

Tenant Handbook

**Community, Seniors and Affordable
Housing Programs**



Lethbridge Housing Authority

Welcome to

Lethbridge Housing Authority

Dear Tenant,

We are pleased to welcome you to Lethbridge Housing Authority. We hope your new home provides you with comfort and meets the needs of yourself and/or your family.

Access to safe affordable housing is the mission of Lethbridge Housing Authority. We pride ourselves in assisting over 2100 individuals throughout Southern Alberta.

We understand that a home is essential. Individuals and families can grow and succeed when they are able to access affordable housing.

Lethbridge Housing strives to provide a house you can call home in inclusive neighborhoods throughout the City of Lethbridge. We also provide housing for seniors in the Town of Magrath and Community Housing in the Town of Coalhurst.

This handbook is provided to all tenants when they move in. It provides useful information and will answer questions you may have.

Our helpful friendly staff will be happy to assist you with any further questions you may have regarding your tenancy with Lethbridge Housing Authority.

Thank you for choosing Lethbridge Housing Authority to be your landlord and we will do our best to ensure your tenancy is an enjoyable one.

Respectfully,

Robin James
Chief Administrative Officer
Lethbridge Housing Authority
Lethbridge & Region Community Housing Corporation

Introduction

This Tenant Handbook has been prepared to provide you with an understanding of the approach and policies that Lethbridge Housing Authority (LHA), and our subsidiary company Lethbridge & Region Community Housing Corporation (L&RCHC) follows to help make your home a safe, affordable and comfortable place to live.

Welcome to
Lethbridge
Housing!



Although the Handbook does not include detailed information for specific locations; it does provide you with an overview of how LHA operates, as well as what is required of you as a Tenant.

We suggest you keep this Handbook in a convenient place for future reference. If you have further suggestions or ideas to offer us for future editions, please feel free to do so by contacting the Property Management Staff.

Types of Social Housing

Lethbridge Housing Authority manages more than 800 units of social housing. Tenants are selected from a waiting list of Applicants seeking subsidized or affordable housing in Lethbridge.

There are different types of housing support, including:

Directly-Managed Housing

LHA directly manages approximately 700 units; 400 units for seniors and 300 units for families with dependent children.



Affordable Housing

We have over 100 units which are rented at 10% below the local market rent.

Rent Supplements

LHA also provides rental assistance to qualified tenants who are renting in the private market by way of Rent Supplements.

Applicants are assisted according to need and availability.

Roles of Property Management Staff



Placement Worker– Your Placement Worker processes your application, explains your tenancy forms, signs your lease, calculates how much rent you will pay, and completes a Move-In Inspection with you.

They also work with Tenants to answer any questions or resolve problems that may arise related to tenancies.

Mobile & Building Maintenance Technicians – For our family units (townhouses, houses, etc.), there are several mobile Maintenance Technicians who will make the required repairs to the units. At each of the seniors’ hi-rise buildings you may contact your Maintenance Technician. To make a maintenance request, please call the LHA Business Office. Your request provides permission for the Maintenance Department to complete repairs.

There is 24 hour Emergency and After Hours response by calling (403) 329-0556.



Community Support Worker – Our Community Workers are available to assist our tenants/clients with a variety of social supports. They can assist by connecting you with other support agencies as well as work with you to maintain your tenancy in good standing with Lethbridge Housing Authority and/or Lethbridge & Region Community Housing Corp.



Newsletters

Newsletters are sent out quarterly with updated information including any applicable office holiday hours.

Your Rent

Your rent must be paid on or before the first day of each month.

You may pay by the following payment systems.

1. **Pre-Authorized Payment (PAP)** – Pay your rent by arranging to have automatic monthly bank withdrawals from your account. Contact our Business Office for more information.
2. **Debit Card** – Our Business Office has the bank debit card system (sorry, no credit cards). 
3. **Cheque** – If you choose this option, you may submit a cheque each month or send post-dated cheques for one year to the Business Office. Please make sure your name and address are on your cheques and on the envelope and mail or deliver them to our Business Office.
4. **Cash** – If you pay with cash, please bring the money directly to our Business Office. Do not send cash in the mail because it could be lost or stolen. Building Maintenance Technicians and /or Community Workers cannot accept cash on sites. 

PLEASE NOTE: If you are unable to pay your rent on time, you must contact our Business Office to make payment arrangements that are acceptable to Lethbridge Housing. Once acceptable payment arrangements have been made and signed by both parties the arrangements must be kept. If your rent is not paid by the first of the month and you may be issued a Notice to vacate the premises.

How is your rent calculated?



For Tenants who pay rent geared to income (RGI), your monthly rent is 30% of your total household gross income, subject to minimum and maximum rental rates and utility charges.

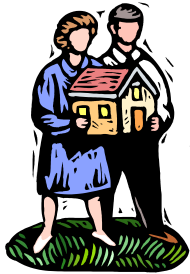
A change in your income may affect your rent. Please notify our Office of any change in your income or source of income; including employment insurance, provincial income assistance, school funding, etc.

Please provide copies of documentation; including the Medical Assistance and Budget cards if applicable. Our Business Office or your Placement Worker will advise if your rent will be adjusted.

Annual Review Process

Once each year, you will need to provide our office with updated information. We will send you a letter to advise what information is required to review your rent. Under the terms of your Residential Tenancy Agreement, you are responsible for paying the rent established for your unit, which is based on the information provided. **If you do not provide the required income verification documents your rent will be set at full Market rates.**

Please call our Business Office if you have any questions or need help filling out the necessary forms. You may also call and book an appointment with our office if further assistance is required.

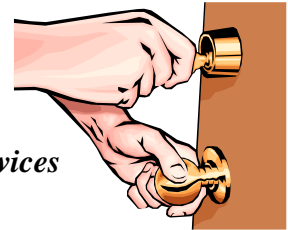


YOUR NEW HOME

Your Placement Worker will let you know what day you may move into your new home, and will arrange to complete a Move-In Inspection and provide your keys.

Keys & Locks

We will install a new lock on your door before you move in and give you keys for your home. Please note that we have to charge a replacement fee if you lose any of your keys.



You must not change your locks or add security devices without prior written approval from LHA.

If you need your locks changed, please contact our Business Office or your Building Maintenance Technician to make appropriate arrangements.

Parking



You will find that parking is available for most locations. Vehicles must be registered, insured and in good working condition.

A parking spot is assigned to you at the time of your lease signing. If parking is not available, your name will be placed on a parking waiting list and you will be notified when a spot becomes available.

Insurance

LHA insures the building only, not Tenants' belongings. We highly recommend that you purchase contents and liability insurance to protect your belongings in case of theft, fire or other damage.



Renovations & Alterations

LHA upgrades units and buildings as Provincial funding allows. Please note that Tenants are not permitted to renovate or alter their units without prior written permission from their Placement Worker. Renovations include painting, wallpapering, installing a satellite dish, etc.

Basements & Storage Areas

Some townhouses have undeveloped basements or storage areas. These areas must not be used as a sleeping area due to improper fire exits. They also must be kept clean and free from clutter to ensure maintenance is able to access the furnace, hot water tank and sump pump.

Yards

If you live in a townhouse or house with a fenced in yard, it is your responsibility to water and mow the grass. It is also your responsibility to shovel snow from the walks and steps to your unit.



Balconies

Balconies must not be used for storage. Barbeques are not permitted on the balcony due to the potential health & fire hazards. **Smoking is prohibited on balconies.**

Pets

Certain types of pets are permitted in some Lethbridge Housing and Lethbridge & Region Housing units. Please ask your Placement Worker if your new home allows pets and which pets are permitted. Tenants are strongly encouraged to review our pet policy prior to purchasing a pet.

Please note that bird feeders are not permitted for health reasons.

Cable, Telephone & Satellite Dishes

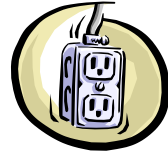
Senior Hi-Rise buildings have an established rate for basic cablevision. All



other units have individual hookups. Tenants are responsible for contacting the cable and telephone companies to arrange for hook up where needed. Satellite dishes cannot be attached to the building.

Electricity, Gas, Water

All Tenants are responsible for the predetermined electrical fees; however, LHA pays for the natural gas, water and waste disposal. A charge for electricity is added to most rent contribution. In Senior Hi-Rise buildings there is a seasonal fee when using an air conditioner.



Smoking & Vaping



All buildings are designated NON-SMOKING and NON-VAPING

Building exteriors should be kept clear of cigarette butts or similar products, i.e. use of proper disposal method of metal container with sand. There are designated outside smoking and vaping areas at Senior Hi-rise Buildings. Tenant must also comply with the smoking bylaw which states you must be greater than 5 meters (approximately 16 feet) from any door or window that opens.

Common Areas

Senior Hi-Rise Buildings have common areas for the Tenants use. Before scheduling any private functions please contact either your Placement Worker or Building Maintenance Technician to confirm availability and acquire the appropriate form to sign. Tenants are asked to clean up after using Common Areas. Tenants are responsible for their Guests; therefore, you are advised to supervise children. Pets are NOT permitted in common areas.

Guests

Your Guest may stay with you for a maximum total of 14 days. If you need to plan a longer visit by guests, you must obtain written approval from your Placement Worker in advance of their visit.

Pest Control

If you suspect pests, **NOTIFY** us **IMMEDIATELY**.

You can reduce the incidence of pests by keeping food stored in glass, metal or hard plastic containers with tight-fitting lids. We recommend that you clean behind and under the fridge and stove every six months.



If pests become a problem in your home, LHA may have to contact an exterminator to control the pests. We may have to spray the units in the building to keep the bugs under control. If we have to spray, you will receive a notice that explains what must be done before any treatment can be completed. It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure proper access to the premises for the purpose of pest control.

You can help to control pests by doing the following:

- Keep your dry goods (flour, sugar, cereal, etc.) in glass, metal or hard plastic containers.
- Keep your garbage, including recyclables, in tight closing, hard containers.
- Keep your floors free of food scraps.
- Keep the grass and shrubs in your yard trimmed where applicable.

Garbage & Recycling

Please wrap your garbage and place inside disposal locations. If you live in single dwellings you will have outside garbage bins and/or regular curbside tub pick-up scheduled by the City. Hi-Rise Buildings have garbage chutes on each floor to use between 7am to 10pm; Please do not put glass items or liquids down the chute.

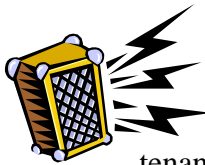


Laundry Facilities



Buildings that have laundry rooms are available for use by Tenants only. We ask that you observe the posted Laundry Room hours, and clean the equipment after your use. Please notify the business office if the laundry facility requires maintenance.

Noise and Disturbances



Please ensure that you, your household members and guests conduct themselves in a manner that does not have a negative impact on your neighbors. Seniors high rise buildings have quiet hours between 10pm and 7am daily. Excessive noise and disturbances may lead to a breach of your tenancy. A breach of your lease may lead to eviction.

Moving Out



When you decide to move, you need to provide our Business Office with a written notice on or before the last day of the month to be effective on the last day of the next tenancy month. You will be given a list of cleaning to do when moving out, and an appointment should be scheduled for your Move-Out Inspection. Tenants should be moved out by 12 Noon on the last day of the month. It is your responsibility to return all keys and sign the Move-Out Inspection form.

SAFETY

Protect Yourself & Your Home

Only let Maintenance Workers into your home if you have been notified of necessary maintenance, or if you have requested a repair. Lethbridge Housing Authority Staff are easily identifiable with Identification cards.



DO NOT let strangers into your building.
Reminder - You are responsible for your Guests.

If you see strangers loitering around the building, please contact the Police, Building Security Personnel, or our Business Office. If you observe suspected criminal activity, do not attempt to intervene, phone the Police immediately, and notify our Business Office.

Fire Safety

Here are some tips to protect your home and your family.

- Do not store flammable materials such as paint thinner, solvents, propane tanks or gasoline inside your home or attached storage area.
- Regularly recycle old newspapers.
- Make sure you know what to do in case of fire. **Create a plan.**
- Make sure you have at least two ways out of the unit in case one escape route is blocked by fire.



- If you hear the fire alarm, you should always leave the building right away, following the escape plan.
- If a fire breaks out in your home, evacuate to safety, activate the fire alarm and call the fire department.
- Call for a Maintenance Technician if the smoke alarm in your home goes off frequently. The alarm will be inspected annually.

Do not remove or disable the smoke alarm.

- Do not overload power outlets. A power bar with a shut-off feature can protect your electrical appliances.
- Evacuation Procedures are posted to the back of your main door. Contact our Business Office if you need a replacement.

Crime Free Multi-Housing

For those Tenants in Crime Free Multi-Housing, any occupant of the Tenant's household and any persons invited onto the residential premises by the Tenant, shall not engage in any criminal activity on the premises or property including, but not limited to:

- Any drug related criminal activity
- Solicitation (sex trade works and related nuisance activity)
- Street gang activity
- Assault or threatened assault
- Unlawful use of a firearm
- Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or welfare of the landlord, other tenants or persons on the Property



CONFLICTS & COMPLAINTS

If you are involved in a conflict with another resident, try to resolve the issue with them before seeking external measures for resolution. If the conflict is criminal in nature or includes a threat of violence please contact the Lethbridge City Police at 403-328-4444. If you are unable to resolve an issue, contact our Community Workers. If they cannot assist, you can contact our Business Office in writing. Please note: written complaints need to be dated, signed, and should state the facts of “who, what, when, where” rather than your judgments, opinions or conclusions. We also recommend you provide us with written permission to share the information.



Below are some methods for resolving a conflict:

- Negotiation: Talk about the issue directly with the other person using sensitive communication techniques.
- Conciliation: A neutral third party acts as a go-between to explain each person’s side of the story to the other and to arrive at a resolution to the dispute. This method is successful only when the third party is truly neutral and trusted by both sides.
- Mediation: If negotiation and conciliation are unsuccessful, you can report this to the Community Workers and request information regarding mediation.
- Arbitration: If all of the above fail, and the conflict is having negative impact on the housing development as a whole, an independent arbitrator may be hired to hear both sides and make a ruling that will be binding to all parties.
- Eviction: This is the last resort and is used only if the tenancy agreement is breached. (*Refer to your Residential Tenancy Agreement*).

Transfers

TRANSFER FEE MAY APPLY.

Can we move to another place?

LHA receives many requests each year from our Tenants wishing to transfer to another unit. The following is the basic eligibility criteria for transfers:

- Your tenancy must be in good standing.
- You have no outstanding debts including charge backs, damages, or rent arrears.
- You still meet the basic eligibility requirements for housing.



LHA may approve a transfer if:

- Your place of employment or schooling has changed and transportation is unavailable.
- A change to your household size or composition requires a different size unit.
- You or a family member has a medical condition that would be stabilized or improved with a change of location.
- You and a household member’s wellbeing is a serious risk from trauma, violence, harassment or other undesirable consequences. Supporting documentation from Police or Social Agency may be required.
- If you would like to transfer and are unsure of your eligibility for a transfer, please contact your Placement Worker who can advise you of your options.

Care of Your Home



It is your responsibility to keep your home clean and safe, and to report any maintenance concerns.

Picture hooks, rather than nails or screws should be used to hang wall decorations. Please keep in mind that you will be charged for any damage you may cause.



Appliances

Many refrigerators are frost free and do not need to be defrosted; but if your fridge is not, we suggest you clean and defrost it regularly to keep it in good condition and save energy. Do not use knives or ice picks to scrape the ice off because they can damage the freezer and you will be charged with any repair costs. Do not place a kettle or pot of boiling water in the freezer because this could melt the plastic parts.



Use a mild soapy solution to clean the smooth surfaces of appliances. Please do not use abrasive cleaning products because they damage the surfaces of your appliances.

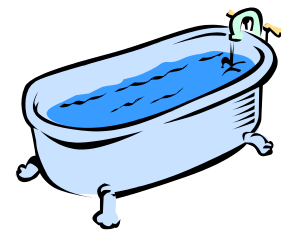
Please call our Business Office to report any problems with appliances, and a Maintenance Technician will have it checked.

Bathroom

You may have condensation problems in your bathroom, if there is condensation on the windows or walls (may appear as yellow spots), dark marks between ceramic tiles, peeling paint, musty smells, etc.

Condensation is caused by:

- Excessive house humidity
- Moisture from hot baths and showers
- Dampness from wet mats and towels
- Inadequate ventilation



Following are a number of things you can do to reduce condensation:

- Turn on the bathroom fan or open the bathroom window while showering or bathing.
- Turn on the heat lamp during your bath or shower if your home has one.
- Keep the kitchen or stove fan running, and/or kitchen window open while cooking and washing dishes.

NOTE: *It costs less to heat dry air than wet air.*

Please call our Business Office to report any maintenance problems.

Conserving Energy



All of us can cut the cost of heating and electrical bills by conserving energy. Here are some ways you can save energy in your home:

- When it is cold out, keep the temperature at 20 degrees Celsius. Lower the temperature at night.
- Turn off the lights in rooms that are not being used, and whenever you leave a room.

VANDALISM

Vandalism can result in costly repairs. Graffiti on brickwork is difficult to remove and is very unsightly.

We ask that you call the Police immediately, and notify our Business Office and/or Building Security if you see anyone damaging property.



MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS

Making a Request for Maintenance Repairs

Please inform our Business Office at 403-329-0556 of any maintenance required in your residence.



When you sign the Residential Lease Agreement for your home, you will receive a list of the Business Hours. If you have a serious problem after hours, we have 24-hour Emergency Answering Service. After Hours calls are for **emergencies ONLY** such as flood, elevator breakdown, power or heat system failure, etc. After hours call outs that are not an emergency will result in the tenant being charged \$35.00 per hour for the maintenance technician's time.

Preventative Maintenance

LHA is committed to providing safe housing for our Tenants. Therefore, LHA Maintenance Staff may need to conduct repairs and preventative maintenance in your home or building to ensure it remains healthy and safe.



We conduct an annual inspection of units to ensure that the fire alarms, furnace, plumbing, etc. are in good working condition. You will be notified at least 24 hours prior to the date of inspections. We will make every effort to minimize disruption while preventative maintenance takes place.

What to do if you have Maintenance Issues

Contact your Building Maintenance Technician or call our Business Office if you have a problem with your home and a repair is required. If there has been property damage or injury, an Incident Report may be required and specific details acquired from you.

If you have an ongoing maintenance issue or have a complaint, your Placement Worker is the person to speak to.

Tenant Rights

Tenancy Agreement



Before moving into your unit, you will sign a Residential Lease with us and you will be provided a copy of this agreement. If you have lost your copy, please contact our Business Office to request one.

If you find the rules difficult to understand, your Placement Worker can explain them. For your convenience, information regarding Landlord & Tenant Rights was included in your Tenant Information Package.

Residential Tenancy Act

The Provincial Residential Tenancy Act explains the rights and responsibilities of both Tenants and Landlords. The rights in this act protect you as a Tenant in public housing and you have the same responsibilities as any other tenant in Alberta.



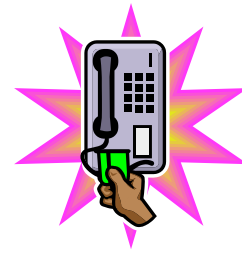
Unless you are paying market rent, the rules for rent increases do not apply to you, as the Rent you pay is based on 30 per cent of your household's gross income (subject to minimum rents) or Income Supports Schedule.

For your convenience, information regarding Landlords and Tenants are included in your Tenant Information Package.

Tenant Holidays

If you will be away from your unit for an extended length of time (in excess of 7 days) please notify our business office.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS



Maintenance Requests Or See Specific Maintenance Technicians at Hi-Rises included in Tenant Package	(403) 329-0556
Placement Workers	(403) 329-0556
Community Worker	(403) 320-5981 or (403) 394-9658
24-Hour <u>Emergency</u> After Hours	(403) 329-0556
Emergency Medical or Police	9 – 1 – 1

See Lethbridge Housing's Website for further information:

www.lethbridgehousing.ca