

Rental Housing in BC: Key Tips for Newcomer Physicians

Finding rental housing in B.C., particularly in high-demand communities, can feel challenging, especially for newcomers to Canada. The notes below are intended to help you search safely, competitively and with confidence.

1. Understand the B.C. Rental Market

- **High demand, limited supply:** Vacancy rates are low on Vancouver Island. Landlords commonly receive many inquiries for a single unit.
- **Competitive applications:** Well-prepared applicants often move quickly. Having documents ready in advance can make a meaningful difference.
- **Rent amounts:** Monthly rent is typically advertised excluding utilities unless otherwise stated. Always confirm what is included.

2. Common Rental Requirements in B.C.

Landlords may legally ask for:

- First month's rent
- A security deposit (maximum 50% of one month's rent)
- Tenant references
- Proof of employment or income
- A credit check (if available)

Landlords **cannot** ask for:

- A damage deposit greater than 50% of one month's rent
- A pet deposit if no pet is allowed (pet deposits are capped at 50% if pets are permitted)
- Additional "holding" or "application" fees

3. Creating a Renter's Curriculum Vitae (CV)

In competitive markets, a renter's CV can help landlords quickly understand who you are. A renter's CV may include:

- A short personal introduction
- Your profession and clinic location
- Expected length of tenancy
- Household details (number of occupants)
- References (professional or personal)
- Proof of income or contract (if available)

Tips:

- Keep it to 1–2 pages
- Be professional and clear

- Don't share sensitive information (e.g., passport numbers)
- Highlight stability (long-term employment, professional role)

4. How to Spot and Avoid Rental Scams

Unfortunately, rental scams do occur, especially targeting newcomers. Be cautious if:

- The rent seems far below market value
- You are asked to send money before viewing the unit
- The landlord claims to be out of the country and unavailable for a viewing
- You are pressured to act immediately or told “many others are waiting”
- Payment is requested via gift cards, wire transfer, or cryptocurrency

Best practices to stay safe:

- Never send deposits or rent without seeing the unit (in person or via live virtual tour)
- Verify the address exists and matches the listing
- Communicate through reputable platforms when possible
- Trust your instincts—if something feels off, pause and seek advice

5. Viewing Rentals from Outside Canada

If you are searching from abroad:

- Ask for a live video tour rather than pre-recorded videos
- Request a copy of the tenancy agreement before committing
- Consider short-term housing initially (e.g., furnished rentals) while you search locally
- Avoid signing leases or sending deposits under pressure

6. Understanding B.C. Tenancy Agreements

- Most rentals use the B.C. Residential Tenancy Agreement
- Leases are commonly month-to-month after an initial fixed term
- Rent increases are regulated annually by the province
- Landlords must provide proper notice for entry or eviction
- All tenants in B.C. are protected under the Residential Tenancy Act

7. Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

As a tenant in B.C., you have the right to:

- A safe and well-maintained home
- Privacy and proper notice before landlord entry
- Receipts for rent paid
- Fair dispute resolution through the Residential Tenancy Branch

8. Final Advice

Housing searches can take time - this is normal. Start early, stay organized, and don't hesitate to ask for guidance from trusted local contacts. Many newcomers find housing successfully after an initial short-term stay. You are not alone in this process, and support is available.

Rental Contacts – South Island Region

Organization	Website	Notes
Craigslist	https://victoria.craigslist.org/search/apa	A common source for finding housing in the region. Be safe and protect yourself from scams - never provide money without seeing a unit and signing a contract first.
Used Victoria	https://www.usedvictoria.com/real-estate	Local website where users can buy or sell used goods, which also has a separate section for real estate.
Meds Housing	https://www.medshousing.com/	A dedicated platform that links medical learners, healthcare professionals, and landlords with housing near hospitals, clinics, and universities. Listings include shared accommodations, private units and furnished or unfurnished options.
Facebook Marketplace	www.facebook.com	Facebook has a variety of boards and groups that post housing in the region including the following: - Victoria B.C. Rentals - Victoria Rentals (B.C., Canada)
Victoria Real Estate Board	https://www.vreb.org/buying-selling/rentals	The Victoria Real Estate Board is an association of approximately 1,600 Realtors who work and live in the communities of Greater Victoria and the Southern Gulf Islands. This website lists all property management firms in the region.
Devon Properties	https://devonproperties.com/	Contact via form on website
Pemberton Holmes	https://thepropertymanagers.ca/	Victoria/South Island: reception@thepropertymanagers.ca Salt Spring Island: vanessa@thepropertymanagers.ca
Newport Property Management	https://www.newportrentals.ca/	info@newportrentals.ca
Clover Residential	https://cloverresidential.com/	Contact via form on website
Rhome Property Management	https://www.rhomepmvictoria.ca/	Contact Greg Long at Greg.Long@rhomepm.com
DFH Real Estate	https://www.dfh.ca/property-management/	Contact via form on website
Equitex Property Management	https://equitex.ca/property-owners/property-management/	info@equitex.ca
Sanpra Real Estate	https://www.sanpra.ca/	Contact Vinit Jain at info@sanpra.ca
Salt Spring Island	Contact Sarah Bulmer, Salt Spring Island Program Lead for listings	sarah.bulmer@sidfp.com