

Frequently asked questions

When will I start receiving assistance?

If you are eligible, your SAFER assistance will be effective the month your application is received in our office. For example, if an application is received on April 29, it will be effective for the month of April. The SAFER assistance is paid in arrears; payments are made at the end of each month. BC Housing contacts applicants by mail as soon as applications are processed.

How is the SAFER assistance paid?

Assistance is paid by direct deposit to your bank account on the last working day of the month. You will need to provide us with a VOID cheque or a Preauthorized Debit Form from your bank. If you do not currently have a bank account, you will need to open one.

Do I ever need to reapply to SAFER?

Yes. A reapplication form will be sent to you three months prior to your birthday each year. You must complete and return the form in order to continue receiving assistance.

Is there a minimum amount SAFER will pay me?

Yes. The minimum benefit is \$25 per month.

How is the rent assistance calculated if I pay room and board?

SAFER assistance does not cover board, cable, parking, laundry, or other personal services; therefore, 50 per cent of a room and board payment is considered to be the rent portion up to the maximum rent level.

Can I receive assistance from SAFER if I am in a long-term care facility or in a residence that is subsidized through another government agency?

No. Seniors residing in these situations are not eligible.

Why are there different maximum rents for different areas of the province?

The separate rent ceilings are used to reflect the difference in rental markets in communities across the province.

My family sponsored me to come to Canada. Am I eligible?

No. Seniors who are in Canada under a sponsorship agreement are not eligible for assistance while the agreement is still in place.

Do I declare my SAFER assistance on my annual income tax return?

No. SAFER is a non-taxable rent benefit.

Important

If your application is approved, please remember to inform BC Housing immediately if you move, your rent increases, or if you begin sharing accommodation with other people who were not included on the application, or if you or your spouse start to receive income assistance.

By providing this information promptly, we can adjust your assistance accordingly to ensure you are receiving the correct assistance and avoid possible overpayments.

For your information

BC Housing will audit some recipients. If you apply and become a SAFER recipient, you may be contacted and asked to prove your eligibility.

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* covers the collection and use of personal information by BC Housing.

For more information



BC Housing
101 – 4555 Kingsway
Burnaby, B.C.
V5H 4V8

Metro Vancouver:
604-433-2218
Elsewhere in BC:
1-800-257-7756



Make your rent more affordable



Find out if you are eligible at
www.bchousing.org/calculator

For more information:
www.bchousing.org/SAFER

www.bchousing.org/SAFER

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The **Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters** (SAFER) program helps make rents affordable for B.C. seniors with low to moderate incomes. SAFER provides monthly assistance to eligible B.C. residents who are age 60 or over and who pay rent for their homes in the private market. Seniors who pay pad rental fees for owner-occupied manufactured homes (trailers) may also be eligible.

SAFER is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.



Eligibility

You **may be eligible** if you meet all of the following conditions:

- You are age 60 or over.
- You and your spouse (with whom you are living):
 - Have lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months prior to your application and
 - Meet one of the following citizenship requirements:
 - Canadian citizen(s)
 - Authorized to take up permanent residence in Canada
 - Convention refugee(s)
- You pay more than 30 per cent of your gross (before tax) monthly household income towards the rent of your home, including the cost of pad rental for a manufactured home (trailer) that you own and occupy.
- Your gross (before tax) monthly household income does not exceed the program income ceiling based on where you live in the province.

Maximum Income effective September 2018*

| | Zone 1 | Zone 2 and 3 |
|---------|---------|--------------|
| Singles | \$2,550 | \$2,446 |
| Couples | \$2,750 | \$2,666 |

*please visit www.bchousing.org/SAFER or contact BC Housing for the Maximum Rent Ceilings in effect before September 2018.

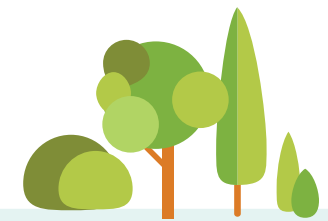
How to Apply

1 Download an application form from www.bchousing.org/SAFER

Eligibility

You **are not eligible** for the program if any of the following are true:

- You are under the age of 60.
- You live in subsidized housing or a residential care facility funded by the Ministry of Health.
- You live in co-operative housing and are a shareholder.
- You or your spouse receives income assistance the *B.C. Employment and Assistance Act* or the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* (excluding the Medical Services Only plan which provides specific health supplements to certain categories of former recipients of assistance).
- You do not live in British Columbia.
- You have not lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months preceding your application.
- You do not meet the citizenship requirements.
- You are in Canada under a private sponsorship agreement.



How is SAFER calculated?

SAFER reimburses part of the difference between 30 per cent of your total income and your rent. The program has a sliding scale that gives the most money to seniors with the least income. The amount of assistance is calculated taking into account your household size, rent, and where you live.

If your actual rent is higher than the maximum rent level, you may still be eligible for the program. However, SAFER will use a maximum rent amount when calculating your assistance:

Maximum Rent Ceilings as of September 2018*

| | Zone 1 | Zone 2 | Zone 3 |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Singles | \$803 | \$767 | \$734 |
| Couples | \$866 | \$836 | \$800 |

*please visit www.bchousing.org/SAFER or contact BC Housing for the Maximum Rent Ceilings in effect before September 2018.

For an estimate of what you may be eligible for, visit www.bchousing.org/calculator.

How do I know what Zone I am in?

For a list of communities for each zone, please visit www.bchousing.org/SAFER.

2 Call BC Housing at 604-433-2218 or 1-800-257-7756 (outside Metro Vancouver) to have an application mailed to you.

3 In person at any BC Housing office.