family house	Landlord
Fourplex	Landlord
4plex	Landlord
Office, both have 4 bedrooms	Landlord
DADU (detached unit behind house)	Landlord
Commercial building	Landlord
55+	Landlord
Boarding House	Landlord
4-plex	Landlord
5 plex	Landlord
4/plex	Landlord
various	Landlord
DADU	Landlord
4-plex	Landlord
home with 5 units	Landlord
Townhouse with an ADU	Landlord
Attached apartment	Landlord
1 unit of zero lost line duplex	Landlord
One half of a 'duplex-like unit' (special wall unit divider so that each side is owned by different individuals).	Landlord
commercial buildings - six unit & 8 unit	Landlord
Commercial Spaces	Landlord
Fourplex	Landlord

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What type of rental unit(s) do you own in Bellingham?	Respondent
4plex	Landlord
4plex	Landlord
ADU	Landlord
Single family with conditional permit for triplex	Landlord
ADU/carriage house	Landlord
Dadu	Landlord
and a second condo	Landlord
commercial condo	Landlord
Office Building	Landlord
vacation rental	Landlord
four plex	Landlord

Do you live onsite?

Do you live on the same property as one or more of your rentals in Bellingham?	Respondent
Other (please specify)	
I manage rental properties	Property Manager
In town	Landlord
I live on site and used to rent out the upper two floors I lived in the basement	Landlord
I live in Bothell WA	Landlord
I live part time in a the ADU on the same property	Landlord
I rent this property to my daughter, so when I am in town I stay there, sometimes for a couple of weeks at a time. However, I do not live there and only keep some tools/paint/etc. there.	Landlord
Co-owner (mother) lives on site of property w ADU.	Landlord
We lived in one of the rentals until two weeks ago. The other is across the driveway.	Landlord
I live in one of the units	Landlord
not disclosed	Landlord
I rent my own house for 6 months of the year.	Landlord
We use the second unit of the duplex when we are in Bellingham (visiting family)	Landlord

How did you find more information about rental regulations in Bellingham?

In the last 12 months, did you use any of the following methods to find more information about rental regulations in Bellingham?	Respondent
Other (please specify)	
Contacted legal counsel to assist with ordinance interpretation and lease revisions.	Property Manager

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In the last 12 months, did you use any of the following methods to find more information about rental regulations in Bellingham? Other (please specify)	Respondent
We also had our emails IGNORED by the Bellingham City Council several times. . .	Property Manager
attorney	Property Manager
what trainings the city did not give us any good information just left of to flounder with no info	Property Manager
Our attorney	Property Manager
I have no idea of the changing regulations as I leave all of that to the property management firm. In fact that is one reason we started using them. Seemed complicated to stay on top of.	Landlord
deferred to a third party	Landlord
Property manager provides information and guidance.	Landlord
Obtaining information from our property manager and their webinars.	Landlord
I relied on my management company.	Landlord
I have tried multiple times to get a hold of someone via phone and email and I'm getting no response this is very dissatisfying	Landlord
Property manager	Landlord
Read newsletters from our prop managers all intended to absurd regulation fees and tax and to justify their recently increased management fees	Landlord
My manager stays well informed.	Landlord
received information from property management company	Landlord
Received information from property manager	Landlord
Random Google searches yielded conflicting information. The City website info is paltry and may fulfill someone's checklist for informing, but does not actually do so.	Landlord
I understand the regulations but do not agree that I am in the group that has been targeted by those regulations because of well below market rates that provide housing.	Landlord
I work within the affordable housing world, I have an understanding on Landlord/tenant laws	Landlord
Reviewed Whatcom County rental rules	Landlord
asked others who rent questions	Landlord
I avoid involvement with the City staff to the greatest extent possible. I don't believe they intend to support landlords -- quite the opposite.	Landlord
email	Landlord
I would have attended in person but I was working.	Landlord
We were required to have a safety inspection	Landlord
Hired an attorney.	Landlord
I looked up/referenced a state-wide site I googled online as I did not know there was a city site for this~	Landlord
e-mail	Landlord
online research	Landlord
web search	Landlord
newspaper/websites	Landlord

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In the last 12 months, did you use any of the following methods to find more information about rental regulations in Bellingham? Other (please specify)	Respondent
Tried unsuccessfully to search city's website	Landlord
We are members of RHAWA and they provide city and county level guidance.	Landlord
talked with my lawyer	Landlord
Reviewed email documents sent to me.	Landlord
Spoke with property manager who takes care of my property outside Bellingham	Landlord
contacted lawyer due to the difficulty of understanding how to comply with changes to state and local regulations	Landlord
My rent is so low I didn't even look... After petitioning my raise in property taxes the board said I needed to raise my rent	Landlord
contacted my attorney	Landlord
Bellingham Reddit	Landlord
Wish there was Landlord training or a forum to share and ask questions with other Landlords	Landlord
WA State requirements.	Landlord
Read information sent to me.	Landlord
Used chatgpt to understand my responsibilities under state and city regulations	Landlord
Searched the state of Washington regulations online.	Landlord
Wasn't aware of any training available to landlords, only tenants.	Landlord
Arg	Landlord
Website is almost useless. Training seems to be directed towards tenants, not landlords. Mostly useless.	Landlord
Contacted a real estate lawyer	Landlord
used a property manager to complete the lease	Landlord
AI	Landlord
Consulted legal counsel	Landlord
Relative gathered information	Landlord
talked to city counselor and not satisfied with answer	Landlord
Prop mgmt	Landlord

Did you make any changes to the way you handled utilities?

In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to the way you handled utilities? If yes, please explain what change you made and why.	Respondent
We went from flat rate utilities to an occupancy based billback ratio	Property Manager
We are starting to add utility charges (based on usage) in new leases, rather than include them in rent.	Property Manager
some units i had to add the uitiles into the base rent price vrs having it seperated out	Property Manager
Due to the knowledge that the Bellingham rental rules would be changing, utilities that were being charged as a flat fee to Tenants monthly were added into the rent amount.	Property Manager

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<p>In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to the way you handled utilities? If yes, please explain what change you made and why.</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
Looked at past bills to make sure I am not overcharging my tenants	Property Manager
Added some utilities as additional charge on top of the monthly rent. (Flat rate)	Property Manager
We had a property owner raise the flat rate amount for their W/S/G utilities.	Property Manager
New Tennant now pays water and sewer in addition to other utilities.	Property Manager
Some properties no longer include any utilities- specifically water, sewer & garbage.	Property Manager
Utilities are different at all of the rentals that we manage. It depends on the set up of the property, the amount of rental units and how many meters there are. If it is a single family rental, all utilities are typically a tenant responsibility. If it is a multifamily rental, some owners have W/S and garbage included and some set it as a shared utility.	Property Manager
Each owner decides how to manage their property; some require the tenant to pay the utilities and others will pay for some or all.	Property Manager
I let the management company handle it...not even sure exactly what they do.	Landlord
Added water/sweeper to tenant responsibility due to increased costs from city for water.	Landlord
In one unit, which is in the lower level of our home, everything is included. The other 16 units the renters are responsible for their own utilities. We pay for water, sewer, garbage.	Landlord
Our third party managers at Landmark made some changes, for their convenience. I do not really know what they are.	Landlord
Unknown	Landlord
I had to increase the rent to keep pace with the ever-increasing utilities. Sewer and Water has increased over 100% in the past few years and garbage is not far behind 4 cans per unit ridicules'	Landlord
Had tenants take over the garbage pickup since the city is requiring additional cans and additional costs.	Landlord
Tennant now pays water/sewer. Previously I paid it.	Landlord
Shifted water/sewer to tenant responsibility so they can apply for discounted rate.	Landlord
As property owner I pay water and sewer and garbage/ recycling	Landlord
In order to avoid raising the rent, we are asking tenants to pay for most of the utilities.	Landlord
I discontinued SSC services due to exorbitant charges (without choice) for the composting bin (as we are on a 'Victory Garden' plot in Birchwood and have always composted our own 'green' garbage back into the earth~) Since no option was offered/available, despite some community suggestions/discussion, I chose not to do business with such a business entity which does NOT offer flexible, environmentally-friendly customer-service~! Our household takes our 'non-compostable' refuse out to RDS on a monthly basis...We pay more but this works best for us~	Landlord
In the duplex I am paying the garbage for the building. With the changes to the garbage there would be no reason to have two sets of totters. There are a total of 3 people in the building. The size and cost of the totters is not practical.	Landlord

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<p>In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to the way you handled utilities? If yes, please explain what change you made and why.</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>I used to not pay for the water/sewer, however since the city can take a lien on the property, I started paying the water/sewer instead of the Tenant.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Shifted internet to tenant to increase versatility</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Mandatory yard waste fee/bin, as well as water-sewer fee increase had effected the price of rental charge.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I started paying for Water because it is a shared meter</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Units with individual water meters were given their own water bills to pay</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>In one rent everything is included and the other one all utilities are tenants responsibility. The reason why I changed the second rental is because when you include the utilities in my experience tenants don't care about things like turning down the heat. There is a lot more waste.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>For my apartment units (in some cases), the tenant(s) requested I include utilities with the rent in an effort to simplify their responsibilities/payment logistics.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I am making tenants pay more utilities as they keep going up cuz it's better for them to see the substantial increases themselves, than for me to increase rent and they think the landlord is the badguy.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We moved utilities to be included in the rent.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I changed to paying the water bill myself and sending bill to tenant. There were multiple instances where it was paid late otherwise.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>4-unit building - huge increase in cost of SSC garbage collection, I could require a residential tenant in a small one bedroom to have a residential SSC account, but large number of totars on grounds and a proportionate huge cost to the tenant, so I attempt to limit totars, keep accounts in my name, and agree with tenant that they cover a portion of the SSC monthly cost. SSC has been erratic in recent years, changes out of the blue, and they miss pickups, different drivers and such.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We combined garbage and recycling bins on our duplex's property to save space and lower overall costs.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We asked the city to only have one container between our home and our ADU to pick up green waste.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Used to cover these expenses, now I don't.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I now pay all utilities other than cable to simplify the turnover process.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>For our standalone house we are making the tenant pay water/sewer.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Previously in the ADU we covered electricity and changed that to tenant responsibility.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>tenant now pays for garbage recycling food plus due to cities mandatory decision to have house hold have the bins weather are needed are not.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Historically, I included water and sewer in rent. But water costs go up so quickly and I wasn't increasing rent accordingly. Also, tenants didn't know how much water cost and had no incentive to conserve. So, on one unit I now charge a water and sewer fee. The fee amount is changed annually with a detailed account of the total of their fees vs. the total I pay for water and sewer.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I took over the water bill to make it easier for the tenants.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

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In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to the way you handled utilities? If yes, please explain what change you made and why.	Respondent
Rents were adjusted to reflect rising operational costs, including increases in property taxes, utilities (such as water and sewer), and waste management services	Landlord
I used to charge a flat rate based on last year's rent and now, with the new ordinance, pro-rate and charge according to the actual bill. It likely will increase costs to tenants, given anticipated rate increases that have already been announced.	Landlord
We added garbage, because renters did not pay their garbage and we ended up getting stuck with it anyways.	Landlord
I increased the rental amount to help cover the costs of COB required food plus service	Landlord
I raised the rent	Landlord
Changed to tenant responsible	Landlord
Increased due to tax and city cost increases	Landlord
I am charging back for water and garbage/recycling/compost for one of our units. Costs have skyrocketed and we can't afford to absorb those costs anymore.	Landlord
Have tenant pay gas	Landlord
We do not have turnovers very often, but since utilities and insurance have gone out of control, we changed our operations to transition water/sewer and garbage as tenant responsibility in all new leases (except multifamily)	Landlord
No but I will be raising rents next period to account for the higher fees such as compost and increases across the board.	Landlord
I changed from paying the utilities to having the tenants pay for their own utilities because I am concerned with the rent control increase cap that I won't be able to raise rent enough to cover the increases in utilities.	Landlord
The city of Bellingham has recently passed several landlord-tenant laws that make it more difficult on landlords to run a profitable endeavor in the city of Bellingham change of leadership is drastically needed!	Landlord
Moved separately charged utilities to included in rent	Landlord

Do you allow pets in your rentals?

Do you allow pets in one or more of your rentals? Other (please specify)	Respondent
No pets, but ESA animals with proper paperwork	Property Manager
Case by case basis specific to property	Property Manager
Depending on the owner of the property we allow pets at some units not all	Property Manager
Depends on the rental and the property owner's preference.	Property Manager
We allow ESAs. Emotional support animals are not pets.	Property Manager
We allow pets in a few of our rentals but probably less than 25%	Property Manager
Depends on the owner wishes and the property	Property Manager
depending on the unit and owner, case by case	Property Manager

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Do you allow pets in one or more of your rentals? Other (please specify)	Respondent
Depends on the rental and property owner's preference.	Property Manager
Most pets are not allowed unless the tenant can show why they should be permitted for things like stress relief.	Landlord
I say no pets. However tenants often have a Dr. note...so are thus allowed to have them.	Landlord
Only emotional support animals	Landlord
Service animals.	Landlord
Only comfort animals	Landlord
Do not allow pets but close to 50% of units have emotional support animals by one or more roommates	Landlord
We do not allow, tenants go get Comfort and support animal licenses to circumvent. It is BS, self serving and behavior of privileged elite slumming in Bellingham	Landlord
When forced by law, preferably no	Landlord
1 well behaved dog	Landlord
My tenant has 2 therapy cats. I couldn't say no legally.	Landlord
I did until two weeks ago when one lease ended and a new one began. Now, I need to prioritize protecting myself over providing a quality home experience for tenants, which to me as a pet owner, would include having a pet.	Landlord
I try to exclude pets, but make exceptions relative to potential impact on the facility or the duplex	Landlord
Although last two years renters had service animal but lease says no pets	Landlord
It is an allergy free house	Landlord
Only with special request	Landlord
On occasion	Landlord
No, we don't allow pets. However, we must accept that if a tenant claims a service animal, including Emotional Support Animal, we have no choice but to accept that. We have had brand new carpet and one year tenants sign for no pets but within a week claim a dog is "part of their family" and produce a letter from an internet therapist. We are further restricted from charging even carpet cleaning fees. It's increasingly challenging for us, as landlords, to treat tenants respectfully, as we have always done.	Landlord
I do not allow pets. I made one exception for a specific cat, and charged an extra damage deposit.	Landlord
Small quiet pets on a case by case basis	Landlord
We did allow pets, we won't do this again.	Landlord
I do allow sometimes. But prefer not to.	Landlord
on a case by case basis	Landlord
one	Landlord
I really do not like that I have to say yes to support animals. Now there are several cats on my 100 year old fir floors!	Landlord
No, I do not allow pets, but the last 3 tenants circumvent that by bringing prescribed emotional support cats which I am obligated to accept.	Landlord
I allow cats but not dogs, tho could make an exception.	Landlord

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Do you allow pets in one or more of your rentals? Other (please specify)	Respondent
Not normally, but we have a tenant with an esa dog.	Landlord
we typically don't allow pets but have made an occasional exception over the years.	Landlord
Might consider it	Landlord
We allow pets in our single family home but not our ADU where we also live.	Landlord
Registered service animal	Landlord
case by case basis	Landlord
I normally do not allow pets, but after tenant moved in, they all requested to have pets.	Landlord
Depends on pet. Cats and small dogs are ok	Landlord
Sometimes. Depends	Landlord
1 cat only	Landlord
No, but made exception for this tenant.	Landlord
I prefer no pets, but can't restrict service animals.	Landlord
Damage dep. for 1 cat	Landlord
yes - cats (on a case by case basis), no - dogs	Landlord
on occasion	Landlord
Generally, no, but I have allowed tenants to have pets depending on the type of animal and circumstances.	Landlord
ADU yes, pets are allowed. SFR, no, pets are not allowed.	Landlord
I allow a cat in 2 of my units.	Landlord
ESA - required. Because of the ESA landlord requirements it's no longer likely any tenant would have non - ESA pets	Landlord
But it doesn't matter anymore because they all get the paper that says they are support animals. Landlords no longer have the right to not allow animals even when we are allergic to them. Most of the time the tenants don't tell us until the lease is signed.	Landlord
Because of online proliferation of emotional support animal permission without even one meeting with a doctor, we now just allow pets	Landlord
To an extent. Tenants are so protected they can claim "ESA" and trash my house and I have nearly zero recourse. That ESA loophole is a joke, very few people actually need an ESA yet 99% of people claim ESA Status.	Landlord
generally, no, but occasional exceptions. Pets trash places.	Landlord
cats, no dogs	Landlord
Small pets with prior approval	Landlord
varies	Landlord
My one tenant does not have a pet.	Landlord
If they pay a pet deposit or they are medically required	Landlord
Only service animals	Landlord
Policy is no pets but I make exception for particular renters.	Landlord
Small dog under 25lb/ bird/ reptiles ok. No cats	Landlord
Technically it's not my policy to allow pets but have made exceptions for the right tenant.	Landlord

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Do you allow pets in one or more of your rentals? Other (please specify)	Respondent
Pets only under ADA certification.	Landlord
I used to allow pets, but with Bellingham’s new rules for the deposit I’m allowed to charge. I no longer allow pets.	Landlord
service dog	Landlord
Prefer not to but service animals are ok	Landlord
No. But they often get them anyway. Damages from pets is significant. There is really no way to charge a fee to offset those damages	Landlord
I sometimes allow them depending on pets and situations.	Landlord
At my discretion	Landlord
One dog. Everyone has an ESA though	Landlord
I do not allow pets but I have a tenant with a service animal	Landlord
cats only	Landlord
Because ESA's are so easy to get all rentals have pets now.	Landlord
Yes because we feel hands are tied with Washington state new rules	Landlord
Depends on the pet	Landlord
I allow dogs on a case by case basis	Landlord
only cats from now on or I will quit renting /////no dogs	Landlord
yes with specific approval	Landlord
depends on the renter and the pet	Landlord
I allow cats and/or ESA's which maybe a dog.	Landlord
in 2 i allow and in 2 i don't. When I do I require pet rent and pet deposit to mitigate the impact on the wood floors, etc.	Landlord
No pets but tenants just claim their pet is an emotional support animal to get around rules so all rents are raised to cover pet damage.	Landlord
I do not allow pets, however I often find pets have been either visiting or residing and have caused damage	Landlord
Just dogs, not cats	Landlord
We prefer no animals but accomidate ESA	Landlord
Sometimes. Many tenants come with emotional support animals	Landlord
Depends	Landlord
not in the two condos,but do in the house	Landlord
Service animals and ESA's only	Landlord
Allow them in some and not in others	Landlord

What pet fees do you charge?

For leases signed after August 1, 2025, landlords are allowed to charge either a pet deposit not to exceed 30% of monthly rent or pet rent not to exceed 2% of monthly rent, but not both. Which do you charge? Other (please specify)	Respondent
Neither. Pets are welcome without additional charge.	Landlord

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For leases signed after August 1, 2025, landlords are allowed to charge either a pet deposit not to exceed 30% of monthly rent or pet rent not to exceed 2% of monthly rent, but not both. Which do you charge? Other (please specify)	Respondent
I allow pets, however, my renters do not have any. I would charge a refundable deposit	Landlord
Refundable pet deposit	Landlord
Ask for professional carpet cleaning done by tenant upon vacating apartment.	Landlord
Currently don't have any tenants with pets	Landlord
Does not apply	Landlord
Currently my tenant doesn't have a pet at this time.	Landlord
Tenants do not have pets	Landlord
\$100 a month - rent is \$2,100 and \$2,400 - no pets currently	Landlord
We charge a one-time pet fee.	Landlord
I only charge pet deposit because I was misinformed by City resources that pet rent was illegal.	Landlord
This is BS. "Pet rent" is nonsense. Who came up with this nonsense? I used to charge a "pet fee" paid once, \$50 for one or 2 dogs. Deposits just create arguments. So with this new BS "pet rent" I no longer allow pets. No problem for me, too bad for renters.	Landlord
Pet fee only, nothing no change to leases after 8/1/25	Landlord
I do not. Tenant does not have pets.	Landlord

Did you change your policy for accepting pets?

In the last 12 months, did you change your policy for accepting pets? For example, did you start or stop allowing pets, or limit the type (cat, dog, reptile, etc.), number, or weight of pets allowed? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
Due to the new ordinance, we are now restricting the number of pets we allow in a unit to a max of 2 total.	Property Manager
To comply with new regulation in city limits. It creates complications.	Property Manager
No longer allow cats. Too much damaged caused by cats	Property Manager
It depends on the unit but many owners are not willing to allow pets because of limited consequences + costs for tenants.	Property Manager
Because of the cap on deposits and pet rent, it does not make sense to allow multiple animals now, which cause so much wear and tear on the units, and have no compensation for the amenity.	Property Manager
Only some owners stopped allowing pets. Limiting the Pet Deposit to 30% is not enough for some landlords to feel comfortable allowing pets. In my experience, pets either cause excessive damage costing a large amount of money or no damage whatsoever. The deposit is there for those times when the pet causes major damage and would not come close to cover the damage at 30% of 1 months rent. If the cost to the potential tenant is what the law change was aimed at, we always worked with tenants to set up payment plans for large move in costs.	Property Manager

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<p>In the last 12 months, did you change your policy for accepting pets? For example, did you start or stop allowing pets, or limit the type (cat, dog, reptile, etc.), number, or weight of pets allowed? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>No longer charging pet deposits, charging 2% pet rent only instead of deposit and pet rent to follow city ordinance</p>	<p>Property Manager</p>
<p>The city's new laws discourage landlords from allowing pets, but we adjusted our policies to still allow pets.</p>	<p>Property Manager</p>
<p>Less pet friendly properties.</p>	<p>Property Manager</p>
<p>Yes, our number of pets max changed to 2 pets max.</p>	<p>Property Manager</p>
<p>Tenants claim its a comfort animal(s) too difficult to stop. i am considering getting out of Bellingham/ Washington State rental business because of imposition of regulations.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Even though we had a pet policy, no pets. Everyone had a pet or two in their unit. It was absolutely ridiculous. And the amount of damage those pets caused was quite unbelievable frankly.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I stopped allowing pets</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Changed from strict no pets policy because I understand that comfort animals should or must be allowed.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>some units changed to pet rent from pet deposit</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Up to Landmark, preferably no</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We began allowing pets, and charging for them, because enforcement of a no-pet policy encouraged too much surreptitious pet presence.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Already did.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I used to allow a cat with permission. Due to recent actions by a tenant, who was guided and advised by the tenants' union, I will no longer allow pets. The Tenants' Union, as an advocacy group, is deeply problematic. A past tenant moved in before the new checklist law; because she has been difficult since day 1, she did not sign the checklist, having lost multiple copies, etc. She never signed it. She recently moved out, left horrendous cat damage to the closets, and the tenants' union advised her to use the checklist law to avoid paying damages. She demanded her entire security deposit because I didn't make her sign the checklist Five years ago. This is unethical on many levels. Blind advocacy for those who have done wrong and are responsible is unhelpful to the whole system. I have lost faith in the Tenants Union and now see them as adversaries.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I did not make the change but with doctors recommendation had to allow</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>allowed new tenant cats (20) with security deposit</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I did not use to charge a pet deposit but due to the new law I started charging a pet deposit because it seems eventually that option will become more restricted.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>From pets To No pets</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Our renter has had a cat for s few years. We have recently allowed her to have a dog.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Allowed current (long time) renter to have a pet</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I've had property damage caused pets that even a hefty deposit did not cover</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

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<p>In the last 12 months, did you change your policy for accepting pets? For example, did you start or stop allowing pets, or limit the type (cat, dog, reptile, etc.), number, or weight of pets allowed? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>This is a redundant question. Landlords no longer have control of the pet issue. A simple \$200 internet letter allows tenants to have ESAs.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I prefer not to have pets, but have on some occasions. Pets have been an issue for the tenants, when they have one.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>no more pets, tenants are not responsible pet owners</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>See above</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>we allowed a very mellow dog in one of our rental houses as an exception for the current tenants.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>allowed pets since you have to allow service animals</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>All the 'wildlife' we could want... No allergic reaction to them outdoors~!</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Some of our units are pets allowed Some of our units are no pets allowed</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>The tenants have already moved in and have requested permission to bring pets. Or they said they need to bring emotional support animals in.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Yes allowed one cat but no other pets</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>damage done due to unauthorized pet</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We began allowing a dog in the ADU.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Originally only allowed a cat. Based on how much we like our renters, we also allowed a dog.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I allowed a cat</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>The ESA system is broken and people abused the system with online permissions. It meant you did not know what you were getting. I prefer to allow pets, review them, and not deal with the obvious fraud that was going on.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>But I will in the future due to any city law changes and limits to charges.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We asked the renter not to care for her boyfriends dog unless he is visiting over the weekend.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Increased pet fees to highest allowed.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I began allowing pets.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I changed pet policy to comply with new regulations for Bellingham</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>If I have a sense that I am dealing with a responsible quality tenant, I may occasionally permit one feline. If tenants are not responsible in cleaning cat boxes, damage results. If I have an older damaged carpet, I may occasionally permit likewise one feline to reside. There are a few respectful tenants who understand the pet issue. Others reside, and then bring up the "emotional pet" issue. It is a problem area for carpeted apartments and with multifamily buildings with a No Pets policy. In short, I strive to honestly discuss issues with tenants to limit conflict. I have numerous 15 - 20 year tenancies.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>New renter had a companion dog, which we allowed</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I allowed a 6 month lease to have one approved dog with a dog fee.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Yes esa</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

<p>In the last 12 months, did you change your policy for accepting pets? For example, did you start or stop allowing pets, or limit the type (cat, dog, reptile, etc.), number, or weight of pets allowed? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>Because onerous policies make margins so thin that I can't afford to recover from animal damages.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I do not offer pets as an option any more because the damage deposit maximum for pets is not sufficient.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I increased the number of pets allowed from one to two</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Right tenant.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Bellingham's new rules for the amount of deposit I can charge for a pet is insufficient and I no longer allow pets</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Cats destroyed a unit</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Stopped charging additional security deposit for pets. If pets are going to be destructive, it's more expensive to fix the damage than any security deposit would cover. Have considered charging pet rent. Instead, restrict size and number of pets. Do a reference check on pet as well as people.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I allowed tenant to have one cat only</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Allowed cats. Tenant asked and I allowed</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We decided based upon perceived popularity of pet ownership in the city.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I'll review the new law when the lease renewal gets closer. If the 30% cap applies per pet versus for all animals. If the 30% is for all animals then I will likely reduce the number of animals allowed in the unit because there is a difference in possible damage from 1 pet vs 4-5 pets.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I will no longer accept pets. It is very easy for a pet to do more damage than the law allows me to charge for. It is certainly not my responsibility to cover this cost.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Number of pets allowed to limit conflict with other animals and wear and tear on the units</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I'm going to however. People are trying to destroy the home with fake ESA cats. My family is allergic and we plan to move back in the future.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I will limit the number of pets allowed to one because I am not able to increase the amount collected if there are more pets. More pets mean more wear and tear and greater liability.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Because of the new BS "pet rent", I no longer allow pets. Period. You people sit back making rules because you think corporations are abusing the poor angel tenants, then us small guys get stuck with crap!!!!!!!!</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We have allowed pets because we feel like the new laws undermine us saying no to pets.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>had to many problems with tenants not having enough time for a dog and damages. the new esa law has me considering selling my properties anyone can get a esa to easy, I own a restoring rental property business for 35 years I have seen the worst issues possible during the 35 years I only work for property management companies , I work for four property Mgmt co in Bellingham , the esa has made it so bad every renter with a dog has one !!!!!!!</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I have had my units/property trashed by cat urine and dog crap</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

In the last 12 months, did you change your policy for accepting pets? For example, did you start or stop allowing pets, or limit the type (cat, dog, reptile, etc.), number, or weight of pets allowed? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
I stopped allowing pets due to excessive damage from a previous tenant's pet.	Landlord
After a cat that destroyed all the blinds and screens in the house we decided to not allow pets.	Landlord
Allow small dogs	Landlord
In the last few years, we decided to allow pets because everyone was getting an ESA note from their doctor and then we couldn't charge any pet deposit. Pets do damage!! It can cost thousands of dollars to replace/repair carpet. This new rule is lame. We will max out the security deposit.	Landlord
my tenant wanted an ESA and I didn't want to bother with having their therapist write a note since it's really none of my business and impossible to verify. so i just let them get a cat	Landlord
People Were bringing their pets anyway or claiming emotional support animals when their certificates were nit authentic.	Landlord
Seems as though if you don't allow pets, tenants will find a way to keep their pets through a health professional note	Landlord

Why did you stop renting your rental unit(s)?

Why did you stop renting your rental unit(s)? Other (please specify)	Respondent
challenges finding tenants that qualify for the property	Property Manager
Several rental property owners in Bellingham have recently sold their properties, citing increasing risks and regulatory burdens associated with operating rentals in the city. The cumulative impact of local and state-level mandates—ranging from compliance costs to liability exposure—has made continued ownership untenable for many.	Property Manager
We had owners stop renting for many different reasons, but several had concerns about the viability of keeping rentals due to the many changes favoring Tenants and not protecting the landlords.	Property Manager
Several rental property owners in Bellingham have recently sold their properties, citing increasing risks and regulatory burdens associated with operating rentals in the city. The cumulative impact of local and state-level mandates—ranging from compliance costs to liability exposure—has made continued ownership untenable for many.	Property Manager
upgraded the property	Landlord
Drug users ruined one of my properties	Landlord

Why did you stop renting your rental unit(s)? Other (please specify)	Respondent
My property valuation for 2024 and my subsequent appeal had a direct impact on my decision. I have been renting a below market value for the past 10 years. The regulations also directly impacted my ability to stay above water as a landlord. I would share with the city council this example of unintended consequences because now there is a rental property that was below market value that is off the market.	Landlord
I sold the rental unit because I had too much of a fiasco with the city rental inspection team. They had an inspector insist that I do things to an original 1927 craftsman bungalow that were not required and I had to battle with ignorant amateurs over obviously wrong implementation of existing rules and I am not a bad landlord and the attitude toward me was persecutorial and heavy handed.	Landlord
Renovation	Landlord
I did not stop renting	Landlord
Remodel	Landlord
Moved into one unit	Landlord

Did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations?

In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
Multiple lease alterations in response to the new ordinance in Bellingham	Property Manager
Changes to security deposits, late fees, assorted fees and application fees due to new legislature	Property Manager
To comply with new regulation, which was complicated and expensive, not to mention confusing due to the poor design of the regulation.	Property Manager
Changes were made on 8/1/25 which were required by City of Bellingham	Property Manager
We are significantly increasing rents to all units to the allowable max on renewal and adjusting our new unit market rents. We are no longer able to charge for 2nd occupants for units that consume more utilities as we have the all inclusive utility model. The new regulations cut significant portions or use based fees without adequate timing for our organization to adjust.	Property Manager
For rentals in the City limits, we changed our lease to comply with the new City rules.	Property Manager
Had to completely revamp lease to comply with COB's regulation requirements. Had to also provide addendums to current tenant leases due to fear of repercussions. The change could not have come at a worse time for landlords, in the middle of busy season with college students leasing.	Property Manager
Leases were revised to align with the City's new fee ordinance.	Property Manager

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In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
I use the Rental Housing Association of Washington's forms and they update them regularly to allow for law changes.	Property Manager
Changed all late fees to be no more than 2% and pet deposits are 30%	Property Manager
Late fee amounts Listing fees on the front of page of the lease	Property Manager
Updated Bellingham Lease Templates to be in compliance with the ordinance..	Property Manager
Disclosure of Fees	Property Manager
Many changes. We now add all possible fees to our first page, we made changes to our lease in order to stay current with the recent law changes. We had to modify and in many cases remove several income producing fees.	Property Manager
Pet rent, late fees, posting/legal fees, non compliance fees	Property Manager
We made all required changes in response to changes in State or local laws. We now use a different lease agreement for Bellingham than we do for the rest of the county.	Property Manager
We made changes to our rental agreements to adhere to the new regulations	Property Manager
I had to make lots of changes for our leases to be in compliance with Bellingham's new laws.	Property Manager
read the law	Property Manager
All the required changes in late fees, admin fees etc	Property Manager
Cap on the rent	Property Manager
Yes, made a new agreement for only our rental properties in COB limits.	Property Manager
Made changes to the rental agreement to be in compliance with the updated City of Bellingham rental ordinance.	Property Manager
Due to recent changes in city ordinances, we reviewed and updated our fee structure to ensure full compliance with local regulations. The following fees have been removed or modified as a result of the new ordinance: Pet Deposit and Monthly Pet Fee: Adjusted in accordance with city guidelines. Administrative Fee: Updated to align with permitted processing standards. Tenant Safety Neglect Fees: Modified to comply with revised safety enforcement rules. Smoke Detector Tampering and Smoking Fees: Updated to meet current city restrictions and enforcement limits. Warning Fees: Removed or revised where no longer allowable under the new ordinance. These updates are effective immediately for all new leases and renewals. Our goal is to maintain compliance with city requirements while continuing to promote a safe and well-managed living environment for all residents.	Property Manager

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

<p>In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>All new COB regulations have been incorporated to our leases & practices.</p>	<p>Property Manager</p>
<p>Late Fees - 2% of outstanding balance, with no per day charges. Application Fees = \$50.00.</p>	<p>Property Manager</p>
<p>The dumb stuff we were forced to change on August 1st. Basically taking money from landlords.</p>	<p>Property Manager</p>
<p>Honestly, I don't know. I leave that to Landmark.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>use a property management lease</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Charged less for pet bc I am forced to by regulations even though pets cause a lot of wear and tear. Which I believe is unfair as it is a personal choice to have a pet and lots of people just lie about pet being service animal.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I do not know this for sure as the rental agreements are prepared by Landmark, the company that manages my properties.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Property Manager may have</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>landmark makes all those decisions based on legal changes and what is best... for Landmark</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>lease agreement is drafted by the property management company, I do not know specifics</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We follow the law</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>unsure</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>My property manager amended their lease documents to reflect both City and State rental legislation.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>changes in monthly rent to compensate for changes in tax and other operating costs</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>The requirement to explicitly state fees such as anticipated cleaning fees led me to update my agreement template. I have now included a significant cleaning fee (among others) to meet the new regulations. Unfortunately, these regulations have and will continue to result in increases in the cost of living for tenants.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I use software that has laws included</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I allowed a sublet as the tenant could not afford the rent. I allowed this, found that neither subletter nor leasor followed the agreement, and so I stopped allowing subletters.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I am contemplating changes to make water and sewer tenant responsibility to encourage water use efficiency. Perhaps the same to the garbage service.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I use to use a very simple boilerplate rental agreement but now I use the most sophisticated one available and now I use a professional management company to screen tenants and draw up a lease, whereas before I use to meet the Tennant myself and get to know them.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>no pets</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Clarification: Going forward I will carefully examine the requirements to make sure I am in compliance. But the leases in effect were made prior to the changes.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>but I will not agree to any more than a 6 month lease due to the unpredictability of Whatcom County raising the property tax</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
Our rent-up agency makes all required changes according to state and city requirements.	Landlord
Compliance with new state law/BMC's.	Landlord
The continued excessive valuation of my rental properties has caused incremental rent increases each year. An example... a few years back, my property tax increased 40 percent. Really?!?!? After going years with no rent increases, I had to begin rent increases. Makes absolutely no sense. You talk a good game about wanting “affordability” in housing, yet the council continues to implement programs and rules that cause rents to increase. Shameful!	Landlord
We raised the rent just under 7%	Landlord
I have increased rent primarily because of increased property taxes but also in part due to increased administrative burden associated with rental policies (researching, safety inspection, registration as a landlord, plus I'm wary of an environment that seems increasingly unfriendly towards landlords.)	Landlord
Below average rent. Already had locking mailboxes.	Landlord
Put utilities info on the first page as required.	Landlord
The rental agreement was updated to reflect the changes made by the City regarding the length of time required to notify the tenant of increases in rent.	Landlord
Just related to utilities as mentioned before	Landlord
References to rent increase notice and timeline	Landlord
I make changes frequently and don't remember all of them or why I changed it.	Landlord
I am a member of RHAWA and have updated my forms according to the most recent WA State and City of Bellingham requirements.	Landlord
Raised rent due to Bellingham rental rules. I now have to raise rent every year because if i don't I can't get caught up later.	Landlord
The taxes on our rental continue to go up. We only want to charge our tenants enough to cover the mortgage. As there is no limit to how much our taxes may go up but there is a limit to how much the rent can go up we have no choice to continue to increase rent yearly to the maximum amount in preparation for taxes going up.	Landlord
to reflect the new state laws	Landlord
Used current forms	Landlord
I have my lease reviewed by my attorney every year to make sure that it's within the law. Costs \$2500 every year. The latest one had to be changed because I have to give tenants 90-120 days ahead of time about change of the lease. I am responsible for this and so far haven't raised their rent. But the new rules and review are expensive. And I am branded an evil landlord even though I'm a good landlord.	Landlord
Wording and first page listing of Tennant/landlord paid utilities and or fees	Landlord
I limited the amount (%) of increase to my rental unit due to the limit stated in the amended guidelines~	Landlord
Changes made to comply with new regulations, regarding rent increases, pet deposits etc.	Landlord

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In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
I updated the lease agreement to reflect City of Bellingham rule/law changes. For example, installing a locking mail box.	Landlord
I did not raise rent as much as needed due to the new law.	Landlord
I updated my lease to match the new local and state laws.	Landlord
We eliminated the monthly pet charge and delayed the automatic rent increase because of the new 90 notice requirement for increases. Previously it had been part of the lease agreement and didn't require an additional notice at 90 days.	Landlord
updated to comply with new state/local laws	Landlord
Per your rules	Landlord
I included language about a 5% increase to renew.	Landlord
I increased my rent. I usually only increase when I change out tenants but because of the new rent increase laws I now increase every year.	Landlord
Yes all requirement put in rental agreement.	Landlord
I am seriously considering turning the management of my rental over to a management agency due to added burdens of these regulations. I have always kept rent a little below market in order to secure good relations with tenants and minimize the time I need to be actively involved. With a management company I am projected two have more income and less time involved, even with the added fees.	Landlord
Listing fees on first page as required, dealing with new locking mailboxes, etc.	Landlord
changed to requiring renter's insurance. Updated dates for non-payment notice to match law	Landlord
as required	Landlord
Yes we adhere to new laws	Landlord
To comply with state law for rental increases	Landlord
updates for new regulations	Landlord
I think it was a couple years ago Bellingham required 120 rent increase notification	Landlord
The Bellingham changes were very confusing. I believe rules were needed. But I don't think small landlords should be lumped in with the large agencies what take advanced and treat there tenants and owners poorly. I tried to keep my rent lower than market because I think the rents are to high. But than I got scared with all the new laws coming so fast that I would be caught below market and with little ability to raise my rent to market to market so I raised my rent closer to market.	Landlord
Everything is on the table for the coming year. I suspect we will sell as soon as market recovers. Tenants are gonna be sick with only apartments with the way the state treats property owners. Small owners aware simply gonna get out of the business.	Landlord
Due to city costs going up, property taxes going up, garbage costs going up, water costs going up I have had to raise the rent.	Landlord
I'm no longer going to enter into 12 month leases as I don't know how high the property taxes will go and the City of Bellingham's 120 day requirement for rent increase is too lengthy. It exceeds the state requirement of 90 day notice of increase.	Landlord

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

<p>In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>We ended the lease June 1, 2025 instead of August 1, after more than a decade of rental in order to do upgrades sorely needed.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Everything that changes is almost always due to local regulations. Rules continue to change in favor of the tenant and everything ends up costing me more. More taxes, more utilities, more rules, more lease changes, more time spent = More money passed down to the tenant. I try to be as fair as possible to tenants and it is still over \$7,000 to move in to a unit. I do not have much wiggle room.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>To meet new regulations on one lease we have signed since new regs came into place.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We increased our rent because of the new “8%” change. The previous rate was too low, and we’ve only increased the tenants monthly rent by \$250 over the last 20 years. Our plan is that now, we will have to increase it every year because of the new law.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>COB changes in policies drove me to update leases to ensure a) that my leases comply, and b) to cover myself for any potential cost increases and protection from bad tenant behaviors.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I use a local management consultant to provide forms that are routinely updated due to changes in State law. I also add lease clauses due to local City Ordinances which also change often.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>NSF fee now matches my cost</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Changed to allow security deposit over 3 payments and changed pet policy</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Rent increase to take effect January 2026 to help with increases in property taxes, insurance and utilities as allowed by Bellingham Whatcom County Housing Authority, state and local regulations.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>This is too complex to fully define and bring to mind at the moment without review of my files. We seek to fully comply with requirements and to protect our position of responsibility as owner/manager.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>No change in the language because they were all renewed/extended. But, we have modified our notification timelines to meet current requirements.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Giving more notice to follow new rules. Increasing rent more regularly to keep up with costs, now that there’s a cap on annual rent increases.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Prefer not to say... Except that I'm actively looking for ways to shelter myself from government overreach</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>N/A - Only started renting units in Aug and Sept of this year. Both of my rentals are furnished - one is short-term and the other is mid-term.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>My taxes went up so much I had to increase rent - had not done that in 7 years</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I changed all things to comply with new state law.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Changes made to comply with current statutes.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Can't recall which ones.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Yes, I increased rents to help cover garbage service increases, and cost of doing business in Bellingham i.e. inspections.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>modified rent that was charged</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I raised the rental price to cover my expenses for registration, utilities, and maintenance.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

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In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
My contract covers everything - always has.	Landlord
I made my agreement consistent with policy	Landlord
Updated all agreemtns based on the new city ordinances.	Landlord
I used to rent month-to-month I now require a more comprehensive leasing agreement	Landlord
I allowed a pet without pet deposit.	Landlord
Gave a longer time as is now required for rent increase.	Landlord
We delayed the start of the automatic rent increase until after the law changed and the 90 day notice was sent out. It would have otherwise been in effect two months earlier.	Landlord
Historical lease provision regarding lease rate changes indicated a 75-day notification prior to lease anniversary date (no rate changes were permitted during middle of lease period). Updated the lease rate change notification requirement to 90-days to comply with the legislative change mandating a 90-day notification period.	Landlord
Modified lease to provide a summary on the first page for easy reference. Providing locking mailboxes.	Landlord
In the last 12 months, I raised rent by just under 8%. This was in direct response to the ordinance in the spring of 2023. I had not planned to raise the rent at all prior to that ordinance.	Landlord
Yes, I plan to make changes because of the new local laws.	Landlord
I was obligated to conform to the new laws on leases and rent caps.	Landlord
Lower late fee, added a cleaning fee for new leases as my cleaning person charged me \$60/hr	Landlord
Rental increase notice timeline to meet regulation	Landlord
I had to change the lease to match the rent increase warning COB passed.	Landlord
Yes we updated the lease to delete pet rent and instead charge a refundable pet deposit. We increased base rent to maximum allowed by regulations and the market as a result to recapture that loss.	Landlord
The law required that changes be made and my leases reflect those new changes i.e. 2% late fee, 2% for pet rent, etc.	Landlord
I no longer allow pets. Sorry tenants, the government is protecting you from evil landlords. We know ALL landlords are born evil. Of course tenants are angels.	Landlord
Rent increase	Landlord
We feel like our hands are tied when it comes to animals. We end up getting screwed. Not happy at all with a new policies it ties landlord's hands and renter look for every loophole. We are good landlords yet we feel we get taken advantage of. We've had our last few renters leave the property and an absolute dump and we feel that the new laws encourage that.	Landlord
Deposit charge changes Admin fees Many others	Landlord
Increased rent because of the COB's authoritarian rental inspection program and fees.	Landlord
No pet deposit	Landlord
Required notice for rent increase required a step up period in the new lease for existing tenant.	Landlord

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In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
Increased the rent to help cover the increasing costs, such as forced food plus service, increase in property taxes including School bonds and levies, additional sales taxes applied to supplies and services, purchase and installation costs of locking mailbox and the increased cost of repairs and maintenance, just to name a few reasons.	Landlord
Paid a lawyer hundreds of dollars to keep me out of state and local cross hairs.	Landlord
I have had to increase rent slightly due to increased property taxes and the cities new increased rent regulations and ensuring I remain current with fair rates in the area.	Landlord
renewal notice and increased security deposit	Landlord
To comply with cobbler and wa laws	Landlord
We change to a single family house instead of renting to multiple individuals	Landlord
Modified lease to update terminology and language to match the latest codes.	Landlord
Updated to include new regulations	Landlord
we incorporated the new laws into our lease	Landlord
The City of Bellingham & the State of Washington passed ridiculous regulations that are unlawful.	Landlord
Increased due to increases	Landlord
Although I don't currently have tenants with pets, I plan to not allow them for future leases.	Landlord
I haven't had to change over tenants, however I understand the new rules in place create a liability for me as a landlord to follow the new rules.	Landlord
It is getting harder and harder to justify being a small landlord in Bellingham. The regulatory burden continues to go up. Small landlords like us (tenants tell us they love us as landlords and hate property managers and the large landlords) can't afford a lawyer on staff. Nor someone who can take a day off work for a rental inspection. Small landlords are different, but we are treated as if we can afford full time staff. We are passing costs through that we used to absorb. We have raised rates in advance of new rules that prevent raising rates after freezing rates previously for existing tenants. We now raise our 12mo leases annually. Previously we didn't raise our rates on existing tenants.	Landlord
Listing tenants rights	Landlord
I always make changes to conform with the laws as they change. Because the COB put in limits on rental increases, we will have to raise rents a small amount every year. We used to skip a year or two in order to retain tenants (better for the homes), but given inflation we may have needed to raise rents more and the new limits put in place by COB mean we have to do smaller increases every year now as a preventive measure.	Landlord
Language about renewals notifications and recently the new rules about late fees	Landlord
There were many new changes to the laws. We had to purchase new lease documents to comply with all of the new rules.	Landlord
I will start raising rents w each lease period the legally allowed amount. I Never used to raise rents regularly but now I'm forced to	Landlord
Notified raising rent and to expect future rent increases due to additional costs to operate and assume liability under current regulations	Landlord

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations? If yes, please explain what change you made and why you made the change.	Respondent
rental increases and fees	Landlord
Changes in pet deposit, changes in late fees, changes in transaction fees all due to Aug. 1 regulations	Landlord
We follow WA Landlord Association guidelines to stay compliant with local and state laws	Landlord
I had to take out cleaning carpets and charging to renters and also some other things	Landlord
I will comply with those that know better than me and who are looking out for my best interests The city and state “always” have my interests a priority Hahahahahahahahaha	Landlord
all sorts of changes due to Bellingham's anti-landlord policy changes	Landlord
More CYA unfortunately	Landlord
No changes made to rentals in the past 12 months	Landlord
I'm not sure exactly but we are making changes when we feel we need to.	Landlord
I raised the rent after the the inspection	Unknown

Rental inspector preference.

Prefer a City Inspector

The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?	Respondent
Prefer a City Inspector	
What we have used previously and it's been fine	Property managers
ease	Property managers
I am often out of town and as the program is city run it makes sense for a city inspector.	Property managers
The inspector knows the requirements.	Property managers
Easier.	Landlord
Convenience	Landlord
Consistency. No surprises.	Landlord
City inspectors have historically been reasonable to work with	Landlord
Cheaper?	Landlord
Ease	Landlord
I hope that the fee charged by the city for the inspection program is less than a private inspector would charge.	Landlord
I think there is more control over ensuring everything is correct and up to City standards by using a City inspector.	Landlord
I don't want to have to deal with hiring a private inspector just to have the city ultimately deny the work they complete resulting in more fees. I would prefer to pay an unjust fee that increases the cost of living for tenants one time.	Landlord

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

<p>The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?</p> <p>Prefer a City Inspector</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>We are approaching our first inspection next month with the city inspector, so we will see how it goes.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I don't know of a private inspector. That said, the city inspector experience was inefficient and unhelpful. I believe in the intent here. But the inspector created many issues, namely saying the smoke detectors "didn't work" when he wasn't testing them correctly. That sounds unbelievable even to me. A contractor came and said this is how to test this particular detector. With that inspection, I also want information from the city on all the new laws. It is VERY CONFUSING to keep up with city ordinances and state laws, and whether they apply retroactively. Giving landlords info so we can simply follow the rules would make me feel like I am getting something valuable for the money and hassle of the inspection. As a small-scale landlord, determined to rent to single parents and families with children, I want to feel supported by the City and not like The Man, always out for profit. I am trying to provide NICE housing while also working on my financial goals.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Ease for single rental unit owners.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Someone who is consistent/experienced with inspecting rental house in Bham</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Seems to be easier.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Don't want to track down an independent inspector</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>More convenient</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I live out of state.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Easier</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Seeking out a private inspector takes time, has a private cost, and the City of Bellingham still charges an administrative fee for a rental.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>This made sense for us.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Less steps</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Costs less</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>easier</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>The city inspectors I had were professional and helpful.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Works just fine.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Great service at the City</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>\$100 for a city inspector seems like a reasonable charge. I'm also assuming the city inspector will know what is or isn't allowed per city regulations.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>My property is in the city of Bellingham, so seems appropriate</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I feel they are more qualified regarding city requirements.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Ease/ convince</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>It makes sense for a small operator. However, it is VERY inconvenient that you cannot get a better time/notification on when. Some of us have to take time off work to meet them and it is just a big of waste for us to be sitting around as it is the inspector.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I don't wanna have to look around and find someone</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Easier</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

<p>The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?</p> <p>Prefer a City Inspector</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
Simplicity	Landlord
Easy to schedule, reasonable cost	Landlord
easier and want to comply with all laws and be a good landlord	Landlord
Don't have time to try to find an inspector. And it's just convenient to have the city take care of it and I don't have to worry about a faulty inspection from an independent inspector.	Landlord
It's easier to book an appointment with the City Inspector.	Landlord
Least effort on my part	Landlord
It's simpler and cheaper for me to have a City Inspector. The City requires the inspection; let them inspect.	Landlord
I assume its cheaper	Landlord
Cost	Landlord
Easier	Landlord
Easier/less time involved to use City inspector.	Landlord
City inspector seems more "standardized"	Landlord
It was easier and cheaper	Landlord
I have to do what the inspector says anyway. I have to say, last time they told me I had to put in wired carbon monoxide units - and I got a notice of non-compliance. They were already there - again, branded evil landlord.	Landlord
A standardized city inspector insures that the same criteria is used when assessing properties.	Landlord
Cheaper	Landlord
The person who inspected my unit the first time was kind and professional.	Landlord
I feel like a city inspector will be impartial and inspect all units in the same manner. A private inspector might not be as strict or diligent. I feel like there are a lot of unsafe/un repaired things that don't get noticed or corrected in a lot of the local rental units.	Landlord
Easier to use city inspector.	Landlord
More convenient.	Landlord
Cost of inspection, as I'm a low-income Senior~	Landlord
I have no rational reason for my preference other than I used to think it was the cheaper alternative.	Landlord
Less expensive	Landlord
Cheaper	Landlord
simplicity	Landlord
More trusting of qualifications of city employee	Landlord
I am frustrated that larger landlords can use private inspectors and get around safety violations. The largest landlords, who are the reason the rental registrations was implemented, are still violating local laws and nothing has changed except it has become an extra cost for landlords and increases rents.	Landlord

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

<p>The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?</p> <p>Prefer a City Inspector</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>A railing needed to be added. It had not been required in the past. A different inspector came to re-inspect. He started writing up additional items he saw. Like a place he thought needed foam sealant - although there was plywood behind it. Sealant was added however it seemed out of the norm for him to call out additional issues after the original inspection had been completed.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I've had an inspection exemption because my tenants have been HUD</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Too much trouble to deal with city. Just tell me what it costs.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We expect consistency between inspections.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We do not have to schedule the inspection, the city does.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>They tell us when they will arrive. takes the guesswork out of scheduling with a private inspector. They know what they're looking for in acceptable rentals.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>easier to arrange</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>It is less expensive. However there were numerous mistakes on my last inspection report.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>All landlords should have to use City inspector. Or... All landlords should have to hire a private inspector.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I trust City Inspector will be fine.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Straightforward, less expensive</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Simplicity and the reminder to do it.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>If the cost stays relatively inexpensive, I'm fine with the City Inspector. If the fees go up. I may want to seek a private inspector.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Private inspectors were more costly because they are home inspectors for home purchases which are more comprehensive than rental inspections.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I'm assuming private would be more expensive</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We do not prefer any inspection! We should not have to be inspected, and pay fee, so often when our units have no issues and are in excellent condition.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>No hassle.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Convenience</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Easier to use a city inspector.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>City. It was free...right?</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I think that the city inspector knows the laws/rules very well and do a good job inspecting.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>But better communication when using city inspector as the communication about scheduling was very poor and I got charged and only received 1 email and communicated issue to tenant but they forgot and I got penalized.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I agree with this because I want my renters to be safe on my property. And I am glad for a second opinion.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I have only ever used a city inspector for my required inspection.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>It's convenient, and I know everything will be covered by the city inspector</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why? Prefer a City Inspector	Respondent
I keep my rentals in perfect condition so it's a waste of time for inspection and I might as well let BELLINGHAM do it	Landlord
It's cheaper	Landlord
Prefer none, but city process simpler	Landlord
Less hassle. I have only one rental and it's silly I have to go through all the hoopla.	Landlord
Easier (so far), although we have experienced inconsistency of scrutiny depending on who has responded.	Landlord
Easier to set up	Landlord
personal choice	Landlord
Less logistics	Landlord
I have had very positive experiences with our city inspectors and I completely support rental registration and safety inspections.	Landlord
Low cost	Landlord
Simpler than finding and paying and scheduling my own person. Or it should be, but wasn't simple this year, it was a big mess.	Landlord
I feel it was a simpler process to use the city inspector.	Landlord
Seems easier to arrange.	Landlord
The city inspector has been timely and easy to work with.	Landlord
My city inspector was very knowledgeable.	Landlord
free	Landlord
We used a city inspector. It all went well.	Landlord
because they are the final say, and maybe less \$?	Landlord
The house is in great condition. This is a cheaper option.	Landlord
Seems to make sense if the city is requiring it	Landlord
Simpler	Landlord
It's the cheapest option but still too expensive	Landlord
Easier	Landlord
I've always used the city inspectors. Simpler than having to find and book a private inspector and feel I they have been fair and objective.	Landlord
City Inspectors are easily bribed with alcohol and distracted by shiny objects.	Landlord
Less expensive	Landlord
less expensive	Landlord
I would rather not have to find my own inspector.	Landlord
I went with the city inspector initially due to convenience, and since I had a positive experience, I have continued to go with them.	Landlord
Its easier then hiring a private inspector.	Landlord
more convenient	Landlord
I don't know any inspectors and trust the city to select trustworthy inspectors.	Landlord
free	Landlord

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

<p>The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?</p> <p>Prefer a City Inspector</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
Less logistics when I have only 2 units	Landlord
They know what is required by the city.	Landlord
Convenience	Landlord
It's cheaper	Landlord
Because one was provided with a date... less hassle for me!	Landlord
City inspector is less expensive at this point in time. Whole program is a farce. Program fees are too low to cover inspecting all rental homes every three months. Maybe focus on homes with complaints?..	Landlord
Easier	Landlord
So I do not need to find one.	Landlord
A City inspector would be more consistent in how they review properties. Contracted inspectors are likely to have different standards.	Landlord
Easiest	Landlord
I don't have to schedule with a private inspector. I trust the competencies of the City employee with no issues.	Landlord
I do not need to organize or schedule	Landlord
Using city inspector as of now.	Landlord
Simpler and the fee seem reasonable. Also we have so far found the inspectors to be very fair.	Landlord
I don't live in Bellingham. I'm single a city inspector is easier on me and my tenant	Landlord
It's easy	Landlord
What we have had in past and it seems to work well.	Landlord
It is cheaper	Landlord
I don't want to spend time finding my own private inspector.	Landlord
It has been easier for me to use the City inspector.	Landlord
Easiest option and seemed lowest cost.	Landlord
As a small land lord, I would prefer this was not a thing. Small usually trys to be fair, even when the city goes overboard on there charges	Landlord
[Staff name] inspected my rental recently, 5 star review for what I thought would be an annoying event. He was professional, friendly, and informative.	Landlord
It feels less like you are trying to hide something by using a COB inspector.	Landlord
The city inspector knows the current regulations.	Landlord
The city inspector was wonderful.	Landlord
Less expensive and seemed to work well	Landlord
It is easier to use a City inspector than to find my own.	Landlord
Tenant and landlord agree with using city inspector.	Landlord
City inspector has done a good job and met our needs to date.	Landlord
I find the city inspectors to be user-friendly. (Indeed, I find the COB in general to be accessible and easy to work with)	Landlord
I assume a city inspector will be vetted more thoroughly.	Landlord

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

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Easier.	Landlord
Makes it easier on me to not have to find someone the City will approve.	Landlord
it was easy	Landlord
However, the last inspection of my 12 year old building (12 units) \$1200 and it took a total of 1 hour!	Landlord
Just seems easier than researching and finding a private inspector	Landlord
Ease of booking. Our City inspector was extremely professional and friendly.	Landlord
I am forced to have the inspection so I figure with the obscene taxes I already pay that the city might be cheaper?	Landlord
It is cheaper.	Landlord
Cheaper	Landlord
Good experience	Landlord
less cost	Landlord
As long as I have to get it inspected, I want it done right.	Landlord
This should only be required once every 5 years if landlord shows compliance. And if there's a fee it should be the same regardless of if a landlord is small (higher cost) or big Wall Street bank. Fees should be the same!! I have no respect for Bellingham since you give fee discount to large corporate landlords. What you show is that the fee isn't a fee but just a Money grab since it can be discounted for big landlords. So you lost my support.	Landlord
Less expensive overall	Landlord
I figure they know what to look for and are in and out quickly causing less disturbance to tenants.	Landlord
quick, reliable, consistent, fair	Landlord
Directly informed of all aspects of the process	Landlord
Trust City staff to do complete inspection	Landlord
It's easy because the city arranges the inspector.	Landlord
It is the same price and more convenient. The \$45 fee that the city applies to people using a private inspector makes the cost savings negligible. It is meant to look on the part of the city to create a sense of choice or a supporting a free market, when it doesn't actually benefit the landlord.	Landlord
I think it is slightly less expensive for a city inspector.	Landlord
because it's well organized and for a low fee	Landlord
less expensive	Landlord
Cost	Landlord

Prefer a private inspector

The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?	Respondent
Prefer a Private Inspector	
City inspectors have been problematic for scheduling, and inconsistent in their standards.	Property Manager
I can't wait at rental for the 2-3 hr window for the inspector. That is too inconvenient for me and the tenant. It's easier to make an appt with a private inspector.	Property Manager
City is very disorganized- lacks systems for processing information. Loses information, their inspectors are not consistent in reporting. Gives time window of when they will be at property for multiple locations. How can I be in more than one place at a time waiting...??	Property Manager
Use private inspectors in Seattle, as well. It has worked well for us.	Property Manager
Did not have a good experience with the rental registration inspectors	Property Manager
We worked with the City inspectors for a long time, but after continuous issues with scheduling and inaccurate reporting done by the inspector, we now use a private inspector. This is all documented via email as well, and we did confirm that the inspector was making invalid claims and failing inspections when they should not have been failed. One of the supervisors's attended the inspections as well in an effort to train that inspector, and pointed how he was wrong with his assessment. This took up way to much of our time and the tenants time and created yet another inconvenience brought on by the City of Bellingham. And we have not forgotten that you charge more for this program now too which makes zero sense. You charge more for worse service? That makes not sense at all. We have also not forgotten that the rental registration program increased their costs to offset the cost of doing business and their general operating costs, but when a landlord or property manager does this, they are the bad guy...	Property Manager
city inspectors are not organized and do not understand anything outside of the inspection they are conducting. Private inspectors understand that we and the tenant are their client and treat both parties with professional customer service. City inspectors many times act like they are there to do us a favor and we should be happy they are there at all.	Property Manager
Easier to plan inspections for a specific time rather than a large time frame with this size property.	Property Manager
It is far easier to schedule with a private investigator than with the city.	Property Manager
Easier to coordinate schedules with private inspector.	Property Manager
It's cheaper.	Property Manager
Easier to coordinate with making an appointment- city has an arrival window, not an exact time.	Property Manager

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The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?	Respondent
Prefer a Private Inspector	
we do not utilize City of Bellingham inspectors for rental property evaluations. Based on repeated experiences, we have found that city inspectors often lack the necessary expertise, make inaccurate assessments, fail to appear for scheduled appointments, and issue charges that are unjustified. To ensure accuracy, accountability, and timely service, we rely exclusively on qualified private inspectors. We believe this approach better protects both property owners and tenants by maintaining higher standards of professionalism and reliability.	Property Manager
Communications are better	Property Manager
We have found in the past that working with the city can be difficult.	Landlord
Prefer not to answer	Landlord
I used a city inspector the last time and it was a fiasco and he was incompetent and did not know what kind of rules applied to my building and made it extremely stressfull and not worth the hassle talking with someone who did not know what they were doing, having to go over their head to higher officials, quoting to them the correct regulations, which, if I had followed, would have caused enormous and unnecessary time and expense and forced the Tennant to move out to do unnecessary repairs.	Landlord
Thank you for asking. This city inspection began with minimal charge and staff. As with most bureaucratic 'empire building' that has changed. Staff has increased and costs increased exponentially. Landlord/Tenant problem resolution has historically been a Washington State issue. Because Bellingham is a college town, the City Council apparently decided those students needed local support. It's a clear cut example of government over-reach. Now we're stuck with an escalating program. For example, the annual fee increases and now landlords must pay an additional fee to the city in order to hire a private inspector who must already be trained and approved by the city. I'm simply trying to limit the CoB imposition into my rental business by hiring a private inspector. Granted, it's a losing effort because the City Council has all the control.	Landlord
More availability	Landlord
no particular reason	Landlord
Availability	Landlord
City inspectors are overprice and lack proper training.	Landlord
Costs less and is more flexible	Landlord
Easier to deal with private companies than the government.	Landlord
I like it when it is a third party and seems more subjective.	Landlord
I thought the city inspector was UNREASONABLE	Landlord
Felt more nimble to go w private inspector	Landlord
Cheaper	Landlord
Cheaper, faster, more pleasant to work with.	Landlord
A third party inspector will likely be the least biased.	Landlord
Support local inspectors (although some do not get back to me).	Landlord

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<p>I'd rather support a local small business rather than the city machine. This aspect should be privatized.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I believe a private inspector brings a possibly more objective third party approach. I admit to having a bit of "fear" of government power and potential abuse without objective considerate reasonable judgmental considerations.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>The city charges too much for an inspection. This is an absurd program! Why not target properties that have had complaints from tenants? This is an added expense I pass along to my tenants (thanks to the city) which needlessly increases their rent. Bellingham always complains about the lack of affordable housing and these types of programs only add to the problem. I have always been a conscientious landlord maintaining my properties in excellent condition.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I am acquainted with a good certified inspector and prefer to give her my business</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Cheaper and easy to schedule</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Easier</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I used the city inspector and he only knocked once and waited 20 seconds then left. I have a camera to prove. We did not hear him arrive.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Because I private inspector is much cheaper.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Easier to schedule</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Easier to contact and arrange day/time with private inspector. Although - I was very unhappy at the \$45 ADMINISTRATION fee by the COB ON TOP of the fee for the inspection. It should be e.g \$10 at most</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>ease of scheduling. I'd use a city inspector if they could be scheduled on a shorter timeline.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I get to chose the inspector and get the best rate and professional</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Flexibility of private inspector</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Independent inspectors are easier and quicker to respond with</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I feel I am paying into an ineffective program. I agree with the goal of the program. But enforcement is lacking. I see rentals that are clearly safety hazards yet the landlord isn't forced to make improvements</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>More to choose from.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I like to support local business inspectors</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>That's how we have handled it in the past and it's worked out well.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Unsure</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>The city has no business coming into my property</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>No</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I have an inspector I know and trust</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Private inspectors can be fired and have to work for their jobs. City inspectors have no reason to be reasonable, understanding, or try to work with landlords in anyway shape or form. - I've never had an issue but consider the difference between the service at the DMV and a private licensing shop.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

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Prefer a Private Inspector	
I prefer a private inspector because of the price but now the junk fee that the city charges even with private inspectors makes it clear that the city just wants the money.	Landlord
Easier to schedule	Landlord
They show up on time	Landlord
The city inspector didn't know the regulations and was going to require us to put an egress window in a basement studio apartment. (Bed was 8 feet from egress door to outside). The rental inspection department was rude, demanding, and refused to research the codes. We found that experience incredibly demoralizing, scary, and made us question our 30 year commitment to being a small landlord in Bellingham. On another unit, we were fined because a tenant took down all five (all our have CO detection, and we have more detectors than required) of their smoke/co detectors. Not the tenant getting fined, us. Deeply unfair.	Landlord
Nicer and individuals in general. Less intimidating	Landlord
cost is better	Landlord
Quick and easy to get inspected with private inspector	Landlord
privacy for tenants	Landlord

No Preference

The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?	Respondent
No preference	
Prefer the city and private option.	Landlord
Whom ever is cheaper	Landlord
I think either of them are reliable.	Landlord
I have not had any problems with inspections and maintain my property myself.	Landlord
Managed by our property management company.	Landlord
My management company makes that decision/	Landlord
i do not manage the matter, and surely do trust city staff to carry out their jobs.	Landlord
I have a rental manager who makes these determinations (with my approval only if necessary).	Landlord
I have made all the changes. Locked mailbox, and others.	Landlord
I would like to have an inspection exemption as a small player in the market renting well below market rate according to the IRS.	Landlord
I would prefer no in inspection. I feel the entire program is waste of time and money at the expense of my tenants	Landlord
however the first inspection by the city inspector was nit good, as he left the gas range turned on. it was on for many hours before tenants returned home. I did point this out to the city at the time	Landlord

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<p>The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?</p> <p>No preference</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>What a circus. When implemented I thought this would be great for those tenants who are living in substandard conditions. Nope, this is just the opposite. If there's no complaints or past violations, why would you continue to impose these fees on landlords. These will then be passed on to tenants. Last year, the inspector showed up with a brand new, city provided vehicle. How does this make any sense. This has turned I. To another top heavy, wasteful, bureaucratic program that only helps those who are getting paid to run these programs. I'd love to adjust this program to actually help those who have issues that landlords ignore. Get the word out about the steps to filing a complaint, stop inspecting wastefully!!!</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I have had one inspection so far and used a City Inspector because it seemed easier to set up.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I should have done private though, I feel I would have had a more thorough inspection so I can fix anything. The city guy was there for 5 minutes.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>But I have one small house 678 sq foot total and think I should be allowed an exemption.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Seemed easy enough to schedule an inspection from the city. I can't imagine why I would go out of my way to find a private inspector.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I prefer you deal with problem landlords and leave the rest of us alone without the extra bill.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I have used City inspector. One year he was great, one year he was unprofessional, didn't want to be there and spent less than 5 mins inspecting (2025).</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Whatever method is most affordable to the taxpayer is my preference.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I want whatever is cheapest!</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I didn't know there was an option, I just had the city do it.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I believe private is less expensive so will look at that next time</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I don't know anything about the process. Am I supposed to initiate?</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Prefer for the government to stay in their own lane.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>The inspection cost the same either way what's the difference?</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I have never used private inspections</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I think there should be options for either city or private, so I'm glad both options are on the table. Then the property manager can decide which is best.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Depends on cost and ease of scheduling</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>I've used both.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Both are just window dressing.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>Couldn't find any private inspector this year. City's list was old and not updated.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>We always pass, I don't care who does it</p>	<p>Landlord</p>
<p>There are limited private inspectors, I am a realtor and the home inspectors I use don't do these city rental inspections.</p>	<p>Landlord</p>

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can use a City or private inspector. Which do you prefer and why?	Respondent
No preference	
I have used the city inspector. I don't have a preference.	Landlord
New build exemption.	Landlord
My daughter is the tenant and has a section 8 housing voucher with BWCHA since 2005 and we are required to have annual/biannual inspections	Landlord
I appreciate being exempt from this requirement as an owner-occupied residence with one ADU!	Landlord
I own a duplex and I live in one until and my tenant lives in the other.	Landlord

Do you have any additional comments of feedback?

The final question of the survey asked respondents if they have any additional comments or feedback. Nearly 300 respondents provided a written comment. Staff created 11 tags to help identify common themes and topics throughout written responses. These tags can be used to find comments related to the topic in the table below but should not be used as an exact count. Tags used keywords and phrases to give an estimate of the number of times respondents mentioned each topic. General themes are summarized below, but Council Members are encouraged to read the full comments to fully understand the nuance of respondent experiences and feedback.

Tag	Comments Tagged	Tag	Comments Tagged
Insurance	6	Rental Inspections	76
Mailboxes	11	Rental Registration	41
Pet Policies	21	Rent Increase	34
Property Tax	30	Rent Stabilization	29
Rental Fee Regulations	37	Suggestions	65
Utilities	16		

Property Managers

Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Property Manager Responses	Tags
<p>The recent city ordinance significantly impacts both property owners and management companies by restricting or eliminating many standard fees previously used to maintain accountability and property safety. While the intent may have been to protect tenants from excessive charges, the outcome has created unintended consequences that undermine responsible property management.</p> <p>For example, penalties such as a \$200 fee for a missing smoke detector or smoking inside a non-smoking unit were not excessive — they were necessary to ensure safety and protect the property from costly damage. By minimizing or removing these penalties, the ordinance effectively reduces tenant accountability for neglect or rule violations, which may increase long-term property risks and maintenance expenses.</p> <p>Additionally, the ordinance fails to account for administrative costs that property management companies incur to provide professional oversight, documentation, and compliance. Administrative fees exist for a reason — they cover the time, staffing, and systems required to ensure properties are managed safely and efficiently.</p> <p>Not all property management companies imposed excessive or unreasonable fees; many of us operated transparently and fairly, with structures in place to maintain high standards and safety for both tenants and owners. Removing these tools without providing a minimum threshold for enforcement or recovery puts responsible property owners and managers at a disadvantage.</p> <p>If this approach continues, it may discourage landlords from keeping properties within city limits, ultimately reducing the availability of well-managed housing. There is always more to every side of an issue — and it's essential that future policy changes consider the broader impact on those who uphold housing quality, safety, and accountability in our community.</p>	<p>Rental Fee Regulations</p>
<p>LEAVE LANDLORDS ALONE!! I HOPE THEY ALL SELL AND THERE IS NO HOUSING LEFT IN THIS PLACE!! YOU ARE TERRIBLE AND COST LANDLORDS SO MUCH MONEY ALL FOR PEOPLE TO MOVE IN AND DESTROY UNITS AND NEVER PAY US!!</p>	

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Property Manager Responses	Tags
<p>The rental regulation specifically in the City of Bellingham has gotten way out of hand. It is very hard for property managers and construction contractors to adapt to new requires continually to maintain compliance. This burden is becoming unbearable, and many developers are saying they are done investing within the Bellingham City Limits, and are looking to other cities for development of more rental properties due to the regulation in place both for construction and rental ordinances.</p>	<p>Rental Fee Regulations</p>
<p>The City of Bellingham’s recent rental ordinances have placed an undue burden on property management businesses. Capping fees and restricting how private companies generate revenue is fundamentally wrong. These regulations disregard the realities of operating a service-based business and effectively force property managers to operate at a loss. The added administrative strain, compliance costs, and liability exposure—without corresponding flexibility or compensation—are unsustainable. These policies undermine the viability of professional property management and erode the incentive to maintain high standards. We strongly oppose these measures and urge the City to reconsider their impact on small businesses and housing providers.</p>	<p>Rental Fee Regulations, Pet Policies</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Property Manager Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>I rated this section:</p> <p>"Understanding the City's new rental fee regulations. Understanding the Rental Registration requirements. Understanding the City's Rental Safety Inspection process. Complying with the City's new rental fee regulations. Complying with the Rental Registration requirements. Complying with the City's Rental Safety Inspection process."</p> <p>as 2 (somewhat easy) only now after we have put in the work to understand these subjects to the degree that we needed to, as a company, we have invested significant time consulting with multiple attorneys to determine the best path forward. Each provided differing opinions and interpretations—which I understand is not uncommon—but it made navigating the process more complex.</p> <p>We have put in extensive efforts to research, meet, and ensure compliance with the new requirements. I do appreciate that the City of Bellingham allowed some time before implementing the recent changes; however, it was not sufficient given the scope and complexity of the updates.</p> <p>These were major, time-consuming changes on many levels. Internally, we had to train employees on the new regulations, revise our lease agreements for compliance (again requiring legal review with differing guidance), completely change and modify internal operating procedures and communicate these updates to both tenants and property owners. We also had to adjust our company's services and fee structure accordingly to align with the City's new regulations.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Fee Regulations, Rental Inspections, Pet Policies</p>
<p>The change in City Rental Regulations has been challenging to implement in part due to the lack of support, training and education materials for landlords. The quick implementation date was challenging to comply with.</p>	<p>Rental Fee Regulations</p>
<p>the building system is such a mess. we are still in the process of getting 2025 cleaned up and you've already billed for 2025. You say that we can use a private inspector, but you scheduled 3 days before with our office for an inspection at a duplex, while I was in italy. No documents to say we had even got - we were told you would wave the fee and it's still not been done and that was months ago. It was even proper notice if we were the tenants. It was rescheduled for 2 weeks later and we were glad to make that happen</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I would have attended a training, but we didn't find out until after it was over. Bellingham seems to be more hostile to housing providers than in the past, which is very sad. We manage 86 units in 1 property.</p>	<p>Rental Registration</p>

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Property Manager Responses	Tags
90 units in another property that is just outside the rental registration program. Another property in Ferndale. We don't own any units.	
Too much Government control. Makes my job extremely complex with all the regulations.....	
I agree with many changes that are occurring and honestly most of them were already a part of our company practices. However the fees and fines have been regulated to such a low amount or are now none existent that there is little to no reason for tenants to abide by the rules of their lease or pay rent on time or at all. We no longer encourage Investment property owners to purchase units in Bellingham as the rules have left little upside for them to do so. I am happy to be a part of any future discussion on this matter with city representatives. As a 4th generation Whatcom county resident and an owner of a property management company in Bellingham I think I may be able shed light on the Local perspective.	Rental Fee Regulations
Too many fees and charges to keep track of and less income for owners. Also less consequences and liability for tenants who are constantly late on rent or lease violations. Owners and Property Managers are struggling to manage properties with the lack of consequences for tenants.	Rental Fee Regulations

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Property Manager Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>As a housing provider committed to safe, well-managed rental housing, we strongly oppose the City of Bellingham’s Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program (RR&SIP) and the recent expansion of rental fee regulations, including the so-called “junk fee” ordinance.</p> <p>We do not support the premise that private rental housing requires municipal oversight beyond the robust protections already provided under Washington State law. The RR&SIP imposes redundant inspections, excessive administrative burdens, and unjustified costs that penalize responsible operators while failing to address the root causes of substandard housing. These mandates increase housing costs, reduce rental supply, and discourage participation by small landlords.</p> <p>The City’s updated regulation targeting “junk fees” is equally problematic. While framed as consumer protection, it reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of how professional property management operates. The ordinance arbitrarily restricts legitimate, itemized charges—such as administrative fees, adequate late fees, lease violations fees that would actually deter someone from violating the lease and application processing costs—that are standard across the industry and fully disclosed to tenants. By prohibiting these fees, the City forces housing providers to absorb operational costs or embed them into rent, undermining transparency and fairness.</p> <p>We reject the notion that government should dictate the structure of private contracts between landlords and tenants. These regulations erode property rights, increase compliance risk, and create a hostile environment for housing providers. We urge the City to reconsider its approach and engage with rental professionals as partners—not adversaries—in maintaining safe, affordable housing.</p> <p>A voluntary, education-based model would be far more effective than punitive regulation. We advocate for policies that respect the expertise of housing providers, preserve contractual freedom, and promote housing stability without unnecessary interference.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Fee Regulations, Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>they need to have better guidance</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>Invest in a system to organize your information. Consistency of inspectors. Educate the tenants on what and why you are doing these.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Consistent staffing makes a big difference.</p>	

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Property Manager Responses	Tags
These changes to the regulations have a negative impact on our plans to do additional development in Bellingham. The added regulations from the City of Bellingham and the State of Washington are forcing our hand to increase rents.	
The rental regulations the City of Bellingham imposed on 8/1/25 did not give Landlord's enough notice to make all the required changes. It was not a well thought out ordinance.	Rental Fee Regulations
Most issues in units that fail are tenant caused, or issues they failed to report as required. Typically removing smoke/CO detectors, cleanliness issues, tenant caused damage. It's especially problematic when tenants are combative, refuse access, or have health problems that prevent them from complying. Somehow the landlord is still responsible for the issues caused by the tenants.	Rental Inspections

Landlords

Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
City claims to be worried about affordable housing but everything they touch they make it more and more expensive for the homeowner/ landlord. We are over regulated for building, over regulated landlord laws, over taxed. Nothing the city is doing is making it affordable to live here. In 5th generation Bellingham resident and know too many people who have been pushed out of town because of how expensive and over regulated we are	Property Tax
The more the city follows the City of Seattle and their rental regulations, you will force out the good, small landlords like myself. I have a legal background, yet the more laws placed the harder it is to want to stay in the rental business. Example removing sub-let fees, which is a burden for a landlord to have to do extra work because a student wants to get out of the lease.	Rental Fee Regulations
Seems like so much of this regulation is a result of a few bad landlords and instead of correcting their irresponsibility, all landlords now have to suffer the regulations. A lot of wasted time and money for all parties. I'm assuming that most of the safety inspections pass without any problems. That's my perception anyway. I could be wrong.	Rental Inspections
locked mailboxes for a house is NOT needed, but extra expense!!	Mailboxes
I think both Bellingham's new laws and the state's new laws are not nearly as clear as they could be with the state laws the most confusing.	Rental Fee Regulations, Rent Stabilization

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
between the city of Bellingham, exorbitant tax increases insurance increases. Garbage increases water and sewer rate increases. It is becoming exceedingly difficult to have any sort of lower income units available in the city of Bellingham, it's become untenable to do business with the city.	Property Tax, Insurance, Utilities
No, Just waiting for my first inspection.	Rental Inspections
Because of the new rule that rent could not be raised more than 8% a year, I had to raise my rents as I was more than 8% below market rents. While the new rule was an attempt to keep housing affordable, as a landlord I feel it does the exact opposite. Market value is determined by the income a property generates, so keeping rents low for tenants might be something a landlord likes to do as it reduces turnover, they are penalized for doing so when they go to sell. The new rule results in tenants having to pay higher rents.	Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization
My HOA will not provide handicapped parking says it's not in the collective agreement, isn't this a human rights issue?	
Honestly- I think it is a joke and a money grab for the city The city is not liable for anything after a "inspection" and it just is another thing to hassle landlords I have excellent relationships with our tenants and wish the city and all their rules and regulations would disappear	Rental Inspections
It is harder and harder to be a landlord in Bellingham. I have now turned over all my properties to a management company because I can't keep up with all the laws and regulations. And many people seem to be aggressively against landlords. We are making less and charging more, by doing this so in the end, I think the tenants lose. I used to like being a small time landlord and really treating my tenants well and getting things fixed fast and better quality than they expected for the rental.	Rent Increase
I removed my rental from the market and sold to a private owner. The one sided anti landlord regulations, rent control and tremendous property tax increases made it untenable and unprofitable to be a landlord in Bellingham any further. I know a number of others who did or are doing the same thing. In addition, the number of pet friendly rentals is going to decrease due to the inability to recoup expenses if damage should occur. If they had simply required tenants carry renters insurance that covered pet damages liability that would have mitigated and even increased the number of pet friendly rentals. Instead the policy as enacted will and is leading to more animals in the already overcrowded shelters and rescues.	Property Tax, Insurance, Suggestions, Pet Policies, Rent Stabilization
This is not a survey about my experiences operating in Bellingham. This is about collecting information.	

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
Please see my comments above. I had been renting it below market value for some time. The nature of the regulations and valuation process made me decide to sell my property. This was a property with a below market rental rate that is no longer available to tenants in your area.	
They are unnecessary and driving up the cost of living for tenants.	
We are mom and pop landlords and have high standards for our property, The Schermerhorn Apartments. We appreciate that the City also has a standard for rentals in the City of Bellingham. We run a tight ship, take pride in our rentals, and have property managers so our tenants are safe and happy. It is important to us to provide a good product to our tenants, and the City helps us by providing guidelines for doing so.	
where is the money going? Of course, increases in your costs to the landlord will be passed on to the tenant.	Rent Increase
We elected to sell our rental because the city imposed requirements were becoming onerous. Now there is one less affordable housing unit available for rent	
I think the ordinance passed by the City is far too aggressive in favor of tenants. There is effectively zero recourse for a landlord for bad tenant behaviour. No enforcement with any teeth. More management responsibilities, equals more management costs, and the ordinance prohibits any fees to be collected, so those additional costs get passed on to the landlord. Rents will go up to cover these costs. I think the City Council passed legislation written to address the 5% of bad landlords at the expense of the 95% who are behaving fairly. This ordinance will drive out local owners and landlords and consolidate management with corporate firms, which is bad for our community. I am dissapointed in our Council for passing this legislation and ignoring the concerns raised by property owners and managers.	Rental Fee Regulations, Rent Increase
I rely on my Rental management company to make sure we comply with rental laws	
Providing a rental in Bellingham has become increasingly difficult. The inspection process has cost us a large amount of money for changes that did not materially impact the safety or comfort of our rentals. We are likely to sell our single family rentals sooner than we'd prefer because the aggravation of being a Bellingham landlord is no longer worth it.	Rental Inspections
Your making renters have more rights than landlords.....not good	
If the City makes being a landlord so miserable, no one is going to want to be a landlord. Then there will be almost no privately owned rental properties in Bellingham. We would like to stay, but we already have a plan ready to go to sell and leave.	

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
I am happy to be working with a rental business called Landmark Real Estate. They are very helpful in explaining the regulations.	
Sure, so when you make it so difficult to be a landlord that every landlord leaves the city, how do you plan to provide housing for would be tenants? Additionally, how many of you on the policy making committee have ever been a landlord? And finally, can you please simplify the wording in your policies and regulations so that someone with an eighth grade education could understand them?	Suggestions
do the best you can, guys and girls, i appreciate our city country and state government while we still have it. Said with a smile, but not a joke, really	
Too much regulation. Avoid this market and type of investment.	
I'm glad there are safety inspections. I've always tried to have a safe, comfortable and pleasant experience for our tenants.	Rental Inspections
I have sold one of my units and you're still trying to charge me for it	
Consistency in applying Health & Safety issues moving forward important to me	
I am distant from these regulations as I have all of my properties managed by Landmark.	
For 40 years I have kept my rents well below par in order to keep good renters. The local ordinances and city intrusion into my business has caused me to hire a property manager who let me know that rents will always be at maximum levels. I rarely raised rents but now they will increase at whatever rate the city allows.	Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization
The regulations are becoming prohibitive to continuing to own a small number of units. The rent increase limits plus fee restrictions are limiting our ability to provide building improvements and cover increasing property taxes. All of which drives the monthly rent cost. The burden is becoming high to own.	Property Tax, Rental Fee Regulations, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization
I am in strong disagreement with the rental requirement regarding pets. I feel like I am forced to allow pets because people will just lie about their pets being service animals even when they are not. And 2% often does not cover the impact caused by a pet. It is a personal choice to own a pet and that comes with costs and it should not be the landlords onus to bear the financial responsibility for the tenants choice to own a pet and sometimes not train that pet and it is very destructive and impractical to the neighbors. If pets are going to be forced on landlords, the owner should be required to complete some sort of training program and certification program that their dog is well behaved and under control.	Pet Policies, Suggestions

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>As a landlord, I like the City of Bellingham Rental Team. They have been helpful in answering questions. The one and only concern I have is over the Late Payment penalty charges. Say, if you were away/abroad and forgot to pay \$20 fee on time, it becomes a ridiculously high amount in a short period of time with late penalties. The late fees/charges need to be reconsidered by the council or someone with authority/responsibility. This is my sincere feedback. Thank you for the feedback opportunity and for your consideration.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Suggestions</p>
<p>I wish the City could understand that everytime they make it more difficult and costly for us to do business with our customers, that the price of our product will be affected.</p>	
<p>Regarding the rental inspection and rental registration fee: Scheduling the inspection is difficult to accomodate dates and times. The rental registration fee was initially \$10. Then it increased to \$20.00. This is a 100% increase in the span of one year with no warning and to maintain the city database, the cost of which can not have increased by 100% in one year. Between this and the rental inspection fees it feels a bit of a money grab on the part of the city. I have one single family home that is well maintained. The inspector walks around for 15 minutes and the fee is \$100. One would think that if a home has continuously passed inspection over multiple years that the inspection spacing would be increased as the landlord, clearly, knows how to maintain a safe and suitable rental environment. That would be an incentive for people to keep rental properties in good order, which would benefit the renter.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Over kill and not really a life safety issue but it's about a whole new government department and a way to make the people feel like government is protecting them. Bottom line city is doing everything it can to generate more money because money brings power and we all know government wants to be all powerful over everyone. Write the rules for the worst offenders and then make those of us who still rent a 2 bedroom apartment for \$400 - \$800 per month comply with all the rules and increased business cost and still keep the rents down for people who just want to live a normal life apart from city regulation. I was born and raised in Bellingham and government has ruined what used to be a pleasant place to live. Get out of my life and let my tenants enjoy some security in their rent amount! I have absorbed all the extra costs to protect my tenants, what have you done to do the same?</p>	
<p>Will review website further and let you know if questions</p>	
<p>I already addressed the ESA privacy concerns with council members and nothing came from it.</p>	<p>Pet Policies</p>
<p>Taxes and insurance keep skyrocketing and the state is trying to determine rents. This is bad.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Insurance, Rent Stabilization</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>The only challenge that I have had is arranging to meet the inspector. You get a time window. I don't live there, and many of my renters have animals. Having a specific time would make life easier for everyone.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>The city council has been exploring some idiotic ideas for clamping down on landlords. They will force us to raise rents, for sure. Yes, there are bad actors out there, but most of us want to provide housing, make a small profit, and take care of our properties. More rules and more expenses and more limitations will mean higher rents. Perhaps if you make it so expensive to own a property and rent it out, we will all be forced to sell them... and maybe that's the goal? But what will happen to the multifamily apartments...?</p>	<p>Rent Increase</p>
<p>These rules are a blunt and inflexible tool to address the actions of terrible landlords like Lakeway Realty or Hammer. Enforcing the existing regulations would have just as effective but wouldn't have been so hard on small landlords with less than 5 units. Small landlords get to know their tenants personally and are preferred by tenants. I encourage you to poll tenants and ask about their satisfaction with their landlord/property managers. The owner operators/micro landlords will have statistically significantly better ratings by tenants.</p>	
<p>Rental regulations are not easily found on line. Also there are old regs and new regs out there which complicate understanding which are valid. There doesn't seem to be any policing of registration. Optional?</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Fee Regulations, Suggestions</p>
<p>Right idea, bad execution. I plan to sell soon to avoid all the hassle. You will keep losing good landlords who can't protect themselves from pet damage, non paying tenants etc. small local landlords are exiting the market. Bellingham will be another corporate owned city. Good luck!</p>	<p>Pet Policies</p>
<p>I would like to do everything online but city has a poor designed website. Did pay in person and even with invoices was many problems. I had to go back and forth to proof my payments.</p>	
<p>Wish city spent more time on enforcing policy then creating new charges to small landlords</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>
<p>The rental inspection process was very challenging this go around. The inspector did not have an accurate understanding of the code and gave me poor advice and was challenging to communicate with in the field. He told me meandering stories of all his experiences while also dispensing inaccurate information. The building official luckily corrected the inspector's understanding of the code and I was able to avoid very expensive and unnecessary changes to my unit. Additional training of the City inspectors on the scope of their enforcement authority and the specifics of the code requirements seems a worthwhile investment.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>prefer program be discontinued or waive the annual fee if a mandate is required such as new mailboxes</p>	<p>Mailboxes, Suggestions</p>
<p>Communication with the city is challenging. Incorrect letters were sent to us, including for properties we do not own, and with incorrect inspection dates. Contacting to correct this was very difficult. Extreme reactions by this department for missed deadlines is very frustrating. For example, our reminder to renew our permit for \$20.00 was paid by check through US Mail, which your department did not receive. Without contacting us, we were just assessed a \$50.00 fine, for a total of \$70.00. That's a 110% late fee. Oddly, I am not allowed to charge my tenants a 110% late fee on their late rent! In addition, the inspection program is unnecessary. Tenants have the right to file complaints about their landlord or rental property. That's when an inspection should be warranted. We maintain our rental property in excellent condition and often update or replace any item in our house which needs attention. We work closely with our tenant to provide a safe and comfortable home. Your fees only add to the cost of renting in Bellingham, and do little to improve the actual housing issue. Its disappointing that the city does not trust its' property owners to act as good landlords, while focusing on poorly managed properties. Instead COB lumps us all into an "untrustworthy" category assuming all tenants are being victimized. To be truthful, the rental registration program feels very authoritarian. The COB should reconsider the validity of having this type of strict oversight on property owners.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Fee Regulations, Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Transparency should be a right for all parties (tenants & landlords). However, the City of Bellingham's increased rental regulations have created additional stress & worry for me as a small (2 unit) self-managed rental property owner. The new requirements to limit deposits, pet fees, late fees and other fees creates a disincentives approach to owning & managing rental properties in Bellingham.</p>	<p>Rental Fee Regulations, Pet Policies</p>
<p>As a small-time landlord with a full-time job and only 2 units, it can be a burden to stay up to date on rental regulations. I want to treat tenants well and provide them a nice home, but I fear that ever-increasing regulations might make it too costly and time-consuming in the future to manage these rentals, which were intended to be our retirement income. If that happens, we will have to sell.</p>	
<p>Larger condo associations should either be exempt, cost less or extend the frequency if the board can show it maintains all safety maintenance. The city shouldnt treat all properties the same.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
We will most likely be selling our rental unit (detached house) in the next six months. Between the state limiting the amount rent can increase (though we have never come anywhere close to the cap-but limiting this is uncomfortable in the event the increase is needed) and City Council's insistence that private landlords shoulder more risk by way of items such as pet deposit or limiting fees on time-sucking issues such as tenant changeover fees, owning a rental here is no longer part of our long-term plans. It only takes one bad tenant, or even a negligent tenant, to cause financial ruin and this is too much business oversight.	Rental Fee Regulations, Pet Policies, Rent Stabilization
I never want to give more responsibility to the most expensive and incompetent sector of society (government) but I know that's what I'll always get in the Communist state of WA.	
Please stop	
Rental registration is a good thing. I secretly lobbied for it while I was employed by the landmark slumlord agency	Rental Registration
The City of Bellingham is out of control on regulations the are passing for rentals	
Rental registration is a scam; I'm already paying the city taxes. Rental safety inspection is good but should be less frequent over time if owner shows to be ethical and competent.	Rental Registration, Property Tax, Suggestions, Rental Inspections
I hope this program is doing what it intended, protecting renters from slum lords. We only have one unit and care very much about our renters comfort and wellbeing.	
Being a landlord is cumbersome and not worth the hassle	

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>I firmly believe that most of these regulations and programs are the largest factor in the decrease of affordable rentals in Bellingham and the increase in rent amount. The COB cant even manage their own finances, yet they seem to think that they can tell others how to manage their finances. I went many years without increases in rent until the COB started the Rental registration program and regulations. Since the COB started these programs and regulations, I believe in 2015, my costs have gone up considerably and those costs are passed on to the Tenant. I have not missed a year since 2015 without an increase in rent and I don't see that changing anytime soon, thanks to the COB, Whatcom county, Bellingham Schools and Washington state. I am a one rental landlord with a little flexibility to maybe help keep rent amount lower, but COB insisted on running my rental like a business. I was told once that businesses aren't there to make friends, they are there to make money. So now I am trying to be a good businessperson. My goal is to sell this rental and not be a landlord anymore. The COB and Washington state have turned this investment from an asset to a liability. When this property sells, I will assure you that the buyers costs will easily double the housing cost for this unit and take away what is probably one of the more affordable units in Bellingham. Way to go COB and all politicians!</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rent Increase</p>
<p>My long-term tenant really hates the invasion of her privacy every time there's an inspection, an inspection which hardly seems justified given that it's a condo unit in the same condo I live in.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>City staff try to do a good job but the patchwork of policies is a mess. For small landlords like me, it's a big burden to keep track of and comply with the layers of policies. The rental inspection program is well intentioned, but everyone knows that private inspectors will look the other way. I'd suggest shifting to an approach where tenants can complain about sub standard situations and get fast relief from authorities. Generally I'm doing fine as a small time landlord, but the City harms more than helps me. Too much bureaucracy.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>No comment at this time. Everything is straight forward</p>	
<p>I raised rents on response to the new legislation to recoup the increase cost we will incur as a result. I used to keep my rents lower and only increase when a tenant leaves. Now I have an automatic yearly increase, so my rents dont get too far behind market, causing me to be in a pickle if I have a long term tenant. City needs legislation that is linked to results. There is no data to support that these new laws ate keeping rents more affordable and safe. If the law isn't doing what you want you need to find one that does. Piling more regulations is bad for everyone. Im all for keeping tenants safe and making sure predatory landlords are kept in check and reprimanded. Thats not what your legislation is doing.</p>	<p>Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>Navigating the city website and accessing rental registration information is extremely cumbersome, outdated and not clear.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Suggestions</p>

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
<p>1) When the program was started what metrics were set out to determine success/failure? How is the community doing with those metrics? 2) Is the program putting money into city coffers or taking it out?</p>	
<p>The time and fees add to the cost for tenants. I also believe that safety inspections could be more infrequent, say every 5-6 years as little would change during this time.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections, Rent Increase</p>
<p>I think a owner should be able to decide if you allow a dog , this esa is terrible as all I do is restore property management properties for a living for over 35years , tenants in general have gotten worse over the past 5 years on respecting rentals see it every day</p>	<p>Pet Policies</p>
<p>I find the online system used to pay the rental registration is hard to use, it is very clunky- not very streamlined or efficient.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Suggestions</p>
<p>Previous inspection found no problems. This year's inspection mandated that I change all my handrails at significant expense to me. I fear more costly mandates in the future and because of that I am actively looking to sell my rental home.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>My "rental" is actually a condo occupied by my daughter and her husband. It is not available to anyone else or the free market. They pay for most operating costs of my ownership (condo fees, taxes, utilities) as "rent". Unfortunately, the Bellingham regulations treat this arrangement just like some for-profit slum landlord. It is unnecessary and intrusive. My gift of a place to live places me in the position of a "landlord", not really appropriate. Change the regulation.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Utilities, Suggestions</p>
<p>Utility and property taxes are prohibitively expensive. Water and sewer fees are incredibly high. We cannot afford to keep rent low when everyone costs so much, including repairs.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Utilities, Rent Increase</p>
<p>I have rentals in Seattle and it's VERY difficult for us small landlords there. Please don't follow their lead or I'll stop renting my house. I'm slowly selling my rentals in Seattle.</p> <p>Also, I wanted to build a dadu here, but there's so much red tape here. In Seattle, building a dadu is easier.</p>	
<p>The fees and tax increases all get passed to the renter</p>	<p>Property Tax</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>I'm looking at selling my house because of your regulations. Then a predatory property management firm can exploit tenants while blowing smoke at the city instead of doing a decent job of being a landlord as I have for the past 20 years.</p>	
<p>These rental regulations should only apply to big corporations. Single house owner need to be exempt</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>
<p>This program is a waste of time and money</p>	
<p>Think it is ridiculous for landlords that keep their property in good condition. Let tenants contact the city if they have issues. Waste of time and money in my opinion. Setting restrictions on rent increases usually results with landlords raising rents the amount allowed every year to keep up with inflation instead of periodically when taxes and insurance increases.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Insurance, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>Strange that you spend so much effort on my property. The former owner is my tenant and we have a very amicable relationship.</p>	
<p>These new regulations and previous regulations limiting rental increases are extremely burdensome on individual landlords who have been exceedingly generous in not raising rent for long periods who find that they are actually losing money due to huge property tax hikes and increases in utility costs with no way to catch up due to rent increase caps that are ridiculously low.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Rental Fee Regulations, Utilities, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>I feel you're gonna have more and more rentals come out the market because of all the new rules. You'll keep your slumlords and all of us. Small landlords will get out of the business.</p>	
<p>Does the rental registration program drive up rent costs? Do short term rentals have the same safety inspection program? Is there incentive for me to short term rent to avoid the rental registration program? I think short term rentals destroy neighborhood values and I don't want any "rental registration program" to push property owners toward short term rental.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Inspections</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>I think there wasn't enough attention paid to the effect on tenants in implementing some of the regulations. There is no doubt in my mind that they will reduce the number of rentals available and the number of large corporations that will be taking over rentals which will increase costs to tenants. I know I'm much more responsive than any corporation/PM and much more likely to sell if things continue to become more onerous on landlords. Some of the regulations are really ridiculous. Having to hand delivery AND certify mail (even if hand delivered) all notices, even if the tenant receives them and agrees to them. That alone will cause us to increase rent to cover time involved. Although city council says they spoke to numerous landlords I don't believe it because none of the PM's or large private landlords I spoken to talked with any council members before the new ordinance was passed. Controls like this have been done in many other municipalities around the country and have always resulted in increased costs to the tenants.</p>	<p>Rental Fee Regulations, Rent Increase</p>
<p>The Inspection program is pure unadulterated window dressing that accomplishes nothing. Rental regulations are seriously slanted as anti-landlord. the assumptions is that landlords are evil and tenants angels. They really should be allowed to stay for free in my million dollar property as I should provide the public service that the city cannot.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>We own and live in a four unit apartment house in a parking permit area by WWU. All of our neighbors who live in single family homes get two parking stickers to put on there vehicles, plus two guest parking passes. Because we live in a rental house we only get one of each. We have off street parking spots just like our neighbors do. I feel like we are being unfairly treated like renters when we do infact own the house we live in .</p>	
<p>I would hope the city would consider increasing the frequency of inspections when compliance has been demonstrated.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I think it should not be applied to those who own a few rentals. Most of use chose this method because it was our source of retirement, unlike a government worker.</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>
<p>I have owned the small house since 1978/79 living in it full time until job transfer to Seattle in 1981. Renting since then. Used a terrible rental management co. when my kids were little and they did nothing, but collect rent and pay themselves. The tenant looked me up by country records to tell me the frig was leaking and mgmt co did nothing. The house was in horrible shape, fired mgmt co house was destroyed, so gutted to bring to standard. Wished had a county inspector then. Cost me thousands plus lost rent as tenant wasn't paying I've been self managing except for 8 years. I have high standards and stay involved. I'm told I am the best landlord ever! I do my own yearly inspections and have drive bys.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Bellingham makes it very difficult to be a landlord and keep prices down. I've had the same renters for 20+ years and have tried to minimally raise rent. You guys keep adding expenses. Super frustrating.</p>	

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
As a landlord in the City of Bellingham since 2001, I have historically made a point of keeping rents stable and have rarely implemented increases. However, in recent years, a growing number of new regulations, along with rising utility costs and additional city-imposed fees, have significantly impacted the cost of operating rental properties. As a result, I have found it necessary to implement annual rent increases when annual lease renewals occur in order to offset these added expenses.	Utilities, Rent Increase
In preparation for compliance with the upcoming fee ordinance, we studied the draft ordinance to build our lease from. The draft prohibited pet fees of all kinds so we structured our lease and base rent accordingly. The result has passed the cost to tenants through increased base rent. The City needs to reduce the amount of resources going into rental requirements considering the budget crisis. The more rules written, the more staff are needed to enforce. Furthermore, these local regulations are one more layer of red tape for landlords. With the implementation of HB 1110, people who would be inclined to develop their properties and rent units may be dissuaded to do so because of the regulatory complexity. The City should rely on state and federal laws to protect tenant and landlords.	Rental Fee Regulations, Pet Policies, Rent Stabilization
I have complaints about the mailbox regulation but there doesn't seem to be a place to voice that. Installation of new mailboxes plus the labor involved cost \$465 per unit for a professional installation.	Mailboxes
The new rules are destroying the ability for people that don't own multiple properties and can't afford to remodel after every tenant and aren't making rent more affordable.	
We've been doing this for a number of years so finally figured most of it out. Scheduling is the difficult part for the inspections..granting access etc, coordinating with tenants.	Rental Inspections
Overly restrictive limits on fees and rent caps are leading to higher rents because property managers can't protect themselves from expensive tenant behavior (like late payment, lease violations, pet damages), so rent is going up across the board as a buffer. Also rent caps have led to preemptive yearly rent increases because rents can no longer follow market demand as needed and instead will always go up to hedge against future increases that exceed the arbitrary rent cap. If these increased rents end up being too high, it will lead to unnecessary tenant turn-over or over-charging by landlords, both of which fail to solve the original problem and actually hurt tenants. Please prioritize less regulation and instead focus on increasing supply for our extremely cost burdened city!	Rental Fee Regulations, Pet Policies, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization
We are not slum landlords and keep our unit up. I feel the Rental Registration and Safety Inspection a waste of time and resources. Just another money grab for the city coffers.	Rental Registration, Rental Inspections
I have no comments or feedback.	

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>We all resist being told what to do, I recognize the power differential and I do believe that the tenants should be protected from unfair treatment. I personally have experienced bad tenants and it's a bit of a bummer how little protection I had when I effectively had a "squatter" in one of my units</p>	
<p>It is very difficult for me to understand why the laws have been skewed so far in the favor of tenants rights that landlords now have very small rights and very large responsibilities. This may work for landlords who have many properties and can afford the losses, but for a small owner it is devastating. I can assure you that landlords are people too, and need to earn a living and pay bills just like a tenant.</p>	
<p>Common sense principles is my hope the future holds. The past has been great but with new political leadership things change.</p>	
<p>I think tenants should have been given a choice about the required locked mail boxes. If we want tenants rights, we should given the tenants the right to choose if they want something instead of it being forced onto both the tenant and the landlord.</p> <p>Capping the pet fees to a specific dollar amount will reduce my willingness to have tenants with multiple animals. The damage potential of 1 small dog is a lot different than 4 large dogs. I think this regulation could have been more carefully thought through so tenants that have multiple pets still have opportunities to find places to rent.</p>	<p>Mailboxes, Rental Fee Regulations, Suggestions, Pet Policies</p>
<p>This seems like an</p>	
<p>Honestly, it feels like a money grab. I understand that it is needed for SOME properties but certainly not for ALL properties. For those properties that are complying, every three years feels way too frequent for the inspection schedule.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Turn this failed effort of Landlord/Tenant Problem Resolution back to the State as it is intended here in Washington.</p> <p>CoB has enough pressing issues without creating/continuing unnecessary challenges like this one.</p>	
<p>I do not live in Bellingham and this is the first I'm hearing of the changes. These are quite burdensome changes to enforce all at once. Also, are you so ignorant to think it is only renters struggling with the high prices of things? With just 3 units, some of these changes are enough to turn our meager profit upside down. Definitely no longer worth the headache of landlording, which is sad. We've always had great relationships with all of our tenants - the result of these changes is strangling the small landlords out of the market and allowing the big money companies (who aren't as good to their tenants) to take over.</p>	

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>The fees and inspections were confusing. I had to pay the inspector and an additional fee ? The \$10 annual registration is easy.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Leave small rentals like us alone, we do not need or want city intervention...exempt small rentals from your list of requirements</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>
<p>I understand and respect that our city regulations are intended to protect renters. As a small-time landlord with a single rental property, i put a lot of effort into making my rental a great place to live. If i should accidentally slip up and be stuck in a legal situation made possible by the new regulations this would have long term detrimental effects on my ability to pay for my own housing. Following these regulations can feel like a nightmare waiting to happen. Where are the stop gaps to protect a landlord from serious legal trouble? Particularly for landlords who aren't in the business of renting many units but who are providing real and valuable housing on a small scale? Please don't forget about the Bellingham resident who does their part to provide housing, respects the process and the renters and may need support of their own along the way. Thank you 🙏</p>	
<p>It is becoming more complex and difficult to be a landlord in Bellingham.</p>	
<p>Sanctuary states have seen huge price increases including this city. My house has tripled in value since 2012 which is proof of outside influences. State regulated 7% rental increases but Bellingham raises rental fee by 100% (\$10 to \$20... unacceptable) now add new wages, flooding of illegles only drives costs up for Americans. As a city this needs to be rectified immediately (mortgages in 2012 \$950 now \$2800). This alone is more then 7% make this make sense</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>Its getting hard to be an individual landlord with just a couple of units. Keeping up with regulations is a lot of work. I understand why that is; there are some unscrupulous landlords out there. The risk of a tenant not paying rent but continuing to live in the rental has increased.</p>	
<p>I understand the need to have safe places for people to live, I would like the city would actually target problem landlords and not charge us fees to have an investment property. We are only keeping a rental so our kids have a place to live when they get older. The city should target landlords with more than 3 dwellings and leave single dwelling landlords alone.</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
<p>I dealt with inspector [staff name] and administrator [staff name]. Both made severe errors in the inspection of my home at 2109 Henry Steet. They incorrectly and repeatedly called for replacement of an egress window which should have been obviously exempt from consideration and had no clue about what the result would be from their incorrect actions. I eventually got the issue cleared up by speaking to [staff name]. But that should never have been necessary. The inspector [staff name] did not know he was looking at a 1927 home that had original windows that were exempt from the egress regulations. His finding would have required extensive wall removal and would have made it necessary to evict the tenant. His apparent boss [staff name] supported his wrong calls. It was not easy to get them to change their minds or understand the mistakes they were making and it should have been easy and obvious</p>	Rental Inspections
<p>To negate pet deposits most tenants nowadays claim their animal is a "therapy pet", making it illegal to charge fees. It is incredibly easy to falsify these claims online and in 100% of the cases, the records are clearly fabricated but there is no way to legally press the issue. I have had numerous alleged "therapy pets" cause damage to my property & I have little recourse for action. I wish there was a way to legal way to enforce the classification of a "therapy pet".</p>	Pet Policies
<p>Generally the City's regulations are reasonable and protect both the landlord and the tenant.</p>	
<p>I'm not happy with having to change the appearance of my rental to comply with what a city inspector thinks is a safety issue. My rental has been through 2 inspections and the first inspection passed.. this second inspection requires me to change front porch handrail to "grasping handrail" which will not match the style of the house. I paid a lot of money to have this porch match the character/style of this house and I'm very unhappy with this request! Also, I charge my renters 1/2 of what I could charge for this rental and it's things like this that make me have to consider raising the rent!</p>	Rental Inspections, Rent Increase
<p>My rental home is only 678 square foot home. For some like me should be exempt all these city rules. I should not be treated as if I was a landlord for multiple apartments or multiple homes.</p>	Suggestions
<p>The more communication the better</p>	Suggestions
<p>I think the program is handled pretty well, I just never did see that it was necessary. The city could just look into complaints against landlords, which would affect a very small percentage of landlords instead of making everybody go through this additional involvement.</p>	Rental Registration, Suggestions, Rental Inspections
<p>Communication erratic. Our mailing address changed, I notified COB by email, and snail mail. Still getting calls about mail undeliverable 4 months later. Mailing has been received at current address, looks like database/updates need to b processed, or merged.</p>	Suggestions

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>It would be helpful if the City of Bellingham made it easier for small landlords to keep up with rental regulations and help ensure we are in compliance with a continually changing landscape against us.</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>
<p>The number of days notice required for rent increase should be consistent with the 90 day state requirement rather than the city's 120 day notice requirement.</p> <p>I have had 4 rental homes in the past and am down to one. I will likely sell the last one soon. The regulations are forcing private, small landlords out. Only large scale businesses survive in over regulated environment. Large companies lack the humanity small time private landlords demonstrate to individual tenants. But just keep making more rules, fools.</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>
<p>When called the COB employees were the best, always helpful, always courteous!</p>	
<p>Whatever fees you charge gets passed on to tenants by most landlords. So you raise rents with fees and property taxes.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Rent Increase</p>
<p>The process has always seemed simple and straightforward to me</p>	
<p>Some people say the inspections are basically a way for the city to take money from the landlords.</p> <p>I think that well-intentioned legislation -- especially that viewing one group of people as against another group of people -- creates unwarranted negativity and conflict.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>After our inspection we were not notified where to access the compliance/inspection report. We found it after reaching out but would be nice to receive one automatically via mail or email.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I find it harder to comply with city Of Bellingham's rental requirements and I'm going to stop managing my properties myself and have a property management company do that for me and they will be charging a much higher rent than I would on my own. As a landlord that manages their own property Some of the requirements by the city I don't feel are helping renters there are advantages for renters and disadvantages for renters when more restrictions are required.</p>	
<p>Yes, it's good to have the rules to protect students and poor people from slumlords but there should be exceptions for landlords with single properties that are well maintained and pass inspection, like 10 year intervals between inspections and more flexibility on rates and other matters.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I'm glad you are doing this! We try hard to be decent landlords, but it seems like the market is dominated by pretty aggressive property managers charging ridiculous application fees and all sorts of stuff.</p>	<p>Rental Fee Regulations</p>
<p>I used a city inspector and just had an issue with the first appointment they show</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>It is hard to coordinate the inspections with the tenants availability. It is hard to re-schedule the inspections if the tenant asks to change the appointment.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I have tried to sell my property and no luck. I do not want to be a landlord anymore because some renters think they have all the rights and claim they are going to take you to court, they hide pets when pets aren't allowed, etc., so much added stress in my life. I'm a single mom who has made good financial decisions without a partner and renters think I have all the funds. Over it.</p> <p>Set different rules for single-owned rentals when they are good standing.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Pet Policies</p>
<p>I do not see how the program is doing anything to help weed out bad landlords. Only legit landlords jump thru your hoops</p>	
<p>I don't have comments about the regulations etc but I wanted to express this opinion: I feel that most landlords are good people and don't try to charge high rent. There are a lot of families with DADU/ADU's and its very expensive to pay all the astronomical fees for permits etc to build a DADU. For example, COB charged us over \$7000 to upgrade the water meter!! It took all of 15 minutes for them to replace the smaller water meter to the bigger one. Why was this one item so expensive? Nobody knew!! The permits are TOO EXPENSIVE in general and take too long. This costs money because it takes so long to get a permit we cant finish the property and get rent to balance the cost of building in a decent amount of time.</p> <p>Also, the Property taxes are so high that we need to cover costs,(we have to add a \$ amount to rent to cover property taxes) Plus, we are paying for maintenance on the properties and DAMAGE by tenants that is above the damage deposit we charge. IF we didn't have all these exuberant charges we could charge a more reasonable rent. I feel that TENANTS should be be more aware and have to be more accountable for the damages they do to properties when they leave. Its basically an easy out for them if they don't care about their deposit - they just trash a place and leave the mess for the landlords/families who have built the rental as a possible investment and solution to the housing issue in Bellingham. Thank you for taking the time to read this :)</p>	<p>Property Tax, Utilities</p>
<p>An email sent to all landlords of registered rentals with updates about changes in rental regulations based on local govt bills up for debate or passed/failed would be helpful</p>	<p>Rental Registration</p>

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
If rent increases are going to be limited, then that same % needs to be carried forward to SSC and taxes. My taxes have gone up over 40% and I'm limited to below 8% for rental increases. That math does not work for landlords. As a private landlord, it's more and more difficult leaving the market to large companies who can absorb all the related fees, taxes, etc. the city has put into place. The city needs to look at alternative methods for funding vs. only property owners. These costs are making renting in Bellingham and the rental market worse, not better.	Property Tax, Suggestions, Rent Stabilization
I don't trust that all landlords are identified and paying the registration/safety fees. My sister had been renting for years and never heard about it.	Rental Registration
It can be difficult to make repairs in 10 days if you fail the inspection. Does not give a lot of time to find a contractor and do the repairs	Suggestions, Rental Inspections
Love how the inspection program provides landlord accountability to make sure housing is safe for everyone renting!	Rental Inspections
The inspection program is over kill. Once a unit is inspected and found acceptable there should be a longer time period between the next inspection unless ownership has changed. I feel that it is just a money grab that is only making us increase our rents to cover the cost. The inspections should be for slumlords only, once a good landlord is determined the city needs to move on.	Suggestions, Rental Inspections
Tenant complaints should drive the inspection program instead of placing unneeded requirements on quality rentals.	Suggestions, Rental Inspections
I have owned this property for more than 30 years. I am a senior and live on a fixed income. I keep the rent as low as possible so my tenants are very long term. I have had 2 inspections and don't need them to keep my rentals in good and safe order. I would like an exemption for a number of years.	Suggestions, Rental Inspections
The regulations on pet deposits swung way too far. The amount I can charge on an average, \$1,300/mo unit is so minor that any damage whatsoever caused by a pet will exceed it. That's why I have made the decision not to allow pets. I used to charge one month's rent as my pet deposit, and even then was burned very regularly by pets and tenants exceeding the amount of damage.	Pet Policies
YES, I have a suggestion. I have 2 rentals that I rent way, way under market rates. I want to give back and help out seniors in our community. I think if you have the same tenant for years and they give the feedback "nothing has changed" we landlords should not have to have the \$100 inspection. There should be some area for tenants that can say good things about landlords too	Suggestions, Rental Inspections
The regulations need more rental owner feedback before implementing.	

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>The unintended consequences of over-regulation is an increase in cost/expense. Those costs get passed along to the consumer/tenant or the landlord, one way or another. Eventually, you'll end up with only corp landlords and/or less and less affordable housing. There is not an unlimited capacity to absorb onerous regulation... Your policies are more harmful for tenants than they are for landlords... But go on, keep doing your "progressive" thing. Eventually it all gets developed into urbanization, anyway...</p>	
<p>As a landlord and property owner who strives to be fair, equitable, and desirable to renters, I wish I had a better understanding of how new laws and regulations will change the landscape for renters. If it is the cost of housing that is the problem, I don't see how these changes will impact much. If there truly are bad actor landlords, I would benefit from learning what their impact has been and what the scope of the problem has been. That information would be helpful to counter the growing sense that landlords and property managers are the source of all housing woes.</p>	
<p>Given all of the changes to state and local laws I am considering exiting the rental market.</p>	
<p>We find it unfortunate that the poor practices of a few increase the burden of regulation on us. We are close to either using a property manager or getting rid of our rental property.</p>	
<p>The COB has made life increasingly more difficult for landlords by giving tenants more and more rights and privileges. Friends of ours who are landlords have described the process and ended up paying thousands of dollars, including lost rental income, and had their property trashed by tenants when they finally did move out. Only in Bellingham can a \$500,000 property be turned over to a tenant for a few thousand dollars and they are given more rights and privileges than the landlord. This is wrong! Affordable housing seems to be such a buzz word when in fact it only appears to be lip service. Property taxes have skyrocketed dramatically over the years, directly adding to increased rental rates. If the city was truly concerned about affordable housing, either putting an annual cap, of say a 3% increase, on property taxes on rental units or exempting rentals from property tax all together would dramatically lower rental costs. The city has no problem limiting the fees and rate increases a landlord can pass on to the tenant but does not have a problem increasing property taxes year after year. Thanks for asking.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Rental Fee Regulations, Utilities, Suggestions, Pet Policies, Rent Increase</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>The city's rental registration and program inspection was a heavy-handed, global solution to an extremely limited problem. I realize there are a few landlords who are bad actors. Might you have dealt with them directly, without putting unnecessary, time-consuming, fee-dependent requirements on all landlords? I take pride in providing high quality, comfortable housing for tenants. I get comments from them such as, "This is the best rental I've ever had." I routinely text them and ask if anything on the property needs attention. But between the city's rental registration program and the media demonizing us, it is quite disheartening. With property taxes, maintenance, and insurance sky-high, we didn't need a local government program with yet more fees, and those fees will only go up and the program will only expand over time. For those of us who pass the first inspection, what about giving us a break from this unnecessary program? Maybe a suspension of rental registration fees and such for a few years anyway? Looking back at my ratings above in this survey, my properties are in such good shape that it wasn't difficult in that sense to comply, but it did take a fair amount of management time; the fees are burdensome as mentioned; and it was an unnecessary intrusion on my tenants who are busy working folks.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Property Tax, Insurance, Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Do I wait for a notice from the city or am I supposed to be managing this?</p>	
<p>I guess my rentals must appear to be in real good shape because the inspector spends about 2 minutes looking at the place and says it's good. They don't even look for a locking mailbox. One that actually works.</p>	<p>Mailboxes, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>When Ordinance 2023-03-007 took effect in March 2023, it was already within the 120 time frame for increasing rent, as the lease renewed on June 1. This could have been most unfortunate, but I had a change of tenants so I was able to bring the unit closer to market.</p>	<p>Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>Frankly, all the new regulations (i.e, mailboxes) are bothersome. And I don't understand them nor the need for them. Yes, there may be some "bad" landlords, but most of us are honest and doing our best for our tenants. I've been a landlady for over 40 years and my tenants are good people and stay with me a very long time.</p>	<p>Mailboxes</p>
<p>I think the rental registration program is totally unnecessary over-reach and has not made any tenants safer, and has only added to the already high rent costs.</p>	<p>Rental Registration</p>
<p>The locking mailbox requirement makes sense, but was slightly painful because it is hard to find a locking mailbox product that is not enormous. And because the only quality ones I could find were enormous it requiring mounting a whole new post. This process made me wonder if it would be a reasonable thing to only require a locking mailbox if the tenant requests it rather than globally enforcing. What do you think? Was that considered?</p>	<p>Suggestions, Mailboxes</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>the new regulations that prohibit a landlord from raising the rent a certain percentage in a year's period are simply not fair to a responsible landlord like myself. the county can increase the property tax by a lot, and it seems we have no say in that. I rent my house for at \$800 less per month than the going rate it could be rented for. I am "trying" to make my house affordable to the young couple in it, so they can save money and buy their own house. the place is not run down, and I personally take care of 90% of the problems, and hire help for bigger issues. in the past 2 years I have raised the rent 4% which did not begin to cover the amount property tax was increased.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>add the \$10 fee to property tax</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Property Tax, Suggestions</p>
<p>I thought the enforcement of locking mail boxes costly and annoying.</p>	<p>Mailboxes</p>
<p>Nope, I'm happy. I think renter protections are great! I do wish the rental cost increase limits were tied to something tangible (ie the property taxes sometimes go up at a greater value than rents can be increased...)</p>	<p>Property Tax, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>I had an inspection and one of the smoke alarms was too quite so it had to be replaced. That's fine, but I was charged for two inspections because the inspector had to return to hear a single beep. Not a huge deal, but it does seem like there could be a slightly better system in place for compliance on small matters.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I don't understand why I am required to register my rental unit if I am exempt from safety inspections. What does rental unit registration do for me? What are the negative repercussions if I forget to renew my unit registration on time?</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Inspections</p>

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
<p>Bellingham is making a lot of busy work for landlords with the yearly registration and inspections. Which cost time and money. The inspections are an invasion of privacy to our renters. Some who have lived in our units for years. If we were bad landlords and didn't keep our properties up, they would move. We have owned our units for some time and because of all the added rules and regulations have no desire to purchase more units in Bellingham. Sewer and water is terribly expensive as is property taxes. Regulating how much a landlord can raise rent but the city can continue to raise s/w and property taxes is truly unfair. That landlords have to give months notice to be able to raise the rent is unfair. But a tenant has only 20 days to say they are vacating. Pets do so much damage to a unit. We recently had to replace all the floors to a unit that a dog tore up and peed everywhere. No damage deposit comes close to covering these damages. You are out of line to limit what a fair charge is for renters to have a pet . Pet rent encourages people to be better pet owners and more conscientious if they have some skin in the game. The ES loop hole is also a joke. I literally have had renters tell me they filed the paperwork to save money on rent.</p> <p>Bellingham you need to stop with all the rules and regulations and inspections etc etc. You are making it worse for everyone.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Property Tax, Utilities, Rental Inspections, Pet Policies</p>
<p>It is too expensive and ultimately places burden on tenancies. The fee was just doubled, the City Inspection Fee, then the private Inspection Fee, and all the while eroding OWNERSHIP Rights while tenancy rights and waivers seemingly increase, against the ownership position.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>The City of Bellingham should stay out of the rental business.</p> <p>As they are already responsible for largest part of rent increases.</p> <p>water & sewer Garbage tax's along with unnecessary programs.</p>	<p>Utilities, Rent Increase</p>
<p>My communications with the Rental Program staff have been prompt and helpful to me. I haven't had any problems with it.</p>	
<p>In general the increased regulations and requirements have become burdensome for Bellingham. I would no longer consider investing in a rental property in Bellingham and will look elsewhere for investing in the future.</p>	
<p>Feels like more and more requirements on landlords and less on tenants. The Landlord is who has all the risk of getting poor or bad renters.</p>	

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<p>It's messed up. I have three specific points. 1 - minor, because you used "surveymonkey" your email went into spam. I found it by accident. 2. I pay 64 different vendors with my bank's bill pay system, but ONLY the COB cannot accept it because their system can't match my payment to my account. I have to use YOUR system. 3. They sent me a notice about an inspection date. Then they showed up on a different date, and told me *I* had failed to notify tenant. After much back and forth it was determined that the system sent out a bunch of incorrect schedules, and I was relieved of paying a fee for not showing up at the right time. Then we had to reschedule to a new time. Either your computer system is messed up, you don't have enough staff, or your staff is not properly trained. As a *small* landlord - a single retired couple using our two small rental houses to pay for life in retirement we feel discriminated against by all the laws and rules that should be targeting the big slumlords.</p>	Rental Inspections
<p>because of the city ordinances recently passed, I may not choose to re-rent my other house</p>	Rental Fee Regulations
<p>Further to above, I strongly support our rental registration process and safety inspections. I take pride in providing a safe rental unit and in being a responsible landlord. I have heard some very disquieting stories from tenants and I encourage the city to maintain a proactive and strict posture with landlords and property managers.</p>	Rental Registration, Rental Inspections
<p>Though I understand the "blanket rules" the local government has passed because I have seen abuse on both apartments and single family homes. I believe a lot of the new rules will put the "Mom and Pop" rentals out of business. I have some friend who will no longer rent and let their property go vacant than have to deal with the new laws. I may do the same in the future.</p>	
<p>the locking mailbox requirement is overkill in safe neighborhoods that don't have trouble with mail theft</p>	Mailboxes
<p>I haven no idea what new regulations you're talking about.</p>	
<p>I would like to know what measurable improvements have resulted from the creation of the City's rental registration/inspection program. My sense is that another layer of bureaucracy was created but not benefit for landlords or tenants.</p>	Rental Registration, Rental Inspections
<p>I understand why the City has established rental regulations, as there are some landlords who do not manage their properties responsibly. However, these regulations add layers of complexity and create barriers for smaller landlords who have included rental properties as part of their retirement portfolios. It can be frustrating when government policies dictate aspects of private business and affect properties that were earned through years of hard work and investment.</p>	

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>I agree that there should be regulations, but it seems the regulations are in favor of the renters. Sometimes they do a lot of damage to the property that we, as the owners, have to clean up.</p>	
<p>Although I understand the need for providing safe living spaces for those renting apartments and houses in our city, it is also true that each additional requirement adds complexity and cost to the process. These regulations must be weighed against the additional cost to housing as well as the attractiveness and viability of rental property as an investment vehicle for landlords. I am an individual investor who manages his own properties. Because of the added complexities, compounded by the risk of housing a difficult tenant, I am looking toward selling my rental properties in Bellingham or likely engaging a property manager to manage the collective process for me.</p>	
<p>We appreciate being exempt from the Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program for our ADU that is part of our owner-occupied single family home.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I am a single landlord with longterm tenants and a good relationship with them. I think the rental program should not apply to small landlords like myself, I'd suggest exempting landlords with 4 or fewer rentals.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Stop making and implementing rental regulations in a vacuum ...even my long term tenants think the near constant changes are ridiculous and confusing. Stop demonizing landlords...I like many other small time landlords live/work in this community, treat my tenants as I would like to be treated, and and take pride in offering affordable housing...I have all long term (plus 8 year) tenants to prove it.</p>	
<p>While well intended to protect tenants from a handful of bad landlords the new regulations and RRSIP simply add cost to a property owner. Costs that will be passed onto tenants.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Fee Regulations, Rental Inspections, Rent Increase</p>
<p>As a responsible landlord of only one home it feels dirty that I have to be policed by the city and pay for it when I am already doing what is supposed to be done.</p>	

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
<p>The website links are very difficult to use. We struggled to get a current copy of our registration to post. I had to help another landlord to even pay her fee online.</p> <p>When we received our notice of inspection, it was only 5 days away from the appointment. It should be a month prior, to allow for scheduling time for both landlord and tenant. It should also be an email and paper mail. If we had been out of town, we would have never known of this appointment and the inspector would have just shown up and charged us.</p>	Rental Registration, Suggestions, Rental Inspections
<p>It is an overstep and infuriating to allow only pet deposit or pet rent. Also to allow a tenant to bring in as many pets as they want and still pay the same as a one pet tenant. Thats not good for tenants! And all the pet section is horrible. Pets do a lot of damage (thousands in my experience) and we are -because of these new regulations- not going to accept pets in the future</p>	Pet Policies, Rental Fee Regulations
<p>Keep costing me more to operate and rent will keep going up.</p>	Rent Increase
<p>No feedback. Valuable Info very easy to understand and apply.</p>	
<p>Seems blatantly unfair that tenants may sue landlords and be awarded legal costs, but a landlord who is sued and defended can't be awarded legal costs. Double standard.</p>	
<p>The required City of Bellingham notice of rental increase should align with the state requirement.</p> <p>I am planning to divest myself of rental property in the near future as the trend continues towards property owners having limited to no rights for rental properties.</p> <p>I have always been a conscientious landlord. It seems the belief system of government is there should be no profit for landlords and we should just have properties available for free.</p> <p>Only large scale companies will remain and they don't care about individual tenants excuses.</p> <p>Good luck to all the short sighted people.</p>	
<p>I will not rent out another unit in BELLINGHAM because of the regulations for tax reasons I need to do a 1031 and we'll move into commercial rather than residential rentals regulations make it too risky for a landlord in residential property. I don't think that City realizes how they are hurting tenants With these regulations which caused higher rents.</p>	Property Tax, Rent Increase
<p>I wish that landlords that are doing a good & fair job did not have to jump through all the same hoops as terrible landlords.</p> <p>With all the focus on making housing more affordable, I do not understand how the city can charge more for everything & expect houses costs not to go up!</p>	Suggestions
<p>Thanks for all you work!</p>	

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
Thank you for the opportunity to rent our condo and keeping our tenant safe through regulations and inspections	Rental Inspections
Compliance with all regulations take both time and money, which increase the cost of renting and therefore raise rents	Rent Increase
The city's website is hard to navigate. There should be more than links to laws written in legalese. There should be clear lists of landlord requirements as opposed to multiple links to multiples sections for each new law. (And dates when the laws went into effect, if CPI calcs. need to be made.)	Suggestions
<p>I feel that it is great that the city wants to make sure tenants don't have to live in unsafe and uncared for dwellings through a safety inspection program. I also think it's great that the city tries to "throttle" the fees a landlord can charge a tenant.</p> <p>I do, however, have a problem with the city raising the fee that the landlord pays for the program by 100%!!!</p> <p>Can I raise my rent 100%?</p>	Rental Registration, Rental Fee Regulations, Rental Inspections, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization
The city needs to find a way to treat owners as people with rights. The shifting of all responsibility to the owner with zero accountability in renters is gonna lead to real problems. I treat my tenants with the utmost respect and courtesy. Some of the rules are gonna drive good people like myself out of the rental market. You are gonna be left with big corporations running big buildings with big law firms.	
I think you should think about the Rental fee regulations if they really make since the way they are written. They are very confusing and don't seem very thought out.	Rental Fee Regulations
I don't understand as I need to do this program as my tenants are very happy with me as I charge way below rental prices—I only have 1 unit. This pro Ge am is better for landlords who have multiple properties. My tenants told me they feel disturbed with inspections and wish we didn't have to do this either.	Rental Inspections
The burden to keep rents under control publically seems to fall to owner/landlords. It should be also widely public knowledge that our list of fee and expenses and property taxes and restrictions and requirements are ever-growing. Landlords have felt "shamed" by these policy's that are very one sided about rents. It makes for very poor relations between regulatory bodies and property owners. Property owners "list" the f requirements and expenses should be equally disseminated to help renters understand - we are not the enemy	Property Tax, Rental Fee Regulations
Where can landlords attend trainings on rental regulations?	Suggestions
Checked on lead time for rent increase notification	

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>Thank you for taking care of landlords and tenants.</p>	
<p>I am a private landlord with only one property in the city. If I am able to pay it off, the property is meant to supplement my retirement some day. State laws have been passed capping rent increases, as well as city codes prohibiting certain landlord fees and rent increases. The increased regulations, registration fees, and inspection fees make it very difficult, expensive, and time consuming to maintain a rental as a private owner. If I were to purchase another rental property, it would not be within the City of Bellingham. Large property management companies have the clear advantage in this market.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rental Fee Regulations, Rental Inspections, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>For someone who instinctively complies and provides for tenants' needs, I find the program annoying, just another hoop to jump. Annoying.</p>	
<p>Some required modifications were pointless.</p>	
<p>We were required to install a smoke alarm in a small room that did not qualify as a bedroom and had no mattress or couch. Then inspector insists he needs to re-enter the tenants home to inspect. Another item, adding a vent, again says he needs to go inside when it is an exterior view, nothing to see inside. Tenants privacy invaded without cause or need. More fees for landlord. You should allow photos to be submitted and no additional fee. We object to inspection program and other over-regulating by Citu government. We are going to take our rentals off the market in near future. You are damaging your rental market with your policies, regulations and over-inspections. It s gone way past taking care of tenant safety. Invasive revenue generating program.</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>

<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>Yes. More and more burdens are placed on landlords. Especially small mom and pop landlords: we find this onerous. This group of owners typically has the most affordable housing options and long standing tenants. It is not unusual for us to have a tenants stay for 10 years.</p> <p>These landlords are leaving the marketplace. We do a good job at being responsive and caring about people. Having to upgrade a building to modern code under the guise of safety is sheer stupidity. Our house passed 2 other times and this time we had three issues. None of these are important safety items. All have been present for our entire ownership time period (25+years)</p> <p>I won't say your inspector lied, but he claimed a small bonus room was a bedroom and implied there were mattresses there. This then requires a smoke detector. The room doesn't meet you size requirements for a bedroom and there are no mattresses there. We had to put a notice of entry and check because of your staff. That is a waste of my time and an intrusion on the tenant.</p> <p>I strongly feel if there are new found objections from your inspector they previously passed, we should not be charged a reinspection fee. Clearly of the work done is exterior only it could be done with a drive by or even with emailed photos at no cost. Intrusion to the tenant should be a consideration as well.</p> <p>I know by working with my mom's estate more and more landlords are selling before they pass (from her attorney). They do so because of increased regulations such as yours and not wanting a burden on the next generation. They do this at a rather large tax cost to themselves. It speaks volumes that this is now a trend in our community: how landlords are seen and treated? I can tell you we don't get a warm thank you for providing housing message.</p> <p>We will be leaving the bellingham area rental market (selling) and that is a sad event after being a proud provider of housing for so many years.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Rental Inspections</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>landlords seem to be targeted and the "bad guys" in the legislative processes and regulation. For instance housing is subject to rent increase charge limits due to housing being a critical living item. However, food, clothing and medical charges have not had any similar limits placed on them by the City even though these are also critical living items. Why not? Is this because landlords are an easy target and politically favorable to attack as to business model and running their business under capitalistic standards?</p> <p>Rent limits will only make me, as a landlord, increase my rents to the maximum available amount, subject to fair market limits, whenever possible, so as not to fall behind on the rental increase limits the regulation currently allow. Rent charge restrictions do not limit increasing rental prices overall and actually will increase over the City population in the long term view. Short term, you may get limits, but long term tenants will lose the rent charged issue. How about the City work on reducing costs to build (permits) and operations of a rental unit (utilities, taxes etc.) that the City controls?</p> <p>Tenants rights seem to be, in practical terms, the only rights that matter to City leaders. When a landlord gets a "bad tenant", they have to spend substantial time and money (attorneys) to evict or deal with the tenant(s). However, the City takes no responsibility to help in these situations, when they have substantial assist procedures available to tenants. The tenant vs. landlord assist procedures need to be way more balanced on the City side of things.</p> <p>I am reluctant to share these thoughts as I may now be a targeted landlord for even making such comments and suggestions - a poor commentary on the state of democracy in these times...</p>	<p>Property Tax, Utilities, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>don't know why it went from \$10-\$20? I also think that as a private home owner in the community managing the rental that I take much better care of my home than do the management companies. I believe that units with complaints, with peeling paint, unkempt yards etc should be subject to inspection</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Incorporating new regulations into leases and listings has been challenging. Coordinating lockboxes in subdivisions with community posts has been expensive and challenging. I don't just manage my rental, I help my aging parents manage theirs and these rules disproportionately affect the landlords that individually manage their properties. Often these are the landlords that provide the best pricing and care to tenants, but aren't best equipped to handle the constant addition of new rules and restrictions.</p>	<p>Mailboxes, Rental Fee Regulations</p>
<p>Intentional updates are always appreciated</p>	
<p>Please provide free trainings for landlords (or property managers) who need to follow the rules. And provide multiple options to attend live or watch recorded trainings. And offer an online FAQ site for landlords & property managers to continue asking questions, provide the answers and allow to search prior questions.</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses	Tags
<p>I think the safety inspection program is a needed program.</p> <p>Once my tenant moves out, they have been there for 5 years, I plan on selling my rental. I feel owners in Bellingham get a bad "rap" but not all owners are painted with the same brush.</p>	Rental Inspections
<p>The new regulations, added to the older regulations have pushed me to reconsider my decision to self manage. I have always kept rent a little below market to ensure good relations with tenants and minimize the time I need to be actively involved. Using a management agency I should have more income and less time involved. The increase in rent will more than make up for management fees and I'll have less exposure to risk from violating these regulations.</p>	Rental Fee Regulations, Rent Increase
<p>It's very difficult to find out about the laws, rules, and regulations from Washington state, and the city of Bellingham, and to find someone who can help you find out what the new laws and regulations are. Because of the toxic laws and rules in Bellingham, we probably are going to be selling all of our rentals in the next couple years. It is very one sided and that side is only for the renters without regard to how new laws and regulations effect the landlords</p>	
<p>Paid for yearly registration online but still received invoice in snail mail and had to call the city to straighten out the problem. Every for last few years have had to do this.</p>	Rental Registration
<p>I understand the intent, but I would never recommend people invest in residential real estate in Bellingham City limits. Only big corporations have the easy ability to deal with these regulations- I understand wanting to regulate bad corporate behavior, but there should be a small landlord exception like HUD has. HUD excepts people with buildings that are 4-plexes and smaller so long as they have no more than 4 properties. This focusses regulation on big apartment buildings and large corporate real estate management.</p>	Suggestions
<p>Its a pain for landlords who do the right thing, maintain their properties and like their tenants.</p>	
<p>Was allowed only 19 days to pay reg fees in 2024. Notice that fee was due was emailed mid December and overlooked because of death in family. An unwarranted and excessive late charge of \$125 was assessed after being 16+ days late in payment on top of a already assessed penalty of \$50 for being 1 day late. If a landlord did this they would be described as a slumlord.</p>	Rental Registration, Suggestions
<p>Rent control and heavy handed rental regulations will ultimately have the unintended consequences of chasing our small local landlords out of this business. to the detriment of our tenants.</p>	Rental Fee Regulations, Rent Stabilization
<p>Every registration is favoring towards the tenant, as a landlord, we are speechless.</p>	Rental Registration

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<p>I think there should be an exemption for those operating with small holdings and not raising rates according to cost of living indexes. It is motivation to sell and get out of Bellingham rather than develop the other duplex lot</p>	<p>Rental Fee Regulations, Suggestions, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>The inspection was kind of a joke. The window makes it really hard for landlords to be present at the time of inspection, especially if they are working a full time job. The inspector was there for 5 minutes and incorrectly noted deficiencies - I put new CO monitors and smoke detectors in with each new tenant.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Been a landword for 40 years and I take good care of my tenants and really do not need city help</p>	
<p>Not at this time. The city staff was very helpful when I needed to reschedule my inspection. Also, they have always been prompt and courteous when performing the inspection.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I did not investigate any of the rules or regulation at the city has for my rental property I just manage it and I have an inspected when it's needed and I take care of it on my own and do some of the work myself but the rules and regulations I don't know much about them I just do what I think is right and fair for my parents and I I charge them quite a low rate compared to most rental properties they're nice units and I'm only asking 1,100 per unit during a nice area of town I try to be fair</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Having to pay a fee to have a forced inspection that costs 100 dollars is absurd.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>Stop making it difficult to be a landlord. Complaints about affordable housing, yet city makes it onerous for property owners to comply with new regulations, especially with older homes, which are otherwise safe and pass inspection. Where in all the new regulations is there common sense and balanced rights of owners vs tenants rights? Getting discouraging for responsible landlords to want to continue with rentals.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>I have found being a landlord in Bellingham to be extremely challenging. We built an accessory dwelling unit in our house in order to provide some additional income. Between the time when we paid all of the thousands of dollars of fees and parking studies to create an accessory dwelling unit and when we started renting it the city changed the rules. We were told that we were not allowed to short term rent and accessory dwelling unit. I then had to pay the city a “demolition permit fee“ to simply remove the stove from our ADU and decommission it so we could continue to rent short term. All in all I have paid thousands and thousands of dollars to the city of Bellingham in order to simply be allowed to do what we want to do with our home. My wife is a stay at home mom for our three children and short term renting our basement ADU was a great way that she could continue to work and support our family while being with our kids. The city took that away from us. We feel constantly harassed as a landlord by the city. We feel that the city has taken a very adversarial posture toward landlords. The city took away. The only means I wish my wife could help support us. The constant rule changes, permitting changes and flat out harassment by the city borders on abusive.</p>	
<p>I believe it’s not necessary and adds undue costs that are passed on to the renters.</p>	
<p>We feel short term rentals should be discouraged in single family neighborhoods because they undermine community cohesiveness.</p>	<p>Suggestions</p>
<p>The 8% rental cap seems unrealistic when the city raises the water/sewer 13.1%, property taxes continue to rise and insurance costs spital upward. These costs are very difficult to cover for small landlords like myself. It may also cause landlords to encourage their tenants to move out, especially if they have low rents.</p>	<p>Property Tax, Insurance, Utilities, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>The 8% rental increase limit (and I understand that it isn’t a hard limit but a prohibitive limit) is below the % increase in water/sewer for 2025. Which means that water/sewer have gone up more than the rent. At the same time Electric, Gas companies have the ability to make the tenant 100% responsible for the bill, however the city makes the landlord somewhat responsible with the ability to put a lien on the house. In addition, it is hard to pre-predict the water usage month to month.</p>	<p>Utilities, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>Adding to my comments above, it is disappointing to see large landlords like Lakeway Reality and Landmark Real Estate Management continue to break the law with inspections and the way they treat tenants and applicants.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>I have experienced the frustration of an inept inspector who seems to have developed his own acceptable criteria standards. I have been left waiting after seeing the inspector drive by...to get his doughnuts? Not impressed.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>

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<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>Rental inspection of a new home build every three years seems excessive and like a way to line COB pockets. A home that is over 20yo might make sense. But otherwise 3yrs? Predatory City practice IMHO</p>	<p>Suggestions, Rental Inspections</p>
<p>The city restricts rent increases to limits much less than its own water/sewer rate increases. Then it hassles landlords with seemingly useless programs which it forces landlords to pay for. Think about it. Is this fostering community? Is it providing low cost housing? It actually creates some bad feelings. I understand the goals. But what would be more positive? Encouragement. Let people work together like people.</p>	<p>Utilities, Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization</p>
<p>I received notice to pay a rental registration fee by a certain date but don't recall any information being sent about this program other than that~</p>	<p>Rental Registration</p>
<p>The program is a waste of money, all it has done is created more government bureaucracy with no overall benefit</p>	
<p>Staff are all very helpful.</p>	
<p>I would love to turn this program in to what it should be. This program should help those that have difficulty with landlords keeping things up and running, safe and within code in a timely manner. Instead this program is just another example of wasteful spending! I'd be happy to assist with getting rid of the "fat" and actually do what the program initially said it would do.</p>	
<p>I'm very happy with Bellingham's policies for and oversight of rentals. I think the approach is a benefit to me and other "good" landlords.</p>	
<p>The inspector made an additional visit for a missing battery for one smoke detector for an additional fee of \$100. This was excessive.</p>	<p>Rental Inspections</p>
<p>It gets more difficult and more expensive to be a landlord in Bellingham. It really isn't worth the effort.</p>	
<p>Our rental property is in excellent condition. If repairs are necessary they are done immediately. We respect & like our tenants. Our tenants like the homes they rent from us.</p>	

2025 Landlord and Property Manager Survey Appendix A – Complete Written Responses

<p>Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Landlord Responses</p>	<p>Tags</p>
<p>Landlords get a bad rap. No one in the City of the Bellingham says that there are some bad actors and never say or celebrate the good ones, who respond as soon as there's a problem, keep the rents low when they have good tenants, lenient when tenants have specific issues etc. Sure, it's a business but that doesn't mean we all treat our tenants poorly. I'm tired of being grouped with large management companies and developers. I'm selling one of my units because it takes a lot of work, costs money and no one sticks up for our protections from bad actors who damage property, don't have to pay rent for 90 days and are hard to evict. I have several friends who will be selling in the next year for those reasons. But we are concerned that while the community lacks single family homes, developers will buy the land, put 4 units on it without parking, and change the face of a neighborhood. Maybe there should be some appreciative recognition for the good landlords who take care of their tenants and are good stewards of our community. Maybe some tax breaks if rent hasn't been raised, utilities provided and paid for, grounds being tended - where's the positive reinforcement from the City who influences the community for good landlords?</p>	<p>Property Tax, Utilities, Suggestions</p>
<p>I think more input from small landlords in designing regulations is needed. I understand the need for and support safety and sustainability regulations, but we're often presented with one-size-fits all regulations that don't make sense for a lot of small property owners. We generally have no input and often not even notification that something new is coming or has been enacted. The result is driving up costs for to provide things many tenants don't care about and sometimes driving small landlords out of the market entirely. The reason for high rents is not primarily landlord greed, though I admit that exists in places, but rather the very high cost of buying property. I pay twice as much as my tenant per month for an identical space, and costs just keep going up. Capping rent increases without corresponding caps on property tax and utility rates can put new and small landlords in a very difficult situation. In a small example, requiring that I toss my newly installed mailboxes into a landfill to replace them with locking boxes would have been less problematic if I knew the new regulation was coming and didn't make the initial investment. These small things add up. Likewise, requiring Food Plus service for all addresses when one container has served the needs of my community with 3 addresses for years just adds cost without any benefit. And a 13.5% hike in water rates means I'll be paying over \$200 a month for myself and a single tenant. Assuming good intentions and recognizing nuance in property ownership and use is not a bad place to start. And using the contact information you have through the registration program to solicit input and alert us to anticipated changes would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Property Tax, Rent Stabilization, Mailboxes, Utilities, Suggestions, Pet Policies</p>
<p>This is a ridicules program and a waste of tax payers dollars. The late fee rate is too high. The bills come in December when everyone is busy and you can't pay online. This is stupid. This program started years ago out of the blue.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Property Tax</p>

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The rules around changing rent seem very complicated and onerous.	
Frustrated that some people get away without registering their units.	Rental Registration
<p>It is wrong that the rental regulations favor large corporate entities over local land owners.</p> <p>We were fortunate to be able to purchase a property with the goal of later building an additional unit on it. The process to be able to build this unit has been incredibly discouraging with all the rules and regulations that are in place making it a challenge to build. Not to mention the exorbitant permitting fees. I guess we could take another home off the market with the money we plan to build with... it would be more simple. We want to be part of the fix not part of the problem. But Bellingham policies make it really difficult.</p> <p>In addition, as a local landlord, this is my community. I care about our tenants. A year ago they had unexpected medical bills and we worked with our tenants to make a payment plan to relieve their stress. Shortly after catching up they decided on divorce. Our tenants didn't pay rent for 3 months and we let that go out of compassion. The mom has since caught up on rent with time and without any late fees. That is the difference between a local landlord and a corporation. Again we are only charging the mortgage- so not making money every month.</p> <p>Please support your local landlords over the corporations that price gouge are community. Please make your decisions in a way that supports your community.</p>	
The more complicated and expensive you make the process of inspections and regulations the less ma and pa owners/landlords you will have and the more corporate investors you will be inviting. That does not seem like a good trade off.	
<p>I just try to do the right thing, and assume it will all work out. I'm not really sure what all the rules are, or if I am following all of them. Knowing and following rules really isn't a strength of mine, but caring about people and being kind is.</p> <p>If i were going to make rules about rentals though, i think that a path to ownership would be nice. Like 10% of the rental fee going to a savings account for the renter that they can use when they want to buy a home, or need help with moving expenses.</p>	Suggestions
We failed the inspection because of the bedroom windows did not meet code. We had to get a permit and order the new windows and have another inspection after the windows were installed. We passed and we were actually happy to have the windows replaced for the safety of the renters. The inspectors were great to work with.	Rental Inspections

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I believe that larger landlords using their own inspectors is unfair and can lead to providing the City with faulty reports. I think the City should be in charge of enforcing their own requirements with their own inspectors.	Rental Inspections
Please try to keep it simple for those of us with 1 rental vs multiple units	
I am just really glad you are making sure renters are taken care of. I want my renters to be safe and have a comfortable house to live in. I don't over charge and talk to them often to make sure they are doing well.	
I hope that tenants are taken care of and that regulations take in to account a difference between a 75 year old owner with 1 duplex and someone with many units.	
It seems like things are always changing and I am always worried about being out of compliance one way or another. I am below market rent because I missed the window to increase rent and now I guess there is a cap on the increase. To much micromanaging of rentals.	Rent Increase, Rent Stabilization
Everyone I have interacted with from the city has been very helpful and polite.	
i prefer the paper bill or text over email	
Staff does a great job - thank you!	
This is Big Government overreach and unconstitutional.	
I don't consider it necessary	
I appreciate that the city is looking out for renters. Bellingham needs to raise taxes on the wealthiest people to provide services that unhoused and low income people need. It would also benefit the city. We need Government housing, more tree planting and tree protections, wildlife wardens, safety officers, traffic calming, a grocery store in Birchwood, better building standards - no more strip malls or crappy apartment buildings. These things would make Bellingham a better place to live for renters and homeowners. Why doesn't the Bellingham mayor answer phone calls or emails?	Pet Policies, Property Tax
<p>I just have one house, I know there are a lot of people complaining about the high taxes.</p> <p>I appreciate the neighborhood law enforcement officers who actually help me, when I have problems. There was garbage in the alley behind my rental that was not my tenants, couches, and things from students.</p> <p>The officer sent a message to all the landlords that they need to keep the tenants from dumping, that they will be charged, this seemed to help. Making the landlords responsible seemed to help.</p>	Property Tax, Utilities, Pet Policies

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<p>It is preferable that tenants don't have pets, but they can cause problems. But I have started to understand that the compassion for people leaving home and needing a pet.</p> <p>Increase property taxes causing harm, passing it down to the tenants sometimes. My property is affordable and below market rent because I purchased a long time ago.</p> <p>Increased taxes increase the fees for tenants.</p> <p>I have been a landlord for over 30 years, so it is not hard to understand for me, but I can see how a new landlord might have a hard time understanding the rules.</p>	
<p>I didn't know about the city's new rental fee regulations until today. Perhaps I've had my head in the sand. I have inadvertently followed all of the new rules, but they reinforce my opinion that additional well intentioned regulations tend to drive the rental market to large property management companies and away from privately owned homes, condos or apartments. I have only ever had good tenants, but I am leaning towards exiting the market when our current tenants leave.</p>	Rental Fee Regulations
<p>I totally object to these periodic inspections. It is ridiculous to assess fees & time when you have never identified a deficiency on my property. I support monitoring but bet smart in narrowing on problems. PROPOSAL: If a property passes inspection with no significant findings for 2 consecutive inspections then, extend the next inspection out to 5 years as long as the property has not under new ownership. Focus on properties that actually have had deficiencies and properties where tenants are in danger. 1 size fits all is just so inefficient. AND the cost you charge gets passed onto my tenants. Thus, increasing the cost of housing in Bellingham. Shame on you.</p>	Suggestions, Rental Inspections

Unknown respondents

Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Unknown respondents	Tags
<p>I believe the rental inspection program is a money grab. Every landlord I've spoken with has said the city getting involved is driving up rents, and I agree. You want affordable housing, but you're creating the exact opposite outcome.</p>	Rental Inspections, Rent Increase

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Do you have any additional comments or feedback? Unknown respondents	Tags
<p>We scrimped and and worked multiple jobs to be able to purchase rentals to provide us with retirement income. We have managed our own rentals for 20 years. We rent below market rate and have good relationships with our renters. We both work and the city has made it impossible for me to for manage our rentals myself. We decided to turn our rentals over to property management next year. You have made it impossible for the little guy. The unintended winner here is the property management company and my renters are the losers.</p>	
<p>In my case, my apartment is well maintained and managed. This program just adds costs and headaches to my management routine. That makes rental rates increase. You're not helping me or my tenants with this program, only making rentals more expensive.</p>	<p>Rental Registration, Rent Increase</p>

Appendix B – survey instrument

1. Please enter your **email address**. - To gather data about trends in landlord and property manager experiences, we'll email you a request to take a follow-up survey in about a year. We do not share information, including email addresses, externally unless legally required to do so through public records requests.

2. How many rental **units** do you own **in Bellingham**? (i.e. how many individual residences or dwelling units: apartments, houses, condos etc.)
 - _____

3. How many rental **properties** do you own **in Bellingham**? (i.e. how many individual plots of land, which can have more than one dwelling unit on the property).
 - _____

4. Who manages your rental unit(s)? Select the one that **best fits**.
 - I am a landlord and manage my own rental(s).
 - I am a landlord and use a third-party property management company.
 - I am a landlord and have a friend/relative manage my rental(s) on my behalf.
 - I am a property manager and only manage rental properties for others.
 - I am a property manager who manages rental properties for others AND owns rental properties.
 - Other (Please explain) _____

5. What type of rental unit(s) do you own in Bellingham? (**Select all that apply**)
 - Single-family detached house
 - Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)
 - Condo
 - Apartment
 - Townhome
 - Duplex
 - Triplex
 - Mobile home
 - Other (Please specify) _____

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6. Do you live on the same property as one or more of your rentals in Bellingham?

- Yes, I live onsite and rent out a secondary unit or units on the property.
- No, I do not live on the same property as one or more rentals.
- N/A, I am a property manager
- Other (please explain) _____

7. Please provide information about what utilities are included in rent, charged to tenants separately, or are the tenants' responsibility.

	Included in Rent	Charged separately to tenant (e.g. charge back or ratio billing)	Tenant responsibility	It depends on the unit	N/A – this utility is not available
Water & Sewer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Garbage/ Recycling/ FoodPlus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electricity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to the way you handled utilities? For example, did you change which utilities are included in rent, charged separately or are tenant responsibility?

- Yes (**please explain**) _____
- No

9. Do you allow pets in one or more rentals?

- Yes, I allow pets
- No, I do not allow pets

10. For leases signed after August 1, 2025, landlords are allowed to charge **either** a pet deposit not to exceed 30% of one month's rent **or** pet rent not to exceed 2% of monthly rent, but not both. (**Select all that apply**).

- I only charge a pet deposit.
- I only charge monthly pet rent.

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- It depends on the unit.
- It depends on the type of pet (fish, bird, cat, dog)
- I allow pets and do not charge anything.
- This does not apply, my rental(s) are all under leases that started before Aug. 1, 2025.
- Other (**please explain**) _____

11. In the last 12 months, did you change your policy for accepting pets? For example, did you start or stop allowing pets, or limit the type (cat, dog, reptile, etc.), number or weight of pets allowed?

- Yes. (Please explain what change you made and why you made the change) _____
- No, I did not change my pet policy in the last 12 months.

12. In the last 12 months, have you **stopped** renting out any of your rental units in Bellingham?

- Yes, I stopped renting out one or more rentals.
- No, I am still renting out all my rental units.

13. Why did you **stop** renting your rental unit(s)? (select all that apply)

- I sold or plan to sell the rental unit(s).
- I or another family member moved into the rental unit(s).
- I am remodeling or rebuilding.
- Temporary pause, I plan to resume renting.
- Business decision.
- Concern about state regulations.
- Concern about City of Bellingham regulations.
- Challenges with previous tenants.
- Challenges finding tenants.
- Personal reasons/change in life circumstances.
- I prefer not to say.
- Other, (please explain) _____

14. In the last 12 months have you **sold** any rental properties in Bellingham?

- Yes, I sold one or more of my rental units in Bellingham.
- No, I did not sell any of my rental units in Bellingham.
- I prefer not to say.

15. In the last 12 months have you **purchased** any rental properties? (Select all that apply)

- I purchased one or more rental units **within** the City of Bellingham.
- I purchased one or more rental units **outside** the City of Bellingham.
- No, I did not purchase any rental units.
- I prefer not to say.

16. In the last 12 months, did you make any changes to your rental agreement(s) because of new state or local regulations?

- Yes (please explain the change and why) _____
- No

17. The City requires a Rental Safety Inspection every three years. Landlords can choose to use a city inspector or private inspector, for the majority of your properties, which do you prefer and why?

- I prefer using a private inspector (Please explain why) _____
- I prefer using a City inspector (Please explain why) _____
- I don't have a preference.
- N/A, I have an inspection exemption

18. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very easy and 5 being very difficult, please rate the following.

	1 Very Easy	2 Somewhat Easy	3 Neither easy nor difficult	4 Somewhat Difficult	5 Very Difficult
Understanding the City's new rental fee regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Complying with the new rental fee regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Understanding the City's rental registration requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Complying with the rental registration requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the City's rental safety inspection process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Complying with the City's rental safety inspection process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. In the last 12 months, did you use any of the following methods to find more information about rental regulations in Bellingham (Select all that apply).

- Contacted the City's Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program.
- Used the City's website.
- Contacted another landlord or a landlord association.
- Attended a training.
- Other (please explain) _____

20. Do you have any additional comments or feedback about the City of Bellingham Rental Regulations or the Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program?