



GREATER VICTORIA
HOUSING SOCIETY
Since 1956

TENANT CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 13

<https://greatervichousing.org/covid-19-resources>

September 23, 2020

WE ARE GOING TO MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION

Can you believe it's been 13 issues already? GVHS started this newsletter as a way to connect with you, our tenants, at the onset of the pandemic ~ 6 whole months ago. As we move forward, monthly distribution makes the most sense. Each issue will come out mid-month. Do you have any questions or suggestions? As always, we welcome your feedback and communication. Email us at info@greatervichousing.org or drop a paper note in your caretaker's mailbox.

ALL ABOUT SAFER THE RENTAL SUPPLEMENT FOR BC ELDERS



request a paper copy of the form.

Does GVHS manage the SAFER program? No, it is operated solely by BC Housing. Because of this, we are unable to answer any questions about your particular application. Please direct all inquiries to BC Housing at 1.800.257.7756.

Do I ever need to reapply for SAFER? Yes. Each year a reapplication form will be sent to you from BC Housing.

We receive a lot of inquiries about the SAFER supplement. In this latest edition of **Ask A Staff Member**, we're presenting answers to some common questions. Even if you already receive SAFER, now you can sound like an expert when your friends ask about it.

What is SAFER? The SAFER program, which stands for Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters, helps make rent affordable for low- to moderate-income BC seniors. If you're eligible, SAFER provides you with monthly payments to subsidize your rent.

Am I eligible for SAFER? You may be eligible, if you meet all of the following conditions:

- You are age 60 or older
- You have lived in BC for the 12 months immediately preceding your application
- You and your cohabiting spouse (if applicable) meet the Citizenship Requirements (contact BC Housing for more details)
- You pay more than 30% of your gross (before tax) monthly income towards rent.

Who is not eligible for SAFER?

- You are under 60
- You live in subsidized housing
- You or your family receive income assistance through the BC Employment and Assistance Act or the BC Persons with Disabilities Act (some exceptions may apply; please contact BC Housing directly for more info)
- You or your spouse (if applicable) are in Canada under a private sponsorship agreement that is still in effect
- You have not lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding your application
- You do not meet the Citizenship Requirements
- Your gross monthly income exceeds the limits set by BC Housing.

Can I still apply if I receive CPP and OAS/GIS? Yes.

I think I'm eligible! How do I get an application form?

- Online: <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/rental-assistance/SAFER>
- Mail: Call 1.800.257.7756 to re-

ing.

There's a portion for 'landlord signature' on the reapplication form – is that GVHS? Yes! For 'proof of rental amount', you may provide BC Housing a rental receipt, or have GVHS complete the 'landlord signature' portion of the form. Please submit this form through your caretaker's mailbox; do not come in to our office. It will be returned to you once it is complete.

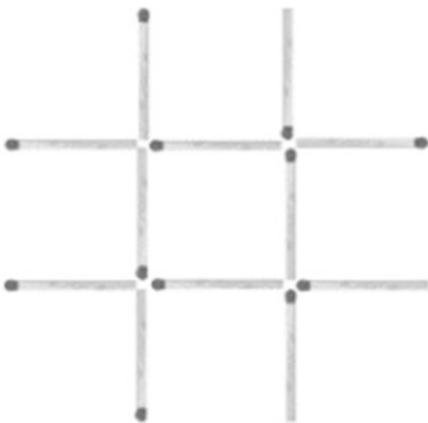
I received a rent increase, what do I do? Please forward a copy of the rent increase notice to BC Housing's SAFER office. Your file will be updated and subsidy adjusted.

My income has changed; do I need to let BC Housing know? Please inform BC Housing immediately so that they can make any necessary changes to your file. This does not include the cost of living increases to income such as CPP or OAS.

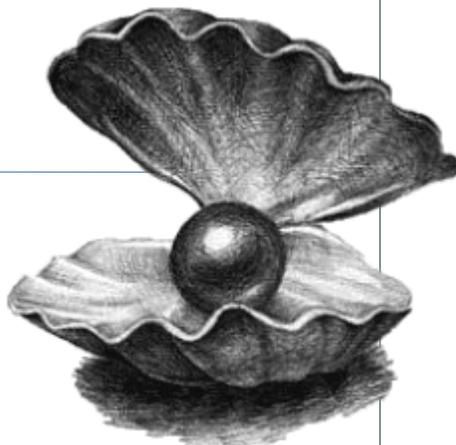
Do I declare my SAFER subsidy on my annual income tax return? No. SAFER is a non-taxable rent benefit. ♦

PUZZLE: MATCHSTICKS

Move 3 matchsticks to make 3 squares. Answers in next issue!



Last Issue's Answer



NATURE, IN DEPTH: PEARLS

Pearls are formed when a foreign object, such as a grain of sand, slips inside a mollusk's shell. This is understandably irritating – it's kind of like getting a splinter. The shellfish's natural reaction is to cover up the irritant, and so it forms a substance called *nacre*, the same material which makes its shell, and surrounds the object. Layers of nacre, also known as 'mother of pearl', are formed around the object over time. Voilà! A pearl is formed.

Given the rarity of naturally-formed pearls (only one of every 10,000 oysters will produce a natural pearl), most pearls today are cultivated by pearl farmers. The farmers, who tend oyster beds, embed a grain of sand in each oyster to start the process of pearl formation, and monitor the pearls for size and colour until they're ready to harvest.

The largest known pearl was discovered in a giant clam off the coast of the Phillipines in 1934: it weighs 14lb and measures more than 9 inches in length.

There are many type of pearls: saltwater (the most expensive), Akoya (the world's preeminent cultured pearl), South Sea or Tahitian pearls (the largest), and Keshi (natural seed pearls in vivid colours), to name a few.

Pearls come in different colours. The most familiar colours are white, cream, black, gray and silver. But the palette of pearl colours extends to every hue: they can be found in rose, green, purple or blue, and there are chocolate pearls and lavender pearls too! ♦

CANNED SOUP DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BORING (REALLY)

Soup is the ultimate cold weather meal. When there's no time to cook, or you'd really just rather be on the couch with a blanket, store-bought varieties are your best friend. Here are 9 ways to quickly transform pre-packaged soup into a seriously delicious meal. Your tastebuds will thank you.

1. **Spices:** Elevate soup's flavour in seconds with spices like red pepper flakes, smoked paprika, or cumin. If you're unfamiliar, start with small amounts and taste as you go. Try new flavours: grocery stores like Fairway often have very inexpensive spice blends in their world cuisine aisles.

2. **Veggies:** Add fresh or frozen vegetables like kale, peas or spinach. Or garnish with sautéed onions or garlic. Got any leftover veggies from past meals? Chop it up and throw it in! It's almost impossible to go wrong.

3. **Cheese?! Everything is better with cheese.** Stir in finely-grated parmesan or sprinkle with grated cheddar. Got a stale piece of bread? Rub it with garlic, top it with cheese, and let it bubble and crisp up under the broiler before tossing it in your soup. It's the ultimate crouton.

4. **Blend It:** Use a blender to instantly transform the texture of a chunky vegetable soup. Especially good for soups with starchy veg like potatoes: the creamy texture will be extra-comforting.

5. **Grains:** Add cooked rice, barley, or quinoa to make soups more filling.

6. **Herbs:** Use basil, thyme, rosemary, or sage – fresh or dried. These seasonings are especially good for chicken soups.

7. **Protein:** Slice or dice your leftover chicken, fish, sausage, or bacon into the pot. Don't want meat? Add a can of kidney beans, black beans, or chickpeas.

8. **Acidity:** A spoonful or two of lemon or lime juice will brighten up boring soup. No citrus? Add a dash of your favorite vinegar.

9. **Dairy:** A dollop of yogurt or sour cream on top adds a welcome tang. ♦

