

BEFORE TENANCY BEGINS

Renters in BC are covered by the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) which is governed by the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB). The RTB also holds dispute resolution hearings for landlords and tenants when they cannot resolve the dispute on their own. The majority of dispute resolution hearings are held via teleconference where the tenant and landlord will be given the opportunity to talk about the problem with an arbitrator, who will then decide the outcome based on the evidence presented and the Law.



WHAT TENANCIES ARE COVERED UNDER THE RTA?

Not all tenancies are covered by the RTA. If your name is on a tenancy agreement, you pay rent to a landlord, and you don't share a kitchen or bathroom with your landlord; you are likely covered by the RTA. Tenants who are not covered under the Act can seek resolution through Small Claims Court, Civil Resolution Tribunal, or the Supreme Court for money they believe the landlord owes them. You can only apply for dispute resolution through the RTB if your tenancy is covered by the Act.

LANDLORDS

What a landlord should NOT ask for:

- + Social Insurance number,
- + Your banking or credit card information,
- + A criminal record check,
- + Driver's licence; unless one-time use as proof of identity, but they can't write down personal information or request a photocopy of your licence.

A landlord must NOT charge a person anything for:

- + Accepting or processing an application,
- + Investigating the applicant's suitability as a tenant, or
- + Accepting the person as a tenant.

DISCRIMINATION

A landlord cannot refuse to rent to you because of your race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, legal source of income, age, married or unmarried, if you have children or a disability.

There are only 2 exceptions to the rule: shared accommodations where the landlord is requesting a roommate of the same gender or unless the building is reserved for people 55 and older.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE START

Remember that you are entering into a contract. After signing a tenancy agreement it becomes legally binding. Therefore it is very important to make sure everything about the agreement is clear and you understand it. You may want to also keep a copy of the tenancy agreement for your own records.