


UNDERSTANDING “FOR RENT” ADS



Most daily and weekly newspapers in Canada have a Classified Advertising section, where they publish advertisements (or “ads”) for apartments and houses that are available to rent. To save space, many of those ads use special terms and abbreviations that can be confusing to anyone who does not know what they mean.

To help you make sense of rental ads, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) offers the following list of some of the most common Classified Ad terms and abbreviations:

- **A/C**—air conditioning, usually central air conditioning, which means that the air comes through the heating vents rather than through a unit that fits into a window.
- **apartment**—a self-contained unit with its own private entrance. Apartments can be in a house or in a lowrise or highrise apartment building.
- **appl**—appliances. All apartments must include a refrigerator and a stove. Some will also have other appliances such as a dishwasher or a clothes washer and dryer.
- **bachelor or studio**—an apartment that has just one room, which is used as both the bedroom and the living area, plus a separate bathroom.
- **basement**—an apartment in the basement of a house. Basement apartments are usually cheaper than aboveground apartments, but they can also be cold, damp and have less light. Avoid damp or moldy basements, especially if you have asthma.
- **BR or bdrm**—the number of separate bedrooms in the apartment. For example, a “2BR” or “2 bdrm” apartment is an apartment with two bedrooms. In Quebec, a “2 1/2 BR” or “2 1/2 bdrm” is a two-bedroom apartment with a private bathroom.
- **cable**—cable TV (or television) service. Cable TV offers better reception and more channels than TV received with an antenna. Some apartments include “free” cable TV as part of the monthly rent.
- **flat**—an apartment inside a house. A flat should have its own door that locks, but you will probably share the front entrance with other tenants.
- **furn**—a furnished apartment. A furnished apartment includes such things as a bed(s), furniture, curtains, fridge, stove and basic kitchen utensils. As a result, furnished apartments can be more expensive than unfurnished apartments. If you rent a furnished apartment, ask the landlord to clean the furniture and carpets before you move in.

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- **hrdwd**—hardwood floors. Hardwood floors can be healthier than carpets if you or anyone in your family has allergies or other breathing problems.
 - **junior one-bedroom**—an apartment that is larger than a bachelor apartment but smaller than a regular one-bedroom.
 - **NS or non-smkr**—an apartment that is only offered to tenants who don't smoke.
 - **prkg**—the number of parking spots that come with the apartment. For example, “1 prkg” means the apartment has one parking spot, “2 prkg” means two parking spots, and so on. The rent may or may not include the cost of the parking space.
 - **sq. ft.**—the size of the apartment, as measured in square feet. In most provinces, a 400 sq. ft. apartment is considered to be small, while a 2,000 sq. ft. home is fairly large. To convert square feet to square metres, multiply the number by 0.09. For instance, a 2,000 sq. ft. apartment is $(2,000 \times 0.09) = 180$ square metres.
 - **util**—the utilities you will need for your home. These include: electricity for the lights, stove and microwave; gas, oil or electricity for heat; cable TV; telephone or Internet service; and water. Some apartments include the cost of some or all of the utilities in the monthly rent. With others, you may have to arrange and pay for utilities yourself. If an ad gives the rent followed by a plus sign (e.g. \$695+), it means you will pay for the utilities on top of the monthly rent.
 - **w/o**—a walk-out door to a deck or balcony, usually off the kitchen.

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