



Tenant Handbook



BC HOUSING

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**THIS HANDBOOK IS PROVIDED ONLY AS A GUIDE.
YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ARE DESCRIBED IN YOUR
RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AGREEMENT.**

For more information on your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, phone the **Residential Tenancy Office** at **604-660-1020** (outside the Lower Mainland: **1-800-665-8779**) or online at **www.rto.gov.bc.ca**.

BC Housing gratefully acknowledges that we live and work on the unceded traditional and ancestral homelands of hundreds of Indigenous Peoples and Nations across British Columbia, each with their own unique traditions, history and culture. We are committed to strong Indigenous partnerships and relationships based on principles of Reconciliation.

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WELCOME to your new home.

To help your home feel safe and be an affordable place to live, this Tenant Handbook provides you easy access to helpful information on many subjects, including:

- Conflicts and complaints
- Emergency contacts
- Insurance
- Electricity
- Keeping pets
- Laundry
- Parking
- Recycling
- Guidelines and Policies

Although it does not include detailed information for specific locations, it does provide a good overview of how BC Housing operates as well as what is required of tenants.

Keep this handbook in a convenient place for future reference. If you have suggestions for future editions, please contact your property portfolio manager or community developer.

About BC Housing

BC Housing is a provincial agency that develops and manages subsidized housing throughout the province. We work in partnership with private and non-profit housing providers, community agencies, other levels of government and provincial health authorities to make a positive difference in people's lives and communities through safe, affordable housing. A range of housing and support options are available, and you are encouraged to visit the BC Housing website (www.bchousing.org) to find out more.

ROLES OF BC HOUSING STAFF

In buildings managed by BC Housing in the Vancouver Coastal, Fraser, Vancouver Island, Interior and Northern regions, you may meet the following people...

Property portfolio manager (PPM) – Before you move in, your PPM helps you complete your tenancy forms and calculates your rent contribution. PPMs (in conjunction with other staff) also work with tenants to resolve problems related to their tenancies. Each PPM handles a group of BC Housing buildings (called a portfolio), like the one you live in.

Property portfolio assistant (PPA) – PPAs work closely with PPMs and building managers/site representatives on unit allocations and administrative duties.

Building manager supervisor (BMS) – BMSs supervise on-site staff and assist in resolving tenant concerns and complaints. Most BMSs live in the buildings they are responsible for. A few live off-site and are available to tenants at the building during their regular work hours.

Building manager (BM) – BMs handle day-to-day maintenance jobs and cleaning in common areas like hallways, community lounges and laundry rooms (in buildings that have laundry equipment). They also help prepare empty units for new tenants. Your BM is the person to call when you have a question or request. Most BMs live in the buildings they are responsible for. A few live off-site and are available at the building during their regular work hours.

Site representative – In many communities in our Northern and Interior regions, your day-to-day contact will be with a local site representative. This person is responsible for maintenance of the properties and liaises with the PPM and PPA frequently. They also are the contact for after hours maintenance emergencies.

Janitor – The janitor in your building provides cleaning services in the common areas, such as lobbies, hallways and amenity rooms. They also keep the common areas outside clean, picking up litter or shoveling snow. The janitors help your building manager prepare empty units before new tenants move in.

Maintenance Staff – Maintenance staff are called in when you need something in your home repaired. For example, they deal with leaky pipes, re-hanging closet doors and some appliance repairs. They also handle repairs in common areas.

Grounds – Both seasonal and full-time grounds staff provide gardening services to the common areas of your development. Duties may include leaf blowing, maintaining lawns, tree pruning, weeding and planting of flower boxes and beds.

Tenant support worker (TSW) – In some communities, a TSW is available to liaise with tenants. Their main goals are to work with tenants to facilitate successful tenancies, find and secure BC Housing and community resources, facilitate programming and provide support to those with day-to-day questions and/or concerns.

Program Support Worker (PSW) - Assists program participants in BC Housing Semi-Supported living sites to learn or enhance the life skills needed to live independently through tailored Individual Service Plans. The PSW also works with external community partners to facilitate access to community services and resources for participants to successfully achieve their goals.

Community developer (CD) – In some communities across the province, a CD will work with you and your neighbours, your PPM and your building manager/site representative to develop a sense of community at your building and to enhance relationships among tenants, BC Housing and local resources.

People, Plants and Homes (PPH) Community Programmer – In some communities, this BC Housing staff member develops and delivers gardening programs for tenants, including providing gardening information, presenting workshops, and facilitating the development and coordination of on-site community gardens.

Priority Placement Coordinator (PPC) – This staff member gives priority access to individuals fleeing domestic violence or abuse. The PPC works with applicants and tenants to assess their current housing needs and to help maintain successful tenancies. This includes connection to services and referrals, facilitating access to those services, and providing crisis intervention, supportive counselling and advocacy.

Housing and Health Nurse (HHN) – HHNs are health-care professionals who assess both applicant and tenant housing needs and assist in obtaining and maintaining successful tenancies.

HHNs work with tenants who are experiencing health issues that may affect their tenancy or ability to live independently and assist tenants by connecting them with appropriate services in the community.

Moving In



Your Property Portfolio Manager will let you know what day you may move into your new home and will arrange for you to be contacted by site staff or a PPA to provide details of your move-in date. When you go to the building to pick up your keys, the building manager/site representative will complete a move-in inspection. Move-in hours are from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. and please be mindful of your time slot as it will allow building staff to schedule other moves that day with limited interruptions to others i.e. the elevators and hallways will not be too busy at any one time where applicable.

KEYS/FOBS AND LOCKS

We will install a new lock on your door before you move in and give you keys to your unit, the front door of the building, your mailbox and the garage or laundry room (as necessary). Please note that you will be charged a replacement fee if you lose any of your keys or key FOB.

We keep master keys to all BC Housing units to ensure your safety in the event of an emergency. You must not change your locks or add security devices without prior written approval from BC Housing. If you need your lock changed, please ask your building manager/site representative. If you are locked out of your building, you can contact your building manager/site representative to let you in. Please note that we may charge a fee for these services.

PARKING

Tenant parking is available at most BC Housing locations. Additional charges may apply. Vehicles must meet certain conditions, including being licensed/insured and in running order. It may be necessary to register your vehicle to obtain a parking space. Parking stalls cannot be used for storage of household items and repairs to vehicles cannot be carried out. It is important to check with your building manager/site representative for your development's tenant and visitor parking provisions.

INSURANCE

BC Housing only insures its buildings, not your belongings. As per your tenancy agreement, it's **highly recommended** that tenants purchase contents insurance to protect your belongings in case of fire, theft, earthquake or other damage and make sure that your policy includes liability insurance. If you suffer a major event, such as a fire, and it is determined that you, a family member or guest are responsible, you will be responsible for the cost of all repairs. Your liability insurance will cover these costs.

MARSH insurance provides a discounted rate for tenant content coverage to BC Housing tenants. Please contact your regional office for more information.

HYDRO AND GAS

In most buildings, tenants are responsible for paying for their own hydro and/or gas. In buildings where bulk hydro is provided, a hydro surcharge is included in the rent.

CABLE; TELEPHONE; SATELLITE DISHES

Most buildings have individual cable hook-ups. Tenants are responsible for contacting their local cable and telephone companies to arrange for connection and payment. Additional service outlets must be approved by BC Housing in writing and installed at your expense. Satellite dishes cannot be attached to the building or fences.

PETS

The pet ownership rules provided with your tenancy agreement outline the restriction on the number of pets and which are not permitted (for example, certain exotic pets) and describes your responsibilities.

It is your responsibility to remove all waste deposited by your pet within the common areas of the development. Please remember that pets must be on a leash and with a responsible person when not inside their units.

If you own a pet or get one after moving in, you must register it with BC Housing. If you violate the pet ownership rules, your tenancy may be at risk.



HOW YOUR TENANT RENT CONTRIBUTION (TRC)/RENT IS CALCULATED

For tenants who pay rent geared to income (RGI), your monthly TRC/rent is 30 per cent of your adjusted total gross (before tax) household income (which means 30 per cent of the gross income from anyone 19 and over living in your home). If your income is very low, you will be required to pay a minimum rent based on your family size. If you are receiving ministry assistance, your rent is calculated on a flat rate table based on the number of occupants in the household.

We look at income, source of income, assets, family size and whether someone is a student when we assess the amount of your TRC. For example, student scholarships are not included as a source of income while wages and provincial income assistance are. Check with your property portfolio manager (PPM) or property portfolio assistant (PPA) for more information on what types of income are and/or are not included, and for details on the TRC rent calculation process. Refer to the Proof of Income and Assets information guide available from your PPM or PPA.

Should a change to your family size or significant income change occur (for example, if your source of income changes from employment, employment insurance, income assistance or any change in the amount of income), you must contact your PPM or PPA. They will advise whether your TRC will be adjusted at that time. Should any of your income come from income assistance, you will be charged a flat rent rate based on your family size.

HOW TO PAY YOUR TENANT RENT CONTRIBUTION/RENT

Your TRC/rent must be paid on or before the first day of each month.

You may pay by:

- ⦿ **Phone or internet banking.** You can pay your TRC/rent through online banking or by calling your bank.
- ⦿ **Direct deposit of ministry-funded payments.** You can have payments sent directly to BC Housing each month to automatically pay your TRC/rent.
- ⦿ **Pre-authorized rent payment.** With this option, you may pay your TRC/rent by arranging to have automatic monthly withdrawals from your bank account.

Please note your TRC/rent is due and payable on or before the first of the month. If your rent is not paid by the first of the month you may receive a Notice to End Tenancy.

ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS

You will need to complete a Declaration of Income & Assets (DIA) form at least once a year. We will send it to you in the mail.

On the form, please provide your current financial and household information and attach copies of any documents that provide proof of your stated income and assets for the past three months.

Documentation for your income and asset review must be current and verifiable. It may include items such as paycheques, letters from employers, tax records, bank statements, and government benefits statements. Each person 19 and over living in your unit must sign the DIA and provide proof of income. The Proof of Income and Assets information guide will be included in the Annual Declaration of Income and Assets package mailed to you.

Additionally, each year we randomly audit a percentage of the declarations to ensure that we are following proper procedures and the information provided is adequate and accurate.

Under the terms of your tenancy agreement, you are responsible for paying the TRC/rent established for your unit, which is based on the information provided in your declaration form. It is important that you fill out this form and have it signed by all members of the household 19 and over. Failure to do so means that you could lose your rent subsidy and be issued a Notice to End Tenancy. This may start the eviction process. (Please refer to your tenancy agreement for more information.)

If you have any questions or need help filling out the declaration form, please phone your regional office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Rights & Responsibilities



PRIVACY POLICY

BC Housing is committed to maintaining confidentiality, respecting personal privacy, and, as a public body that falls under the B.C. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA), is responsible for the protection of all personal information under its custody and control.

When you applied for housing, we collected only the personal information required to administer our housing programs. We will only use this information to support you in your tenancy.

Your personal information will only be used by authorized staff to fulfill the purpose for which it was originally collected, or for a use consistent with that purpose. We do not disclose your personal information to other public bodies or individuals except as authorized by legislation or through your consent.

BC Housing has safeguards in place to protect your electronic records against risks of unauthorized access. Staff access such information only on a need-to-know basis to perform their jobs. We only keep your personal information for the length of time governed by our records retention schedules and other legislative requirements. Records are then destroyed.

To obtain access to your records or to request a correction to a record, you must make a written request. Please contact the Privacy Officer at FIPPA@bchousing.org for assistance or to receive more information about BC Housing's privacy policy.

TENANCY AGREEMENT

Before moving into your unit, you signed a tenancy agreement with BC Housing, and you should have a copy of it. (If you lost yours, you can call your property portfolio manager to request another.) If you find some of the rules difficult to understand, your building manager/site representative or property portfolio manager can help you.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

If there is an increase or decrease in the number of residents in your family, even temporarily, you must contact your PPA or PPM right away.

Your New Home



CARE OF YOUR UNIT

It is your responsibility to keep your home safe and clean.

- Leave common areas like the hallways, laundry rooms and grounds clean for other tenants.
 - Remember that children and pets should not play in hallways, elevators, laundry rooms, locker rooms or underground parking garages.
 - If your children keep bicycles in your home, please make sure they do not ride them inside.
 - Picture hooks, rather than nails or screws, must be used to hang wall decorations.
 - Avoid liquid bleach and use environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- Any alterations, renovations or painting in your unit must be approved in advance by your property portfolio manager in writing.

BC Housing publishes a Mould Management Guide for Residents. You can access this brochure online at www.bchousing.org/aboutus/publications/tenants or ask your building manager/site representative.

APPLIANCES

Many of our units' refrigerators are frost-free and do not need to be defrosted. If you do not have a frost-free fridge, clean and defrost yours regularly to keep it in good working condition and to save energy. Do not use knives or ice picks to scrape ice off as these can damage the freezer and you will be charged for repair costs. Also, do not put kettles or pots filled with boiling water in the freezer to melt the ice as the heat could melt plastic parts.

If your unit does not have a self-clean oven use oven-cleaning products for your oven.

Use a mild soapy solution to clean the smooth surfaces of appliances. For grease and dirt, try a paste made from baking soda and water. Please do not use abrasive cleaning products as they will damage the surfaces of your appliances.

BATHROOMS

Please use a gentle, non-abrasive cleaner on bathtubs, sinks and toilets. A rough cleaner will scratch the surface and make the fixtures harder to keep clean.

You may have a condensation problem in your bathroom if there are symptoms such as:

- condensation on the fixtures, windows or walls;
- mould and mildew between ceramic tiles, in the corners or on the ceiling;
- peeling paint, rotting, blackened windowsills, damaged drywall under windows, curling floor tiles, musty smells, or water dripping from vents.

Condensation is caused by:

- excessive house humidity;
- moisture from hot baths and showers;
- dampness from wet bath mats, towels and drying clothes;
- inadequate ventilation;
- uninsulated vent ducts;
- paint or wallpaper not designed for use in bathrooms;
- cold outside air leaking through insulation.

While you cannot change any structural causes, there are a number of things you can do to reduce condensation.

- Turn on the bathroom fan or open the bathroom window while you are showering or bathing. Keep the fan running or window open until the condensation has evaporated.
- Keep the kitchen fan on, or a kitchen window open, while cooking and washing dishes.

Note: It costs less to heat dry air than wet air, so keeping a window slightly open or the fan running will result in smaller hydro bills.

BASEMENTS AND STORAGE AREAS

Some townhouses have basements or storage areas. If your unit has one, it must not be used as a sleeping area. Most basements and storage areas do not have proper fire exits or ventilation, so using them as bedrooms violates fire regulations and, in the event of a fire, could endanger lives.

YARDS AND BALCONIES

If you live in a unit with a fenced-in yard, it is your responsibility to maintain the area, mow the grass and weed the garden. Yards cannot be used for storage other than patio furniture and firepits are not permitted. If you have outside water taps, shut them off inside your unit before winter and remove hoses from the hose bib. Your building manager/site representative can show you where the shut-off valve is located if you are not sure. BC Housing staff will shovel snow from the city sidewalks, but it is your responsibility to shovel the walkway and steps to your unit.

If your unit has a balcony, it must not be used for storage. Barbecues and firepits, whether charcoal or propane, are not permitted on balconies as the fumes and burning coals are a potential health and fire hazard. In the winter, you should clear any snow from your balcony because accumulated melting snow could leak under the door into your home.

Please check with your building manager/site representative regarding the use of kiddie pools and trampolines. Kiddie pools and trampolines are not permitted on balconies or common areas.

HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE AND RECYCLING

Check with your building manager/site representative for information about garbage removal and recycling programs at your development.

Disposal of furniture, electronics, appliances or other large items are not permitted to be left on the premises. Tenants must arrange for removal of these items at their own expense. Please contact your building manager/site representative if you require assistance.

COMMON AREAS

Most of our larger buildings have common rooms that tenant groups and individuals can use for recreation and meetings. Your building manager/site representative, tenant support worker, community developer or property portfolio manager can let you know about the availability or use of the common space in your building. Common areas cannot be used to store scooters or other items. It is your responsibility to ensure safe and reasonable use of all common areas by household members and guests.

BC Housing is not responsible to replace stolen or damaged belongings from storage, parking stalls and/or lockers.

LAUNDRY ROOMS

Buildings that have laundry rooms are available for use by tenants only.

We ask that you:

- check with your building manager/site representative whether there is a laundry schedule;
- check for posted laundry room regulations;
- remove lint from the lint screen in the dryer after each use to reduce drying times and to prevent fires;
- report any washer or dryer that is not working to your building manager/site representative or call the number posted in the laundry room;
- do not store household belongings in laundry room.

CONSERVING ENERGY

BC Housing is a carbon-neutral organization. This means we try to reduce energy and electricity consumption and related greenhouse gas emissions on all our housing sites. We support a culture of energy conservation. Whenever possible we use energy-efficient lights and appliances. We keep the heat at moderate temperatures in stairwells and we put weather stripping around doorways and windows to reduce drafts.

There are ways you can also save energy and lower your utility bills.

- ⦿ Turn off lights in rooms that are not being used and whenever you leave a room. When possible, use natural light and energy-efficient light bulbs.
- ⦿ Unplug electronic devices and chargers when not in use.
- ⦿ To save hot water:
 - run full loads in the washing machine and the dishwasher;
 - take shorter showers;
 - use cold water to wash clothes;
 - plug the sink or rinse dishes in a dishpan rather than under hot running water.
- ⦿ When it is cold out, keep the temperature at 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit) if you have a thermostat in your unit.
- ⦿ If you have a thermostat in your unit, turn it down when you:
 - leave your home;
 - open windows.
- ⦿ Keep your refrigerator on a medium or low setting.
- ⦿ Remove the lint from the lint screen in the dryer after each use to reduce drying times and to prevent fires.

Please contact your building manager/site representative if:

- ⦿ your unit is too hot or too cold and you cannot control the heat;
- ⦿ you notice a leaky tap or toilet;
- ⦿ your unit has a dehumidistat (staff can set it to the recommended operating guidelines).

Do not turn your heat below 15 degrees Celsius (59 degrees Fahrenheit) in the winter even if you will be away for a long period of time.

RENOVATIONS AND ALTERATIONS

BC Housing upgrades units and buildings as required. In some of our older developments, we have renovated kitchens, installed new windows and doors, upgraded elevators, and replaced hallway carpeting. We plan ahead for this type of work and let you know well in advance of any renovations planned for your building.

Depending on the age of your building, asbestos or other hazardous materials typically found in floor, wall and ceiling materials may be present. **These materials are not a health risk when undisturbed.** To avoid risk of exposure during repair and/or renovation work, BC Housing, in compliance with WorkSafeBC requirements and other general safety practices, takes precautionary measures to protect both staff and tenants from possible contact with these materials. As such, you may see BC Housing staff and/or contractors use tools and wear special clothing to protect themselves from possible workplace hazards. You may also see the posting of warning or caution signs. For your safety and the safety of others, please respect these signs.

Do not carry out alterations or renovations to your unit without prior written consent and contact your building manager/site representative if repairs are required. Renovations and alterations include painting, wallpapering, changing the flooring, installing a satellite dish, and making structural changes.

GUESTS

The BC Housing Guest Rules provided with or as an addendum to your tenancy agreement outlines the requirements and your responsibilities. If you want or need to plan for a guest to stay more than 30 days, you must obtain written approval in advance of the visit from your property portfolio manager.

Tenants who have received approval for a guest to stay longer than 30 days:

- Will not be allocated a larger unit;
- Will not be required to have their guest apply to be added to the household; and
- Guest will be required to provide proof of residence elsewhere.

SMOKING

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) requires that all employers in British Columbia, including BC Housing, observe the following rules:

- 1) Employers may not subject their staff, except in emergency situations, to second-hand smoke.
- 2) Smoking is no longer permitted in public areas where staff must perform work duties. This includes entrance ways, stairwells, lobbies, laundry rooms, lounges, and hallways.

Tenants may smoke in their own homes, but we request your co-operation when maintenance repairs and other property management services are provided by our staff. If you or the other occupants of your unit are smokers, please refrain from smoking tobacco or cannabis (whether medical), e-cigarette use, vaping, etc., in the unit for at least one hour before the staff person's arrival and while they are present (as per WorkSafe BC regulations). Or, alternatively, ensure your suite has been aired so that no traces of smoke remain. It is important to ensure at least one ventilation fan is operated during this time, provided it does not result in uncomfortable cooling. Persons wishing to smoke can do so outdoors during the period of time while the worker is in the residence.

If you reside in a designated smoke-free building and signed the "Smoke Free Housing Addendum," at no time may tenants, occupants, guests and invitees of the tenants or occupants, smoke anywhere in the rental unit, including the balcony, patio and common grounds.

Our staff has been advised that they are not to enter any environment for the purpose of working that contains noticeable second-hand smoke, except in the case of an emergency. We regret any inconveniences that may arise as a result of the implementation of WCB's regulations and ask for your full co-operation in helping us in this regard.

If you have any questions about the regulations, please contact your Property Portfolio Manager.

PEST CONTROL

Please report the first sign of pests in your unit to your building manager/site representative immediately. Pests include (but are not limited to) rodents, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, and bedbugs. Treatments will be scheduled to avoid further infestations. It is the responsibility of the tenant to prepare their unit for treatment, with information being sent by the pest control company.

You can reduce pests by:

- keeping your dry goods (flours, cereals, sugars, etc.) in glass, metal or hard plastic containers with tight-fitting lids;
- keeping your garbage, including recyclables, and food scraps in tight-closing hard containers;
- blocking any holes in your deck or foundation;
- stuffing steel wool into holes around water pipes that can be found in the kitchen and bathroom;
- keeping the grass and shrubs in your yard trimmed;
- making sure the cover on your basement drain is securely in place.

To avoid the spread of **bedbugs**, it is important that you do not bring any furniture or household items into your unit from dumpsters or second-hand stores. Should you discover bedbugs in your unit, notify your building manager/site representative immediately. They will give you further instructions on what is required to prepare your unit for effective treatment. If spraying is necessary, you will receive a notice that explains what must be done before any treatment can be completed.

NOISE AND DISTURBANCES

You and your neighbours are entitled to privacy and quiet enjoyment of your homes. Please ensure that you, your household members and guests live in a manner that does not have a negative effect on your neighbours. Please note that excessive noise and disturbances may lead to action against your tenancy.

CONFLICTS AND COMPLAINTS

If you are involved in a conflict with another tenant, try to resolve the issue with them before seeking help. If you are unable to resolve an issue as it relates to your tenancy, contact your property portfolio manager in writing.

Note: Written complaints must be dated and signed and should state facts (who, what, when, where) rather than personal judgments, opinions or conclusions.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

BC Housing is committed to providing safe housing for its tenants. From time to time staff may need to conduct repairs and preventative maintenance in your unit. BC Housing will make every reasonable effort to minimize the disruption while repairs and maintenance are underway.

Please inform building staff of a maintenance problem by filling out a maintenance request form. This form can be obtained from your building manager/site representative. You must complete and sign the form before staff can schedule the repair work. If you do not sign the form, the maintenance staff cannot enter your unit.

If a form is not available, please contact your building manager/site representative. If there has been property damage or an injury, the building manager/site representative will complete an Accident Critical Event Report and may require specific details from you.

AFTER-HOURS MAINTENANCE EMERGENCIES

If you have a serious problem after hours, phone the 24-hour emergency maintenance number in your area (listed in Appendix 1 of this handbook). This number is intended for maintenance emergencies only such as a flood, an elevator breakdown, power or heat system failure, a broken window, or a leaking roof.

COMPLYING WITH WORKSAFEBC REGULATIONS

BC Housing, in compliance with WorkSafeBC requirements and other workplace safety practices, takes precautionary measures to protect people in and around work sites while maintenance or repair activities occur. These could include high-level work, floor/railing repairs, mould management, and the removal of airborne dust particles, low levels of asbestos, insects, rodents, and lead products.

You may see BC Housing staff or contractors utilize tools and wear special clothing to protect themselves from workplace hazards they may encounter as part of their work activities. You may also see the posting of warning or caution signs. For your safety and the safety of others, please respect these signs.

We may need to ask you to be absent from your unit while repairs are underway. BC Housing staff will clean up their materials and ensure your unit is safe before you return.

TRANSFERS

BC Housing receives many requests each year from tenants wishing to transfer to another unit or another building. There are no guarantees another unit will be offered or how long it will take to process a request, as transfer requests are evaluated along with new applications for housing. Transfer requests will be accepted if the tenant and all members of their household still meet the basic eligibility requirements for housing and all of the basic transfer eligibility criteria outlined below.

Basic transfer eligibility criteria:

- The tenant(s) have lived in their current unit for a minimum of one year;
- Their tenancy is in good standing;
- They have no outstanding debts including chargebacks, rent arrears or audit arrears.

You will also need to meet one of the following reasons for a transfer request.

- Your place of employment or schooling has changed and transportation is either unavailable when you need it, or your commute is more than three hours round-trip. (You will need to provide a letter of employment or school registration verification.)
- A change to your household size or composition requires a different size unit (over/under-housed tenants are required to move to an appropriately sized unit).
- You or a family member has a medical condition that would be stabilized or improved by a change of location. (Your physician must provide documentation that supports the need for a medical transfer.)
- You or a household member's well-being is at serious risk from trauma, violence, harassment or other undesirable consequences. (You will need to provide supporting documentation from the police or an appropriate social agency.)

If you would like to transfer and are unsure of your eligibility, please contact your property portfolio manager who can advise you regarding your options. If you are behind in your rent payment or owe BC Housing any money when you are offered a transfer, all outstanding charges should be paid in full before you transfer. Your transfer may be cancelled or put on hold until all outstanding charges are paid.

Changes in family composition resulting in your unit being over-housed will result in your transfer to an appropriately sized unit as you no longer qualify for the unit. You will be asked to provide up to three Directly Managed developments in your transfer listing if you wish to remain with BC Housing.



PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR HOME

Do not let strangers follow you into the building as you enter. If your building has an intercom, ensure your guests use it when visiting you. When you receive a call on the intercom, be sure that you know that person before allowing them into the building.

Only let workers come into the building or your unit if you know they should be there (for example, if notices have been posted) and they have proper identification.

If you see strangers loitering around the building, please contact your building manager/site representative or the police directly. If you observe suspected criminal activity, do not attempt to intervene. Phone the police immediately.

If your safety or someone else's safety is at risk, call 911 immediately.

BE PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Keep an emergency supply kit with a minimum five-day supply of water, food (especially foods that do not require cooking such as energy bars and crackers) and clothing. Also include a first-aid kit, flashlight, extra batteries, a portable battery-operated radio and any required medications.

If you live in an area where an earthquake could happen, you can prepare your family ahead of time.

- Know the safe places in your home. You are usually safest against an inside wall, under a strong table or desk and away from falling glass or objects.
- Know that dangerous areas are near windows, mirrors, hanging pictures or plants, tall furniture and ceiling fixtures.

If there is an earthquake and you are at home, you should:

- **DROP** to the ground;
- Take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy desk or table; and,
- **HOLD ON** to it until the shaking stops.
- Remain calm. After the shaking stops, wait 30 to 60 seconds before moving.
- Check yourself and your family for injuries.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions.
- Be aware of overhead dangers when you go outside.
- Assist neighbours wherever possible.

BC Housing staff are trained in how to respond during an earthquake. If there is an earthquake, they will be able to assess any damage to your building. They may need your help if you are able to assist them.

Check the information section of your local telephone directory for more information on first aid and preparing for an earthquake.

In the event of a major disaster, BC Housing has a business continuity plan to ensure building services are restored to tenants as soon as possible. For updates on progress during the recovery process, please call 604-433-1711 for a recorded message and/or to speak to a service coordinator.

The following resources may be helpful to people with disabilities in preparing for an emergency.

- **BC Coalition of People with Disabilities**
www.bccpd.bc.ca/default.htm
- **A Road Map to Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities**
www.bccpd.bc.ca/docs/emergpreroadmap.pdf

FIRE SAFETY

Here are some fire safety tips to protect your home and your family.

- Do not store flammable materials such as paint thinner, solvents, propane tanks or gasoline inside your home or attached storage.
- Regularly recycle old newspapers as they are a fire hazard if you let them stack up.
- Make sure you know what to do in case of fire. If you live in an apartment building, you will find fire safety and evacuation information posted on each floor. You can also obtain fire safety information from your building manager/site representative.
- If you live in a townhouse, draw a floor plan of your unit on the fire escape plan located in Appendix 2 of this handbook.
- Make sure you know at least two ways out of the building in case one escape route is blocked by fire. Plan these escape routes with your household members and practice them regularly so everyone knows how to exit the building safely.
- If you hear a fire alarm, always leave the building right away. Follow your fire escape plan.
- If a fire occurs in your unit, evacuate to safety, activate the fire alarm, and call 911 for the fire department.
- Call your building manager/site representative if the smoke alarm in your home goes off frequently. This alarm is wired, so there is no battery to replace. We inspect the smoke alarm and test it regularly. Do not remove or disable it.
- By keeping your stove, oven and toaster clean so they don't smoke, you can help prevent setting your smoke alarm off. Also, use the exhaust fan when cooking to reduce the possibility of false alarms and never leave cooking food unattended.
- Advise your building manager/site representative immediately if you become aware of any fire hazards in your home or building, for example, accumulations of combustible materials, flammable liquids, or blocked exit routes.

- Only use a fire extinguisher if you have been trained. If you want to learn how to use a fire extinguisher, contact your local fire department.
- Do not prop open fire doors or disable automatic door closers, as you place both yourself and your neighbours in danger in the event of a fire.
- Do not overload power outlets or use damaged, old or frayed power cords. A power bar with a shut-off feature can protect your electrical appliances.

CRIME FREE ADDENDUM

Since 1998, all new BC Housing tenants sign the Crime Free Housing Addendum when they move in. The addendum states that:

The tenant(s), any occupant of the tenant(s)' household and any persons invited onto the residential property or residential premise by the tenant(s) or any member of the tenant(s)' family shall not engage in any criminal activity on the premises or property including, but not limited to:

- any drug-related criminal activity;
- solicitation (sex-trade workers and related nuisance activity);
- street gang activity;
- assault or threatened assault;
- unlawful use of a firearm;
- any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or welfare of the landlord, other tenants or persons on the residential property or residential/premises.

Violating any of the provisions of this addendum is a serious violation and material non-compliance with your Residential Tenancy Agreement. (Please refer to the Crime Free Multi-Housing addendum attached to your tenancy agreement.)

VANDALISM

Vandalism to elevators, stairwells and hallways can result in costly repairs. Graffiti on brickwork is difficult to remove and is unsightly. We ask that you call the police right away and tell your building manager/site representative or property portfolio manager if you see anyone damaging BC Housing property.

EXTREME HEAT

Be on the lookout for any symptoms of heat-related illness or conditions. See a doctor if you are not feeling well, and in a medical emergency call 911.

Tips to beat the heat

- ⊕ Keep hydrated – consume plenty of water
- ⊕ Limit non-essential strenuous activity
- ⊕ Avoid alcohol and caffeine as they can make dehydration worse
- ⊕ Be cool, stay indoors and make use of fans and air conditioners
- ⊕ Soak, take a cool shower or bath to help you cool down
- ⊕ Rest
- ⊕ Use window coverings to reduce heat
- ⊕ Seek shade
- ⊕ Dress down by wearing lightweight clothing and use sunscreen
- ⊕ Check on others



Housing & Health Services

Staff who work in BC Housing's Housing and Health Services Department are health-care and community professionals from a variety of disciplines. Staff include: Housing and Health Nurses, Priority Placement Coordinator, Tenant Support Workers, Program Support Workers, Community Developers and the People Plants and Homes Team (see page 5 for more information on the roles of Housing and Health Services staff).

ON SITE SUPPORT

The **Housing and Health Nurses (HHN)** and **Tenant Support Workers (TSW)** are located at Directly Managed BC Housing buildings and support tenants living independently with access to physical health, mental health, addiction services, tenancy resources and crisis support. To access their services please contact your regional office, building manager or site representative.

Program Support Workers (PSWs) are located at BC Housing's Semi-Supported housing sites and facilitate recovery and support to individuals who require semi-supported housing options. They provide access to life-skills training and programming to help participants develop tenancy skills.

The **Priority Placement Program (PPP)**: Gives priority access to individuals and families who are fleeing domestic violence or abuse. PPP staff work with applicants and tenants to assess their current housing needs and to help maintain successful tenancies.

The **Addiction Recovery Program** is a health and housing partnership between BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health. The program provides transitional supportive housing to people in recovery from problematic substance use in the Lower Mainland. For more information, please contact your local BC Housing regional office.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Community development is the process of helping a community strengthen itself and develop towards its full potential. BC Housing Community Developers, Tenant Support Workers and the People, Plants and Homes team work in partnership with residents and support organizations to meet identified tenant needs. A community developer or tenant support worker will work with you, your neighbours and BC Housing staff to develop a sense of community at your building. For example, social/recreational events, educational/life-skills workshops and food security programs can help you get to know your neighbours and also connect with local organizations.

TENANT ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

In many BC Housing sites there are **Tenant Engagement Programs**. At these programs, community partners, Tenant Support Workers or Program Support Workers provide onsite groups or activities for tenants. You can check the bulletin board in your building where a monthly activity calendar is posted or ask Housing and Health Services staff or your building manager/site representative for more information.

Tenant Activity Grants (TAG) - If you are interested in organizing a tenant activity, your building manager/site representative will tell you how to contact the local community developer or Tenant Support Worker to discuss applying for a grant to create an event. This program will help you to identify the most appropriate type of activities for your building.

The **Student Tenant Employment Program (STEP)** offers innovative employment training programs for tenant youth between the ages of 15 and 18. This program helps prepare youth for employment by offering a two-week training session and a five-week paid job placement. The training weeks include resume preparation, interviewing techniques and certifications.

The **Education Awards Program (EAP)** can help you pursue your educational goals and/or to acquire new skills. The program's bursaries and awards can be used towards post-secondary educational and training programs. The EAP promotes education as a path to success and personal growth.

The **People, Plants and Homes (PPH)** program aims to collaborate with tenants to grow healthy communities and improve quality of life by connecting people with nature and neighbours. PPH staff provide interested tenants with planting supplies, information and training on gardening, community kitchens and offer various workshops throughout the year. For more information, contact the PPH Team at pph@bchousing.org or talk with your building manager/site representative.

If you are looking for other community resources in the province, go to: www.bc211.ca.

Moving Out



When you decide to move out, you need to give your property portfolio manager written one-month notice. This notice must be received by the day before the rent is due, one month before you plan to move. For example, if you were planning to move out on April 30, you would need to notify your PPM by 4:30 p.m. on March 31. If you provide notice on March 15th and want to move out April 15th, you will still be required to pay the full April rent.

Your building manager/site representative will make an appointment with you to inspect your unit before you leave and will give you a list of the cleaning you have to do before moving out. You must leave the unit as clean as it was when you moved in. Except for normal wear and tear, any damage to your unit is your responsibility. You may be charged with repairs.

You must be moved out by 1 p.m. on the last day of the month. It is your responsibility to return all keys and your laundry card, and to sign the move-out inspection form before you leave.

Appendix 1: Contact Information

Most BC Housing offices are open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, please visit our website at: www.bchousing.org

TENANT INQUIRIES

For all tenant enquiries, please e-mail: tenantinquiries@bchousing.org

APPLICANT SERVICES INQUIRY LINE

The Housing Registry/SAFER/Rental Assistance Program

Suite 101 - 4555 Kingsway

Burnaby BC V5H 4V8

Telephone: (604) 433-2218

Facsimile: (604) 439-4729

Toll Free: 1-800-257-7756

STOREFRONT OFFICE

Suite 101 - 4555 Kingsway

Burnaby BC V5H 4V8

HOME OFFICE

Suite 1701 - 4555 Kingsway

Burnaby BC V5H 4V8

Telephone: (604) 433-1711

Facsimile: (604) 439-4722

Toll Free: 1-866-465-6873

Email: webeditor@bchousing.org

VANCOUVER COASTAL REGION

510-369 Terminal Avenue

Vancouver BC V6A 4C4

Telephone: (604) 609-7024

Facsimile: (604) 609-7031

E-mail: LMDirectlyManaged@bchousing.org

After hours emergency maintenance (4pm to 8:30am): 604-682-4852

FRASER REGION

Telephone: (604) 609-7024

Facsimile: (604) 609-7031

E-mail: LMDirectlyManaged@bchousing.org

After hours emergency maintenance (4pm to 8:30am): 604-682-4852

VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION

Suite 201 - 3440 Douglas Street

Victoria BC V8Z 3L5

Telephone: (250) 475-7550

Facsimile: (250) 475-7551

Toll Free: 1-800-787-2807

E-mail: VanIslandRegion@bchousing.org

24-hour emergency maintenance: 250-213-8798

INTERIOR REGION

451 Winnipeg Street

Penticton BC V2A 5M6

Telephone: (250) 493-0301

Facsimile: (250) 492-1080

Toll Free: 1-800-834-7149

E-mail: InteriorRegion@bchousing.org

24-hour emergency maintenance: 250-493-0301 (This is the office number.

The after-hours answering service will redirect your emergency call.)

NORTHERN REGION

1380 – 2nd Avenue

Prince George BC V2L 3S6

Telephone: (250) 562-9251

Facsimile: (250) 562-6488

Toll Free: 1-800-667-1235

E-mail: NorthernRegion@bchousing.org

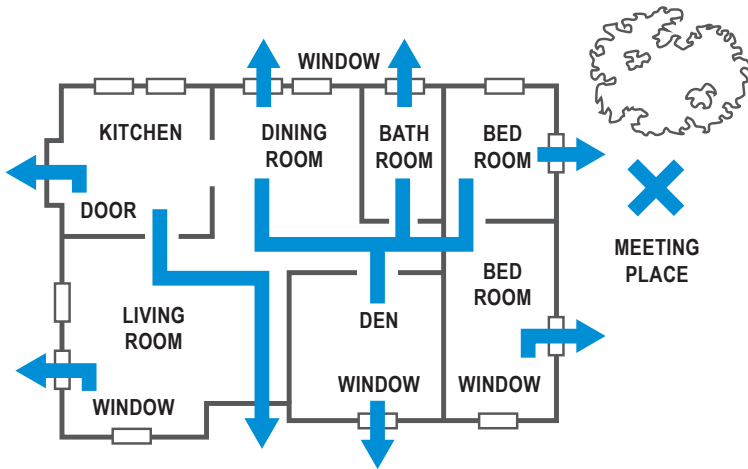
24-hour emergency maintenance: 250-562-9251 (This is the office number.

The after-hours answering service will redirect your emergency call.)

Appendix 2: Your Fire Escape Plan

If you live in a building that does not already have a fire escape plan posted, use the grid below to draw a fire escape plan for your home and post it in a visible location in your unit. Note where the walls, windows and doors are and indicate all the possible escape routes. You should also indicate a meeting place outside near a tree or other landmark. When your plan is complete, practice it with every member of the household.

SAMPLE PLAN:





EIGHTH EDITION
APRIL 2022

