



Brightside Community Homes Foundation

Tenant Handbook



Important Information

Use this page to record important information

Brightside Main Office: 604-684-3515 - Office hours: 8:30 – 4:30 Monday to Friday
(Closed Saturday, Sunday and Statutory Holidays)

Maintenance Emergency Line: 1-888-622-6250 - Please call this number only if there is imminent danger to property such as a flood.

Emergency Contact Numbers

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Emergency Police, Fire, Ambulance | 911 |
| Non-Emergency Police: | 604-717-3321 |
| BC Hydro for power outages: | 1-888-769-3766 |
| Fortis BC for a gas leak: | 1-800-663-9911 |

Other important info:



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About Us

BRIGHTSIDE is a private non-profit housing provider that incorporated in 1952. BRIGHTSIDE currently operates 27 income-based subsidized buildings that provide 945 independent living units. Its vision is to create a community where low income people live with dignity.

Welcome to Your New Home

This handbook is filled with information about your home and community. It will provide you with a better understanding of the policies that BRIGHTSIDE staff follow to help make your home a safe, affordable and comfortable place to live.

While the handbook does not include detailed information for specific locations, it does provide practical information about your home, rent, common areas, cleaning and care, safety, and community development.

Roles of BRIGHTSIDE Staff

Executive Director

Along with the Board of Directors, provides oversight, vision, and direction to BRIGHTSIDE.

Director of Operations

Oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Director of Finance and Administration

Oversees the organization's finances, audit and budgeting processes.

Tenant Relations Specialists

They are the first point of contact for tenants. Tenant Relations Specialists are responsible for tenant selection/renting suites, scheduling repairs, and annual income reviews, among other tasks.

Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable Clerks

They ensure that all bills are paid and that rent payments are processed in a timely manner.

Field Manager

Oversees work done by the field staff, and coordinates third party contractors.

Building Manager

Collects all the maintenance request forms, shows suites to prospective tenants, and provides access.

Field Technicians

Responsible for the repair and maintenance of BRIGHTSIDE buildings.

Cleaners

Clean the building's common areas.

Your Home

One of our Tenant Relations Specialists will let you know on which day you may move into your new home. Please contact BRIGHTSIDE in advance to arrange a time for your move in, so that the move can be properly scheduled. When you go to the building to pick up your keys, the building manager/site representative will complete a move-in inspection.

Keys

Once you meet with the building manager you will receive a key for your unit, the front door and the amenity room (if there is one) and your mail box. **You are not, for any reason, permitted to change or add locks in your unit as the building manager must be able to access your unit in case of an emergency.**

Parking

Parking is based on availability and if you choose to park your vehicle in a designated parking area there may be an additional monthly fee. Any vehicle parked in designated parking must have insurance.

Insurance

As per your tenancy agreement, you must purchase content insurance to protect your belongings in case of fire, theft, flood, earthquake or other damage. Make sure your policy includes liability and temporary relocation insurance. If you suffer a major event, such as a fire, and it is determined that you, a family member or guest are responsible, your liability insurance will cover the costs.

Utilities

If electricity or gas is not included in your rent, you must apply for it separately. Prior to moving in please contact BC Hydro at 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376) or Fortis BC at 1-888-224-2710 or online at fortisbc.com to activate these services in your new home.

Cable and Internet

Please contact BRIGHTSIDE's office for details on cable and internet offerings.

Pets

As per your tenancy agreement, we do not allow pets. If you are found in breach of this term you will be in violation of your agreement and will be given one week to find a new home for your pet.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted inside the building. This includes balconies and other common areas. Smoking outside the building at least 6 meters from any entry or exit is permitted.

Home Alterations and Decorations

No alterations are permitted without written approval. Alterations include painting, wallpapering, changing the flooring and installing a satellite dish or security system. Additionally, you are not permitted to make any structural changes to the unit or change the exterior of the building for any reason. If in doubt, submit a written inquiry to BRIGHTSIDE.

Tenants must submit a written request to BRIGHTSIDE and receive written approval before any work is done. Approval may be subject to certain conditions, such as the final work being inspected. BRIGHTSIDE reserves the right to withhold approval or remove any structure or additions that have not been approved, and associated costs will be at the tenant's expense.

Picture hooks, rather than nails, staples, or screws should be used to hang interior wall decorations. Under no circumstances should you attach anything to the roof or siding.

Storage

Storage guidelines to be aware of:

- Clear access to hot water tanks, electrical panels and attic hatches is necessary at all times.
- Attics or crawl spaces cannot be used for storage. These areas are for access purposes for repairs only.
- Tenants are required to follow municipal bylaws and/or fire department regulations for parking areas, storage areas and yards.
- **Flammable or dangerous materials must not be stored at or near the building.**
- **Furniture, appliances or equipment are not to be stored on balconies, patios, backyards, garages, carports or yards.**
- **Carports or parking stalls cannot be used for storage of any kind. Items stored in parking areas will be removed without further notice at the responsible tenants' cost.**
- Patios and balconies must not be used for storage, although the following may be on your patio and/or balcony:
 - Plants – A reasonable number of small planters are permitted. Planters must be raised one inch to allow airspace if sitting on anything other than concrete.
 - Outdoor furniture.

Guests

Guests are permitted for a maximum of 14 days in a calendar year. For longer stays please contact your Tenant Relations Specialist for written approval.

Maintenance and Repairs

Maintenance request forms, depending on your building, can be found next to the Building Manager's office, in the lobby, or next to a storage room. Once completed, the request form should be placed through the mail slot provided. Request forms are picked up Tuesday and Friday of every week. Please ensure your name, building and unit number, and phone number on the form. Maintenance requests are processed in priority sequence. If it is an emergency (i.e. water leaking) please call the maintenance emergency line at 1-888-622-6250.

Noise and Disturbances

You and your neighbours are entitled to privacy and quiet enjoyment of your homes. Please ensure that you, your household members and guests behave in a manner that does not have a negative effect on your neighbours. Please note that excessive noise and disturbances may lead to action against your tenancy.

Moving Out

When you decide to move out, you must provide BRIGHTSIDE with written notice no later than the last day of the month, one month before you plan to move (for example, by 4:30 p.m. on March 31 for an April 30 move out). A Notice of Intention to Vacate can be found on page 13 or can be picked up at the BRIGHTSIDE office. BRIGHTSIDE undertake a pre move out inspection of your unit, and will let you know what cleaning has to be done before moving out. You must leave the unit as clean as it was when you moved in. Except for normal wear and tear, any damage to your unit is your responsibility and the cost of repairs may be charged to you.

You must be moved out by 1 p.m. on the last day of the month. It is your responsibility to return all keys and fobs, and to sign the move-out inspection form before you leave. You may forfeit the return of your damage deposit by failing to attend the move-out inspection.

Transfers

BRIGHTSIDE receives many requests from tenants wishing to transfer to another suite or another building. Transfer requests will only be considered if the tenant provides one of the following reasons for a transfer request.

- A change to your household size or composition requires a different size unit (over-housed and under-housed tenants are required to move to an appropriately sized unit).
- You or a family member has a medical condition that would be stabilized or improved by a change of location. (Your physician must provide documentation that supports the need for a medical transfer.)
- You or a household member's well-being is at serious risk from trauma, violence, harassment or other undesirable consequences. (You will need to provide supporting documentation from the police or an appropriate social agency.)

As well, you must be in good standing and have no outstanding debts owing to BRIGHTSIDE. If you would like to transfer and are unsure of your eligibility, please contact BRIGHTSIDE who can advise you regarding your options. Keep in mind that BRIGHTSIDE has a low vacancy rate, and transfers are also subject to availability.

Conflicts and Complaints

If you are involved in a conflict with another tenant, try to resolve the issue with them before seeking help. If you are unable to resolve an issue as it relates to your tenancy, please provide BRIGHTSIDE with the details of your complaint in writing.

Note: Written complaints must be dated and signed and should state facts (who, what, when, where) rather than personal judgments, opinions or conclusions. Complaints must be submitted on the form found on page 14, and include all the required information in order to be considered and acted on.

Your Responsibilities

Among others, the following is a list of items that are tenant responsibilities:

- Changing burnt out lightbulbs.
- Replacing sink stoppers, chains, plugs.
- Covering the cost of replacing glazing or broken windows when due to negligence. BRIGHTSIDE will cover the cost if damage is due to vandalism from a third party and police reference number is provided.
- Repairing air conditioning units or appliances that have been installed by Tenants with BRIGHTSIDE's authorization.

Brightside

- Shutting down the water to mitigate damage when there is a leak in the suite. Shutoffs can be found under the sink, and behind toilets.
- Unblocking toilets.
- Keeping patio and balcony drains clean and clear of debris.

Rent

Rent is due on or before the 1st day of each month.

Payment Options

Cheque or Cash

Insert your cheque into our secure lock box located at the main office at 1025 West 13th Avenue, Vancouver. If you are paying by cash or would like a receipt, please attend the main office during regular business hours.

If your cheque is returned due to insufficient funds you will be charged a \$25 administration fee. **Do not leave cheques or cash in your building's mail slot.** BRIGHTSIDE will not be held responsible for lost cash or cheques.

Pre-Authorized Direct Debit

BRIGHTSIDE can automatically withdraw your rental payment from your bank on the first day of each month. The PAD sign-up form can be obtained at the BRIGHTSIDE head office. New tenants must still pay their deposit and first month's rent, by cheque or cash.

Rent Subsidies

If your rent is subsidized by BC Housing or directly by BRIGHTSIDE, your income will be reviewed annually. You will be required to submit specific documentation to confirm income during the annual income review. To prevent significant rent increases you must submit ALL requested documentation by the date provided.

SAFER

If you are 60 years or older you may be eligible for SAFER (Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters). SAFER is a BC Housing program that provides monthly cash subsidies for renters over 60 with low to moderate incomes.

Find the application online at bchousing.org/Options/Rental_market/SAFER or come to the BRIGHTSIDE office at 1025 W. 13th Ave to pick up an application. If you have any questions about this program, contact our office at 604-684-3515.

Common Areas

Amenity Rooms

If your building has an amenity room, and it locks, your front door key will open the lock. Please be respectful to others using this space and clean-up after yourself. Amenity rooms are provided for socializing, meeting, or relaxing and it is your responsibility to ensure safe and reasonable use by household members and guests. Under no circumstances should any furniture or household items be left in the amenity rooms.

Laundry Rooms

Buildings that have laundry rooms are available for use by tenants only. If your building has laundry facilities, your Building Manager can demonstrate how to use the machines. Please:

- Check for posted laundry room regulations. In some buildings, use of the laundry room is limited to specific hours.
- Clean around the drum and exterior of the washing machine after you've used it and remove the lint from the lint screen in the dryer after each use.
- Report washers or dryers that aren't working to BRIGHTSIDE.
- Further instructions are posted in the laundry room on the wall.

Snow Removal

BRIGHTSIDE is responsible for snow removal from the city sidewalk and interior common pathways once there is sufficient snow accumulation. It is your responsibility to shovel and sand the walkway and steps to your unit, if applicable. BRIGHTSIDE will also clear a roadway through parking areas when snow build-up warrants. Tenants are responsible for clearing snow around their vehicles, including any that may result from roadway plowing.

Please use a broom to remove snow from your balcony rather than a shovel, as shovels could damage the surface. If you have drains, we ask that you ensure they are clear at all times.

Garbage and Recycling

Remember the 3 R's – Reduce, Re-use & Recycle. Contact BRIGHTSIDE for information about garbage removal and recycling programs at your building. **Small appliances, computers, paint, oil and prescription drugs should not be put in the bins. Plastic bags, Styrofoam, paper cups, containers, and landscaping debris should never be placed in organics bins.** It is your responsibility to ensure safe and environmentally responsible disposal.

Furniture, mattresses, appliances and other large items may not be abandoned or dumped in or around the garbage bin areas, or anywhere on the property. Tenants found dumping will be charged removal costs for abandoned items.

When taking garbage to the bins, please ensure your garbage is not dripping any liquid on the floor. Make sure the garbage is in, not beside the bin. Bagged or loose garbage cannot be left outside your unit.

Cleaning and Care

Pest Control

Please report the first sign of pests in your unit to BRIGHTSIDE immediately. Pests include (but are not limited to) rodents, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, and bedbugs. Treatments will be scheduled to avoid further infestations.

You can reduce pests by:

- Keeping your dry goods (flours, cereals, sugars, etc.) in glass, metal or hard plastic containers with tight-fitting lids;
- Keeping your garbage, including recyclables, and food scraps in tight closing hard containers;
- Stuffing steel wool into holes around water pipes that can be found in the kitchen and bathroom;
- Taking out your garbage regularly and not allowing it to accumulate;
- Using rodent traps until the scheduled pest control arrives.

To avoid the spread of bedbugs, it is important that you do not bring any furniture or household items into your unit from the street or second hand stores. Should you discover bedbugs in your unit, notify BRIGHTSIDE immediately. They will give you further instructions on what is required to prepare your unit for effective treatment. If spraying or heat treatment is necessary, you will receive a notice that explains what must be done before any treatment can be completed. You are responsible for ensuring your unit is properly prepared for treatment. Failure to comply or provide access could result in termination of your tenancy.

Appliances

Most refrigerators are frost-free and do not need to be defrosted. If your fridge isn't, we suggest you clean and defrost it regularly to keep it in good condition. Never use knives or other sharp tools to scrape the ice off because they can damage the freezer and you will be financially responsible for the repair costs. Report problems to BRIGHTSIDE by completing a Maintenance Request Form.

Use a mild soapy solution to clean the smooth surfaces of appliances. Try using a paste made from baking soda and water on grease and dirt. Vinegar and baking soda are excellent for cleaning and better for the environment. Do not use harmful cleaning products such as bleach because they will damage the surfaces of your appliances.

Bathrooms

Please use a gentle non-abrasive cleaner on bathtubs, sinks and toilets. A rough cleaner will scratch the surface and make the fixtures harder to keep clean. Please ensure all tiles and surrounds are cleaned regularly.

Lighting

It is your responsibility to replace the light bulbs inside your suite.

Maintaining Indoor Air Quality

You play the most important role in maintaining healthy indoor air quality. Your family, indoor plants and aquariums play a role in producing moisture. Occupants can release anywhere from 10 to 50 liters of moisture a day into the air through routine activities like cooking, showering, bathing and doing laundry.

Bathrooms:

- Always use your bathroom fan when showering – leave on for 30 minutes after showering; consider letting it run for several hours each day (it will only cost 1 – 2 cents a day in electricity!).

Kitchens:

- Use the stove hood fan when cooking or boiling water and when using a rice cooker.
- Use pot lids to reduce humidity and save energy.

Thermostats

- Set thermostats between 15 and 23 degrees Celsius. Remember, during the fall, winter and spring seasons it is important to maintain a minimum of 15 degrees Celsius in each room to reduce the likelihood of mildew and mold growth.

Air circulation:

- Open all window drapes every morning.
- Clean all window tracks and ensure drainage holes are free to drain.
- Open bedroom doors during the day to improve circulation of warm air.
- Routinely crack open windows to bring in fresh air.

General:

- Never hang wet laundry inside to dry.
- Keep all furniture and boxes 1 inch away from exterior walls to allow warm air to circulate and keep walls warm. Do not pack closets with boxes.

These steps will improve interior air quality and reduce the likelihood of mildew and mold growth. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact BRIGHTSIDE.

Safety

Protect Yourself and Your Home

Do not let strangers follow you into the building as you enter. If your building has an intercom, ensure your guests use it when visiting you. When you receive a call on the intercom, be sure that you know the person before allowing them into the building.

Only let workers come into the building or your unit if you know they should be there (for example, if notices have been posted) and they have proper identification.

If you see strangers loitering around the building, please contact BRIGHTSIDE or the police directly.

If you observe suspected criminal activity, do not attempt to intervene. Phone the police immediately. If your safety or someone else's safety is at risk, call 911 immediately.

Be Prepared for an Emergency

Keep an emergency supply kit with a minimum five-day supply of water, food (especially foods that do not require cooking such as energy bars and crackers) and clothing. Also include a first-aid kit, flashlight, extra batteries, a portable battery-operated radio and any required medications.

You can be prepared for an earthquake ahead of time by:

- Knowing the safe places in your home. You are usually safest against an inside wall, under a strong table or desk and away from falling glass or objects.
- Knowing that dangerous areas are near windows, mirrors, hanging pictures or plants, tall furniture and ceiling fixtures.

If there is an earthquake and you are at home, you should:

- DROP to the ground;
- Take COVER by getting under a sturdy desk or table; and,
- HOLD ON to it until the shaking stops.
- Remain calm. After the shaking stops, wait 30 to 60 seconds before moving.
- Check yourself and your family for injuries.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions.
- Be aware of overhead dangers when you go outside.
- Assist neighbours wherever possible.

In the event of a major disaster it may take up to 72 hours to receive assistance.

Fire Safety

Here are some fire safety 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.
- Regularly recycle old newspapers as they are a fire hazard if you let them stack up.
- Make sure you know what to do in case of fire. If you live in an apartment building, you will find fire safety and evacuation information posted on each floor. You can also obtain fire safety information from BRIGHTSIDE.
- Make sure you know at least two ways out of the building in case one escape route is blocked by fire. Plan these escape routes with your household members and practice them regularly so everyone knows how to exit the building safely.
- If you hear a fire alarm, always leave the building right away. Follow your fire escape plan.
- If a fire occurs in your unit, evacuate to safety, activate the fire alarm, and call 911 for the fire department.
- Call BRIGHTSIDE if the smoke alarm in your home goes off frequently. We inspect the smoke alarm and test it regularly. Do not remove or disable it.
- By keeping your stove, oven and toaster clean so they don't smoke, you can help prevent setting your smoke alarm off. Also, use the exhaust fan when cooking to reduce the possibility of false alarms and never leave cooking food unattended.
- Advise BRIGHTSIDE immediately if you become aware of any fire hazards in your home or building, for example, accumulations of combustible materials, flammable liquids, or blocked exit routes.
- If you want to learn how to use a fire extinguisher, contact your local fire department.
- Do not prop open fire doors or disable automatic door closers, as you place both yourself and your neighbours in danger in the event of a fire.
- Do not overload power outlets or use damaged, old or frayed power cords. A power bar with a shut-off feature can protect your electrical appliances.

Community Development

Amenity Rooms

We encourage you to use the amenity room for community activities. Please keep it clean at all times so that it is welcoming for others to use. If you have any questions about using the amenity room and its availability, please contact the Building Manager.

Community Board

If your building has a community board, feel free to advertise clubs, programs, or events on these boards. Contact information for the building clubs and programs coordinators should be posted on this board.

Outdoor Space

If your building has outdoor space, remember that it is there for everyone to enjoy. Be welcoming to others who choose to enjoy the outdoor areas. Feel free to bring lawn chairs outside.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO VACATE

Date: _____

Please be advised that I / we will vacate Unit # _____ at _____
on or before _____, 20_____.

It is understood and agreed that if I/we vacate without one full calendar months' notice, I/we will pay one month's rent in lieu thereof or the amount pro-rated until BRIGHTSIDE is able to find a new Tenant.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

- B.C. Statute requires one full calendar months' notice, dating from the first day of the month, or rent in lieu thereof.
 - As noted on the Tenancy Agreement, the tenancy ends at **1:00 p.m.** on the last day of the month.
 - At the termination of the tenancy, it is the responsibility of the Tenant, or the Tenant's representative, to leave the apartment, stove, refrigerator, cupboards and closets in a state of cleanliness, satisfactory to the Building Manager or Field Technician undertaking the move-out inspection.
 - All carpets in the suite must be steam cleaned at the tenant's expense. It is possible to arrange this through the office by calling 604-684-3515.
 - If wall to wall carpeting, fly screening, curtain rods, drapery tracks, or plumbing fittings, such as shower units or handrails, are affixed by the Tenant, they become the property of BRIGHTSIDE, and shall not be removed at the termination of the tenancy.
 - Cablevision hook-up cords are the property of BRIGHTSIDE and shall not be removed at the termination of tenancy.
 - By signing this 'Notice of Intention to Vacate', the Tenant acknowledges that BRIGHTSIDE staff will access the above-noted unit to perform a pre-move out inspection within 72 hours.
 - Upon signing this 'Notice to Vacate' the tenant agrees that the suite may be shown to prospective tenants between this date and the move-out date between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, with 24 hours advance notice.
 - New address for security deposit refund:
-

BRIGHTSIDE TENANT COMPLAINT LETTER

Name: _____ Building: _____ Suite No: _____

Phone No. _____ E-mail: _____

Date of incident: _____ Time(s) of incident: _____

Unit subject of your complaint: _____

Details of Complaint: _____

If this complaint leads to a hearing with the Residential Tenancy Branch, do you authorise BRIGHTSIDE to use the details of this complaint as evidence? The details of the complaint will be sent as evidence to both the Residential Tenancy Branch and to the Tenant about whom the complaint letter is regarding. YES NO

If this complaint leads to a hearing with the Residential Tenancy Branch, do you authorise BRIGHTSIDE to release your name and/or unit number as evidence? This information will be included as evidence to both the Residential Tenancy Branch and to the Tenant about whom the complaint letter is regarding. YES NO

* Please note that contact information is not released under any circumstances, but failure to authorize the release of this complaint letter, will result in BRIGHTSIDE unable to take any action*

If you have not authorized the release of this letter or other information, please state the reason(s) why:

(Tenant's Signature)

(Date)