Resolving Neighbor Conflicts

Apartment living is not the same as living in single family homes. Neighbors will sometimes rub us wrong; some are noisy or have noisy animals, some have trouble following their lease agreements. These issues are not always resolvable, but there are steps you can take.

Noise is unregulated by our lease between 8 AM and 10 PM. However, between 10 PM and 8 AM, we are not allowed to do laundry, run our dishwashers, dump garbage down the chutes, vacuum, play our TVs or radios loudly, play musical instruments or hang pictures. Letting our doors slam may sometimes be unavoidable, but shutting them quietly is more considerate.

Smoking is another common complaint. This is a smoke-free property, both indoors and out, which means no fire for anything, including medicinals or candles. Furthermore, RCW 70.160.075 prohibits smoking within 25 feet of any doors, windows or vents of a building.

If you believe your neighbor is violating the lease, be sure you know who the violator is. For example, noise travels oddly in these buildings. You may think the noise is coming from one source but it could actually be coming from another.

Consider calmly talking to the neighbor yourself. They may not be aware they are disturbing you. Don't be confrontational when discussing the issue. Try, rather, to be informational.

If you are uncomfortable talking to the neighbor, document the problem. You'll need a name and apartment number as well as the type and time of the violation. Pictures or recordings can be helpful, but don't endanger yourself to get them. Present a written Incident Report to the office and ask them to enforce the rental agreement. Ask for a signed copy of your complaint. A letter from a doctor or other healthcare professional may improve your argument.

If you still feel your concerns are not being addressed, consider mediation. You can call the CIRC Community Life Foundation at 206-940-6708, or connect with them online at circliving.org, and ask them to help you mediate with your neighbor.

After hours, consider calling the non-emergency number for the Police, at 206-625-5011. The Police may just make note of your call or they may show up only to verbally warn the neighbor. This might not seem like a very satisfying result, but if the Police get enough complaints about an individual, they may eventually charge them.