

Rhode Island

Landlord-Tenant Compliance Guide

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■■ IMPORTANT LEGAL DISCLAIMER

This guide provides a summary of key compliance requirements for residential landlord-tenant relationships in Rhode Island. It is not legal advice and should not be relied upon as a substitute for consultation with a qualified attorney. Laws change frequently; always verify current requirements with official state sources or legal counsel. enCompliance.com provides this information as-is and makes no warranties regarding accuracy or completeness.

■ Severity Indicators:

- **Critical** - Must comply (legal requirement)
- **Important** - Should follow (best practice)
- **Standard** - Good to know (general info)

■ This guide covers 103 compliance requirements across 18 categories

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1. ADDITIONAL LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

● **1. Rules and Regulations** (RIGL § 34-18-25)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-25](#) (click to view statute)

● **2. Abandonment** (RIGL § 34-18-40)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-40](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Attorney Fees** (RIGL § 34-18-38)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-38](#) (click to view statute)

● **4. Smoking Policies** (No specific statute)

■ *Legal Reference:* *No specific statute*

● **5. Pet Policies** (No specific statute; Federal FHA for service animals)

■ *Legal Reference:* [No specific statute; Federal FHA for service animals](#) (click to view statute)

● **6. Lease Assignment & Subletting** (RIGL § 34-18-15)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-15](#) (click to view statute)

● **7. Landlord Identification** (RIGL § 34-18-20)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-20](#) (click to view statute)

● **8. Nonresident Landlord Agent** (RIGL § 34-18-22.3)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-22.3](#) (click to view statute)

● **9. Zoning and Housing Code Compliance** (RIGL § 34-18-22.2, § 45-24.3)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-22.2, § 45-24.3](#) (click to view statute)

● **10. Occupancy Limits** (Local building/zoning codes, RIGL § 45-24.3)

■ *Legal Reference:* [Local building/zoning codes, RIGL § 45-24.3](#) (click to view statute)

2. BUSINESS OPERATIONS

● **1. Trust Account Requirements (No specific statute for property managers)**

■ *Legal Reference: [No specific statute for property managers](#) (click to view statute)*

● **2. Insurance Requirements (RIGL § 42-128.1 (lead insurance))**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1 \(lead insurance\)](#) (click to view statute)*

● **3. Tax Obligations (Various tax statutes)**

■ *Legal Reference: [Various tax statutes](#) (click to view statute)*

3. CORE LEASE REQUIREMENTS

● **1. Lease Formation & Disclosures (RIGL § 34-18-20, § 34-18-22.1)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-20, § 34-18-22.1](#) (click to view statute)*

● **2. Written Lease Requirements (RIGL § 34-18-15)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-15](#) (click to view statute)*

● **3. Lease Language Requirements (RIGL § 34-18-15, § 34-18-18)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-15, § 34-18-18](#) (click to view statute)*

● **4. Lease Addendums (Various RIGL § 34-18 sections)**

■ *Legal Reference: [Various RIGL § 34-18 sections](#) (click to view statute)*

● **5. Lease Renewal (RIGL § 34-18-15)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-15](#) (click to view statute)*

● **6. Lease Termination (RIGL § 34-18-37)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-37](#) (click to view statute)*

● **7. Early Termination (RIGL § 34-18-15(e), § 34-37-1, § 34-18-33)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-15\(e\), § 34-37-1, § 34-18-33](#) (click to view statute)*

4. COURT ACTIONS & LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

● **1. Small Claims Court (RIGL § 9-12 (Small Claims))**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 9-12 \(Small Claims\)](#) (click to view statute)*

● **2. District Court Evictions (RIGL § 34-18-9)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-9](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Service of Process** (RIGL § 34-18-10)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-10](#) (click to view statute)

● **4. Answer Period** (RIGL § 34-18-36)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-36](#) (click to view statute)

● **5. Appeal Rights** (RIGL § 34-18-47)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-47](#) (click to view statute)

● **6. Writ of Execution** (RIGL § 34-18-48)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-48](#) (click to view statute)

5. ENTRY & ACCESS

● **1. Landlord Entry Rights** (RIGL § 34-18-26)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-26](#) (click to view statute)

● **2. Entry Notice Requirements** (RIGL § 34-18-26(c))

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-26\(c\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Abuse of Access Rights** (RIGL § 34-18-26(c), § 34-18-45)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-26\(c\)](#), [§ 34-18-45](#) (click to view statute)

6. EVICTION PROCEDURES

● **1. Eviction for Nonpayment of Rent** (RIGL § 34-18-35)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-35](#) (click to view statute)

● **2. Eviction for Lease Violation** (RIGL § 34-18-36)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-36](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Termination of Periodic Tenancy** (RIGL § 34-18-37)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-37](#) (click to view statute)

● **4. Eviction for Holding Over** (RIGL § 34-18-38)

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-38](#) (click to view statute)

● **5. Self-Help Eviction Prohibited (RIGL § 34-18-44, § 34-18-34)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-44, § 34-18-34](#) (click to view statute)

● **6. Eviction Process Timeline (Various RIGL § 34-18 sections)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Various RIGL § 34-18 sections](#) (click to view statute)

● **7. Tenant Defenses to Eviction (RIGL § 34-18-32)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-32](#) (click to view statute)

7. FAIR HOUSING & DISCRIMINATION

● **1. Fair Housing Protections (Federal Fair Housing Act, RIGL § 34-37 (Domestic Violence))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Federal Fair Housing Act, RIGL § 34-37 \(Domestic Violence\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **2. Reasonable Accommodations (Federal Fair Housing Act, ADA)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Federal Fair Housing Act, ADA](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Familial Status (Federal Fair Housing Act)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Federal Fair Housing Act](#) (click to view statute)

● **4. Domestic Violence Protections (RIGL § 34-37-1)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-37-1](#) (click to view statute)

8. FINANCIAL TERMS

● **1. Rent Amount & Payment (RIGL § 34-18-15)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-15](#) (click to view statute)

● **2. Rent Increases (RIGL § 34-18-16.1 (amended 2024))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-16.1 \(amended 2024\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Late Fees (No specific statute)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [No specific statute](#) (click to view statute)

● **4. NSF/Bounced Check Fees (RIGL § 6-42-3)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 6-42-3](#) (click to view statute)

● **5. Application Fees (RIGL § 34-18-59 (effective 2024))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-59 \(effective 2024\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **6. Move-In Fees (No specific statute)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [No specific statute](#) (click to view statute)

● **7. Pet Fees & Deposits (No specific statute; RIGL § 34-18-19 applies to pet deposits)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [No specific statute; RIGL § 34-18-19 applies to pet deposits](#) (click to view statute)

● **8. Utilities (RIGL § 34-18-31, § 34-18-34)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-31, § 34-18-34](#) (click to view statute)

● **9. Convenience Fees (RIGL § 34-18-61 (effective January 1, 2025))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-61 \(effective January 1, 2025\)](#) (click to view statute)

9. HABITABILITY & MAINTENANCE

● **1. Landlord Maintenance Duties (RIGL § 34-18-22)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-22](#) (click to view statute)

● **2. Tenant Maintenance Duties (RIGL § 34-18-24)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-24](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Repair and Deduct Remedy (RIGL § 34-18-30)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-30](#) (click to view statute)

● **4. Landlord Noncompliance - Tenant Remedies (RIGL § 34-18-28)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-28](#) (click to view statute)

● **5. Essential Services Failure (RIGL § 34-18-31)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-31](#) (click to view statute)

● **6. Fire or Casualty Damage (RIGL § 34-18-33)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-33](#) (click to view statute)

10. LEAD PAINT & HAZARD MITIGATION

● **1. Lead Certificate Requirement (RIGL § 42-128.1-8)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 42-128.1-8](#) (click to view statute)

● **2. Lead Disclosure Requirements (RIGL § 42-128.1, Federal 42 USC 4852d)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1, Federal 42 USC 4852d](#) (click to view statute)*

● **3. Rhode Island Rental Registry (RIGL § 34-18-58)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-58](#) (click to view statute)*

● **4. Lead Inspection Requirements (RIGL § 42-128.1-4)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1-4](#) (click to view statute)*

● **5. Lead Hazard Mitigation (RIGL § 42-128.1-5)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1-5](#) (click to view statute)*

● **6. Lead Law Penalties (RIGL § 42-128.1-11, § 42-128.1-14, § 34-18-58)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1-11, § 42-128.1-14, § 34-18-58](#) (click to view statute)*

● **7. Lead Insurance Requirement (RIGL § 42-128.1)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1](#) (click to view statute)*

● **8. Presumptive Compliance Certificate (RIGL § 42-128.1-4.1)**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1-4.1](#) (click to view statute)*

11. LOCAL ORDINANCES

● **1. Providence Requirements (Providence City Ordinances)**

■ *Legal Reference: [Providence City Ordinances](#) (click to view statute)*

● **2. Other Cities (Various local ordinances)**

■ *Legal Reference: [Various local ordinances](#)*

12. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LICENSING

● **1. Real Estate Broker License (RIGL § 5-20.5 (Real Estate License Law))**

■ *Legal Reference: [RIGL § 5-20.5 \(Real Estate License Law\)](#) (click to view statute)*

● **2. Business Registration (General business law)**

■ *Legal Reference: [General business law](#) (click to view statute)*

13. RECORD KEEPING & REPORTING

- 1. Lease Records (General business practice, required for disputes)
■ Legal Reference: [General business practice, required for disputes \(click to view statute\)](#)
- 2. Payment Records (General business practice)
■ Legal Reference: [General business practice \(click to view statute\)](#)
- 3. Maintenance Records (RIGL § 34-18-22 (repairs duty))
■ Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-22 \(repairs duty\) \(click to view statute\)](#)
- 4. Move-In/Move-Out Inspections (RIGL § 34-18-19 (security deposits))
■ Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-19 \(security deposits\) \(click to view statute\)](#)
- 5. Lead Documentation (RIGL § 42-128.1, Federal lead disclosure)
■ Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1, Federal lead disclosure \(click to view statute\)](#)
- 6. Notice Documentation (RIGL § 34-18-56)
■ Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-56 \(click to view statute\)](#)

14. RETALIATION & PROHIBITED ACTS

- 1. Retaliation Prohibited (RIGL § 34-18-46)
■ Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-46 \(click to view statute\)](#)
- 2. Presumption of Retaliation (RIGL § 34-18-46)
■ Legal Reference: [RIGL § 34-18-46 \(click to view statute\)](#)
- 3. Lead-Related Retaliation (RIGL § 42-128.1-14)
■ Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-128.1-14 \(click to view statute\)](#)

15. RHODE ISLAND-SPECIFIC ISSUES

- 1. Coastal Properties (RI Coastal Resources Management Council regulations)
■ Legal Reference: [RI Coastal Resources Management Council regulations \(click to view statute\)](#)
- 2. Historic Properties (RIGL § 42-45 (Historic Preservation))
■ Legal Reference: [RIGL § 42-45 \(Historic Preservation\) \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **3. Bed Bugs (No specific Rhode Island statute)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [No specific Rhode Island statute \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **4. Mold (No specific Rhode Island statute)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [No specific Rhode Island statute \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **5. Winter Heating Requirements (RIGL § 34-18-22)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-22 \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **6. Court File Sealing (RIGL § 34-18-60)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-60 \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **7. Providence/Warwick Absentee Landlord Act (RIGL § 34-18-57)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-57 \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **8. Foreclosure Protection for Tenants (RIGL § 34-18-38.1, § 34-18-38.2)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-38.1, § 34-18-38.2 \(click to view statute\)](#)

16. SCREENING & SELECTION

● **1. Application Process (RIGL § 34-18-59, Federal Fair Housing Act)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-59, Federal Fair Housing Act \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **2. Credit and Background Checks (Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act \(FCRA\) \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **3. Criminal History Screening (Federal Fair Housing Act guidance)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Federal Fair Housing Act guidance \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **4. Income Requirements (No specific statute)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [No specific statute \(click to view statute\)](#)

17. SECURITY DEPOSITS

● **1. Security Deposit Limits (RIGL § 34-18-19(a))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-19\(a\) \(click to view statute\)](#)

● **2. Security Deposit Storage (RIGL § 34-18-19)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-19](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Security Deposit Return (RIGL § 34-18-19(b))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-19\(b\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **4. Allowable Deductions (RIGL § 34-18-19(b))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-19\(b\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **5. Itemization Requirements (RIGL § 34-18-19(b))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-19\(b\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **6. Penalties for Wrongful Withholding (RIGL § 34-18-19)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-19](#) (click to view statute)

● **7. Interest on Deposits (RIGL § 34-18-19)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-19](#) (click to view statute)

● **8. Deposit Transfer Upon Sale (RIGL § 34-18-19(g), § 34-18-23)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18-19\(g\), § 34-18-23](#) (click to view statute)

18. SPECIAL PROPERTY TYPES

● **1. Owner-Occupied Multi-Unit (RIGL § 42-128.1-8 (amended 2024))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 42-128.1-8 \(amended 2024\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **2. Student Housing (RIGL § 34-18 applies)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-18 applies](#) (click to view statute)

● **3. Senior Housing (Federal Fair Housing Act (55+ exemption))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Federal Fair Housing Act \(55+ exemption\)](#) (click to view statute)

● **4. Subsidized Housing (Federal HUD regulations)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Federal HUD regulations](#) (click to view statute)

● **5. Short-Term Rentals (Check local ordinances)**

■ *Legal Reference:* [Check local ordinances](#)

● **6. Condominium Rentals (RIGL § 34-36.1 (Condominium Act))**

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 34-36.1 \(Condominium Act\)](#) (click to view statute)

● 7. Mobile Home Parks (RIGL § 31-44 (Mobile Manufactured Homes))

■ *Legal Reference:* [RIGL § 31-44 \(Mobile Manufactured Homes\)](#) (click to view statute)

Severity Indicators:

- Critical requirement (must comply)
- Important guideline (should follow)
- Standard information (good to know)

■■ LOCAL ORDINANCES & MUNICIPAL REQUIREMENTS

Note: The following requirements are specific to certain municipalities or counties within the state and may differ from or supplement statewide regulations. Always verify local requirements with your city or county government.

● 1. Providence Requirements (Providence City Ordinances)

■ *Legal Reference:* [Providence City Ordinances](#)

● 2. Other Cities (Various local ordinances)

■ *Legal Reference:* [Various local ordinances](#)

For the most current information, always consult official state sources.

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■ Questions or need legal review? Contact: **support@enCompliance.com**

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