

Abbotsford Housing Guide

Finding a safe home



ABBOTSFORD HOUSING GUIDE

COST OF RENTING

The cost of renting in the Fraser Valley varies depending on the rental suite's location, age, and condition. Use the table below as a guide to compare the typical costs of different rental options.

Type of accommodation	Average rent/month	Typical Rent
Shared accommodation	\$450	\$400-500
Bachelor Suite/Studio	\$650	\$500-800
One-bedroom apartment/basement suite	\$650	\$600-900
Two-bedroom apartment/basement suite	\$900	\$750-1,300
Three-bedroom apartment/ condo/townhouse	\$1,200	\$1,000-1,600

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Security Deposit

A security deposit (sometimes called a damage deposit) - usually equal to half a month's rent - may be required before you can move in. The deposit will be returned to you when you move out, if the apartment is clean and in good condition.

One-time Costs

- Furnishings
- Buying a home phone (optional)
- Phone, Internet & cable installation fee (optional)
- Setting up an account with BC Hydro (electricity company)

Additional Monthly Costs

In addition to rent, you may have to pay any of the following on a monthly basis:

Utilities (electricity, cable etc.)

- Cable television
- Telephone
- Internet
- Laundry
- Parking
- Food
- Tenant's insurance (optional)



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LOOKING FOR A PLACE

To search for an apartment in the Fraser Valley, look for apartment listings in newspapers, on campus notice boards, in online listings or through rental services. Always make sure you visit the unit in person to ensure you are satisfied with what you see. Since you will be living in the accommodation for the duration of your lease, you want make sure you will be happy! If your home affects your well-being, your studying will be affected as well.

WHERE TO LOOK?

Off Campus Housing 101 — Off-Campus Student Housing website, specifically for students!

UFV Off-Campus Postings

— Fraser Valley housing network specific to the UFV campus areas. Please note this website is a resource for UFV students but is not affiliated with the University.

Roommate Finder — Look for a roommate to share your off-campus accommodation, or connect with other students looking for a roommate.



Rent Seeker — A website which includes rental opportunities specific to students.

Rent BC — An easy to use site for rental housing search areas in BC.

Vivaliva — A website where you can learn about the neighbourhoods as well as the property.

BC Renters Hotline — Search rentals in the Fraser Valley.

BC Classifieds — Here you can check classified listings that are similar to what you would find in a local newspaper.

Craigslist — This is popular website for housing and other classifieds, free to read and post.

Kijiji - Another very popular free, local classifieds site.



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WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Total cost

- What does the rent include?
- Will you have to pay extra for heat, electricity, cable, laundry facilities, storage, or parking?
- Determine the average cost of utilities (electricity, hydro, etc)

Examine the unit carefully before you rent

- Is there proper ventilation?
- Do you have direct control over your heating?
- Do the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors work?
- Are there locks for security?
- Is there a window large enough to get out in case of fire
- Are there accessible and barrier-free fire escape routes?
- Is the space well –lit/clean/spacious and well heated?
- Do the appliances work? Check the fridge and turn on the stove
- Do the shower and taps work? Turn each one on
- How loud is traffic noise when the windows are open?
- Is the carpet clean? Ask the landlord if the carpet will be cleaned before you move in.

Are there any restrictions?

- Are you allowed to paint the walls?
- Are you allowed to hang things on the walls?
- Is smoking allowed?
- Is the place pet-friendly?
- Water damage (yellow stains on the walls and ceiling), mouse droppings, and cockroaches are very bad signs. Avoid renting suites that have these problems. Be sure to alert your landlord to these issues if they come up after you have moved in.
- Get references from other past and present tenants.
- Make sure you are comfortable with the neighborhood.
- Get your rental agreement in writing.
- Check with an insurance company to find insurance for your belongings.
- If you feel at all uncomfortable with the landlord - DO NOT RENT!
- You will be living in the accommodation for the rest of the time of your lease – will you be happy with that? If your home affects your well-being your studying will be affected as well.



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AFTER YOU'VE FOUND A PLACE

There are still important considerations to keep in mind once you've found a place. Make sure to get appropriate documentation for all agreements. Furnishing your unit, organizing utilities and obtaining the proper insurance are several things to think about during this process. Below are several important considerations to keep in mind. Make sure you know your rights as a tenant and resident.

DOCUMENTATION AND DEPOSITS

1. Get all the details of your rental agreement in writing. If you are signing a lease, make sure the details are included. A lease is typically one year (with opportunity for renewal), however, it can be for shorter or longer depending on what you both decide is best. Sometimes you can also have a month-to-month agreement which means you can both cancel at any time with at least 30 days written notice.
2. Take photos to document any existing damage or repairs needed before you move in. If the landlord says something will be repaired or cleaned before you move in, write this down in the agreement.
3. Make sure both you and your landlord have a copy of all the agreements you have signed. Make sure both you and your landlord have a copy of all the agreements you have signed. If you make any changes to the documents, both you and your landlord should initial next to each change.
4. Prove that you paid. Pay by cheque or money order, or get a receipt if you pay in cash.

FURNISHING YOUR APARTMENT

Furnished suites are available, but are more expensive. Most suites and apartments are unfurnished, so you'll need a bed, desk, kitchen table, and chairs. You'll find some good deals on furniture at the following places:

- Salvation Army Thrift Stores

- Value Village
- Classified ads in newspapers
- Craigslist
- Garage and yard sales
- Ads on campus

UTILITIES FOR YOUR APARTMENT

- Electricity - [BC Hydro](#)
- Cable TV - [Shaw Cable](#), [Telus Cable](#)
- Internet - [Shaw](#), or [TELUS](#)
- Telephone - [TELUS](#), [Shaw](#), or [Rogers](#)
- Cellular phones - [TELUS Mobility](#), [Bell](#), [Rogers Wireless](#), [Fido](#), or [Virgin Mobile](#), [Wind Mobile](#)

Note: some companies will offer student rates or special packages if you order more than one service

LAUNDRY FACILITIES

Rental suites often do not include laundry facilities. If this is the case for you, ask your landlord or a fellow tenant for the location of the nearest Laundromat, or look in the Yellow Pages. Although you can buy detergent at some Laundromats, you'll find it cheaper to bring your own. Most laundry machines take only quarters and [one-dollar coins](#).

TENANT INSURANCE

Some renters insure their accommodations and belongings against theft, fire, and other damage with renter's insurance. This is a good idea.



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ROOMMATE TIPS

Having roommates is very common in BC, particularly for students. This kind of arrangement has many benefits, and sharing expenses is only one of them!

Below you will find tips and resources that will help you make the most of living with roommates, and avoid any unfortunate surprises or disagreements.

GET TO KNOW YOUR (POTENTIAL) ROOMMATES

Regardless of whether you choose to live with good friends, acquaintances or complete strangers, sharing a living space presents unique challenges. Before making a commitment to share an apartment or house with someone, it's important to make an effort to understand their habits and routines. It will be a lot easier to live with another person if you get to know each other first.

ROOMMATE AGREEMENTS

Something to consider if you plan to live with a roommate is a roommate agreement. A roommate agreement is a written agreement between inhabitants of a living space, which is collectively agreed to be binding. This agreement enters all signatory parties into a contract with each other (the landlord does not take part), and is an important document to have in case of a legal dispute.

While this process may seem overly formal, especially if you already know your roommates, it can still be extremely useful. It may help by bringing up potential problems that have not already been considered, and possibly preventing them. In the event that a friendship between roommates deteriorates, this document could be vital to the resolution of issues regarding payment, maintenance, belongings, etc.

A roommate agreement can be as detailed or as general as you wish. Here is [an example of a sample roommate agreement](#) to be used as a guide for what issues should be included.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A TENANT

For information on leases, tenants' rights, or for help dealing with your landlord:

- Read the fact sheets on the [Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre](#) website
- Visit the [Residential Tenancy Office](#) website
- Contact [UFV International](#) for further support

