

Questions and Answers

- From Landlords and Tenants

Here are some of the commonly asked questions from landlords and renters with pets. While we cannot provide legal advice, this should give you a good idea of what can happen - and how to prevent misunderstandings - with pet-friendly landlords.

Question: Can my landlord charge half a month's rent for each pet that I have?

Answer: A landlord is permitted to charge up to half of one month's rent despite the number of pets in your care. This is governed by the Residential Tenancy Act. At the time of vacancy, and provided your pet has not caused any damage within your apartment or suite, your landlord will reimburse your pet deposit along with interest. As this surety generates interest, many dog owners are willing to offer an amount equal to one month's rent as a pet deposit.

Question: I had an oral agreement with my landlord, and my new landlord wants me to get rid of my pet. She says she is suffering from allergies. Do I have any rights?

Answer: Be gracious and thank your new landlord for her information. Request a period of time to prove you can keep dander down in the dwelling. Your Vet or groomer can offer you great suggestions to manage reactions to blowing coats and dander. If you and your dog share a common entrance way with the landlord, arrange to use another entry, or slip a T-shirt over your dog to keep fur from falling in common areas. Pose these solutions to your landlord for consideration. If this is inadequate, plan to move. Everyone will be happier including your pet.

Question: I have no idea what vaccinations are required for dogs. Can you tell me more about vaccinations and which ones will protect other pets and people in my apartment block?

Answer: A vaccination schedule is recommended and strongly encouraged as this is the best way to protect a much loved pet and to prevent the spread of communicable disease. Here is the [Puppy Healthcare Recommendations](#) from our friends at Hillside Veterinary Hospital. Dog owners should discuss their and their dog's day to day living circumstances with trusted healthcare experts to help direct informed decisions regarding vaccines.

Question: I manage a complex that accepts dogs. A shift working tenant is complaining about a dog that is, apparently, "barking all day long". Can you offer a strategy and some options to deal with this complaint?

Answer: While it is not uncommon or unexpected for dogs to bark, excessive noise or habitual barking bylaws are in place to prevent high levels of ongoing anxiety boredom or frustration for individual dogs to ensure harmony within a neighbourhood.

If possible, tactfully discuss the problem with both tenants. Remind both tenants of the pet agreement signed prior to their moving in. Many people do not realize that their dog barks when they are not home or that it disturbs their neighbours. The

barking may be triggered by outside activity where the simple solution of drawing blinds may be effective or a television or radio on low may be enough to muffle outdoor sounds. Most dog owners react well to a reasonable, non-combative approach where creative solutions are discussed. This may avoid a defensive and uncooperative attitude developing out of an official visit from a Bylaw Enforcement Officer. If reasonable communication is not effective, you may wish to provide the complainant with a [barking log](#) that can be provided to Bylaw Enforcement; a copy of the barking log should also accompany your first warning.

Your question demonstrates why it is so important to have the terms and conditions of keeping a pet in writing.

Question: I heard that the condo owners can prohibit you from having a pet in Victoria. Is that true?

Answer: Most condominium complexes elect a governing body who meet to discuss and vote on guidelines or rules that will affect the entire building. The rules accepted often depend on who attends the meetings. To avoid restrictive rules, stay involved. That said, a condominium may be pet friendly but individual condo owners may choose to keep their rentable condo pet free or they may restrict the size, breed, and number of pets. As property owners, they have this right.

Question: Why should I buy personal and property insurance when I am only renting and my most valuable possession is my dog?

Answer: While everyone expects certain wear and tear over time, few can foresee an accident or oversight; ultimately, these can be extremely costly. Personal and property insurance is one way to guarantee any damage will be covered by a second party. Tenants can name the landlord as second insured on their personal or home insurance policy. This will help to prevent any cost recovery problems from unexpected property damage and boost confidence for the unsure landlord. Liability insurance will protect you from costly civil action should your dog cause injury. We also suggest tenants provide the landlord with a copy of the insurance policy to keep secure in your file in the event of fire or other disaster.

The Residential Tenancy Act and Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act supercede all agreements therefore it is important for landlords and tenants to learn about each other's rights and responsibilities before problems arise. For more information about this, visit the [Residential Tenancy Branch](#) website.

E-mail your comments and questions to us at info@citizencanine.org You may see your question posted here.



Dog Friendly Rental Program
Citizen Canine
Cook Street RO
PO Box 23078
Victoria BC CANADA V8V 4Z8