

CHECKING OUT A HOME OR APARTMENT



One of the first things most newcomers have to do when they arrive in Canada is find a place to live.

Many newcomers find that it can be a good idea to rent their first home. Renting gives you a safe and comfortable place to begin to build your new life in your adopted country. Plus, renting can give you the time to look for a place you might want to buy, without feeling pressured into making a quick decision.

To help you find a place that fits your needs and budget, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) offers the following tips on what to look for when checking out a rental home or apartment:

- Take a notebook with you so you can write down important points about each place you visit. This will make it easier for you to remember and compare different apartments later.
- Check the front door to make sure it locks properly.
- Turn on the oven and the stove, and open the refrigerator and freezer, to make sure they are all working properly.
- Turn on the taps in the kitchen and bathroom to make sure there is hot water, and flush the toilets to be sure they work.
- Make sure there is a shower or bathtub for bathing, and enough closet space for all your clothes.
- Ask how the heat works. This is especially important for basement apartments, which can sometimes be colder than above-ground apartments.
- If the place you are looking at is in an apartment building, find out if there are any common areas you will be sharing with other people who live in the building. These could include a shared laundry room, a pool, an exercise room or a storage area.
- Ask who is responsible for making repairs in the home, and whether or not the utilities (such as heat, cable TV or electricity) are included in the rent. If the utilities are not included, find out how much you will have to pay each month to heat and light your home.

Remember: don't feel rushed into taking the first apartment you see. Finding an apartment can take time. Make sure you look at several different places, and take your time making a decision. After all, the place you choose will be home for you and your family for months or even years to come.

For more housing information, please visit Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation at www.cmhc.ca/newcomers.