

Communicating with your Landlord



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As tenants, we cannot expect landlords to follow the law – we often need to hold them to it!

Landlords often take advantage of tenants not knowing their tenancy rights or not feeling empowered to enforce these rights.



There is power in numbers.

Taking collective action can be a powerful way to defend your rights and protect your home.

- Talk with your neighbours to see if they are experiencing similar issues. Often you will find you are not alone.
- Send a collective letter to your landlord outlining your requests and a timeline for them to fix it.

Knowing that multiple tenants are working together and are making the same demands will put additional pressure on your landlord.

Try these communication tips!

1. Reference relevant sections of the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA), the Residential Tenancy Regulation (RTR), and the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) Policy Guidelines in your communications with your landlord.
2. Use TRAC's template letters, found on our website, to communicate with your landlord about different topics.
3. Tell your landlord that you've consulted with TRAC or other legal advocates. Knowing that you've received legal advice and/or are in contact with an advocacy organization may persuade your landlord to comply with the RTA.

- Consider taking your story to the press. Sometimes public scrutiny will compel landlords to respect the law and treat their tenants better.
- Tenants can collectively hold their landlords accountable by forming or joining a tenants' union. Contact your local tenants' union to learn more.¹



Keep records of your communications!

- If you have a conversation with your landlord in person or over the phone, take written notes of the date, time, and discussion, and send a written summary to your landlord after the meeting or call is over.
- BC is a one-party consent province. This means you can legally record all conversations **that you are a part of**, without letting the other person know you are recording.²
- Email can only be used if it is listed in the tenancy agreement as a service method or if you and your landlord agree to it in writing. E.g. by signing RTB-51 "Address for Service".³

Your landlord cannot send you eviction or rent increase notices over text message or social media.⁴

- Remember that both you and your landlord can submit your communications as evidence during the RTB dispute resolution process.

If you feel your landlord is discriminating against you because of your identity, they may be in violation of the BC Human Rights Code. Contact the Human Rights Clinic at CLAS to learn more.



Are you worried about retaliation from your landlord for standing up for your rights?



Here are some things to know & ways to protect yourself!



The RTA prohibits landlords from punishing tenants who try to enforce their rights.

This means landlords cannot try to coerce, threaten, intimidate, or harass tenants – for example, by neglecting necessary repairs, threatening eviction, or illegally entering the rental unit.

Landlords who are guilty of retaliation can be fined up to \$5,000 by the RTB Compliance and Enforcement Unit.⁵

If you think your landlord is punishing you for standing up for your rights:

- ✓ Keep detailed notes of their behaviour.
- ✓ Submit a complaint at the RTB Compliance and Enforcement Unit.
- ✓ Join your local tenants' union.

For More Information

- 1 Check out the Vancouver Tenants Union, Surrey ACORN, New West Tenants Union, Victoria Tenants Union, Nelson Tenants Union.
- 2 See Section 184(2)(a) of the Criminal Code.
- 3 To learn about the various service methods and when they're needed, see RTB Policy Guideline 12.
- 4 Section 88 and 89 of the RTA explains correct service of general documents and special rules for certain documents.
- 5 See Section 95(2)b of the RTA for more information.

TRAC receives ongoing support from:

English



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada

This is general information that applies to British Columbia, Canada. TRAC cannot guarantee that it is current or complete. This fact sheet is not meant as legal advice for specific legal problems. Use at your own risk and consult a lawyer if you need legal advice. V1 July, 2025.