



City Council adopted Ordinance No. 6223 in April 2015, amending the Land Use Code definitions, including the definition of “family,” and implementing regulations pertaining to rentals of dwelling units. This handout provides key information and answers common questions about the Single-Family Dwelling Rental regulations.

Can I rent out rooms in my house?

There are several ways that homeowners can rent space in their homes to other parties. One way is to operate a Boarding House, defined as an owner-occupied house where up to two rooms may be rented for profit to individuals unrelated to the owner (includes Transient Lodging as defined in Section 20.50.048 of the Land Use Code or LUC). A second form of rental is a Bed and Breakfast, defined as an owner-occupied dwelling which temporarily houses guests for profit. Land Use Code 20.20.140 addresses general development requirements for Boarding Houses and Bed and Breakfasts, including the requirement for Home Occupation Permits.

A third form of rental is a Rooming House, defined as a non-owner-occupied dwelling subject to multiple leases or in which rooms are offered for rent on an individual room basis. Rooming houses are allowed only in certain specific Land Use Districts of the city and are subject to specific requirements addressed in more detail below.

What are the specific requirements to operate a Rooming House?

- A Rooming House is not owner-occupied (LUC 20.50.044).
- Rooming Houses are allowed only in the following Land Use Districts: R-10, R-15, R-20, R-30, OLB, CB, F1, F2, F3, BR-OR, BR-RC, BR-R, BR-CR, BR-ORT, and EH-A (LUC 20.10.440; 20.25D.070; and 20.25F.010).
- A Rooming House must be located in a detached, single-family dwelling on its own parcel.
- A Rooming House may offer no more than four rooms for rent to not more than a total of five individuals at any one time.
- All rooms offered for rent shall be legally-established bedrooms.
- An owner, landlord, or registered agent shall be identified as the party legally responsible and accountable for compliance with all City of Bellevue Rooming House requirements. This party must be local, and the name and contact information for that party shall be filed with the city before establishing the Rooming House.
- Legal on-site parking spaces shall be provided in a quantity equal to the number of bedrooms leased or available for lease in the Rooming House.
- Appropriate provisions shall be made for the maintenance of the exterior of the property.
- Appropriate provisions shall be made for refuse collection, including trash, recycling, and yard waste.
- A Rooming House shall comply with City of Bellevue noise, nuisance, health and safety regulations, as well as all other applicable city and state codes and regulations.

What is the definition of “family,” and how does that relate to single-family dwelling rentals?

Land Use Code 20.50.020 defines “family” to include not more than four adult persons, unless all are related by blood, marriage, or legal adoption, living together as a single housekeeping unit. A single housekeeping unit is defined by LUC 20.50.046 as one household where all members have common access to and common use of all living, kitchen, and eating areas within the dwelling unit, and share

common responsibilities and activities such as expenses, maintenance, chores, and meals. If the dwelling unit is rented, the household members must jointly occupy the dwelling unit under a single lease in order to be considered a single housekeeping unit.

Land Use Code 20.50.020 also provides that more than four unrelated adults can live in a single-family dwelling (outside of the districts where Rooming Houses are permitted) if they live as the functional equivalent of a family in the determination of the director of Development Services. Factors to be considered by the director in making this determination include whether the group of more than four unrelated adults:

- Shares the entire dwelling unit or acts as separate roomers.
- Includes minor, dependent children regularly residing in the household.
- Can produce proof of sharing expenses for food, rent, or ownership costs, utilities, and other household expenses.
- Shares common ownership of furniture and appliances.
- Constitutes a permanent living arrangement, and is not a framework for transient living.
- Maintains a stable composition from year to year.
- Is not a group of students or other individuals where the common living arrangement is temporary in nature.
- Can demonstrate other factors reasonably related to whether the group is the functional equivalent of a family.

Again, if the dwelling unit is rented, the household members must jointly occupy the dwelling unit under a single lease in order to be considered a single housekeeping unit.

What about existing single-family dwelling rental situations that do not conform to Ordinance 6223?

Ordinance No. 6223 provides that nonconforming single-family rental uses that lawfully existed at the time Ordinance No. 6223 became effective could continue until expiration of the last lease or until April 14, 2016, whichever occurs earlier.

Where can I obtain additional information?

- The Land Use Review desk in the Permit Center at Bellevue City Hall (450 110th Avenue NE), 425-452-4188 or landusereview@bellevuewa.gov.
- Ordinance No. 6223 http://www.bellevuewa.gov/Ordinances/Ord-6223_room_rentals.pdf
- Land Use Code 20.20.700 (Rooming Houses); 20.50.020 (“family”); 20.50.046 (“single housekeeping unit”); 20.50.012 (Bed and Breakfast and Boarding House); and 20.30N (Home Occupation Permit).

This document is intended to provide guidance in applying certain Land Use Code regulations and is for informational use only. This document cannot be used as a substitute for the Land Use Code or other City codes. Other City codes such as the Building Code, Clearing and Grading Code, etc., may also apply to your project. Additional information is available from the Development Services Department at Bellevue City Hall.