Verifying tenant information
Tips for residential landlords

This publication is intended to provide general information only and is not a substitute for legal advice.

Assessing the suitability of potential tenants

In order to help determine if applicants are likely to be responsible tenants, landlords can consider asking for the following:

- General information
- name, contact information, how they found out about the listing, etc., provided the questions are not discriminatory under the *Alberta Human Rights Act.*
- References
- Landlords can ask potential tenants to provide references from individuals who:know the potential tenant(s) (for questions about general nature or responsibility); orhave previously rented to the tenant(s) (for questions about rental and payment history).
- Occupants
- In some cases, the person or people applying for the rental may not be the only one(s) living on the premises. In this case, landlords can ask for the number of individuals and the names of those who would be living on the premises.

Additional information that can be requested

Human Rights

Within the framework of the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, landlords are able to request information from prospective tenants to help them make informed decisions. However, in some cases, there are limitations on the information that can be requested. For example:

Amount of income, not source of income
Landlords may ask applicants for information about the amount of income they earn, but should not ask about the source of income. Landlords cannot discriminate or deny tenancy applications based on the applicants' source(s) of income (e.g., income supports, rental subsidies, etc.).

Co-signors
Landlords may request co-signors or guarantors from any potential tenants. However, landlords are not permitted to routinely request co-signors or guarantors from any particular type of person (e.g., based on gender, ethnicity, or perceived source of income).

For more information regarding types of information that can be requested, visit the Alberta Human Rights Commission website at **www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/other/tenancy/Pages/what_to_know.aspx**.

Privacy

Within the framework of the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA), landlords are able to collect certain personal information from prospective tenants if it is necessary to make a decision about whether or not to rent to the tenants. Examples include:
- reasonable proof that a tenant is capable of paying rent; and
- contact information.

Landlords are invited to review the following page about PIPA to help understand their obligations when collecting and using tenant information, and as an additional resource in determining which questions can and cannot be asked: **www.oipc.ab.ca/resources/subjects/landlords-and-tenants.aspx**.

Alberta

Credit reporting

Landlords can request a credit report from a reporting agency about a prospective or existing tenant if they have a direct business requirement for the report, and express verifiable consent from that individual (e.g., in writing, by email, or by audio recording). To learn more about requesting credit reports, visit **open.alberta.ca/publications/your-credit-report**.

Court of Queen's Bench civil search

Members of the public can request a search of civil actions in Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, either by name of a party involved (individual or company) or by court action. A search by party name will produce a list of all actions for or against the named person or company. Search fees apply.

Searches can be requested online at **eservices.alberta.ca/court-of-qb-civil-search-request.html**.

Additional resources

Consumer Contact Centre
Edmonton and area: 780-427-4088
Toll-free in Alberta: 1-877-427-4088
www.alberta.ca/service-alberta.aspx

Residential landlords may also find it helpful to contact the following organizations for advice and guidance:

- Calgary Residential Rental Association: 403-265-6055, **www.crra.ca**
- Alberta Residential Landlord Association: 780-413-9773, **www.albertalandlord.org**
- Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta: **www.cplea.ca**

Alberta