

NEWCOMER'S GUIDE TO CANADIAN HOUSING


How to find, rent or buy a home in Canada



According to the 2006 Census, an average of 240,000 newcomers arrive in Canada each year. As a result, roughly two-thirds of Canada's annual population growth now comes from net international migration. For many of these new arrivals, finding a safe, affordable place to live can be an immediate challenge, especially since housing in Canada varies greatly between provinces and territories, cities and communities. To help Canada's newcomers make the best housing decisions, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) offers the following tips on what to look for when buying or renting a new home:

- Decide how much you can afford, how many rooms you will need, where you'd like to live and what type of housing you prefer.
- If you are renting, find out what the rent includes. Remember that while the rent may be higher in central areas, these neighbourhoods also often offer greater access to work, shopping, recreation and public transportation.
- Use several different search methods to find your new home. Ask relatives or friends. Search the classified ads of ethnic, community or daily newspapers. Check bulletin boards in grocery stores, laundromats, libraries, thrift stores, health clinics, etc.
- Many non-governmental agencies can help you find a community where you'll feel comfortable. Make a list of neighbourhoods where you might like to live. Take into account the character of the community and the proximity to medical care, schools, shopping, places of worship and possibilities for work.
- If you're buying a home, make sure you have the right team of professionals. An appraiser and a home inspector will give you a better idea of the condition of a home and its worth. A lawyer (or notary in Quebec) will help protect your interests. If you need to arrange for a mortgage, you will need to find a lender or mortgage broker who can help you buy your home.
- Before you search for a home, learn more about the housing market and the latest price trends in the city or neighbourhood that interests you. Keep interest rates in mind. Figure out how much you can realistically afford and ask a lender or mortgage broker how large a mortgage loan you qualify for.
- Always check out a house or apartment as thoroughly as possible before committing. Make sure all plumbing, electrical and other systems are in good working order. Ask about utility, repair and other costs that you may have to pay in addition to the rent or mortgage.
- Know your rights and responsibilities as a tenant or home owner. Most cities and towns in Canada have bylaws that protect your rights and responsibilities.
- Try to remain positive and avoid being too choosy. If you're having difficulty finding a permanent place, consider a room that rents by the week or month while you keep looking. Don't feel rushed into renting an apartment or buying a home immediately.

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For more housing information, please contact Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
Website: www.cmhc.ca/newcomers

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