



Housing Tips for Landlords

Roles and Responsibilities of Landlords in British Columbia

What are my rights and responsibilities as a landlord?

The main rights of a landlord are:

Collect rent

- Collect rent from tenants following the terms of the lease agreement. They can set the rent amount, due date and payment methods.

Access to the rental unit

- Enter the rental unit for specific reasons, such as inspections, repairs or to show the unit to potential tenants or buyers. They must provide proper notice to tenants before entering, except in emergencies.

Enforcing lease terms

- Landlords have the right to enforce the terms and conditions of the lease agreement. If tenants violate the lease, landlords can take action, such as issuing warnings or eviction notices.

Ending a tenancy

- Landlords have the right to end a tenancy under specific circumstances, such as when the tenant violates the lease agreement, doesn't pay rent or engages in illegal activities on the property. They must follow the legal eviction process outlined in the Residential Tenancy Act.



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**Refugee
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Responsibilities of a landlord are:

- Supply a written lease agreement signed by both parties.
- Maintain the rental property in a state of reasonable repair.
- Handle tenant requests for maintenance/repairs on time.
 - Appropriate response times depend on the severity of the issue but should not surpass one week.
- Respect tenants' privacy and only enter the unit for specific reasons, such as repairs, inspections or showing the unit to potential tenants or buyers. They must provide proper notice before entering, except in emergencies.

Renting to Refugees

Who are refugees?

- Refugees were forced to leave their countries because their lives were threatened or in danger. Refugees are considered permanent residents in Canada and are eligible to apply for citizenship if they live in Canada for a minimum of three years.



What are the benefits of renting to refugees?



There are many benefits to renting to refugees!

- You have access to qualified, potential tenants which can contribute to fewer vacancies.
- Refugees are often looking for stability, so they are more likely to be long-term tenants.
- Refugee tenants receive support from settlement workers and interpreters, ensuring that they fully understand the lease, when and how to pay rent and their rights and responsibilities as tenants.
- Refugees receive various financial support to help them with paying rent.
- You can help families who escaped from life-threatening conditions and make them feel safe and welcome.

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How can I communicate effectively with refugees who have language barriers?

- Take your time when speaking and use plain, straightforward language.
- Avoid making assumptions about the refugee's culture and background and ask them about it instead.
- Use repetition when needed and use visual methods of communication (e.g., hand gestures, written/drawn visuals, photos, etc.).
- Consider finding an interpreter to help you communicate important terms and conditions with the tenant, especially before deciding on a unit or while signing a lease agreement.

How can I verify the refugee tenant's eligibility to rent?

- **To verify a refugee's eligibility to rent, you must confirm their legal status in the country.**
 - You can request documentation from them stating their refugee or immigration status, such as:
 - Refugee claimant document
 - Permanent resident card
- **Some refugees may rely on government aid to pay rent.**
 - You can request a copy of their rental assistance statement as proof of income. Examples of government aid programs that supply funding to refugees include:
 - Rental Assistance Program, Resettlement Assistance Program, Canada BC-Housing Benefit Program.
- If a refugee cannot supply references or does not have a rental history, you may:
 - Ask the potential tenant to request a reference from their settlement worker or from a community agency they often visit.
 - Interview them yourself to assess their suitability as a tenant. During the interview, you can ask questions about their current living situation, reasons for moving and any relevant circumstances.

REMINDER: It is illegal for you to refuse a potential tenant due to their place of origin, religious affiliation, sex, race, sexual orientation, family status, or disability.

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If refugees receive any government aid to help them pay for housing, how does it reach me?

- Most government aid programs deposit funding directly into the tenant's bank account. The tenant is then responsible for ensuring the funding is provided to you promptly.
- If the tenant has a pattern of not paying rent at all or at the time it is due, you may:
 - Reach out to them to discuss the matter. Late payments may be due to a misunderstanding or temporary financial difficulties.
 - Review the lease terms on late fees and grace periods with the tenant.
 - Consider creating a payment plan with the tenant. Be sure to document the terms of the plan in writing, including the amounts and due dates for partial payments.



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