



COVID-19 and Rental Units in Strata Multi-unit Buildings

The majority of landlords in BC are private individuals or couples that have 1 – 3 rental units located primarily in urban centres and many of these landlords are renting out condos in strata buildings. This can present its own unique set of challenges to overcome. During the age of COVID-19 virus landlords of all kinds need, more than ever, to be aware of their rights and responsibilities to ensure they can respond to tenant concerns in a timely and informed manner.

LandlordBC has compiled some of the most important pieces of information for landlords of rental units located in strata buildings.

Communication

During this unique and unprecedented time, strata councils and strata managers will need to ensure they are taking quick action to keep residents safe. This may mean increased cleaning and closure of some common area facilities such as gyms and game room. While these are both important steps in attempting to limit the spread of this virus, it is important to communicate these changes to tenants. While communications to all residents generally comes from the strata manager, landlords should not rely on this to keep their tenant up to date on changes within the building. It is as simple as forwarding any relevant information and communications onto tenants.

Common Areas and Facilities

Even in strata buildings, landlords have a responsibility under the Residential Tenancy Act to provide and maintain a safe rental unit and residential property. This means maintaining reasonable cleanliness throughout common areas of the residential property. Landlords who have not heard from their strata manager or council are encouraged to check in to ensure appropriate steps are taken to increase the cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces in common areas and that non-essential facilities not conducive to proper social distancing practices are temporarily closed.

With the temporary closure of these common facilities, there is no requirement for landlords to reduce their tenants' rent. If, however, the strata council decides to permanently close these facilities, landlords will need to serve the appropriate form "Notice of Terminating or Restricting a Service or Facility" and reduce the rent by the value of this service.

Repairs and Maintenance

In a Ministerial Order, which came into effect March 30, 2020 and will be in place for the duration of the Provincial State of Emergency, for the time being landlords no longer have the right to enter a tenant's

unit unless they have asked for and obtained consent from their tenant. This also applies to units in strata buildings and landlords must be clear in their communications to strata manager and trades professionals that entry to a tenant's unit should only be for the emergency repairs.

This is especially important in cases where there may be a warranty claim or a home inspection; access to a tenant's suite is not an option at this time. In an effort to preserve their claim landlords may need to take photographs or ask their tenants to take photographs of the concern and then forward these images to the warranty provider.

Further information on COVID-19 and Strata Housing can be found [here](#).