



# ORCA TALES



**We will soon be Distributing Drug Testing Products.**

For More Information Please Contact Rebekah Near Ext# 103

## Definition Of A Crime

A crime is a violation of a specific criminal statute. Crimes in Washington generally fall into two categories: (1) **felonies** and (2) **misdemeanors**. The exact punishment that can be imposed upon conviction of a crime depends on the type of crime and the individual's prior criminal record.

Generally speaking, a felony is a crime for which the sentence may be more than one year in prison. In the state of Washington, there are three classes of felonies: Class A, Class B and Class C. Class A felonies are the most serious.

There are two categories of misdemeanors in this state: gross misdemeanors (punishable by up to one year in jail and / or a \$5000 fine) and misdemeanors (punishable by up to 90 days in jail and / or a \$1000 fine).

Convictions for certain crimes may require mandatory minimum sentences, and penalties may be increased if the crime occurred while armed with a firearm or deadly weapon. Washington's Sentencing Reform Act governs punishments for felonies in this state. Except for special circumstances, the court must sentence the offender within a particular range set by the state Legislature.

First offenders may be eligible for special sentencing consideration for nonviolent crimes. If the court grants probation as part of the court's sentence, a person must be placed on community supervision for between 12 and 24 months.

Information obtained from Washington State Bar Assoc. ~ What you should Know about Criminal Law

## ORCA WISDOM



*"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity".*  
*{Albert Einstein (1879-1955)}*

## CONGRATULATIONS!

### Find the Whale with the Tail

There was one winner each week! Each wins \$25.00  
 Week 1~ Dawn Benysek @ Koetje Agency Mgmt.  
 Week 2~ Denise Bresee @ Cornell / Northpoint Apts  
 Week 3~ Agne Elliot @ Manor Properties Cascade  
 Week 4~ Danelle Singleton @ Nevins/Lewbel

## What People Are Saying

✧ Katie, Thank-You for the information you provided for me on 4/23/2003. It was very helpful.  
*Plymouth Housing Group ~ C. Lewiston*

✧ Rebekah, Thanks ever so much for bringing your expertise and enthusiasm to our little Tukwila Managers Training. It's a delight to have you here! I appreciate that you take the time and energy to share "your stuff."  
*Crime Free Multi-Housing Officer ~ R. Burns*

✧ We wanted to take time out to send our heartfelt "Thank-You" for your support of our very successful First Annual Meeting and conference held last October in Salem, Oregon.  
*Affordable Housing Management Association ~ J. Diehl*

## Rejecting Tenant Applications

You've done the background check on your new tenant and you see it's a no-go. As long as the reason isn't discriminatory (rejecting a tenant due to their race, religion, national origin, sex or disability) you'll be okay right? Not necessarily.

In order to stay out of trouble with Fair Housing, it is important to set standards for evaluating applications. The standards must be legal and they must be applied to all applications. One of the biggest things we are judged on is that our standards are uniformly applied and that the unit is rented to the 'First Qualified Applicant.' The important thing is that people must keep good records of how they apply the rules to all potential tenants equally.

If you simply tell a tenant your application has been rejected, with nothing to back up the reasons for your decision, the tenant could then draw a number of conclusions: It's because of my race. It's because of my sexual preference. It's because I have kids. Etc.

This might not be what you intended at all... but unless you have proof to back you up otherwise, your rejected applicant may be able to make it seem that way. To avoid any sticky situations with false accusations, accompany each application with a cover letter explaining to the tenant how you will evaluate their application.

The following is an example letter: Welcome to RUs Property Management services. We hope that you will find a property that meets all your needs. For your convenience, the following is a brief overview of the general guidelines used to process an application.

A completed application form -in order to tell us about yourself. Each adult wishing to live in one of our properties must fill out an application and be approved. All sections of each application must be complete and accurate.

Employment—in order to verify that there is ade-

quate income to make rental payments. In general, we expect applicant(s) to have been in current employment for at least six months, and that income is equal to three to four times the monthly rental amount.

Rental History - in order to verify that the prospective tenant has demonstrated a desire to meet lease obligations. In general, we want to verify the amount of current rent and that the rent was paid in a timely manner; that the property was kept in good condition; that there is no history of complaints from other tenants; that all lease obligations have been a positive experience.

Credit History -in order to verify that the prospective tenant has demonstrated fiscal responsibility. In general we look for payments that are made on time, that there are no judgments or bankruptcy records, and that credit responsibilities are in line with income.

Vehicle Information -including make, model, color & year of any vehicle to be kept at the rental property.

A valid photo I.D. - so that we can assume the property owner that the person applying for the property is indeed the person moving in. Authorization for us to verify information given on the application and to order a credit check. No person shall be denied the right to rent one of our properties based on applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status or familial status.

By providing tenants with the above information before they even fill out the application, they will know exactly what you're looking for, and what possible reasons their application may have been rejected. In the event that you do choose to reject an application, you should be prepared to provide the applicant with documentation about the reasons why.

**Above Information was obtained from the Onsite Northwest by Kate Kemp.**

To obtain information on consumer rights FCRA Amendment—Section 615. Please contact Orca's Headwhale ~Rebekah @Ext# 103.