

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5921

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Judiciary, March 3, 1999

**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 History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 2/24/99, 3/3/99 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5921 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Heavey, Chair; Kline, Vice Chair; Costa, Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Long, McCaslin and Thibaudeau.

**Staff:** Penny Nerup (786-7484)

**Background:** Landlords are required by state law to keep the premises of their building(s) fit for human habitation. Included is the responsibility to maintain the premises to substantially comply with applicable codes, to maintain the structural components of the building, to keep the premises pest free, to provide adequate heat and hot water, and to make all necessary repairs.

The Governor's Fire Protection Task Force made many recommendations concerning fire safety in boarding homes. The task force also looked at fire safety in multi-family dwellings, such as apartment buildings. Members of that task force suggest that tenants of multi-family dwellings be provided with written notice of fire safety procedures and equipment in the multi-family dwellings they rent.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The landlord of a multi-family dwelling must provide written notice to tenants that disclose the fire protection and safety information for the building, such as sprinkler systems, smoke detection devices, other detection systems, fire response plans, evacuation practices, smoking policy, and the fire safety characteristics of the premises. Both the landlord and the tenant must sign the statement and both parties must be provided with copies.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill provides that landlords are required to disclose their buildings' fire response plans and evacuation practices to the extent they exist. There are specific time lines for notification of tenants. Vague terminology was deleted.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Prospective tenants of multi-family dwellings need to rent knowing what fire protection the building has. Given the tragedy and deaths that occurred in the Kona Village apartment fire, it is good sense for renters to decide to rent or not to rent based upon the fire safety of the building. This bill only requires the landlord to disclose the information. They are not required under this legislation to add new fire safety devices.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; Captain Eric Robertson, Washington State Patrol, State Fire Marshal; Gordon Walgren, Washington State Fire Chiefs; Paul O'Connor, Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board of Puget Sound.