

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

ESSB 5921

Title: An act relating to the disclosure of fire protection and building safety information.

Brief Description: Requiring the disclosure of fire protection and building safety information.

Sponsors: Senator Kohl-Welles.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF BILL

- Requires landlords to provide tenants with a written statement disclosing the fire protection and building safety information for the building.
- Exempts single-family residences from this requirement.

HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRADE COMMITTEE

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392)

Background:

Under the state fire protection statutes, all dwelling units occupied by persons other than the owner, or built after 1980, must be equipped with smoke detection devices. Installation of the device is the owner's responsibility, and the owner is also required to ensure that a device is operational after a vacancy. The tenant is responsible for maintaining the smoke detection device, including the replacement of batteries. Noncompliance by a landlord or a tenant is punishable by a fine of up to \$200.

Under the state Residential Landlord-Tenant Act, the landlord is required to maintain the premises in a manner fit for human habitation. Included in this is the duty to provide written notice: (1) that the unit has a smoke detection device; (2) that the tenant is responsible for maintaining the device in working condition; and (3) of the penalties for noncompliance.

Summary of Bill:

A landlord of a multi-family dwelling must provide a written statement to tenants that discloses fire protection and building safety information. The disclosure statement must include information on the fire protection features of the unit and the premises « such as sprinkler systems, smoke detection devices (including whether they are hard-wired or battery operated), other monitoring and detection systems, fire response plans, and evacuation practices to the extent they exist « and the smoking policy.

Both the landlord and the tenant must sign the statement and both parties must be provided with copies. It must be provided to new tenants prior to signing the initial lease, and to existing tenants no later than January 1, 2001. The requirement does not apply to single-family residences.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.