



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development
Diane M. Sugimura, Director

BRIEFING PAPER, INFORMATION ONLY
JANUARY 14, 2014

Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance (RRIO)

This memo provides a brief update on the status of the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance (RRIO) program, adopted by Council in October 2012. The intent of the RRIO program is to ensure all rental housing in Seattle is safe and meets basic housing maintenance requirements. The program calls for all rental housing properties to be inspected at least once every ten years and in some cases as often as once every five years. The program must pay for itself from registration fees and DPD worked hard with stakeholders throughout much of 2013 to minimize costs and ensure the technology systems and business processes for RRIO will be efficient and easy for customers to use and understand.

We initially thought the program would “go live” and people would be able to register their properties beginning in February of this year. We recently extended that estimate by a month, to March 2014, to accommodate needed technology upgrades. We’re confident this will have little to no impact on our customers because the first actual deadline for registration is not until July 1, 2014.

We’re pleased that we’ve begun getting calls already from property owners interested in knowing what they need to do to meet the new registration requirements. Although registrations for the nearly 48,000 rental properties covered by the program are spread out over three years, through 2016, once we go live, any property owner will be able to register early. The five year registration fee for a single unit is \$175 with each additional unit costing only two dollars. This fee is payable once every five years. Inspection costs will be on top of the registration fee and property owners will be able to hire a private inspector or buy inspection services from DPD. The DPD price for a RRIO inspection is \$130 for a single unit and \$25 for each additional unit. We do not know yet how our pricing will compare to the private sector.

We will be updating the RRIO web page in the near future with more information about the registration requirements. We are also preparing a handout for inspectors to give to property owners or tenants who inquire about RRIO. As we near the “go live” date, we will increase our outreach and public relations work.

In response to recommendations from our stakeholder group, we asked for help from community organizations and have been able to direct small financial grants for targeted outreach and education to three non-profit organizations: the Tenant’s Union, the Seattle Neighborhood Group, and the Off-Campus Housing Office for the Associated Students of the University of Washington. We also have education and outreach planned with the Department of Neighborhoods public outreach and engagement liaisons (POELs), the Seattle Chinatown International District PDA, a consortium of affordable housing providers, and associations such as the Rental Housing Association and the Washington Multi-family Housing Association.

We will keep you informed over the next two months as we bring together the remaining pieces of the RRIO program and “go live” with our new online system for registering properties. If you have any questions or want more information about the program, please feel free to contact Faith Lumsden, DPD Code Compliance Director at 206-615-0097.