

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE

MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Payment and Deposit Controls

SCOPE: This policy shall apply to all housing programs administered by the Seattle Housing Authority and its employees, unless specifically noted. Hope VI and Mixed-Financed communities shall be governed by the properties' Management Plan.

POLICY: As part of its duties as landlord, the Seattle Housing Authority handles payments for rent, services rendered, damages, and other debts owed to the Housing Authority.

Cash, personal checks, cashiers checks, and money orders made out to the "Seattle Housing Authority" shall be the only acceptable forms of payment for any such debts. For internal control and accountability for payments received, all cash payments must be made at the Housing Authority's Central Office.

No check or money order may be made payable to any individual staff person, and no staff person may accept such a payment. No staff may, under any circumstance, make a payment in any form (cash, check or money order) on behalf of a resident. Any payments received by staff shall be recorded, held in a secure location and should be deposited within two business days.

Rent payments are processed through a lock box service. SHA will accept rent payments in the field management offices only when immediate payment is required or payment by lock box service is not feasible, such as a new move-in rent and deposit payment or rent payment to settle an eviction..

In the event a payment is lost after receipt by SHA, as verified by a written receipt or by staff, SHA shall be responsible for reimbursing the resident for the cost incurred to place a stop payment on the payment and to have it re-issued.

No staff person who is also an SHA resident shall handle any aspect of his/her own tenant account, including, but not limited to, the processing of payments due. In addition, no staff person shall be allowed to handle the tenant accounts of residents who are immediate family member(s) or whose relationship or association with the staff person may create the appearance of a conflict of interest. Staff members shall advise their supervisors of any such potential conflict.

RESPONSIBILITY: The Director of Housing Operations shall be responsible for overall oversight and administration of this policy. The Senior Property Managers and Property Managers shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration of this policy. Administrative Specialist III's and other field staff who receive payments shall be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and for carrying out the following procedures.

PROCEDURE:

Rev. 11-01-05 Revised language regarding cash payments and clarified language to state rent payments are not accepted in field offices.

SHA staff shall not accept rent payments in the field management offices except when immediate payment is required or payment by lock box service is not feasible, such as a new move-in rent and deposit payment or rent payment to settle an eviction..

If payment must be accepted, staff shall process the payment as follows:

PAYMENTS. Anyone who accepts or receives a payment(s) shall promptly notify the ASIII responsible for processing payments for the property. Payments shall be placed in a designated secure location. Under no circumstances may a payment be left out on the desk or in any unsecured location. Staff may provide residents with a pre-paid, self addressed envelope and re-printed rent statement so the resident can mail their rent payments for processing.

1.

- a. Cash. Payment by cash (United States currency), will only be accepted at the Central Office by the Finance and Administration (F&A) Department. A staff person who refers a resident to the Central Office to make payment by cash, shall e-mail the Front Receptionist to advise him/her of the details of the referral, including the resident name, community and amount to be paid in cash.

Two staff members (at least one from F&A) shall always be present when accepting cash payment. Cash payments will only be accepted during the hours of 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Residents must have the exact dollar amount due as shown on the resident's account. Acceptance of any dollar amount other than the amount shown on the resident's account, or for accounts shown on MLS as under eviction, must be approved by the Senior Property Manager or designee.

2. **RECEIPTS.** When accepting a payment of any kind, staff shall prepare a written receipt from the office receipt book. The top copy shall be kept in the receipt book. Upon request, staff shall provide a copy of the receipt to the resident. The second copy shall be kept with the payment.

Receipt books shall be kept in the office for three years and sent to records retention to be kept for the time period required by SHA's Record and Retention schedule.

3. **PROCESSING AND DEPOSITS.** Payments should be deposited in 48 hours or two business days, whichever is less.

- a. Print a rent statement with bar coding (OCR)

In MLS

- Select Tenant Processing
- Select Tenant Records
- Select tenant (or F4 to search)
- [Alt A] to select Access drop down menu
- Select Process Payment [P]
- Enter dollar amount of payment to be sent in
- Enter a reason, i.e., interim review, rent correction, lost rent stmt.
- Press [F5] to print.

- b. Mail the resident's payment and printed rent statement into Lock Box using the self addressed envelope.
- c. If access to printing a rent statement is not possible, create a "dummy" rent statement by typing out the resident's full name, tenant identification number, unit and community number, and rent amount due. Staff name and phone number should be added at the end.

If it is necessary to process a payment on MLS, the following steps should be followed:

- a. MLS Process. Payments received in MLS are under the Accounting menu option. Each ASIII, Property Manager and Senior Property Manager has an individual receiving location code assigned by IT. Payments received under a location code, will be "batched" together for deposit by MLS.

If an ASIII or other staff has a payment receipted under another staff's location code, that payment must be included in the other staff's bank deposit, otherwise the deposit will not balance to his/her "batch listing".

When payments are receipted in MLS and are ready to be deposited, the ASIII shall complete in MLS, under the End of Day Procedures menu option, the End of Day Listing. This creates a "batch listing" for the payments receipted in MLS that are to be deposited. Each batch listing is identified by a "batch number" for easy reference. The printed listing is kept for future reference at the management office. **Important:** once the batch listing is created, the ASIII must make the bank deposit that same day. If there is a problem with the batch listing or bank deposit, staff should contact the Accounts Receivable Supervisor for further instruction.

- b. Bank Deposit. ASIII's shall complete a bank deposit slip for all payments to be deposited. The ASIII shall signature stamp the back of each payment with SHA's account information. Each payment must be listed separately on the deposit slip. Staff shall also fill in the date at the top, enter the total number of items being deposited and total amount of the deposit. The amount on the bank deposit slip and total on the batch listing must match. Bank deposit books and SHA's signature stamp are available through the finance department.

NOTE: Cash payments accepted by F&A will be processed and deposited in accordance with procedures as outlined in the Accounting section of the Manual of Operations.

4. **VACATED ACCOUNTS**. Payments received for vacated accounts shall be forwarded to Accounts Receivables, in F&A.
5. **REJECTED RENT PAYMENTS FROM LOCK BOX**. Payments rejected from Lock Box because of missing rent statements, or because payment amounts do not match the rent statement, are sent by courier to the Central Office. Housing Operations shall manually process these payments in coordination with the Administrative Specialist III's. Payments may be processed and deposited or when the account is under eviction or a partial payment is received, the payment may be rejected and returned to the resident or whoever made the payment. The Finance department includes the rejected payments in its daily bank deposit run.

A spreadsheet of all payments received shall be maintained, with all documentation concerning processing of the payment.