



City of Seattle
Finance and Administrative Services

FILING A CLAIM FOR DAMAGES AGAINST THE CITY – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is a Claim for Damages?

- A. A claim is a request for payment for a loss, injury, or damages that you incurred in an incident/accident.

Q: What law regulates the City's claims process:

- A. The claims process follows Washington State Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [4.96.020](#) and Seattle Municipal Code [5.24.005](#).

Q: How long do I have to file a claim?

- A. You must file your claim within the state statute of limitations. There are different statutes of limitation for different types of claims. See [RCW 4.16](#) for the various statutes of limitation.

Q: I filled out a report when I was involved in the accident; do I still need to file a claim?

- A. Yes, in most circumstances where you seek money damages, you must file a claim if you believe the City of Seattle is responsible for your loss, injury, or damages.

Q: How do I get a claim form to file against the City of Seattle?

- A. You can print a claim form from the website, call for a claim form, or pick up a claim form from the Office of the City Clerk.

Website: www.seattle.gov/riskmanagement

Pick up form at the City Clerk's Office: 600 Fourth Ave., 3rd floor, Seattle
Call 206-684-8213 to request a form be mailed to you

Q: What information do I need to include on my form?

- A. Claims must include
1. Name, date of birth, contact information
 2. Description of the circumstances that brought about the injury or damage
 3. Description of the injury or damage
 4. Statement of the time and place the injury or damage occurred
 5. List of all persons involved and contact information if known
 6. Statement of the amount of damages claimed
 7. Statement of the actual residence of the claimant at the time of presenting the claim and at the time the claim arose
 8. Signed by the person filing the claim, the attorney in fact for the claimant, an attorney admitted to practice in Washington State on the claimant's behalf, or a court approved guardian or guardian ad litem on behalf of the claimant

9. Original signature on the claim form that is filed with the Office of the City Clerk since this is a legal document

Q: Should I include any other documents?

- A. It will help your claim to include any supporting records, such as receipts, estimates, and invoices, along with any additional evidence, such as photos, diagrams, etc. All documents filed with your claim are subject to Washington State public disclosure statutes.

Q: Where do I file my claim?

- A. Claims for damages against the City of Seattle must be filed with the City Clerk's Office in person or by mail. The address and location are on the back of the claim form.

Q: What happens when I file my claim?

- A. Your claim will be sent to the City's Risk Management Office the following business day after the date you filed the claim. You will receive a claim acknowledgement by mail, e-mail, or telephone call. A claims adjuster will then investigate your claim. Possible resolutions are that the City:
 1. Pays a sum of money;
 2. Transfers the claim to another party or entity;
 3. Denies the claim where there is no evidence of City negligence.

Q: How long will the investigation take?

- A. The length of time will vary from case to case. On average, claims take up to 60 days to resolve, but more complicated cases may take longer.

Q: What are the considerations in evaluating a claim?

- A. The considerations in evaluating a claim include
 1. The facts of the loss
 2. The applicable law
 3. Whether the City of Seattle has legal responsibility
 4. The claimant's role in the situation
 5. The nature and extent of damages claimed.

Q: I was injured. Who is going to pay my medical expenses?

- A. You are responsible for all medical expenses that you incur. If you believe the City of Seattle is responsible for your injuries, you must file a claim. The circumstances surrounding your injury will be investigated. If a settlement is warranted, it may include reimbursement of your medical bills. The City does not pay medical providers directly.

Q: I need a rental vehicle because my vehicle is badly damaged or unsafe to drive. How can I get a rental vehicle?

- A. The City of Seattle does not authorize rentals but will pay for the loss of use of your vehicle while it is being repaired or not drivable if the City is responsible for your damages. Please understand that the claims adjuster must complete an investigation to determine responsibility prior to any authorization to pay for the loss of use of your care while being repaired or not drivable. You may consider contacting your own automobile insurance

company for assistance in the meantime. Should you choose to rent a vehicle prior to the conclusion of the claims adjuster's investigation then you may be responsible for all or part of that expense. The City of Seattle does not reimburse for fuel, mileage, or any insurance waivers the rental company may charge you.

Q: How do I check the status of my claim?

- A. Call your claims adjuster. If you do not have your adjuster's direct number, call the City's Risk Management Office at 206-684-8213.

Q: What if my claim is denied and I disagree with that outcome?

- A. If you have new information or information not previously presented, then please contact your claims adjuster and provide that information. Otherwise, you could consult a private attorney at your own expense for your next options, to include litigation.

Q: Where can I get translation help?

- A. In order to obtain translation help, please call your claims adjuster. NWI Global is available to help citizens and claims adjusters communicate if translation or interpretation services are needed.