



CRHC
The Capital Region's Housing Corporation

Tenant Handbook

Office **250.388.6422** 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday. Closed holidays.
Office Fax 250.361.4970

Caretaker Name _____ Phone _____

24-Hour Emergency Maintenance 250.388.1690

Residential Tenancy Branch 250.387.1602

*This handbook has been created as a service to our tenants.
It is not intended to take the place of the Residential Tenancy Act, your Tenancy Agreement or
Housing Corporation policies.*

Contents

Welcome ... Did you know that:	3
Who Do I Call?	3
CARETAKER AND EMERGENCY CARETAKER	3
OFFICE	3
Your New Home.....	4
TENANCY AGREEMENT	4
MOVE-IN INSPECTION.....	4
KEYS	4
SECURITY.....	4
CRIME FREE MULTI HOUSING.....	4
VEHICLES / PARKING	5
ALTERATIONS AND DECORATING	5
PAYING FOR DAMAGES	5
HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE	6
PATIOS, BALCONIES AND CARPORTS	6
FIRE SAFETY.....	6
STORAGE AND STORAGE AREAS.....	6
PETS	6
GARBAGE AND RECYCLING	6
PEST CONTROL.....	7
CHRISTMAS TREES AND LIGHTS.....	7
BACKYARDS AND LAWN CARE	8
GUESTS.....	8
GUEST ROOMS AND LOUNGES	8
SMOKING AND ALCOHOL.....	8
Paying Your Rent.....	8
LATE OR UNPAID RENT	9
NOTICE TO END A RESIDENTIAL TENANCY.....	9
ANNUAL RENT REVIEW.....	9
TRANSFER POLICY	10
TRANSFER TO ANOTHER BUILDING.....	10
TRANSFERS FOR CHANGE IN FAMILY SIZE.....	10
Tenant Associations.....	10
Common Tenancy Issues	11
OUTDOOR PLAY	11
SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN	11
VANDALISM.....	11
LAUNDRY FACILITIES.....	11
HOME BUSINESS AND DAYCARE.....	11
Complaints and Disputes	12
Entering Your Suite.....	12
PRIVACY	12
PROPER NOTICE	12
ANNUAL INSPECTION.....	13
Moving Out	14
NOTICE	14
EARLY NOTICE PROGRAM	14
PRE MOVE-OUT INSPECTION.....	15
SHOWING THE SUITE.....	15
MOVE-OUT INSPECTION.....	15

Welcome ... Did you know that:

The Capital Region Housing Corporation is a non-profit corporation wholly owned by the Capital Regional District. The mandate of the Housing Corporation is to build and manage housing for low, moderate and middle income families, seniors, and those persons with special needs. The Housing Corporation is directed by a seven-member Board of Directors, four of whom sit on the Capital Regional District Board, two of whom are community volunteers and one who is a tenant with the Housing Corporation.

For more information and a listing of our Board of Directors, see our website at www.crd.bc.ca/housing/corporation.htm

Who Do I Call?

CARETAKER AND EMERGENCY CARETAKER

You should call your caretaker first if you have a maintenance problem. Caretakers are not always at home but have an answering machine where you may leave a message. Your caretaker checks message throughout the day. Please leave your name, address, telephone number and the type of problem. Remember to speak slowly and clearly if you are leaving a telephone message. **It is important for you to leave permission for the caretaker to enter your unit if you won't be home.** If your caretaker does not repair the problem or return your call within 48 hours, please contact the office for follow-up.

Caretakers do not regularly work after 5:00 pm on weekdays, or on weekends or statutory holidays, but an **EMERGENCY CARETAKER** is always on call for maintenance/building emergencies.

Call 250.388.1690 for the Emergency Caretaker.

Emergencies are problems that must be addressed immediately in order to avoid damage to your suite or to the housing complex. Examples of emergencies are leaking hot water tanks, electric problems or a malfunction of your toilet in suites where there is one bathroom only. Routine maintenance requests should not be made to the emergency caretaker.

OFFICE

You should contact the office regarding matters related to your rent, tenancy issues, transfer requests, alteration requests etc. When you contact the office remember you can assist us in providing efficient service by leaving your name, address and details of your concern.

Note: When you change your telephone number, please advise the office and your caretaker so that we may change it in your file. This will assist us in reaching you in the event of an urgent matter.

Your New Home

TENANCY AGREEMENT

The Tenancy Agreement is a legal, binding document, agreed to and signed by the landlord and adult tenants. It outlines the terms of your tenancy.

MOVE-IN INSPECTION

Your caretaker will inspect and record the condition of your suite on a move-in/move-out inspection form. You will be asked to sign the inspection form so let your caretaker know about any other damages or problems you find in the first three days after moving in. Otherwise you may be charged when you move out for damage you were not responsible for in your suite.

KEYS

The locks are always changed before a new tenant moves in. Your caretaker will give you keys to your new home after the move-in inspection. Do not change the lock or get extra keys made without the prior written consent of the Housing Corporation. Please contact the caretaker for assistance if you require additional keys. There is a charge for lost or additional keys.

Note: The Housing Corporation is not permitted to change locks to exclude a legal tenant without proper authority from the police or courts.

SECURITY

Please lock your home whenever you are out. Do not give out keys for your suite or the front door of the apartment building. Do not let anyone into the apartment building that you do not know. Do not let strangers follow you into the building. Telephone the police if you see strangers loitering in or near your building.

CRIME FREE MULTI HOUSING

A number of our buildings located within the City of Victoria and District of Saanich are part of the Crime Free Multi-Housing initiative of the Victoria and Saanich Police Departments. The Housing Corporation has made a number of modifications to the locks, landscaping, fencing and exterior lighting to reduce the opportunity for crime on the sites.

New tenants are required to sign a “crime-free” addendum to the tenancy agreement for designated buildings which allows the Housing Corporation to issue an eviction notice should they be involved in any illegal activities on site. Tenants are encouraged to participate in the crime free certification process and annual socials which are held to give residents an opportunity to get to know your neighbours and learn what you can do to reduce crime in your community.

Tenants play a huge part in the success of this program as you are the eyes and ears on site.

VEHICLES / PARKING

- Vehicles must be licensed, insured and operational at all times. Storage insurance is not adequate.
- Unlicensed vehicles may be towed. If you require time to renew your license, please contact the office.
- You may only park in your assigned parking space (carport/garage/numbered space)
- Any available additional parking spaces are rented first-come first-serve. Contact your caretaker to rent an extra space. You will be billed six months in advance for your extra parking space. (January and July)
- Give your caretaker your vehicle type and license plate number and let your caretaker know if you change vehicles or license plates
- If you park in a Visitor parking spot, your vehicle may be towed at your expense.
- No parking on laneways at any time.
- Vehicle repairs are NOT permitted ANYWHERE on the property. This includes, but is not limited to, oil changes, body repairs and engine repairs.
- An authorized handicap decal must be displayed if a vehicle is parked in a handicap parking spot.

ALTERATIONS AND DECORATING

The Housing Corporation has a policy for limiting decorative changes in our suites. The reason for this is the high cost of returning units to a condition where they could be occupied by a new tenant. The Corporation does not permit any painting within our suites except the approved Corporation colour. Your caretaker can provide you with paint information.

- Tenants may use their own drapes or blinds as long as they appear white or cream from the exterior. Corporation window coverings should be carefully stored and re-hung prior to ending the tenancy agreement.
- Tenants may hang pictures on the walls with proper picture hooks.
- Satellite dishes may be installed with **prior written** permission.
- Plants may be added to your garden provided that you do not disturb existing shrubs. Tenants are not permitted to remove existing plants.
- No items such as hanging plants or decorative materials may be attached to the exterior walls or fencing.
- No standing water is permitted on site (bird baths, pools, ponds).
- Changes to fencing, decks, appliances and shelves may be considered – **written permission is required prior to any change being made.**

PAYING FOR DAMAGES

If you or your guests damage your suite beyond what is considered normal wear and tear, you will have to fix the damage. You can do the repairs yourself, or have someone else do them as long as the repairs meet the Housing Corporation standards. You can also ask the Housing Corporation to do the repairs and invoice you for the work. If you can't pay the whole bill at once, please contact the office to ask for a payment plan.

HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE

The Capital Region Housing Corporation is not responsible for your personal belongings. Our tenancy agreement requires you to obtain tenants' insurance prior to moving into your suite. We recommend that you maintain insurance throughout your tenancy agreement. If there is a fire or flood in your unit, the Housing Corporation will not pay for any lost items.

PATIOS, BALCONIES AND CARPORTS

Patios and balconies must be kept neat and attractive and are not to be used as storage areas. Do not store bicycles on your patio or balcony.

Barbeques are only permitted on ground level patios. They are not permitted on upper balconies at any time. Barbeques must be at least 2 meters from the building and not under an overhang when they are being used.

FIRE SAFETY

- **Never disconnect your smoke detector.** Please contact your caretaker immediately if the smoke detector is not working properly.
- Learn the fire safety plan for your building including an alternate emergency exit.
- Notice the location of any fire alarms.
- You are not permitted to store flammable materials or liquids in your home or storage area. This includes gasoline, paint thinner or solvents.
- Recycle your old newspapers. They can be a fire hazard if too many accumulate.

STORAGE AND STORAGE AREAS

Most of our apartment buildings have storage lockers and your caretaker will assign you one if available. Do not store any dangerous substances or flammables in a storage area. Attics or crawl spaces are not to be used as storage areas.

PETS

You must have prior written permission from the Corporation before getting a pet. Please contact the office to ask about the rules in your building. Dogs are not permitted on the property at any time unless they are registered assistance dogs.

GARBAGE AND RECYCLING

Please bag your garbage properly and take it to the garbage bin. Do not leave it outside your door or on the ground by the garbage bin. Do not allow small children to take the garbage out if they cannot reach the lid. Lids on garbage bins must be kept closed at all times according to Municipal bylaws.

Garbage and Recycling Cont'd

You are responsible to dispose of any old furniture, mattresses, tires etc. If you leave these items in the garbage enclosure, the Housing Corporation will haul them away and you will be billed for the hauling and disposal fees.

Recycling bins for cardboard are provided at most complexes. If yours does not have a cardboard bin your caretaker can tell you where to find the nearest recycling depot.

You can recycle:

- Glass
- Newspaper
- Clean paper
- Cardboard
- Cans

DO NOT DISPOSE OF PAPER OR CARDBOARD IN THE GARBAGE BINS. The Housing Corporation can receive a fine if cardboard or paper is found in the garbage bins.

For more information on recycling call the CRD Recycling Hotline at 250.360.3030.

PEST CONTROL

If you detect any infestations in your unit, for example bed bugs, fleas, cockroaches, mice etc. please notify your caretaker immediately so the unit can be treated as soon as possible.

Please do not bring old / used furniture, mattresses, clothing or other items into the building or your suite as they could be infested with bedbugs without your knowledge.

The Residential Tenancy Branch requires that tenants work in conjunction with the landlord's instructions when treatment of units is required.

If you have a pet, please take precautions in consultation with a veterinarian to prevent flea infestations.

CHRISTMAS TREES AND LIGHTS

You are allowed to have live Christmas trees in your suite. We have a tree pick-up service in early January and you will be told when it is. If you miss the pick-up date, you will have to dispose of the tree yourself. You may not put the tree in the garbage bin.

You may put up Christmas lights on the outside of your unit and on your balcony. You must use plastic clips only to put up the lights. Do not make any holes to attach the lights. Christmas lights must be taken down by the end of January, unless you receive notice otherwise.

BACKYARDS AND LAWN CARE

If you have a back yard you are responsible to cut your own grass. You may borrow a lawnmower if you don't have one by contacting your caretaker. Please return the equipment in clean condition. The Housing Corporation is not responsible for injuries caused to tenants who use the equipment and reminds you that you use it at your own risk. Use extra care when children are around.

The Housing Corporation limits the use of herbicides and pesticides on our property. Please do not use any of these products in your yards. Please check the CRD website for other ideas on handling weeds and bugs at www.crd.bc.ca/rte/pest/healthygardenguide.htm .

GUESTS

You may have a guest stay with you for up to three weeks in any calendar year. For a stay longer than three weeks you must get written permission from the Housing Corporation. If a guest stays longer than three weeks without permission, that person is required to be added to your Tenancy Agreement if guidelines permit an additional occupant.

GUEST ROOMS AND LOUNGES

Some of our seniors complexes provide a guest suite for rent at a moderate cost. Contact your caretaker to make a reservation. Your guest may rent the suite for up to one week, and possibly longer depending on availability. The caretaker will collect the rental fee and give you a receipt. You are responsible to leave the guest room clean and tidy.

Lounges are for tenant use only. No commercial or outside agency use is allowed. These areas are for the enjoyment of all tenants. Noisy or inappropriate activities will not be tolerated.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

Some of the Corporation's buildings are non-smoking buildings. This means smoking is not permitted anywhere on the property, including inside a tenant's suite or on their balcony.

In all Corporation buildings smoking and consumption of alcohol is not permitted in any common area, including hallways, parkades, laundry rooms, lounges etc. at any time.

Paying Your Rent

Your rent must be paid on or before the first day of each month. Please call the office if you have any questions about paying rent.

Rent can be paid at the Corporation office, sent by mail, or put in the drop box at the Corporation's door at 631 Fisgard Street after hours. The Corporation is not responsible for cash put in the drop box.

You can pay your rent by cheque, money order, cash, Interac™, or by pre-authorized debit from your chequing account.

AFTER THE FIRST WORKING DAY OF THE MONTH REGULAR CHEQUES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND PAYMENT MUST THEN BE BY CERTIFIED CHEQUE, MONEY ORDER, CASH OR INTERAC.

For pre-authorized debit arrangements, please contact the office.

Note: if rent is being paid by pre-authorized debit, we cannot make any changes after the 20th of the month. The next month's rent will still come out of your bank account.

LATE OR UNPAID RENT

If you can't pay your full rent on the first day of the month because of unexpected circumstances you must contact the office before the first day of the month. Late rent payment is a breach of the Tenancy Agreement and is grounds for a Notice to End a Residential Tenancy.

NOTICE TO END A RESIDENTIAL TENANCY

- 1) **Why are they issued?** If you don't pay your rent on or before the first day of the month, it is the Housing Corporation's policy to serve a Ten Day Notice To End A Residential Tenancy showing the outstanding balance of the unpaid rent.
- 2) **Why are they posted on the door?** As a landlord, we must use the forms specified in the Residential Tenancy Act and we must follow the guidelines of the Act to serve documents. The front door is the most conspicuous place of the home and this means there is more chance the notice will be seen. It may seem unfair or embarrassing but we are required by legislation to serve notices this way if you are not home to accept personal delivery.
- 3) **What should I do if I receive a Ten Day Notice To End A Residential Tenancy?** If you pay your rent within five days of receiving the notice you will not have to move out. However, if you pay your rent late repeatedly, the Housing Corporation will issue a One Month Notice To End A Residential Tenancy for paying rent late repeatedly as this is considered a breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

ANNUAL RENT REVIEW

If you pay rent based on your income, each year you must complete an Application for Rent Subsidy form. You must provide satisfactory proof of income and assets. You are required to report any change in family size and income. These changes can affect your rent calculation.

The Housing Corporation will send you this form with instructions well in advance of your rent review. **YOU MUST RETURN ALL THE DOCUMENTATION REQUESTED ON TIME TO AVOID CANCELLATION OF YOUR RENT SUBSIDY PAYMENT.**

TRANSFER POLICY

You can apply to transfer to another Corporation unit if:

- 1) You have been a tenant of the Corporation for 12 consecutive months
- 2) You have paid your rent in full and on time for the previous six months and continue this up to the date of your transfer.
- 3) You have kept your suite clean, tidy and undamaged, as determined by your annual inspection, and by an inspection which will take place before your transfer request is approved.
- 4) You and other occupants of your suite have not been disruptive to your neighbours.

The Corporation has a limit on the number of transfers approved each year. Transfers are accepted on a first-come first-served basis, except for tenants applying for **priority status**. To be considered for priority status you must provide documentation that proves there is a risk to your personal safety that can be resolved by a transfer to another suite.

TRANSFER TO ANOTHER BUILDING

The Housing Corporation currently owns and manages buildings administered under different housing programs. Eligibility requirements can vary with respect to the program guidelines set for a specific complex. You may apply for a transfer to any other building, or suite within your existing building, as long as you meet the eligibility requirements of the program for the complex of your choice. Corporation staff will review your completed application for transfer and advise you in writing of your eligibility and status on the transfer waitlist.

TRANSFERS FOR CHANGE IN FAMILY SIZE

You are required to advise the office when your family changes in size because of birth, adoption, a child leaving home or any other circumstance. Housing programs guide how many children at certain ages may share a bedroom. If you receive a housing subsidy and your home no longer fits your family size according to the guidelines, a transfer will be arranged to the appropriate size suite for you. Contact staff at the Housing Corporation for more information.

Tenant Associations

Tenant associations can help to create a sense of community in housing complexes. Many associations organize events to bring neighbours together. If you are interested in forming a tenant association, you can get more information from the Housing Corporation office. If your group is interested in forming a more formal organization you may be eligible to become an incorporated society, which means the association could apply for government grants and funding.

The Housing Corporation has a small fund available to assist with the cost of special projects which benefit all tenants in a complex – flower gardens, special event dinners. If your group has an idea or a project, please contact the office for more information.

Common Tenancy Issues

OUTDOOR PLAY

Playgrounds are for toddlers and younger children and are available from 8 am to 8 pm or sunset, whichever is earlier. The same hours apply if there is a basketball hoop at your complex. Please be considerate of your neighbours and make sure your children are not too noisy when they are using the playground.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPERVISE YOUR CHILDREN AT ALL TIMES or to make arrangements for someone else to watch them.

Children must not play in hallways, laundry rooms, elevators or underground parking garages. **You are legally responsible for any damage caused by your children.**

NOTE: building caretakers will not supervise your children.

VANDALISM

If you see anyone causing damage to Housing Corporation property, please call the 24-hour emergency number or the police immediately. Vandals may be charged and billed for the cost of the repairs.

LAUNDRY FACILITIES

Laundry facilities are for residents only and are available from 8 am to 10 pm daily. You can help our caretakers keep the laundry room clean by cleaning up around the machines and removing lint from the dryer after each use. Please be considerate of tenants who will be using the machines after you by promptly removing your laundry when it is done.

HOME BUSINESS AND DAYCARE

You and your guests may use the property for private residential purposes only. No business, trading or other income-producing purposes are allowed.

Exceptions may be made for providing daycare to the children of immediate family members or children who live in the complex. Please contact the office to get written permission prior to starting a business.

Entering Your Suite

PRIVACY

Your rented unit is *your home* and you have a right to privacy.

PROPER NOTICE

The Housing Corporation is required by law to give you between 24 and 72 hours written notice before entering your suite. You will be notified in writing when we need access to your suite and the reason for entry.

If you are asked, you may let an employee of the Housing Corporation into your home, but you have a right to say no if you haven't been given proper notice.

Housing Corporation employees will enter your suite without notice if there is an emergency.

Complaints and Disputes

If you have a concern with a neighbor in your complex, please try and resolve the issue directly with the neighbor. If this does not work, please contact your caretaker for help. If the issue is not being resolved, or if the complaint is of a serious nature, please put your complaint in writing to the Housing Corporation office. Please list dates and times the problem is occurring, and as much specific information as you can about the dispute. Staff will contact you to try and assist with a resolution.

If you think that the Housing Corporation is not meeting its obligations under your tenancy agreement or the Residential Tenancy Act, please contact a Senior Property Manager at the Housing Corporation office. If we cannot resolve the issue, you may apply to the Residential Tenancy Branch for a dispute resolution officer to assist with a solution or to rule on the matter in dispute. This service is free to residents of British Columbia who have a limited income.

If you have a concern with a Housing Corporation staff person, please call the office and ask to speak to their supervisor. Depending on the issue, you may be asked to provide your complaint in writing.

If you have a concern or complaint regarding a policy, please contact the Senior Manager. If that person is unable to resolve your concerns, a tenant may appeal to the Board of Directors, either by letter or requesting to appear before the Board.

The Corporation is also governed by Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation. If you want to make an application for release of information under FOI, please contact the Capital Regional District FOI Officer by calling 250.360.3000.

ANNUAL INSPECTION

As part of our program to maintain our buildings to a good standard, the Housing Corporation conducts annual unit inspections. Corporation staff will provide notice of this inspection and request that you provide a list of any problems that you are aware of in the suite. As a result of that inspection, work may be identified that requires contractors to make repairs or replacements. During the inspection, if we note any damage that has occurred in the suite, you will be asked to repair that damage. If you are unable to do this work, the Corporation will undertake the work and charge you. Tenants are required to maintain their units to a standard that ensures the building is not damaged in a manner that will require expensive repairs, be susceptible to fire or impact your neighbours.

Unit painting and replacement of flooring and appliances is undertaken as required and as budgets allow.

Moving Out

NOTICE

You must give one month's written notice to the Housing Corporation when you intend to move. This must be received at the Corporation's office on or before the last day of the month, to take effect on the last day of the following month.

For example, if you will be moving out on June 30, you must deliver your written notice to the office on or before May 31.

Notice can be mailed, hand-delivered or faxed. You must sign your notice.

EARLY NOTICE PROGRAM

If you are able to give an additional 10 (ten) working days notice when you intend to move, you may be eligible for a \$100 bonus from the Housing Corporation. The extra time gives Corporation staff the opportunity to select a new tenant, and perform necessary repairs in your suite.

To be eligible:

1. You give an additional 10 working days notice to vacate in accordance with the posted schedule of monthly notice deadlines. Notice must be in writing.
2. You are not transferring to other Housing Corporation accommodation.
3. You have no outstanding charges owing to the Corporation (rent, parking, maintenance).
4. You allow your caretaker to show your unit to prospective tenants as required.
5. Except for normal wear and tear, any damage identified during the pre-move-out inspection must be repaired before the tenancy ends. You agree to allow access to your suite for necessary repairs to be done if you are not doing the repairs yourself.
6. Your unit is left clean and ready for immediate occupancy by the incoming tenant by 1 pm on the last day of your tenancy. A cleaning checklist is available on the Corporation website or from your caretaker.

The \$100 bonus will be sent to you at the time your security deposit is refunded. The bonus may not be used against any maintenance, repairs or other charges.

PRE MOVE-OUT INSPECTION

Your caretaker will schedule an appointment within a few days to inspect your suite to determine if there is anything that you need to repair or replace before you leave. A copy of this pre move-out inspection will be left in your suite.

SHOWING THE SUITE

Once you've given notice, we will need to show your suite to potential tenants. Your caretaker will be in touch with you regarding these showings, and your cooperation is appreciated.

MOVE-OUT INSPECTION

You must leave your suite in a clean, tidy and undamaged condition. After your caretaker inspects your suite, you are required to sign the move-out inspection forms. These will show the condition of your suite and list any repairs and charges that we are assessing. If you disagree, you can sign that you disagree and staff will be in contact with you to resolve the issue.

Your security deposit will be retained or refunded in accordance with the Residential Tenancy Act.

The Capital Region Housing Corporation's goal is to provide you with quality service and enjoyment of your home.

This handbook was created to assist you with answers to frequently asked questions. If you have not found your answer here, please call our office or your caretaker for more assistance.