

## Frequently asked questions and answers.

### *When will my SAFER subsidy be effective?*

- If you are eligible, your subsidy will be effective the month we receive your application in our office. For example, if your application is received in our office on May 29, your application will be effective for the month of May.

### *How is the SAFER subsidy paid?*

- You have a choice of receiving your subsidy by cheque or by direct deposit to your bank account. Cheques are mailed during the last week of the month and direct deposits are made on the last working day of each month. We recommend direct deposit if possible.

### *Is there a minimum amount SAFER will pay me?*

- Yes, the minimum is \$1 per month. However, if your subsidy is less than \$10 per month, you will receive two payments per year. The first payment will be made six months after your birth month. The second payment will be made during the month prior to your birth month.

### *What happens if my income changes?*

- Please inform BC Housing immediately so that we can make any necessary changes to your file. This does not include cost of living increases to income such as CPP or OAS.

### *What happens if I move or my rent amount changes?*

- Please inform BC Housing immediately so that we can make the necessary changes to your file and adjust your SAFER subsidy accordingly.

### *How is the rent subsidy calculated when I pay room and board?*

- The SAFER subsidy does not cover board, cable, parking, laundry, or other personal services; therefore 50% of a room and board payment is considered the rent portion up to the maximum rent level.

### *May I apply for the SAFER rent subsidy if I am in a Long Term Care facility or in a residence that is subsidized through another government agency?*

- No. Seniors residing in a Long Term Care facility or in a residence that is subsidized through another government agency are not eligible for subsidy because they are already receiving rental assistance for their accommodation.

### *How will I know that my SAFER application has been approved?*

- BC Housing will contact you by mail.

### *Do I declare my SAFER subsidy on my annual income tax return?*

- No. SAFER is a non-taxable rent benefit.

### **Important:**

Please remember to immediately inform BC Housing of any changes in your address, rent, income, marital status, family size, or people sharing your accommodation.

By providing this information promptly, we can adjust your subsidy accordingly to avoid any possible overpayment.

### **For your information:**

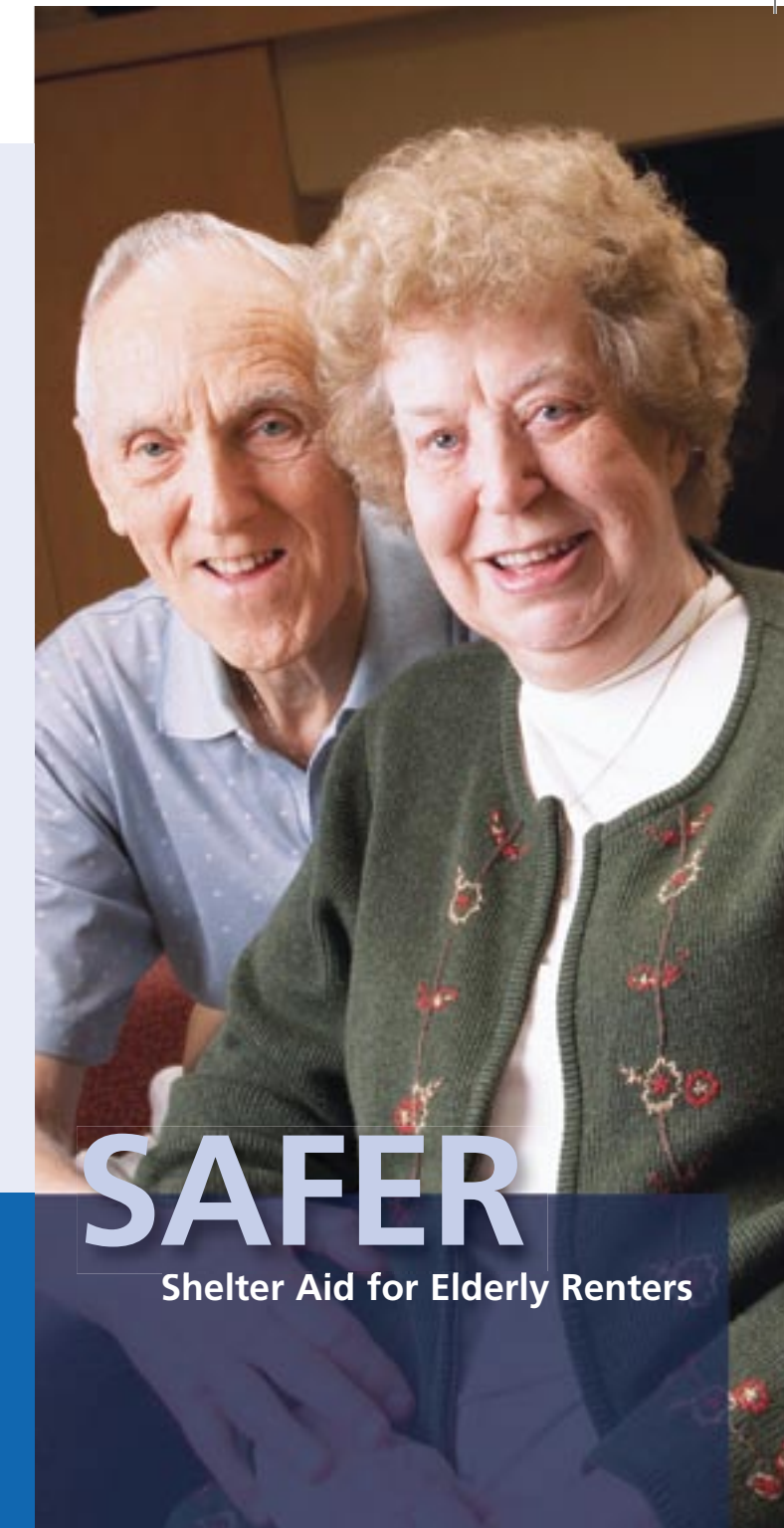
BC Housing will audit some recipients. If you apply and become a SAFER recipient, you may be contacted and asked to prove your eligibility.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act covers the collection and use of personal information in BC Housing's files.

For more information, contact:

**SAFER**  
BC Housing  
101 – 4555 Kingsway  
Burnaby, BC V5H 4V8

Lower Mainland:  
**604-433-2218**  
Elsewhere in BC:  
**1-800-257-7756**  
[www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org)



# SAFER

Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters



# What is SAFER?

The SAFER Program provides direct cash assistance to eligible residents of British Columbia who are age 60 or over and who pay rent for their homes.

## Offering BC Seniors More

Effective October 1, 2005, the Government of British Columbia doubled its funding for rent assistance under the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program. Rent ceilings have been increased across the entire province, and separate rent ceilings have been established for the higher average rents in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. The program has also been expanded to include seniors who pay pad rental fees for owner-occupied manufactured homes.

# Who is eligible?

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

- You pay rent for your home, or if you pay pad rental for a manufactured home (trailer) that you own and occupy.
- You are age 65 or over, and entitled to Old Age Security from the Government of Canada.

OR

- You are age 60 to 64 and are either a Canadian Citizen or a Landed Immigrant.
- You or your spouse (with whom you are living) have lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding your application.
- You have lived continuously in Canada for at least 10 years as an adult.
- You are paying more than 30% of your household gross monthly income towards the rent for your home or pad rental for a manufactured home.



You will not be eligible if any of the following are true:

- 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 family receive a subsidy from income assistance through the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, excluding the Medical Services Plan.
- You do not live in British Columbia.
- You have not lived in Canada for 10 continuous years as an adult.
- You have not lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding your application.
- Your gross monthly income exceeds the following:

	Greater Vancouver Regional District	Other Areas of the Province
Singles	\$ 2,333	\$ 2,033
Couples	\$ 2,517	\$ 2,217
Shared	\$ 1,625	\$ 1,625

## How is SAFER calculated?

SAFER gives the most subsidy to people with the least income. The program reimburses part of the difference between 30% of your total income and your rent. Regardless of your actual rent, SAFER will only consider amounts up to maximum rent levels. Before October 1, 2005, the maximum rent levels, province-wide, were \$520 for singles, \$575 for couples, and \$885 for people who share. The new maximum levels are:

	Greater Vancouver Regional District	Other Areas of the Province
Singles	\$ 700	\$ 610
Couples	\$ 755	\$ 665
Shared	\$ 975*	\$ 975*

\* Divided by the number of adults in the home.

If your actual rent is higher than the maximum rent level, you may still be eligible for subsidy.

Here are some examples of estimated SAFER subsidies for a single senior:

Greater Vancouver Regional District		
Annual Income	Monthly Rent	Subsidy
\$12,500	\$ 500	\$ 168.75
	\$ 700 +	\$ 348.75
\$15,000	\$ 500	\$ 101.51
	\$ 700 +	\$ 263.92

Other Areas of the Province		
Annual Income	Monthly Rent	Subsidy
\$12,500	\$ 410	\$ 87.75
	\$ 610 +	\$ 267.75
\$15,000	\$ 410	\$ 27.49
	\$ 610 +	\$ 184.57