

## Update on Recent Changes to Landlord/Tenant Laws

The 2024 General Assembly session resulted in several changes to Rhode Island laws involving landlords and tenants. RIHousing is providing this update to keep you informed of statutory changes that may affect affordable housing owners and property managers.

- **Changes to rent increase notice requirements ([H7304A/S2189A](#)):** Increases the notice requirement for rent increases from 30 days to 60 days and for persons older than age 62, excluding residents of independent living, assisted living or congregate care facilities, from 60 to 120 days. Landlords are not however required to provide rent increase notices on a time frame that exceeds that set forth under any state or federal law, regulation or requirement of housing programs established under state or federal law or regulation. Effective upon passage.
- **Accommodation for residents not on the lease in the case of the death of the leaseholder ([H7162A/S2407A](#)):** Permits other residents of a residential dwelling unit that are over the age of 18 and not on the lease (grace period temporary tenants) to extend the term of the rental agreement for the lesser of 3 months after the death of the lessee or the remaining term of the rental agreement. The grace period temporary tenant must pay the rent and assume all other obligations of the existing rental agreement. The bill defines the documentation that a grace period temporary tenant can use to prove their eligibility for this accommodation. Effective upon passage.
- **Mandatory fee transparency ([H7647A/S2643A](#)):** Requires landlords to list all mandatory fees in the same section as the rent disclosure unless the tenant or unit are receiving state or federal subsidies that require a different lease format. If there is no written lease, the landlord shall provide to the tenant, in writing, a list of all fees beyond the rent that apply to the rental of the unit. Any change in required fees must be disclosed in writing at least 30 days prior to the change becoming effective. In any lease agreement the landlord shall disclose which utility costs are included in the rent and which are the tenant's responsibility. If there is no written lease, the landlord shall provide this information to the tenant in writing. If a tenant is required to obtain renters insurance, this requirement must be stated in the lease or if there is no written lease the landlord shall provide this information to the tenant in writing. Tenants may recover any fees paid for the unit that were not disclosed as required. Prohibits a landlord from charging a convenience fee when the tenant pays rent, unless the landlord accepts other forms of payment of rent, such as cash or check, without a convenience fee. Effective January 1, 2025.
- **Legislative Commission to study “Residential Landlord and Tenant Act” (H8368):** This resolution creates an 11-member commission to study and provide recommendations to update and clarify the "Residential Landlord and Tenant Act", and would report back to the House by May 5, 2025, and would expire on June 5, 2025.

In addition to legislation passed in the 2024 General Assembly session, there are several bills that were passed during the 2023 session but which go into effect in 2024.

- **Rental Registry ([R.I.G.L § 34-18-58](#)):** Requires landlords to register certain property identifying information on the [Rhode Island Rental Registry](#) managed by the Department of Health and for pre-1978 properties, provide a valid certificate of conformance with the [lead hazard mitigation act](#). Landlords who do not meet the requirement to register are subject to a civil fine of at least \$50, per unit, per month. Landlords who do not meet the requirement to provide a valid lead certificate are subject to a civil fine of at least \$125 per unit, per month. In addition, landlords are not able to file for eviction for nonpayment of rent unless they are registered in the Rhode Island Rental Registry and provide the court with evidence of compliance. This legislation took effect upon passage, with compliance with registry requirements by October 1, 2024.
- **Expansion of Lead Hazard Mitigation Act to small properties ([H5946A/S656A](#)):** Requires owner occupants of pre-1978, 2-3 unit properties to comply with the state's lead law. This legislation took effect on January 1, 2024.
- **Cost of Repairs ([H5108A/S1099](#)):** Increases the amount of costs for repairs that a tenant may deduct from their rent from one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) to five hundred dollars (\$500). This legislation took effect January 1, 2024.
- **Landlord/Tenant Law Consumer Guide ([H5204A/S305A](#)):** Requires the Secretary of Housing to create a written, consumer guide of landlord-tenant laws to be updated biennially. The guide will be published on the Department of Housing website and needs to be made available in both English and Spanish. This legislation took effect January 1, 2024.

This update is provided for informational purposes only. Always consult your legal counsel for advice on how this legislation may impact you or the properties you manage. Please contact Amy Rainone at [arainone@rihousing.com](mailto:arainone@rihousing.com) with any questions.