

**RCW 59.18.230 Waiver of chapter provisions prohibited—
Provisions prohibited from rental agreement—Distress for rent
abolished—Detention of personal property for rent—Remedies.**

(1) (a) Any provision of a lease or other agreement, whether oral or written, whereby any section or subsection of this chapter is waived except as provided in RCW 59.18.360 and shall be deemed against public policy and shall be unenforceable. Such unenforceability shall not affect other provisions of the agreement which can be given effect without them.

(b) Any agreement, whether oral or written, between a landlord and tenant, or their representatives, and entered into pursuant to an unlawful detainer action under this chapter that requires the tenant to pay any amount in violation of RCW 59.18.283 or the statutory judgment amount limits under RCW 59.18.410 (1) or (2), or waives any rights of the tenant under RCW 59.18.410 or any other rights afforded under this chapter except as provided in RCW 59.18.360 is void and unenforceable. A landlord may not threaten a tenant with eviction for failure to pay nonpossessory charges limited under RCW 59.18.283.

(2) No rental agreement may provide that the tenant:

(a) Agrees to waive or to forgo rights or remedies under this chapter; or

(b) Authorizes any person to confess judgment on a claim arising out of the rental agreement; or

(c) Agrees to pay the landlord's attorneys' fees, except as authorized in this chapter; or

(d) Agrees to the exculpation or limitation of any liability of the landlord arising under law or to indemnify the landlord for that liability or the costs connected therewith; or

(e) And landlord have agreed to a particular arbitrator at the time the rental agreement is entered into; or

(f) Agrees to pay late fees for rent that is paid within five days following its due date. If rent is more than five days past due, the landlord may charge late fees commencing from the first day after the due date until paid. Nothing in this subsection prohibits a landlord from serving a notice to pay or vacate at any time after the rent becomes due; or

(g) Agrees to make rent payments through electronic means only.

(3) A provision prohibited by subsection (2) of this section included in a rental agreement is unenforceable. If a landlord knowingly uses a rental agreement containing provisions known by him or her to be prohibited, the tenant may recover actual damages sustained by him or her, statutory damages not to exceed two times the monthly rent charged for the unit, costs of suit, and reasonable attorneys' fees.

(4) The common law right of the landlord of distress for rent is hereby abolished for property covered by this chapter. Any provision in a rental agreement creating a lien upon the personal property of the tenant or authorizing a distress for rent is null and void and of no force and effect. Any landlord who takes or detains the personal property of a tenant without the specific written consent of the tenant to such incident of taking or detention, and who, after written demand by the tenant for the return of his or her personal property, refuses to return the same promptly shall be liable to the tenant for the value of the property retained, actual damages, and if the refusal is intentional, may also be liable for damages of up to \$500 per day but not to exceed \$5,000, for each day or part of a day that the

tenant is deprived of his or her property. The prevailing party may recover his or her costs of suit and a reasonable attorneys' fee.

In any action, including actions pursuant to chapters 7.64 or 12.28 RCW, brought by a tenant or other person to recover possession of his or her personal property taken or detained by a landlord in violation of this section, the court, upon motion and after notice to the opposing parties, may waive or reduce any bond requirements where it appears to be to the satisfaction of the court that the moving party is proceeding in good faith and has, prima facie, a meritorious claim for immediate delivery or redelivery of said property. [2022 c 95 § 2. Prior: 2021 c 212 § 5; 2021 c 115 § 15; prior: 2020 c 315 § 6; 2020 c 177 § 2; 2011 c 132 § 11; 2010 c 8 § 19024; 1989 c 342 § 8; 1983 c 264 § 4; 1973 1st ex.s. c 207 § 23.]

Effective date—2021 c 212: See note following RCW 59.18.030.

Finding—Intent—Application—Effective date—2021 c 115: See notes following RCW 59.18.620.

Effective date—2020 c 315 §§ 5-8: See note following RCW 59.18.410.

Findings—Intent—2020 c 315: See note following RCW 59.18.057.