

British Columbia

Newcomers' Guide

**to Resources and Services
Dawson Creek Edition**



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British Columbia
Newcomers' Guide
to Resources and Services

Dawson Creek Edition
2013



Please note

2013 Dawson Creek Edition: The information in this guide is up-to-date at the time of printing. Names, addresses and telephone numbers may change, and publications go out of print, without notice. For more up-to-date information, please visit: www.WelcomeBC.ca

This guide has been written using the Canadian Language Benchmark 4 (CLB 4) level to meet the needs of non-English speaking newcomers.

To order copies of the *British Columbia Newcomers Guide*

The *B.C. Newcomers' Guide* is available in a web version at: www.WelcomeBC.ca Print copies of the provincial edition book are available free of charge while quantities last. The provincial edition is also available in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Farsi (Persian), French, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

You can order copies of the provincial edition by filling in the resource order form at: www.WelcomeBC.ca You can also request copies by telephone, fax, or e-mail. Please include your contact name, address, postal code, and phone number with "B.C. Newcomers' Guide - English #7550001438" in the subject line.

Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
5th Floor – 605 Robson Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5J3
Telephone: 604 660-2203
E-mail: DCVCustomerSer@gov.bc.ca

Credits

Illustrations: Gillian Ruemke-Douglas and Nola Johnston
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WelcomeBC



Welcome to British Columbia!

Every year we welcome more than 40,000 new immigrants to beautiful British Columbia, a place where newcomers from around the world are choosing to live, work and raise their families.

In B.C. we are putting families first, and part of our job is to ensure that you feel at home and have access to the resources and services you need to thrive in our province.

To help you in your journey, we are happy to offer you the *2013 British Columbia Newcomers' Guide, Dawson Creek Edition*. Previous editions of this guide have helped many new immigrants over the years, and I know it will help you and your family find the information and services you need so that you can confidently settle in your new home – British Columbia.

Inside this guide you'll find important information about topics such as housing, banking, health care, education, driving, employment and business, the legal system, government, citizenship and much more.

Immigrants play an important role in British Columbia, and I am thrilled to welcome you to our province. I wish you well in your journey to settle and adapt to your new life.

Thank you for choosing British Columbia as your new home.

Honourable Pat Bell
Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training



Welcome to Dawson Creek.

Dawson Creek continues to shine as one of the best places in British Columbia to live, raise a family, work and invest. We are moving forward in such a positive way, gaining national recognition for the quality of life we offer our citizens.

Our economy is situated to continually grow for years to come, which will have even more wanting to make this great community home.

There is always something to do in Dawson Creek for all ages, and we continue to ensure that we put forward programs and investment that offer healthy lifestyle opportunities for everyone.

On behalf of Council, I wish to extend a heartfelt welcome to everyone visiting our community, and I am confident that you will quickly feel part of our City and discover why we are proud to call Dawson Creek home.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Mike Bernier".

Mayor Mike Bernier

Table of Contents



Welcome to Dawson Creek, British Columbia 1



About British Columbia and Dawson Creek 3



Chapter 1: Arriving in B.C. and the First Few Days 10



Chapter 2: Finding a Place to Live 24



Chapter 3: Money and Banking 35



Chapter 4: Health Care 41



Chapter 5: Education 49



Chapter 6: Help for Individuals and Families 59



Chapter 7: Cars and Driving 70

Table of Contents



Chapter 8: Employment and Business

80



Chapter 9: The Legal System

92



Chapter 10: Government and Citizenship

99



Chapter 11: Community, Culture and Sports

107



Chapter 12: Environment

112

Abbreviations and acronyms

118

Index

119

Questionnaire

123

Welcome to British Columbia



Note:

Some of the information—for example, names, telephone numbers and addresses—may have changed since this guide was published.

All websites are in English. Some may also be in other languages.

Please refer to the map of British Columbia at the back of this guide for the city, town or region names in English.

Welcome to Dawson Creek, British Columbia (B.C.). Many people have come to B.C. from all over the world. They have settled and made new lives here. Newcomers have been very important in B.C.'s history, growth and development.

Using the *B.C. Newcomers' Guide*

The *British Columbia Newcomers' Guide, Dawson Creek Edition* has information that will help you settle in B.C. in the first few months after you arrive. Each chapter provides information and the names of agencies and services to help you settle in B.C. Look for chapter headings, such as Finding a Place to Live, Health Care, and Employment and Business. At the end of most chapters there is a list of agencies where you can get help or more information. Look in the index at the end of the guide to help you find specific information.

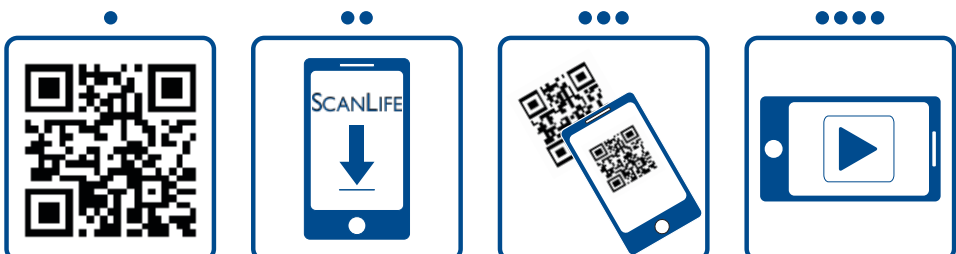


Newcomers' Guide Videos

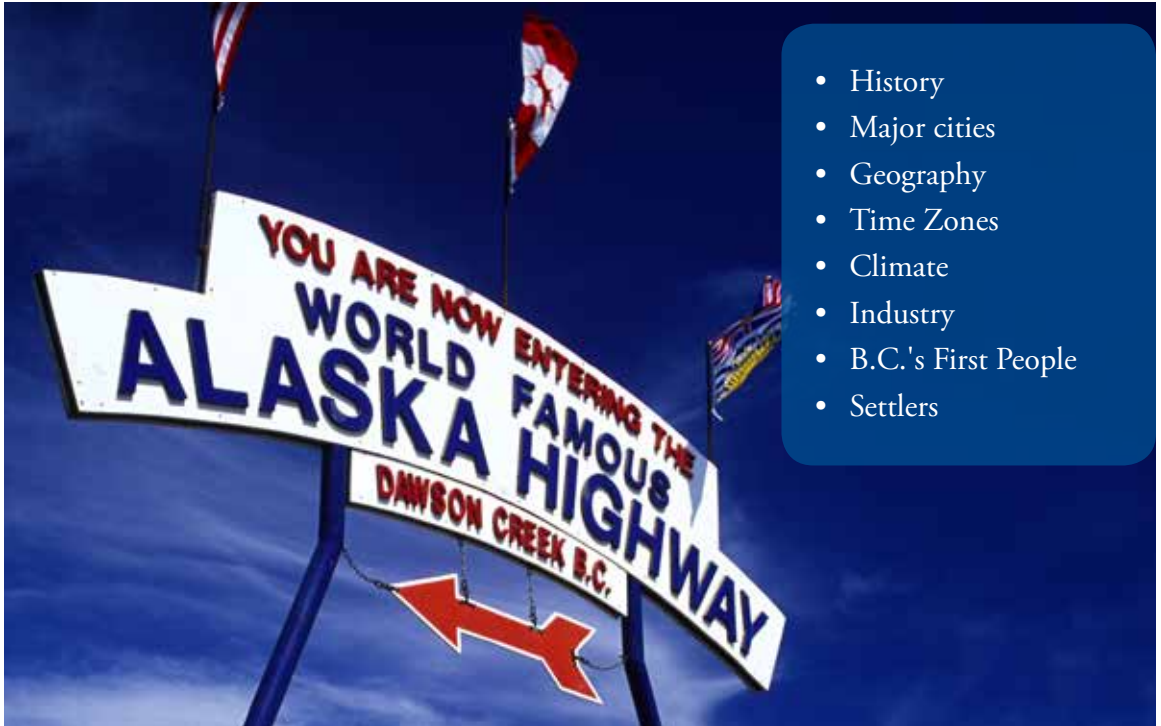
Newcomers' Guide videos are now available online through the WelcomeBC website. These videos have more information on some of the topics covered in this guide. The videos are available in 11 different languages. To view the videos online, go to www.WelcomeBC.ca or scan the Quick Response (QR) codes to view them on your smartphone. Learn more about QR codes below.



Throughout the guide, you will see symbols like this one next to some topics. These are QR codes that you can scan with your smartphone using software such as ScanLife. When you scan a QR code, it will play the Newcomers' Guide video for that topic on your smartphone. If you do not have a QR code reader on your smartphone, go to www.getscanlife.com from your mobile browser to download the free application. Standard data usage rates apply.



About British Columbia and Dawson Creek



- History
- Major cities
- Geography
- Time Zones
- Climate
- Industry
- B.C.'s First People
- Settlers

Canada has about 34 million people. About 4.5 million people live in British Columbia (B.C.). Most British Columbians live in the southern part of the province.

Canada has two official languages: English and French. In B.C. most people speak English.

B.C. is one of Canada's ten provinces. It is a very large province—larger than many countries in the world. For example, it is four times larger than Great Britain.

B.C. is on the west coast of Canada. It is between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. It has many mountains, rivers, lakes and forests.

Dawson Creek is in the northeast of British Columbia.

Major cities

Metro Vancouver is the biggest city in British Columbia, and the third largest city in Canada. More than two million people live here.

Victoria is the capital city of B.C. It is on Vancouver Island. About 375,000 people live in and around Victoria, and the B.C. government meets here.

Prince George is the largest city in northern British Columbia. It provides services to Northern B.C. About 83,000 people live in Prince George.



Other cities in British Columbia:

- Kelowna is in the interior of the province. It is on Okanagan Lake, and is at the centre of a large fruit-growing and wine-producing area.
- Penticton and Vernon are also in the Okanagan Valley.
- Kamloops is in the Interior of B.C.
- Nanaimo is on Vancouver Island.
- Fort St. John is in Northern B.C.
- Cranbrook is in Eastern B.C.

About British Columbia and Dawson Creek

Geography

British Columbia is on the West Coast of Canada, between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

It is a land of mountains, rivers, forests, islands and coastlines. The Rocky Mountains are in the eastern part of the province. The Coast Mountains are near the Pacific Ocean. Forests cover most of the province. Much of British Columbia is wild country.



There are not many roads and towns in Northern B.C., and people must drive long distances from one town to another. Most British Columbians live in the southern part of the province, close to the United States border.

The area around Vancouver, south toward the U.S. border, and east toward the town of Hope, is called Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, or the Lower Mainland. More than 2 million people—half the population of the province—live here.

Dawson Creek is in northeast British Columbia in an area known as Peace River Country near the Alberta border. The soil is fertile and farming is important to the region.

About 12,000 people live in Dawson Creek.



British Columbia's Provincial Flower

British Columbia has its own flag. The Pacific Dogwood is B.C.'s provincial flower.



Time Zones

Dawson Creek is in a different time zone from most of British Columbia. It is in the Mountain Time Zone, which means during the winter months the time is one hour ahead of the rest of British Columbia. In the spring, when most of British Columbia moves its clocks to Pacific Daylight Time, the time in Dawson Creek stays the same.

Most of B.C. is in the Pacific Time Zone and on daylight saving time (DST) in the spring and summer. In areas on DST, people turn their clocks back one hour in November. In March, they turn their clocks forward one hour.

Climate

British Columbia has four seasons:

Winter (December to February)



Spring (March to May)



Summer (June to August)



Fall (September to November)

The climate varies in different parts of B.C. The coast has a mild climate all year around. Summers on the coast are warm and winters are rainy and mild. The interior, or central area of the province, is usually cold and snowy in the winter and the summers are hot and sunny. In the north, winters are long and cold with lots of snow, and summers are short.

Dawson Creek has four seasons with warm summers, and winters that can be extremely cold. There are occasional heavy rain showers in the summer months and there is a lot of snow in winter.

In January, the temperature can go to -21°C or colder. In July the temperature warms to 22°C.

About British Columbia and Dawson Creek

Preparing for winter

Winters along the coast are usually very rainy. You will need an umbrella, raincoat, and rain boots. In the interior and northern regions, winters can be very cold. It is important to wear warm winter clothing when you are outside. Most people wear thick coats or jackets, scarves, hats, and gloves or mittens. If it is snowing, boots will keep your feet warm and dry. Many people wear boots outside and take shoes to wear indoors at work or school.

On very cold days, some people wear long underwear under their clothes. This special underwear is made from warm materials.

Children usually feel cold more. It is important to dress children warmly in winter.

Industry

Service industries make up three quarters of B.C.'s economy. They include finance (banks, credit unions, trust companies, and mortgage companies), insurance, real estate, transportation (trucks, buses, taxis), retail and wholesale trade, tourism, and health services (nurses, doctors, technicians).

Forestry, construction, mining, fishing, and farming are also very important.

Four highways lead to Dawson Creek, and it is a transportation centre for northeastern B.C. It is the starting point—Mile Zero—for the famous Alaska Highway and the main shopping and service centre for the area.



The economy in Dawson Creek is very strong with oil, gas, and energy companies investing in the region. The area also has a strong agricultural history with nearly 600 farms.

B.C.'s first people

Aboriginal people have lived for thousands of years in the area that is now called British Columbia. Today, about 200,000 Aboriginal people live in B.C. About five percent of people in B.C. are Aboriginal.

There are three main groups of Aboriginal people in Canada: First Nations, Métis and Inuit. They have many different cultures, languages, and traditions. Sixty percent of



First Nations languages in Canada are found in B.C. British Columbia has 32 languages and 59 dialects.



Métis are people of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry. Culture and history are important parts of being Métis. Their language is Michif. Inuit people live in northern Canada. They speak Inuktitut.

Before people came here from Europe, Aboriginal people had their own societies, cultures, lands, and laws. In the past, the federal and provincial governments tried to change the way of life of Aboriginal people. For example, children were taken away to schools, and were not allowed to see their families or speak their own language. Now Aboriginal people live in cities, towns and in their own communities. Aboriginal people and the governments of B.C. and Canada are working to make treaties (agreements) to keep Aboriginal rights and lands, and to improve education and health in their communities.

Many names of places in B.C. are named after Aboriginal words, for example: Nanaimo, Tsawwassen, Sooke, Esquimalt, Kamloops, and Chilliwack. The name of the country, Canada, is Aboriginal in origin. “Canada” is from the word “kanata” which in Huron-Iroquois language means “village” or “settlement”.

For thousands of years, the Beaver and Cree people lived in the northeast of British Columbia. At the turn of the 20th century, First Nations bands signed on to Treaty 8. The traditional territories of these bands include the area around Dawson Creek.

The nearest Treaty 8 First Nations communities to Dawson Creek are the Doig River, Blueberry River, Halfway River, West Moberly and Saulneau First Nations.

The Beaver language

- “Je aa haanach’e” means “How are you?”
- “Wuujo haasch’e” means “I am fine.”
- “Wuujo assana laa” means “Thank you.”

Settlers

British and Spanish explorers came to the Pacific coast in the 1700s. The British explorer George Vancouver arrived in 1792. Vancouver Island and the city of Vancouver are named after him. Other European explorers came to the Pacific coast by river and on land. One of these early explorers was Simon Fraser. The Fraser River is named after him. People found gold along the Fraser River in 1857. Thousands of people came to B.C. to look for gold.

About British Columbia and Dawson Creek

In 1867, the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia joined together to form Canada. British Columbia joined Canada in 1871. At that time, it was estimated that about 36,000 people lived in B.C. There were many more Aboriginal people than newcomers.

Dawson Creek is named for George Mercer Dawson, who explored the area for the Geological Survey of Canada in 1879. The first farm was established in 1907.

Dawson Creek became an economic centre in the 1940s, when the American and Canadian governments agreed to build a road to Alaska that began in Dawson Creek. The construction of the Alaska Highway turned Dawson Creek into a boomtown.

Between 1880 and 1885, workers built the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) across Canada. The CPR joined the country from east to west.

Since 1885, B.C. has grown quickly. In the last 100 years, people from all over the world have come here to live. In 2012, the population of B.C. was about 4.6 million.

Where to go for information

To get more information about British Columbia:

- Go to the B.C. government website:
www.WelcomeBC.ca
- Ask at your local library for books and maps of B.C.
- Contact Service BC:
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html
- For statistics about B.C.:
www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca
- For tourist information:
www.hellobc.com

To get more information about the history of Dawson Creek and the Peace region visit:

- www.dawsoncreek.ca/visitors/history/
- www.calverley.ca

Chapter 1: Arriving in B.C. and the First Few Days



- Arriving in B.C.
- Help for newcomers
- To-do checklist
- Emergencies
- Safety tips
- Money
- Metric and imperial measurements
- Shopping
- Social customs
- Telephones and Internet
- Post office
- Transportation



Refugee claimants

Refugee claimants are people who live in Canada, but are waiting for a decision by the government to make them permanent residents. They are not eligible for all government benefits and programs for newcomers. For example, some refugee claimants may not have regular medical insurance (MSP). For more information, see Chapter 4. Refugee claimants can apply for a work permit and income assistance. Contact your local immigrant settlement agency. They can help you apply for government services.

The Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) may provide temporary health insurance to refugees, protected persons, and refugee claimants and their dependants until they are eligible for provincial or territorial or private health plan coverage. Resettled refugees who already have provincial or territorial health insurance may receive extra health coverage through the IFHP for one year from the date they arrive in Canada. This includes emergency dental, vision, and pharmaceutical care. Coverage may be extended for people with special needs.

For more information, visit: www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5568ETOC.asp

Help for newcomers at the airport

Most people immigrating to Canada and settling in British Columbia arrive at Vancouver International Airport. The Community Airport Newcomers Network (CANN) welcomes immigrants and refugees who arrive at the Vancouver International Airport. The service is located in the Immigration Landing Room at the airport's International Arrival area. CANN provides orientation and information for newcomers in more than 20 languages.

Community Airport Newcomers Network
Tel: 604 270-0077
E-mail: cann@success.bc.ca
www.success.bc.ca/cann



Visiting Vancouver

You might decide to visit Vancouver when you first arrive in British Columbia. More than 2 million people live in the Vancouver area, more than half the people in the province.

Most of British Columbia's immigrants settle in Vancouver and the metropolitan area. There are many ethnic communities to explore, including Chinatown, the Punjabi Market and markets in Richmond, a suburb of Vancouver.

Visitors to Vancouver enjoy shopping, scenery and outdoor activities like golf, sailing, cycling, hiking, skiing and running.

Travelling to Dawson Creek

It takes about two hours to fly from Vancouver. If you take a bus, it will cost about \$220 and will take about 28 hours. If you drive a car, it will take about 13 hours, depending on traffic and road conditions.

When you get to Dawson Creek, you may have to change the time on your watch. Most of B.C. is in the Pacific Time Zone but Dawson Creek is in the Mountain Time Zone. That means that in fall and winter months, it is always an hour later in Dawson Creek than it is in Vancouver.

Where to stay when you arrive

When you arrive in Dawson Creek, you will need a place to stay. Many newcomers stay with relatives or friends when they first arrive. If you do not have friends or relatives in Dawson Creek, you can stay in a hotel or motel until you find a home.

You can look in the telephone book's yellow pages, under Hostels, Hotels and Motels.

The Dawson Creek Literacy Society can also help you find a place to stay. Call 250 782-4211.



Ask the Expert

Do you have questions about living, working, or settling in B.C.?

Contact WelcomeBC's Ask the Expert. This service is FREE from the Government of British Columbia.

Visit: www.WelcomeBC.ca and click on "Ask the Expert"



Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR)

Government-assisted refugees are permanent residents.

They get financial help from Citizenship and Immigration Canada under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). RAP helps with housing, food, clothing, health care, and access to provincial and federal programs. For more information, contact B.C.'s local immigrant settlement agency, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia – Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) at 604 684-7498 in Vancouver, or call the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Call Centre at: 1 888 242-2100. Website: www.cic.gc.ca

For more information on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Call Centre, see Chapter 10.

Chapter 1: Arriving in B.C. and the First Few Days

Agencies to help newcomers

Immigrant settlement agencies give free help to newcomers. Most of these agencies have interpreters and settlement workers. They can help newcomers look for housing, jobs, and English classes. They may also do translations. These agencies may help with immigration problems.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Translation and interpreting services

The Dawson Creek Literacy Society can help you find interpreters and translators.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Contact the Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia at 604 684-2940 or visit the website: www.stibc.org. You can also look in the yellow pages, under Translators and Interpreters. These companies charge a fee.

Checklist of things to do right away

- ☐ Contact the Dawson Creek Literacy Society for information about your community, jobs, finding a place to live, and language training.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
E-mail: dawcrls@gmail.com
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

- ☐ Apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN). (See Chapter 8.)
- ☐ Register for the Medical Services Plan (MSP). You will not have MSP for up to three months. Make sure you buy private medical insurance for that time. (See Chapter 4.)
- ☐ Open a bank account. (See Chapter 3.)
- ☐ Find a place to live. Buy insurance for your home and belongings. (See Chapter 2.)
- ☐ Apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit for children under 18 years old. (See Chapter 3.)
- ☐ Register children for school. (See Chapter 5.)
- ☐ Apply for a B.C. driver's licence. (See Chapter 7.)
- ☐ Register for English classes. (See Chapter 5.)



Names

When you fill in forms for the government, jobs, schools, and other agencies, make sure your name is exactly the same as on your passport and other official documents.



9-1-1 Tips

- When the 9-1-1 call-taker answers, say which emergency service you need: fire, police, or ambulance.
- Know your location (where you are calling from). Tell the call-taker the city, your address, the cross streets, or other landmarks—for example: a gas station, school, or store.
- Learn directions—north, south, east, and west, from where you are.
- If you call 9-1-1 by mistake, do not hang up. Stay on the line and tell them you do not need help. If you hang up, they will not know if you are okay and may send the police.
- Do not program your phone to dial 9-1-1 automatically.
- Teach your children how to make a 9-1-1 call and what to say.



Emergencies



In Dawson Creek, the emergency phone number for fire, police, and ambulance is 9-1-1. The 9-1-1 call is free, even from a pay phone. You can ask for help in your own language if you do not speak English. Learn to say the name of your language in English.

Personal safety

In some places, especially large cities, there are many crimes. Be careful to protect yourself and your belongings. Criminals sometimes use other people's personal information for crimes. This is called identity theft. Keep important documents and information—such as your passport, Social Insurance Number, credit cards, and bank account number—in a safe place.

Lock your home, car, or bicycle. Do not leave extra keys outside. Do not leave valuable things where someone can see them and steal them.

Chapter 1: Arriving in B.C. and the First Few Days

Canadian money

Money is also called cash—coins and bills. There are 100 cents in one dollar. Common bills (paper money) are \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100. Coins used in Canada are:



- penny = 1 cent (\$0.01)
- nickel = 5 cents (\$0.05)
- dime = 10 cents (\$0.10)
- quarter = 25 cents (\$0.25)
- loonie = 1 dollar (\$1.00)
- toonie = two dollars (\$2.00)



The Canadian Government stopped making pennies (1 cent, \$0.01) in May 2012, but they are still recognized as cash. Stores will “round up” the cost of the item to the nearest five cents.

- If something costs \$1.01 or \$1.02, you will pay \$1.00
- If something costs \$1.06 or \$1.07, you will pay \$1.05
- If something costs \$1.03 or \$1.04, you will pay \$1.05
- If something costs \$1.08 or \$1.09, you will pay \$1.10

Many people do not like to carry large bills—\$50 and \$100. Some stores and restaurants do not take large bills.

Metric and imperial measure

Canada’s official system is metric. People in Canada use both metric and imperial measurements, such as kilogram (kg) and pound (lb). Some stores have prices marked in both systems, and others use just one system. Distances and speed limits on roads are in kilometres (km) and gas is measured in litres (l). Canadians measure temperature in degrees Celsius (C).



Shopping

Most stores open around 9 a.m. or 10 a.m. and close by 6 p.m. Some stores may be open late in the evening. Many stores are closed on Sundays, but most grocery stores and department stores are open. People do not bargain for a lower price in stores that sell new products.

Most stores open around 9 a.m. or 10 a.m. and close by 6 p.m. Some stores may be open late in the evening. Many stores are closed on Sundays, but most grocery stores and department



stores are open. People do not bargain for a lower price in stores that sell new products.

There is a Farmer's Market in Dawson Creek every Saturday morning from May to October at the Co-op Mall parking lot, 10200 8th Street. The Farmer's Market is a great place to buy fresh vegetables and fruits and to meet people.

You will usually pay a 7% Provincial Sales Tax (PST) and a 5% federal Goods and Services Tax (GST) on most products and services you buy.

For information about the PST, visit the website at: www.gov.bc.ca/pst

For information about the GST, visit the website at: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/gst-tps/gnrl/hw-eng.html

Refunds and exchanges

If you buy something and later you decide you do not want it, you may be able to return or exchange the item. Stores do not have to take things back, but some stores will return your money or exchange items. Always keep your receipt and find out the rules about exchanges and refunds. Not all stores have the same rules.

Second-hand stores, yard sales, and online sales

Second-hand and consignment stores sell used clothing, furniture, and other household items, usually very cheaply. Churches and charities often have thrift stores. You can also donate things you no longer need.

Check the yellow pages under Second Hand Stores.

Often, people will sell things they no longer need at a yard or garage sale at their home. Check the Classified Advertisements in the local newspaper and watch for small signs posted along the roadside. They are usually held on Saturday mornings. If you bargain, you can sometimes bring down the price.

Social customs

When you leave your homeland and come to live in a new country, everything seems different. People here may seem strange to you because they speak and behave differently. They have different social customs. Sometimes misunderstandings happen because of these differences.

Then you may feel confused or embarrassed. Watch how people behave together—for example, how close they stand when they speak to each other, and so on.

Canadian society may have different values from your culture's. Canada's society is multicultural. By law, you have to respect other people's lifestyles, beliefs, religion, and culture, and they have to respect yours.

In Canada, many couples live together without marriage (common law). This is also true

Chapter 1: Arriving in B.C. and the First Few Days

of same-sex (gay, lesbian, or transgendered) couples. Same-sex marriage is legal in Canada. Many Canadians live in single-parent families (mother or father only) because the parents are separated or divorced. Many others live in blended families where the children may be from previous relationships.

In B.C., it is against the law to smoke in public buildings. In public, you may drink alcohol only in places that have a liquor licence.

Most of the time, Canadians are easy-going (informal) and polite. Usually people call each other by their first names. But this changes with the social situation. For example, you should call employers, clients or doctors by their title (Mr. for a man, Ms. for a woman, Mrs. for a married woman, Dr. for a doctor). If you know them, and know that they prefer being on a first-name basis, call them by their first name. If you are not sure, ask them.

Canadians are serious about some things, such as time. If you have an appointment—for example, to see a doctor—you should be there on time.

If you have to cancel a doctor's or dentist's appointment, you should call at least 24 hours before your appointment. Some places require 48 hours' notice. You should check when you make the appointment. If you do not call to cancel, you may have to pay a fee.

Canadians usually respect privacy. You should not ask personal questions about how much money someone makes, who they live with, what their religion is, what their sexual orientation is, or what property they own, unless you are getting to know them well.

These things depend on the social situation as well as individual differences. Try to learn more about Canadian social customs. Communicate and make friends. When you are not sure, ask friends, neighbours, and people at work. You can also talk to the people at your settlement agency.

Adjusting to life in Canada

Most newcomers are excited about their new life when they first arrive in Canada. But after a short time they may feel worried and irritable because it is often difficult to find jobs, housing, and schools. Also, learning a new language is not easy. Newcomers may feel anxious or depressed. Some people may have difficulty sleeping, or they may have stomach problems or headaches. It may help to talk about these problems with family, friends, or a doctor. A worker at the Dawson Creek Literacy Society can help.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Telephones and Internet

There are three kinds of telephones. Land lines are phones which work through a wire in your home. Cordless phones are attached to the wire in your home, but are portable around and near your home. For a phone in your home, you pay a fixed monthly fee for all local calls. Long distance calls are usually paid by the minute. Cell phones (mobile phones) are small, portable pocket phones you can take anywhere. Plans for cell phones can be expensive. Make sure you understand all the costs when you buy a cell phone.



Telephone Calls

When you make a telephone call, you usually have to dial 10 numbers. The first three numbers are the area code.

Local calls

There are four area codes in British Columbia: 236, 250, 604 and 778.

In Dawson Creek, all phone numbers begin with 250 or 778, and are followed by seven other numbers. In Metro Vancouver, all phone numbers begin with 236, 604 or 778.

Coin-operated pay phones can be paid for by either coin or calling card. Rates are posted on the phones. You can talk as long as you wish. You can find pay phones on streets, in shopping malls, and in public buildings.

On private land-line phones, there is no charge for local calls. At a hotel or motel, you may have to pay an extra charge for each call you make from your room. (For more information on private phones, see Chapter 2.)

Long distance calls

From a pay phone:

0 + 236, 604, 778 + local number – for calls to Metro Vancouver

0 + 236, 250, 778 + local number – for calls to everywhere else in B.C.

1 + area code + local number – Canada and the United States

01 + country code + city code + local number – overseas

The operator tells you how much money to put into the telephone. You can also pay for long distance calls with a credit card or prepaid phone card. If you want the person you are calling to pay, tell the operator you want to make a collect call.

From a private phone:

1 + 236, 604, 778 + local number – for calls to Metro Vancouver

1 + 236, 250, 778 + local number – for calls to everywhere else in B.C.

1 + area code + local number – Canada, United States, and the Caribbean

011 + country code + city code + local number – overseas

It is cheaper to dial directly from a private phone. It may also be cheaper to make long distance calls on weekends, weekday evenings, and on some holidays in North America. Look in the first pages of your telephone book for information about rates and types of calls. If there is something you do not understand, you can ask the operator for help. Dial 0 (zero) for the operator.

Chapter 1: Arriving in B.C. and the First Few Days

Some telephone numbers are toll-free. This means that you do not have to pay for the call. These numbers usually begin with 1 800, 1 866, 1 877 or 1 888, for example.

Telephone numbers beginning with 1 900 are pay-per-call numbers. This means you will be charged for the call. These calls are often very expensive and cannot be made from a pay phone.

Phone cards

Companies in B.C. sell phone cards which let you make phone calls from public telephones or on cell phones. You can buy these cards in many drugstores, supermarkets, and convenience stores. These cards can be used for both local and long distance calls. Each company charges different rates for their phone cards.

Answering machines and voice mail

Many people have answering machines or voice mail on their telephones. If they do not answer the phone, you can leave a message for them. When you hear the message, wait for the beep. After the beep, leave your name, phone number, and a short message. Speak slowly and clearly.

Internet

If you need to use the Internet or send e-mail, most public libraries have computers you can use for free. Some coffee shops also have computers with Internet service. These are called Internet cafes. You usually have to pay to use their services. Many coffee shops and public places have wireless Internet.

If you have a wireless portable computer (laptop), you can use it there for free. Many hotels and motels have free Internet service when you stay with them. (For Internet in your home, see Chapter 2.)

Telephone books

Telephone books can be very useful. They are divided into several sections.

- The front pages have emergency numbers, community information, and area codes.
- The white pages list the names, addresses, and phone numbers of people. They are listed in alphabetical order.
- The grey pages list the names, addresses, and phone numbers of businesses, schools, and some community services. They are listed in alphabetical order.
- The blue pages list government offices. The Government of Canada is listed first, then the Government of British Columbia, Health Authorities, then your city or town (municipal) government.
- The yellow pages—sometimes a separate book—list businesses under the type of business or work—for example, doctors, restaurants, and pharmacies.

If you live in an apartment building, ask the manager for a phone book. Libraries, settlement agencies, large stores, and offices will usually let you use their telephone books.

You can order copies of the phone book (white pages) and the yellow pages by visiting: delivery.ypg.com/en/US/Home/Index or calling 1 800 268-5637.



Find Telephone numbers

On the Internet, you can find phone numbers and addresses of people and businesses at: www.yellowpages.ca or www.canada411.ca

You can also get an application for your mobile phone at mobile.yip.ca/applications/ or by texting YPAPP to 411411. Please note that normal text messaging charges based on your cellular plan will apply.

If you cannot find a number in the telephone book or online, you can call directory assistance. Dial 4-1-1 for local numbers. There is a fee for this service if you call from home or from your cell phone.

There are no phone books at most pay phones. Directory assistance is free from a pay phone within British Columbia—just dial 4-1-1.

Sending and receiving mail

You can send mail from a regular post office or a small post office in a store. You can put letters (with stamps on) in any red Canada Post mailbox on the street.



You can also put letters in the outgoing slot of a community mailbox. Sometimes, there are two mailboxes beside each other. Check the writing on the front.

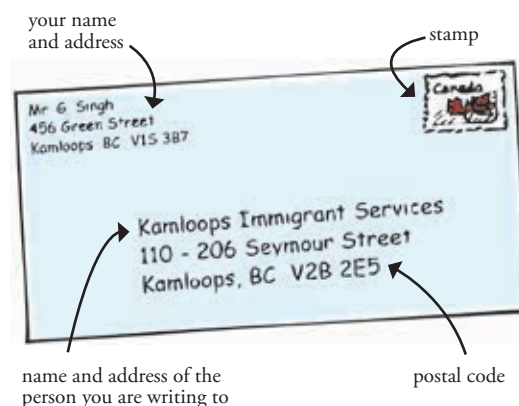
One is for local letters and the other is for mail being sent outside the city.

Find a postal outlet near you by visiting the Canada Post website at: www.canadapost.ca/cpotools/apps/fpo/personal/findPostOffice

All addresses for Canada must have a postal code. If you do not know the postal code for an address, you can look up the postal code in a book at any post office or on the Canada Post website at: www.canadapost.ca

Postage on letters

Stamps for letters cost different amounts for Canada, the United States, and to other countries. Postal rates sometimes go up. Check the price at a post office or at: www.canadapost.ca/cpo/mc/personal/productsservices/send/postagestamps.jsf



You can buy PERMANENT stamps to mail a letter in Canada. The stamps have a “P” on them. They can help you save money. You can use P stamps even if the price of stamps goes up in the future.

Envelopes and parcels (packages) that are bigger, thicker, or heavier cost more to mail. Check the price at a post office or at: www.canadapost.ca/cpotools/apps/far/personal/findARate?execution=e1s1

Chapter 1: Arriving in B.C. and the First Few Days

Parcels

If you mail a parcel to someone outside Canada, you have to fill in a customs form at the post office. Write what is in the parcel and the value of the item. If you are not at home when a parcel is delivered, the letter carrier may leave a note. It tells you where you can pick up the parcel. You will need photo ID to pick up the parcel.



Other services

There are different ways of sending letters and parcels. For example, you can pay extra to have your mail delivered sooner. For important documents, you should use Registered Mail, Xpresspost, or Priority Post. You can also buy insurance for letters and parcels. You should insure packages with valuable items. Ask at your post office about these services.

Private courier companies (like UPS and Purolator) also deliver letters and packages quickly, but they are often more expensive. Look in the yellow pages, under Courier Service.

Transportation



You can get travel information and road maps for Dawson Creek and the province at the Dawson Creek Visitor Information Centre.

Dawson Creek Visitor Information Centre
900 Alaska Avenue
Tel: 250 782-9595

You will also find an interactive map of Dawson Creek online at: www.dawsoncreek.ca/multimedia/interactive-map/

Order a free B.C. road map on the HelloBC website: www.hellobc.com/british-columbia/contact-us.aspx

Visit map websites at: www.mapquest.com or maps.google.com

In Dawson Creek, the streets and avenues have numbers. Streets go north and south, and avenues go east and west.

Buses



Most cities and towns in B.C. have a bus system. In Dawson Creek you can get a bus



schedule at City Hall (10105 12A Street), the Co-op Mall (10200 8th Street), and on the buses. You can also get information online at: www.transitbc.com/regions/daw/

Buses pick up people at bus stops in areas around the city. People get on the bus at the front door and get off at the back door. If you want the bus driver to let you off at the next bus stop, pull the cord above your seat or push the red button on some of the poles.

In Dawson Creek, you will get a transfer from the driver when you pay your fare. Check the transfer to find out how long you can use it.

A single bus fare costs \$1.75 for an adult, \$1.50 for a senior (65 years or older with identification), and \$1.50 for full-time students up to Grade 12 (with identification). Children 4 or under are free.

If you take the bus a lot, it is cheaper to buy a pass or a book of tickets. You can buy bus tickets and passes at City Hall (10105 12A Street), the Co-op Mall (10200 8th Street), or you can get student passes at School District 59, Peace River South offices. Bus drivers do not sell books of tickets or passes.

Full-time students in schools, colleges, and universities can pay a lower price if they have a student pass. People with disabilities can also get a special pass. Seniors (people 65 years and older) pay a lower price by showing their BC Services Card (see Chapter 4) or any identification (ID) showing their age. You need to check with the bus company in your community to find out what passes are available.

For information about bus service, routes, and costs in Dawson Creek, visit the BC Transit website at www.transitbc.com/regions/daw/ or call 250 782-4636.

If you travel to or visit Vancouver, here are some tips about public transit. Metro Vancouver has SkyTrain (rail) and SeaBus (boat) as well as buses. You can transfer from buses to SkyTrain or SeaBus, or from these services to buses, without paying again. The cost of your fare depends on how many zones you travel in. Longer trips (more than one zone) cost more during busy hours.

For information about bus service, routes, and costs in Metro Vancouver, call TransLink: 604 953-3333. You can also use the trip planner on the website at: www.translink.ca. Or, go to: www.google.com/transit and look up Metro Vancouver addresses and click on Get Directions.

Taxis

Taxis are convenient, but they can be expensive. Most cities and towns have taxi companies. You can order a taxi by telephone. Look in the yellow pages, under Taxicabs. At the end of your trip, the meter in the taxi shows how much to pay. People usually give the driver a tip, which is about 10-15% of the fare.

Chapter 1: Arriving in B.C. and the First Few Days

Transportation for people with disabilities

People in wheelchairs can get on most buses in B.C. In Metro Vancouver, people in wheelchairs can travel on all buses.

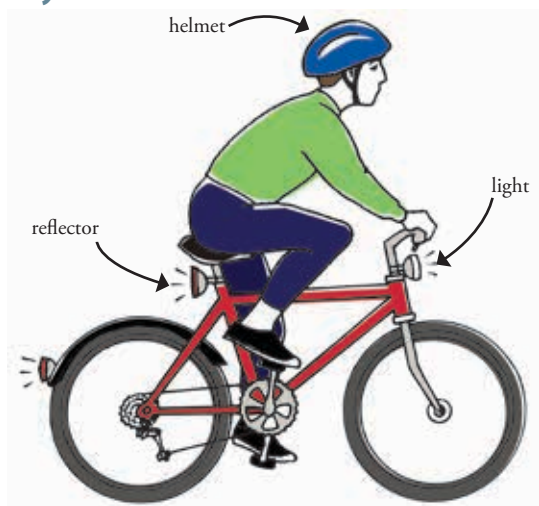
Some taxis take wheelchairs. You need to ask for wheelchair service when you call the taxi company.

Walking

You should cross streets only at a corner or a crosswalk, and obey traffic lights. It is against the law to cross in the middle of a block.

This is called jaywalking. If the police see you jaywalking, you may have to pay a fine. Many corners have crosswalks. These are wide white lines painted on the road or a sign. Cars should stop at crosswalks to let people cross. Although people who are walking have the right of way, you should always be careful when crossing a street. Look left first, then right.

Bicycles



You do not need a licence to ride a bicycle. People on bicycles must ride on the road, not on the sidewalk. They must obey the same rules as car drivers. Only one person may ride a bicycle. A small child may ride in a special seat behind the adult rider. You must have a light in front and a red reflector on the back of your bicycle to ride at night.

The law says everyone who rides a bicycle must wear a helmet (except Sikhs who wear a turban for religious reasons). Where there is a bike lane, you should use it.

Sometimes, community centres and bicycle shops have free clinics to teach people how to ride safely.

Cars

In all of North America, people drive on the right side of the road. You need a licence and insurance to drive a car in B.C. For information on licences, buying a car, and getting car insurance, see Chapter 7.

Travel between cities

Driving

While highways are very good in British Columbia, weather and mountains can make driving very difficult sometimes. Because there are long distances to travel when leaving Dawson Creek, it is important to be prepared before leaving the community.

Sometimes, the roads are in the mountains, and even though it does not look like a long distance, it could take a long time. Visit the DriveBC website (www.drivebc.ca) and find out exactly how many hours it will take to drive to your destination. You can also find



information about weather warnings and road conditions.

Airlines

Dawson Creek Regional Airport is just a few minutes away from downtown. You can travel by airplane to most cities in British Columbia. Small airlines fly to smaller cities in B.C. and western Canada. Phone an airline company or talk to a travel agent for information on air travel. Look in the yellow pages, under Airlines, Airline Ticket Agencies, or Travel Agencies.

Buses

Buses travel between towns and cities throughout British Columbia. Greyhound travels to most cities in Canada and the United States. Pacific Coach Lines travels to and on Vancouver Island. To call about route and schedule information, look in the yellow pages, under Bus Lines, or contact Greyhound Canada at 1 800 661-8747 (TRIP) or on the Internet at www.greyhound.ca

Trains

Trains travel between many cities and towns in B.C. VIA Rail operates railway passenger routes in B.C.:

- east from Vancouver through Kamloops to Alberta and other provinces
- in Northern B.C., between Prince Rupert on the Pacific Coast and Jasper, Alberta

For information, call VIA Rail at 1 888 VIA-RAIL (1 888 842-7245). There is also railway service between Vancouver and Seattle, Washington. For information, call Amtrak at 1 800 USA-RAIL (1 800 872-7245).

Ferries

Ferries connect Vancouver with cities on Vancouver Island, such as Victoria and Nanaimo. Other ferries go to small coastal islands and the Sunshine Coast. On some routes, it is a good idea to have a reservation. For information, look in the yellow pages, under Ferries or call BC Ferries at 1 888 BC FERRY (1 888 223-3779). Visit their website at: www.bcferries.com

There are also ferries on lakes in the B.C. interior. There is no fee for these ferries. For information, including a list of routes and phone numbers, visit www.th.gov.bc.ca/marine/ferry_schedules.htm



French-speaking Immigrants

French-speaking immigrants can receive information on settlement services and community support by contacting:

Connection Centre for Francophone Immigrants (CCFI) / Agence francophone pour l'accueil des immigrants (AFAI)
1551 West 7th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1S1
Tel: 604 630-0316
Toll-free: 1 877 492-2780
E-mail: info@vivreencb.ca
www.vivreencb.ca

Chapter 2: Finding a Place to Live



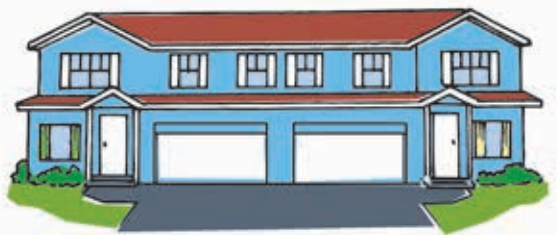
- Types of housing
- Renting
- Finding a place to live
- Tenancy agreement
- Moving in: To-do checklist
- Disagreements
- Moving out: To-do checklist
- Buying a home

Types of housing

Dawson Creek has different kinds of homes to live in. You can rent a small apartment in a big building, or buy a house with a yard. There are also many people you can talk to about housing. Real estate agents sell homes, and property management companies manage apartments and houses for rent. The Dawson Creek Literacy Society, community service organizations and BC Housing may be able to help you find a place to live.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

An apartment or suite usually has one or more bedrooms. All apartments and suites have a kitchen, a bathroom, and a living room. Suites for rent may be in an apartment building or in a house. Studios or bachelor suites have one room with a kitchen area and a bathroom.



Duplex



Townhouse



Apartment

A duplex is a house divided into two separate apartments. It may be bought or rented.

A townhouse is a small house joined to other small houses. It may be bought or rented.

An apartment building has one owner for the whole building. In a condominium (condo or strata) building, each apartment is owned by one person or family.



Mobile home

A mobile home can be moved from one place to another. It is usually cheaper to buy than a house. You must also buy or rent the land to put a mobile home on.

A room for rent is usually in a shared house or apartment. Everyone shares the kitchen and bathroom.

Room and board means a room and meals. Furniture is included.

Subsidized and low-cost housing

BC Housing is a government agency that has housing available to help people in greatest need. This includes subsidized (government-assisted) housing and help to pay for rent in private (non-government) apartments.

To find out if you qualify for these programs and to find information in other languages, visit the BC Housing website at: www.bchousing.org/Find or call 1 800 257-7756.

Subsidized housing

Subsidized, or government-assisted housing, is long-term housing where the amount of rent paid is based on the money you earn. There are different types of housing for different groups: adults who are single or in a couple, families, seniors, and people with disabilities. In order to be eligible for subsidized housing through BC Housing, you must permanently live in British Columbia, meet the residency requirements, and have a total household income below a certain amount. There is usually a waiting list for government-assisted (subsidized) housing. For more information, visit: www.bchousing.org/Options/Subsidized_Housing/Apply

Chapter 2: Finding a Place to Live

Rental Assistance Program

The Rental Assistance Program provides low-income, working families with cash to help with their monthly rent payments. Families must have an annual household income of \$35,000 or less, have at least one dependent child, and have been employed at some point over the last year. For more information, visit: www.bchousing.org/Options/Rental_market/RAP

Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters

The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program offers seniors monthly cash payments to help with the cost of rent. To be eligible, you must be at least 60 years of age, meet citizenship requirements, and have lived in B.C. for the full 12 months before applying. For more information, visit: www.bchousing.org/Options/Rental_market/SAFER

Co-ops

Housing co-operatives (co-ops) and some non-profit groups are a “mixed-income” form of housing. They often started through a government funding program and some do provide subsidy for low-income members or have a “rent-geared-to-income” policy. Even the “market rent” rate at housing co-ops can be relatively low-cost compared to other rental housing. This varies depending on the co-op. Many co-ops have long waiting lists.

There are currently no co-op housing units in Dawson Creek.

To see a complete listing of housing co-ops in B.C., visit the website at: www.chf.bc.ca/what-co-op-housing/find-a-co-op. Each

co-op has its own listing in this directory and the listing will explain how to apply.

For more information on co-ops, call the Co-operative Housing Federation of B.C.

Co-operative Housing Federation of B.C.
Toll-free: 1 800 879-5111
www.chf.bc.ca

Renting

When you rent a place to live, you will be doing official business with the person who looks after the place. This person can be the landlord or landlady, the owner or a manager.

Where to look for housing

You can begin by contacting the Dawson Creek Literacy Society.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

BC Housing has a Housing Registry for Dawson Creek. See the listing for the Northern Interior at: bchousing.org/Options/Subsidized_Housing/Listings

The nearest BC Housing Office is in Prince George.

BC Housing
1380 Second Avenue
Prince George, B.C. V2L 3S6
Toll-free: 1 800 667-1235



Look for ads. You can find them in these locations:

- Look in the advertising section in the *Dawson Creek Daily News*, www.dawsoncreekdailynews.ca
- The classified section lists many kinds of things to buy, sell, or rent. Look for Classifieds–Rentals.
- Look for Vacancy or For Rent signs in front of houses and apartment buildings.
- Look for advertisements on notice boards in your community.
- Check the RentBC website at: www.rentbc.com

Discrimination

A landlord cannot refuse to rent a place to people because of their race, skin colour, ancestry, birthplace, religion, sex, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or lawful source of income. This is discrimination, and it is against the law. A landlord usually cannot refuse to rent to people because they have children, unless it is an “adult-only” building, or reserved for people who are 55 and older. A landlord can refuse to rent to pet owners and people who smoke.

If you have a problem with discrimination and you want advice, call the B.C. Human Rights Coalition or the Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre. If you want to make an official complaint, contact the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal or the Canadian Human Rights Commission. See the listing at the end of this chapter.

Finding a place to live

When you find a place you like, ask these questions:

How much is the rent?

You usually pay rent on the first day of each month. The landlord can only increase your rent once a year and only by a certain amount. The landlord must tell you in writing three months before the rent goes up.

Chapter 2: Finding a Place to Live



Are utilities included in the rent, or do I have to pay for them?

Utilities are electricity (hydro), gas or fuel oil. Sometimes you have to pay for utilities yourself. Sometimes the landlord includes all or some of the utilities in the rent. Ask the landlord about this so you know how much you will pay every month.

How much is the security (damage) deposit?

You usually have to pay some extra money—not more than half of one month's rent—when you move in. The landlord keeps this money until you move out.

The landlord can use this money to pay for any damage you do. If you do no damage, and clean the apartment when you move out, the landlord must give you back all the money plus interest. The landlord must do this within 15 days. If the landlord wants to use some or all of the security deposit, you and the landlord should make an agreement in writing.

Tenancy agreement

If you decide you want to rent a place, you will need to sign a tenancy agreement. It is a good idea to bring a cheque with you when you look at places to rent. Make sure you get a receipt for all payments to the landlord. Tenants are responsible for paying the rent on time, keeping the place clean, and not disturbing other tenants.

References

A landlord may ask you for references (letters from or phone numbers of people who can recommend you as a good tenant or employee). It is a good idea to have references with you when you look at places to rent.

Application deposits are illegal

Some landlords ask tenants to pay a deposit when they apply to rent a place. It is illegal for landlords to collect money unless you have both signed a tenancy agreement first. Some people who have paid these illegal application deposits were not able to rent and did not get their money back. Do not rent from a landlord who wants to charge an application deposit.



Make a checklist before you move in

☐ **Make sure you have a signed tenancy agreement**

When you agree to rent a house or apartment, you and the landlord are making a contract. It is called a tenancy agreement. The agreement should be in writing.

Your tenancy agreement gives you the rules for renting your home. Make sure you understand everything in the agreement before you sign it. If you are not sure, ask someone who can help you—for example, a settlement worker. You may need to have the agreement translated into your language. For more information on tenants' rights, go to the website: www.tenants.bc.ca



☐ **Check for damage**

Before you move in, make a list of any damage you find. You and the landlord should sign the list. This is to make sure you get your damage deposit back. You can also take photographs of any damage you find in the apartment or house. The law says that landlords and tenants each have certain rights and certain things they must do (responsibilities). A tenancy agreement cannot change the law.

☐ **Arrange for utilities**

If you have to pay for utilities, such as hydro (electricity) and gas, you have to get these connected. The cost of connecting is usually included in the first month's bill. To get these services, check with BC Hydro (www.bchydro.com), FortisBC (www.fortisbc.com) or the companies that provide oil, gas or hydro in your community. You can find their phone numbers listed in the telephone book. You can also find companies that provide oil or gas in the yellow pages, under Gas Companies, and Oils–Fuel and Heating.

☐ **Buy insurance**

Both home owners and tenants can buy insurance. If you are a tenant, you should buy insurance for your belongings (the things you own). The insurance company will pay for most of the cost of what you lose in a fire or a robbery. Look in the yellow pages, under Insurance Agents and Brokers.

☐ **Arrange for phone and Internet service**

Chapter 2: Finding a Place to Live

Telephones

There are many telephone companies in B.C. They offer different kinds of services. You may see advertising that says you can save money if you change phone companies. This may be true, but you need to be careful. Do not sign a sales contract unless you understand what services you are getting, how much they cost, and how long the contract lasts. With some companies, you have to pay a fine to get out of a contract.

To get telephone service, look in the yellow pages, under Telephone Service—Local.

Internet

If you want to have Internet service in your home, look in the yellow pages, under Internet Access Providers. As with phone companies, there are many Internet companies in B.C. You may see advertising that says you can save money and get faster Internet. Do not sign a contract unless you understand what services you are getting, how much they cost, and how long the contract lasts.

Mail

In Dawson Creek, mail is delivered to your house or apartment building. If you live in an area without home delivery, call Canada Post at 1 866 607-6301 to get a community mailbox.

Garbage and recycling

In Dawson Creek, the city will collect up to two garbage bags or containers of garbage each week. To find out which day your garbage will be picked up call the city's utility

department at 250 784-3610 or find your garbage day on the online map at: www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/finance/utilities/

Recycling

In Dawson Creek, you can recycle and reduce garbage.

- The Dawson Creek Recycling and Bottle Depot at 925 100th Avenue takes most household recyclable goods, such as glass, plastic and metal cans.
- Compostable materials such as grass clippings can be brought to the city compost site at 941/949 99th Avenue.

For more information on garbage and recycling, call the city's utility department at 250 784-3610 or visit the Eco-Depot recycling website at: ecodepotrecycling.com.

You can also call the BC Recycling Hotline at 1 800 667-4321 or go to: www.rcbc.bc.ca (For more information on recycling, see Chapter 12.)

Water and Sewer

If you buy a home, you will have to pay for water and sewer services. The City of Dawson Creek mails bills for water use every two months. The average homeowner in Dawson Creek pays \$922 every year for water, sewer, and garbage pickup.

Dawson Creek City Hall
10105 12A Street
Tel: 250 784-3600
www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/water/recycling/



If you rent a house, an apartment or a condominium, ask your landlord if these utilities are part of the rent.

Repairs

What if the roof leaks, the toilet does not work, or there is no hot water? The law says the landlord must make these repairs quickly. The landlord must give you the name and phone number of someone who can make repairs in an emergency.

If a tenant or a tenant's guests damage a rented house or apartment, the tenant must pay for the repairs.

You may want to make changes in the place you rent—for example, paint the walls a different colour or drill holes in the walls for shelves. You should get permission from your landlord in writing before doing this.

B.C. cities and towns also have laws about health and building standards. Phone your city or town hall to talk about repair problems, such as no heat or no hot water.

Letting the landlord in

A landlord must ask the tenant before coming into the house or apartment you rent. You can say no. However, the landlord can come in if he or she has a good reason and tells you 24 hours before.

Emergencies are different. If there is an emergency, such as a fire or a broken water pipe, the landlord can come in without a tenant's permission.

Disagreements

For information on landlord or tenant rights and responsibilities, contact the Residential Tenancy Branch. The office can also help solve disagreements between landlords and tenants.

Residential Tenancy Branch
Toll-free: 1 800 665-8779
www.rto.gov.bc.ca

In Dawson Creek, you can also call or visit the Service BC office.

Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html

Make sure you are prepared. Have your complaint in writing, with supporting documents such as the signed tenancy agreement, receipts, photos showing damage, and witnesses.

Eviction

The landlord can tell a tenant to move out. This is called an eviction.

The landlord must tell you in writing and give reasons. This is called giving notice.

If you do not agree with the reasons the landlord gives, you can call the Residential Tenancy Branch, the Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre, or your local tenants' group.

Chapter 2: Finding a Place to Live

Make a checklist before you move out

☐ Give notice

When you plan to move out of a rented house or apartment, you must tell your landlord in writing. This is called giving notice. If you are renting month-to-month, you must give the notice to the landlord one whole month before you will move out. For example, if you plan to move out on December 31, you must give notice by November 30. December 1 is too late.

November 30, 2012
To: Sun Realty Management
From: Kelvin Lee
I will be moving out of Apt. 2, 1234 Main Street on December 31, 2012.
<i>Kevin Lee</i>

☐ Clean

You must clean your rented home before you move out. You must also clean the stove, fridge, bathrooms, and light fixtures. Check your tenancy agreement to see if you must clean the carpets or drapes.

☐ Cancel telephone and utilities

Call the telephone company to have the phone disconnected or transferred to your new address. If you do not do this, you may have to pay phone bills after you move out. If you pay for the electricity, gas or oil, phone the companies and tell them to disconnect your service.

☐ Change your address

Go to the post office and fill in a change-of-address card. The post office will send your mail from the old address to the new address. There is a fee for this service. Give your new address to your bank, employer, school, medical plan, Driver Licensing Centre, credit card companies, Canada Revenue Agency, cable TV company, and any other contacts. Phone them or mail them a change-of-address card. You can buy these cards at the post office.

☐ Arrange for a moving company or rent a truck

A moving company will send a truck and people to move your things. Look in the classified advertisements in the newspaper or in the yellow pages, under Movers. You can also rent a truck or van and move things yourself. Look in the yellow pages, under Truck Renting and Leasing.



Buying a home

In 2012, the average price for a house in Dawson Creek was \$265,000.

You can look in newspapers, and on the Internet at: www.realtor.ca, to see what homes are for sale. However, to buy a house or an apartment, most people call a real estate company. Look in the yellow pages, under Real Estate. A real estate agent can help you find a house or apartment, bargain for a better price, and explain the legal papers. Many people pay a lawyer to help them with the legal papers to buy a house.

Most people borrow money from a bank, credit union, or trust company to buy a house. This is called a mortgage. Mortgage rates are not the same at all banks. Check around for the best mortgage you can get.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation website has information about buying a home and getting a mortgage (bank loan). Visit: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/buho/index.cfm

To find houses for sale in Dawson Creek and see how much they cost, visit www.realtor.ca

If you own your own home, you must buy insurance for it. You should also have insurance for your belongings. The insurance company will pay for most of the cost of what you lose in a fire or a robbery. Look in the yellow pages, under Insurance Agents and Brokers.

If you intend to rent out your house and become a landlord, you must understand your rights and responsibilities. For more information on becoming a landlord,

Chapter 2: Finding a Place to Live

go to the Residential Tenancy Branch website at: www.rto.gov.bc.ca. Look for the *Residential Tenancy Act: A Guide for Landlords and Tenants in British Columbia* under Publications. This guide is available in English, Traditional Chinese, and Punjabi. You can also visit: www.tenants.bc.ca/main/?publications to download the *Landlord Guide*, available in English, Traditional Chinese, and Punjabi.

Where to go for help

For more information on renting or buying a place to live, go to the B.C. Government website at: www.WelcomeBC.ca

Here are more resources:

The Dawson Creek Literacy Society can help with information about finding a place to live in Dawson Creek.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society

929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre (TRAC)

Lower Mainland Tenants' Rights
Information Line/ Tenant Hotline
Toll-free: 1 800 665-1185
www.tenants.bc.ca

Residential Tenancy Branch

Toll-free: 1 800 665-8779
www.rto.gov.bc.ca

B.C. Human Rights Coalition

1202 – 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
Toll-free: 1 877 689-8474
www.bchrcoalition.org

B.C. Human Rights Tribunal

1170 – 605 Robson Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5J3
Toll-free: 1 888 440-8844
E-mail: BCHumanRightsTribunal@gov.bc.ca
www.bchrt.bc.ca

Canadian Human Rights Commission

Toll-free: 1 888 214-1090
www.chrc-ccdp.ca

Chapter 3: Money and Banking



Banks, credit unions, and trust companies



You can open an account at a bank, a credit union or a trust company. Before you choose a place to bank, find out what kind of accounts it has. Ask questions about banking charges and interest on your money. Most banks pay you interest on the money in your accounts. A bank may charge you for the services it provides. To find a bank or credit union in Dawson Creek, check the yellow pages in your phone book under Banks.

Types of accounts

- **Chequing accounts**
Some chequing accounts charge you for each cheque you write. Some have monthly charges that include a bundle of services. Most chequing accounts do not pay interest.
- **Savings accounts**
All savings accounts pay interest, but the amount of interest is not always the same. You cannot write cheques on some savings accounts.
- **Chequing-savings accounts**
These accounts pay interest. You can also write cheques. The interest and charges are not the same at all banks.
- **Term deposits**
These accounts usually pay more interest than saving accounts but you have to leave your money in for a certain length of time (a term).

Chapter 3: Money and Banking

Paying by cash, cheque, credit card or debit card

Cash is money—coins and bills. Cheques are sometimes used instead of cash. When you write a cheque, you are telling your bank to pay with your money. To pay by cheque, you must show the cashier some identification (ID). Most cashiers ask to see identification with your photo on it, such as a driver's licence. If you do not have a driver's licence, ask for a B.C. Identification card (BC ID) at a Driver Licensing Centre. (To find a Driver Licensing Centre, see Driver's Licence in Chapter 7.) Some stores do not take cheques. You should check with the cashier if they take cheques before shopping.



Credit cards let you buy things now and pay for them later. You can get bank credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard. You can also get credit cards from department stores

or gas companies. If you do not pay the full amount of the credit card bill each month, you have to pay interest. The interest on some credit cards is higher than on others. If you won't pay the full credit card bill every month, be sure to check the interest rates carefully. There are many low-rate credit cards available.

Debit cards can be used instead of a cheque or credit card to buy things in many stores. You get these cards from your bank or credit union. When you buy things with a debit card, the money comes out of your bank account immediately.

Use your credit and debit cards safely, and keep them in a safe place. You should protect them the same way you protect your money.

Bank machines



Banks, credit unions, and some trust companies have bank machines. They are called automated teller machines (ATMs). There are also bank machines in some stores and in other convenient places. Full-service ATMs are usually provided by banks and credit unions. You can take money out of your accounts or put money into them. You can also pay bills and transfer money to other accounts. Other machines will only allow you to take out money. You can use bank machines any time, day or night.

Some banks and credit unions charge a service fee each time you use an ATM. Usually it costs more to use an ATM that is not from your own bank. The bank machine



should let you know how much it will cost you to take out money.

To use bank machines, you need a card from your bank or credit union. You will get a secret number (personal identification number or PIN) so that only you can use your card. Be careful. Do not give this number to anyone else or allow any person to see you use it or they may be able to take money from your bank account. Do not keep the PIN written down anywhere near the card or on the card itself. If someone steals your wallet, they would be able to take money from your account.

Banking by phone and Internet

You may be able to do your banking on the Internet. You need a computer and Internet service (see Chapter 2) to connect to your bank account. Ask your bank or credit union about this service.

You may also be able to do some of your banking with a touch-tone phone. For example, you can find out your account balance, transfer money between accounts and pay your bills. Ask your bank or credit union about this service.

Sending money to other countries

Canadian banks and foreign exchange companies can send money to banks in most countries. You can also mail a money order (also called a draft). You can get this at a bank, foreign exchange company, or

post office. Check first that the money order can be cashed in the country where you are sending it. To find a foreign exchange company in Dawson Creek, look in the yellow pages, under Foreign Exchange Brokers. For money orders, look in the yellow pages, under Money Order and Transfer. Compare the costs to find the best price.

Loans and mortgages

A loan is money you borrow from a bank or credit union. For example, some people get a loan to buy a car. You must pay back part of the money you borrowed (called the principal) and an extra fee (interest) each month. To get a loan, you must be earning enough money to easily repay the borrowed money.

A mortgage is money you borrow to buy a house or apartment. Banks, credit unions, and mortgage companies give mortgages. (See Chapter 2.)

Owing money

Sometimes people borrow money or buy things and plan to pay for them later. They may find that they cannot make the payments. If this happens to you, you should talk or write to the people you owe money to. Sometimes it is possible to make smaller payments.

The Credit Counselling Society has counsellors who can help people with debt and credit problems at little or no cost to you. Call 1 888 527-8999 or go to: www.nomoredebts.org

Chapter 3: Money and Banking

You can also look in the blue pages, in the Government of Canada section under Bankruptcy. Or go to the federal government website at: www.osb-bsf.ic.gc.ca

There are other companies that give advice to people on how to pay their debts. They charge a fee for these services. Look in the yellow pages, under Credit and Debt Counselling.

Paying taxes

Governments get most of their money from taxes. Taxes pay for services such as roads, parks, community centres, medical care, welfare, schools, and universities.

BC Sales Tax (PST)

You pay 7% provincial sales tax on many goods and services you buy in British Columbia. For information, go to: www.gov.bc.ca/pst

BC Sales Tax (PST) Credit

You may be able to claim a refundable tax credit when you file an income tax return.

For more information, go to: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/individuals/Income_Taxes/Personal_Income_Tax/tax_credits/salestax.htm

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

You pay 5% federal sales tax on many goods and services you buy in Canada. For information, go to: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/gst-tps/gnrl/hw-eng.html

Goods and Services Tax (GST) Credit

You may be able to claim a refundable tax credit when you file an income tax return. For more information, go to: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/gsthst/fq_qlfyng-eng.html

Income tax

Everyone in B.C. has to file a personal income tax return each year and send it to the federal government by April 30. This return determines how much tax you pay on your income. This return also determines if you qualify for tax credits and other benefits. Employees have income tax taken off their paycheques. If you have paid too much tax, the government will give you the money back (a refund). If not enough money was taken off your paycheck, you may have to pay more.

You must report income you earned in Canada and any income from outside Canada. People who are not working must pay tax on any income from investments.

If you had no income in Canada, it is recommended that you still complete and send in a tax return. You may receive tax credits and benefits you may be eligible for.

Self-employed people and people who own businesses also have to pay their taxes by April 30, but they have until June 15 to fill out and send in their income tax return.

You can send in your income tax return in different ways—filling out a printed paper tax form, by phone or by Internet.



For income tax information, visit the Canada Revenue Agency or visit the website at: www.cra.gc.ca

Ask the people at the Dawson Creek Literacy Society to help you fill out your income tax forms.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

You can also pay someone to help you—for example, an accountant or a tax preparation company. Look in the yellow pages, under Tax Consultants.

Child Tax Benefit

The Canada Child Tax Benefit is a monthly payment to help families with the cost of raising children under age 18. To qualify, at least one parent must be a resident of Canada and both parents must send in their income tax forms every year, even if they have no income to report. To apply, call 1 800 387-1193. For information, go to: www.cra.gc.ca. You can also talk to a settlement worker at your local immigrant settlement agency.

Property taxes

Generally, everyone who owns a house, land, or buildings must pay property tax. The City of Dawson Creek will send you a bill once a year. If your property is outside Dawson Creek, the B.C. government will send you a bill. You can also talk to your bank and arrange to pay your property tax as part of your mortgage.

The tax must be paid in early July. For more information, visit: www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/finance/taxes/

Property Tax Assistance

The Home Owner Grant Program reduces the amount of property tax eligible British Columbians pay on a home (principal residence). The Home Owner Grant provides a maximum reduction in residential property taxes of \$570. If you are over 65, permanently disabled, or are an eligible veteran, you may qualify for \$275 more, for a total of \$845.

Another \$200 homeowner grant is available for homeowners living outside the Capital, Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley Regional Districts. If you qualify, you will receive this grant automatically when you apply for the homeowner grant.

Homeowners must apply for this grant each year. For more information, go to: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/individuals/Property_Taxes/Home_Owner_Grant/hog.htm

Property Tax Deferment Programs

Property tax deferment programs are low-interest loan programs that allow qualifying residents to defer all or part of their property taxes until they sell or transfer ownership of their home, or it becomes part of an estate.

Property tax deferral options are available for qualified individuals, including homeowners aged 55 and over, persons with disabilities, and families with children.

Chapter 3: Money and Banking

For information on property tax deferment, go to: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/individuals/Property_Taxes/Property_Tax_Deferment/ptd.htm

Property Transfer Tax

When you buy or register a transfer of property in B.C. you must generally pay Property Transfer Tax. The rate of tax is 1% on the first \$200,000 of the value and 2% on the rest.

If you are buying your first home, you may not have to pay this tax.

For information on the Property Transfer Tax, go to: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/business/Property_Taxes/Property_Transfer_Tax/ptt.htm

Financial help for seniors

Old Age Security Pension (OAS)

The federal and provincial governments give pensions to all seniors who meet Canadian legal status and residence requirements. It does not matter if you worked or not. You must apply for this pension when you are 65 years old. You must have lived in Canada for 10 years before you can apply. If you worked in a country that has a pension agreement with Canada, the time can be shorter than 10 years.

Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)

People who get OAS but have little or no other income may also qualify for the GIS. How much you get depends on you and your spouse's (wife's or husband's) income. You must apply to receive GIS. For more information, call the Canada Pension and OAS enquiry line at: 1 800 277-9914.

For more information about OAS and GIS, see:

- www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/oas/pension/oldagesecurity.shtml
- www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/isp/pub/oas/oas.shtml
- www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/oas/gis/guaranteedincomesupplement.shtml
- www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/isp/pub/oas/gismain.shtml

Seniors Supplement

People who get OAS and GIS may also qualify for the provincial government's Seniors Supplement. You will receive the Seniors Supplement automatically if you are eligible. The amount depends on your income. For more information, call 1 866 866 0800 then press 4, or visit the website: www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/PROGRAMS/other.htm

Investing money

There are many ways to invest money. Banks and other financial companies sell investments such as term deposits, Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs), Canada Savings Bonds, and treasury bills. Talk to someone at your bank, credit union, or trust company. You can also talk with an investment counsellor or financial planner. Look in the yellow pages, under Financial Planning Consultants. You can find information about banking in Canada at: www.cba.ca/en/consumer-information

Chapter 4: Health Care



B.C. health insurance

The Government of British Columbia has a health insurance plan called the Medical Services Plan (MSP). It is only for eligible British Columbia residents who are Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, or government-assisted refugees. Post-secondary international students with study permits and people with work permits for six months or longer can also get MSP.

MSP pays for basic, medically needed health costs—for example, doctor visits, some medical tests, and treatments. Some health costs are not covered by MSP—for example, dentists and physiotherapists. Please contact Health Insurance BC for more information. Call toll-free 1 800 663-7100. Visit the website at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/insurance

Registering for medical insurance



All residents of British Columbia must register with MSP. You should register as soon as you arrive. There is a waiting period. You will not get MSP coverage for up to three months. You should buy private medical insurance for that time. If you do not have medical insurance, you must pay the doctor or hospital yourself. Medical costs can be very high. Look in the yellow pages, under Insurance Companies—Other Than Life.

Chapter 4: Health Care

When you apply for MSP, make sure that you give your name exactly as it is on other official documents. Phone Health Insurance BC to find out how to register. Call toll-free 1 800 663-7100. Visit the website at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/insurance

When your MSP coverage begins, you will get a card with your name, birth date, photo and Personal Health Number. This is called the BC Services Card. It used to be called the CareCard, and you may be asked for the card by either name. Always bring your BC Services Card when you go to a doctor, clinic, or hospital. You will also need it for prescriptions and when you register children for school.

Medical premium fees

MSP insurance coverage is not free. You must pay a monthly fee (premium). The costs per month are:

- for a single person: \$66.50
- for a family of two: \$120.50
- for a family of three or more: \$133.00

Note: Premium costs could change. Phone Health Insurance BC to check the costs.

If you have a job, MSP premiums may be paid by your employer. Ask your employer about this.

Premium assistance

If your income is low, you may be eligible for premium assistance. You may be able to pay less, or get free MSP coverage.

You must have lived in Canada for the last 12 consecutive months (one year) as a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. You need to fill out a form to apply for premium assistance.

Contact Health Insurance BC or your local settlement agency for information.

Refugee claimants

If you are a refugee claimant, you need to contact Health Insurance BC to find out if you qualify for MSP coverage. If you do not qualify, ask Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) about the Interim Federal Health Program (IFH). Phone the CIC call centre at: 1 888 242-2100 or visit the website at: www.cic.gc.ca

Private insurance

MSP insurance does not cover all medical costs. You can buy extra insurance from a private company. Look in the yellow pages, under Insurance Companies—Other Than Life.

Out-of-province coverage

Check with MSP about your coverage if you will be away from B.C. for an extended period of time.

HealthLinkBC

HealthLink BC provides access to free non-emergency health information and advice in British Columbia. You can get this information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by telephone, website, an app for your mobile phone, and printed information.



By phone: 8-1-1

Navigation Services

Call 8-1-1 to find out about general health information and health services in your area, or to speak directly with a registered nurse, dietitian, or pharmacist.

Nursing Services

Call 8-1-1 to ask a registered nurse your health questions. Nurses are available 24/7/365 to provide non-emergency health information, advice, and referral.

Pharmacist Services

Call 8-1-1 to speak to a licensed pharmacist about your medication. HealthLink BC's Pharmacist Services are available from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. every day of the week.

Dietitian Services

Call 8-1-1 to speak to a registered dietitian for information about nutrition and healthy eating. Dietitian Services are available from Monday to Thursday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., or you can e-mail a dietitian with your nutrition questions by visiting: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating/emaildietitian.html

All of HealthLink BC's 8-1-1 services are free. Translation services in more than 130 languages are available upon request.

On the Internet: www.HealthLinkBC.ca

This website provides medically approved information on more than 5,000 health topics, symptoms, and over-the-counter and prescription drugs. You can find tips for a healthy lifestyle and check medical

symptoms. You can also search and find a map for more than 5,800 health services in or near your home.

BC Health Service Locator App

The BC Health Service Locator App helps you find walk-in clinics, hospitals, emergency rooms, immunization locations, after-hours pharmacies, and laboratory services on an iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch. Visit: www.HealthLinkBC.ca

BC HealthGuide Handbook

The free *BC HealthGuide Handbook* has information on common health topics including disease prevention, home treatment, emergencies, healthy lifestyle choices, and advice on when to go to a doctor or to hospital.

The Handbook is available in French, Chinese, or Punjabi. The English BC HealthGuide is available online at: www.HealthLinkBC.ca. French, Chinese, and Punjabi handbooks can be found at many pharmacies, Service BC offices, and immigrant settlement agencies. It can also be ordered online at: www.HealthLinkBC.ca or by calling 8-1-1.

In Dawson Creek, Chinese and Punjabi handbooks are available at the Dawson Creek Literacy Society, 929 102nd Avenue.

HealthLinkBC Files

HealthLinkBC Files are easy-to-read fact sheets on public health and safety topics including common illnesses, vaccinations,

Chapter 4: Health Care

environmental health concerns, and health tips. Most information has been translated. Visit: www.HealthLinkBC.ca to download files in English, Chinese, Farsi, French, Punjabi, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Types of doctors

There are two types of doctors in British Columbia: family doctors (general practitioners or GPs) and specialists.

Family doctors take care of most medical problems. You can also talk to your family doctor about emotional problems, nutrition, and family planning.

Specialists treat special health problems, such as heart disease. If you are sick, go to a family doctor first. Your family doctor may refer (send) you to a specialist. If you think you need to see a specialist, you must talk to your family doctor first and ask for a referral.

Finding a family doctor

To find a family doctor:

- Talk to people at the Dawson Creek Literacy Society at 250 782-4211. They may be able to help you find a doctor who speaks your language.
- Look in the yellow pages, under Physicians and Surgeons.
- Visit the website for the College of Physicians and Surgeons at: www.cpsbc.ca to find a list of doctors who are taking new patients.
- Ask your friends, neighbours, co-workers, or other people in your community.

Making an appointment

Before you go to the doctor, phone the doctor's office for an appointment. Always take your BC Services Card with you when you go to a doctor. Make sure you are on time.

If you are very late or miss an appointment, you may have to pay a fee. This fee is not covered by MSP.

Medical emergencies



If you have a serious accident or suddenly get very sick, you should call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency department of Dawson Creek and District Hospital. It is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Dawson Creek and District Hospital
11100 13th Street
Tel: 250 782-8501

If you are taking prescription medicine, bring it with you.



Walk-in clinics

If you need medical attention but it is not an emergency, you can go to a walk-in clinic.

Dawson Creek has two walk-in clinics:

- Mile Zero Walk-in Clinic
10200 8th Street
- Eljen Medical Clinic
1300 111 Avenue

These clinics have doctors and nurses. You do not need an appointment. Most large communities have walk-in clinics. Some clinics are open late. Many are open seven days a week. Look in the yellow pages, under Clinics.

What if you need to go to a walk-in clinic before you have received your BC Services Card? If you have completed your waiting period, but have not yet received your BC Services Card, you must pay for the visit. Keep your receipt. MSP may pay for part of the cost of the visit.

Calling an ambulance

If you need an ambulance, call 9-1-1 or the emergency phone number in your area. This number is usually at the front of the telephone book. Ask for an ambulance. The ambulance will take you to the emergency department of a hospital. MSP will not pay for the ambulance. If you go in an ambulance, you do not have to pay right away. You will get a bill later. If you have a low income, you may get assistance.

Hospital costs

You do not have to pay for hospital costs if you have MSP coverage.



Healthy Kids Program

The B.C. Healthy Kids Program helps low-income families with the cost of basic dental care and prescription eyeglasses for children under 19 years. This help is for families who already get MSP premium. For more information, go to: www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/publicat/bcea/HealthyKids.htm

Chapter 4: Health Care

Language assistance

The Provincial Language Service provides interpreters in 180 languages. Ask your doctor or the hospital to call the Provincial Language Service at 1 877 228-2557 to book an interpreter. Only a doctor or a hospital may book this service.

Dawson Creek Regional Hospital has a list of staff that can help translate for people who do not speak English. If you have an appointment and need a translator, call the hospital at 250 782-8501 and ask if a translator is available.

Finding a dentist

To find a dentist, check with friends, an immigrant settlement agency, or look in the yellow pages, under Dentists. You can also go to the BC Dental Association website at: www.bcdental.org/Find_a_Dentist. Phone the dentist's office to make an appointment.

MSP will not pay for dental services. If you have a job, your employer may have a dental plan that you can join. MSP will pay if you go to a hospital for dental surgery.

If your family is not covered by an employer's dental plan, children under 19 can get some dental care under the Healthy Kids Program. This is only if your family already gets MSP premium assistance. Ask your dentist for more information.

Some public health units have dental clinics. They give free dental checkups and cleanings to young children and low-cost dental care to older children and adults.

Public health units

Many communities have public health units. These are medical offices where nurses and doctors give free health care information. You will need your BC Services Card to visit a public health unit.

If you have a serious, ongoing health problem, a public health nurse may be able to help you in your home. These nurses can also help women prepare for a new baby and visit them at home after the baby is born. They will also give immunizations to babies and children to prevent diseases, such as polio and measles.

The Dawson Creek Health Unit
1001 110th Avenue
Tel: 250 719-6500

Private specialized clinics

In some cities and towns there are private specialized clinics such as weight-loss, and Chinese and other alternative medicine. You have to ask what services are covered by MSP.

To find clinics in your area, look in the yellow pages, under Clinics.

Prescription drugs

You must have a doctor's prescription (written permission) to buy prescription drugs (medicines) at a pharmacy (drugstore). The pharmacist will explain how often and how long you must take the medicine.

You can buy some medicines without a prescription. These are called non-prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs. These are



usually for less serious problems, such as common colds or headaches. If you have a question about over-the-counter drugs, ask the pharmacist or call 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a pharmacist about your medication.

You must buy prescriptions at drug stores or pharmacies. To find pharmacies in Dawson Creek, look in the yellow pages under Drugstores or Pharmacies.

Registering for prescription drug insurance: PharmaCare and Fair PharmaCare

As soon as you get your BC Services Card, you should register for prescription drug insurance with PharmaCare. It is a B.C. government program. It may pay some of the cost for prescription drugs you buy in B.C. You have to be a permanent resident of B.C. and for most PharmaCare plans, you must have MSP coverage.

Fair PharmaCare is for B.C. families who have MSP coverage. The lower your income, the more help you will get to pay for prescription drugs.

To register or get more information, phone Health Insurance BC. Call toll-free 1 800 663-7100 or visit the PharmaCare website at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare



Eye exams and eyeglasses

If you need an eye examination, talk to your family doctor or look in the yellow pages, under Optometrists.

MSP pays for routine eye exams by an optometrist:

- for children and youth 18 years and younger
- for adults 65 years and older

Note: MSP covers up to \$46.17 for an eye exam. Some optometrists may charge more than \$46.17. Be sure to ask your optometrist about costs before your eye exam.

MSP also pays for other visits to an optometrist. The plan pays for people of all ages with a medical need. For example, a visit to remove an object from an eye or visits for people with eye diseases.

Some people have benefit plans at work. These plans might help pay for eye exams, glasses, and contact lenses. Ask your employer.

Chapter 4: Health Care

People with Disabilities



People with disabilities may need information about housing or jobs. They may also want to know what special programs are available in their communities. For information and advice, call the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities toll-free at 1 800 663-1278, or visit the website at: www.bccpd.bc.ca

Mental health centres and community agencies

If you have a serious emotional problem, talk to your doctor and get help. If you do not have a family doctor in Dawson Creek, talk to a settlement worker at Dawson Creek Literacy Society at 250 782-4211 to find help.

For help with a mental health issue in Dawson Creek, call the Northern Health Authority mental health line at 250 719-6525. Do not feel ashamed or try to deal with the problem alone.

For help with an addiction issue in Dawson Creek, call the Northern Health Authority addiction line at 250 782-4410.

Most B.C. communities have mental health centres that help people with problems such as severe depression, paranoia, and schizophrenia.

The Canadian Mental Health Association has an office in Prince George.

Canadian Mental Health Association
555 George Street
Toll-free: 1 800 555-8222

The BC Schizophrenia Society helps people with all types of psychotic illnesses and major depression. They also provide support for families of people with mental illnesses.

In Dawson Creek, contact the BC Schizophrenia Society at 1 855 784-4780.

For more help for individuals and families, see Chapter 6.

Chapter 5: Education



- Education system
- Elementary and secondary schools
- Distance education
- Post-secondary education
- Costs and financial help
- English classes for adults
- Continuing education for adults

Education system

Education is very important to most Canadians. The education system in Canada has three levels. Children usually go to elementary school from ages five to 12, and to secondary school (high school) from ages 13 to 17 or 18. After secondary school, students can go on to post-secondary study at colleges, technical schools, and universities.

In British Columbia, both the provincial government and local Boards of Education manage the public school system (Kindergarten to Grade 12).

The provincial government funds the education system and sets the legislation, regulations, and policies that make sure every school meets provincial standards and every student receives a high-quality education.

There are also 60 local Boards of Education (school boards) across the province. Dawson Creek is part of School District 59, Peace River South. Trustees are elected to these boards to make local education decisions.

For more information about the Ministry of Education, visit the website at: www.gov.bc.ca/bced

If you want information about registering your child for school, learning assistance, ELL (English Language Learning), or have other questions about education in Dawson Creek, contact the Board of Education directly.

School District 59, Peace River South
11600 7th Street
Tel: 250 782-8571
www.sd59.bc.ca

Chapter 5: Education

Preschool

For children under five years old, there are free learning programs in schools called StrongStart BC. Parents and children attend these programs together. For information, contact your local school or visit: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/strongstart_bc/

Many schools offer Ready, Set, Learn programs for children who are three years old. Parents also attend. Children learn important skills through play activities, and parents get information about how to help their child learn. For information, contact your local school or visit: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/rsl

Elementary and secondary schools



In British Columbia, all children between the ages of 5 and 16 must go to school. Public elementary and secondary (high) schools are free. For a list of public schools in Dawson Creek, go to www.sd59.bc.ca

School District 59, Peace River South
1160 7th Street
Tel: 250 782-8571

Some children go to independent (private) schools. Most independent schools charge fees.

Parents may also choose to teach their children at home. Students who are taught at home can take courses on the Internet and can also have lessons sent to them by mail.

Children usually start elementary school in the same year that they turn five years old. This first year of elementary school is called kindergarten. Kindergarten is a full-day program in public schools. Independent schools also offer kindergarten for a fee. For more information on kindergarten, visit: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/fdk

Children usually attend the public school closest to their home. In some elementary schools, students study in multi-grade classes. For example, one class may have students in grades 1, 2, and 3. Some school districts have middle schools for students in grades 6 to 8. Secondary schools are for students in grades 8 to 12, or grades 9 to 12. Most students finish secondary school by age 18. When they graduate from secondary school in B.C., they get a graduation certificate.

For a list of all elementary and secondary schools in Dawson Creek, visit: www.sd59.bc.ca/schools.php

School District 59, Peace River South has staff who will help children learn English. For more information, call 250 782-8571.



English classes for children

Some students attend English Language Learning (ELL) classes. Most students who need help learning English receive extra help in the regular classroom. Some older students attend both regular classroom programs and ELL classes. The school will decide if your child needs ELL classes—you do not have to enroll them.

Special preschool programs can help young children learn English. To find out if there is an ELL preschool program in your area, ask an immigrant settlement agency.

Registering a child for public school

When you register your child at school, you will need to show official documents with your child's date of birth, your resident status in British Columbia, and the address where you live. You will also need to show your child's immunization record. This is a paper that lists the vaccinations against diseases that your child has received.

To register your child for public school, contact School District 59, Peace River South.

School District 59, Peace River South
11600 7th Street
Tel: 250 782-8571
www.sd59.bc.ca

Getting involved

If you have a child in school, talk often with your child's teachers. Go to the parent-teacher meetings during the year. You can also go to school meetings and volunteer in the school. Your children will sometimes bring home letters and notices from school. Make sure you read them to know what is happening at your child's school.

Keeping your language

Many newcomers want their children to continue learning their native language. In some places, there may be a preschool with classes in your language. There may also be classes after school or on Saturdays for elementary school students. You may have to pay fees for these classes. Many secondary schools have a choice of language classes. For information, call the B.C. Heritage Language Association at 604 298-4526 or visit their website at: www.bchla.net

Children with special needs

Some children need extra help. They may be blind or deaf or have another physical disability. Some children may need help because they have a learning disability.

In British Columbia, children with special needs attend regular classes. Contact your local school to talk about your child's special needs, and to learn about programs and services to help your child.

Chapter 5: Education

French programs

There are French programs in B.C. public schools:

- In Dawson Creek, students can take French Immersion programs to learn French and study all subjects in French.
 - In Dawson Creek, École Frank Ross Elementary offers early French Immersion. Tel: 250 782-5206.
 - Dawson Creek Secondary School offers French Immersion to Grade 12. Tel: 250 782-5585.
 - In all other public schools, students can learn French as one of their regular subjects. Talk to your local school or contact School District 59, Peace River South, at 250 782-8571 for more information.
- Some school districts have programs for students who speak French as their first language. You can find out about the francophone program by calling Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique at 604 214-2600 or toll-free at 1 888 715-2200. You can also visit the website at: www.csf.bc.ca

Independent (private) schools

Some independent schools have religious programs, such as in Catholic or Muslim schools. Others may have different teaching methods. Most independent schools charge fees. For a list of independent schools, call the office of the Federation of Independent School Associations at 604 684-6023 in Metro Vancouver. For more information visit the website at: www.fisabc.ca

You can also look for independent schools in the yellow pages of the phone book, under Schools–Academic–Elementary and Secondary. The B.C. Ministry of Education has information on independent schools on the website at: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/independentschools

Distributed (distance) Learning and Homeschooling

Some children in British Columbia do not go to regular schools. These children may live far from school, be too sick to travel to school or their parents may prefer to teach them at home. They can do this in two ways—by Distributed Learning or by Homeschooling.

Taking courses online or by correspondence (sent by mail) is called Distributed Learning. You can find out about Distributed Learning schools and courses at: www.learnnowbc.ca/schools

Students in Dawson Creek can take online distance education courses through the Distributed Learning program at Dawson Creek Secondary School. For more information, call 250 782-5585.

When parents are responsible for teaching their children at home, this is called Homeschooling. Parents have to prepare the lessons and make sure their children are learning. They must register their child with a school before they begin. You can find more information on Homeschooling at: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/home_school



Post-secondary education

After Grade 12, many students continue their education. There are public (government-funded) and private (not government-funded) universities, colleges, and institutes in British Columbia.

People can study many different subjects at university, such as arts, education, sciences, medicine, and law. It takes about four years of full-time study to complete a Bachelor's degree. If you continue at university, you can get a post-graduate degree such as a Master's or a Doctorate/Ph.D.

Colleges and institutes offer first- and second-year university courses. Then you can transfer to a university. Colleges and technical institutes also have job training programs, for example, chef training, computer technology, or auto mechanics.



Northern Lights College (www.nlc.bc.ca) has a campus in Dawson Creek. There is a University of Northern B.C. campus an hour away in Fort St. John.

For a list of colleges and institutes, see the end of this chapter or look in the yellow pages of the telephone book, under Schools—Academic—Colleges and Universities. The

yellow pages have both public and private schools. For a list of public post-secondary institutions, go to: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/institutions

To help you choose a post-secondary school and program, see Being an Informed Student at: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/informedstudent/welcome.htm

Costs and financial help

At public universities, colleges, and institutes, the government pays for most of the cost of programs, but students also have to pay fees. Each post-secondary school has different fees, and each program has different fees.

The B.C. government lends money to many students who need financial help. Some students with low incomes may get help to pay their fees and some of their living expenses. To get this help, students must have lived in B.C. for 12 months before their program starts. For information, talk to the financial aid office at the college, institute or university you plan to attend. You can also get information at the B.C. Government website at: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc

Parents can start a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) to save for their child's education after high school. You can open an RESP at many banks and credit unions. Your child needs a Social Insurance Number (SIN) to open an RESP. You may also be able to get a Canada Education Savings Grant. This is money that the Government of Canada deposits into your child's RESP. For more information, go to: www.CanLearn.ca or call 1 888 276-3624.

Chapter 5: Education

Many students work part-time or work in the summer to earn money for their education.

Private post-secondary schools and colleges

British Columbia has many private post-secondary colleges, business schools, technical schools, and language schools. The fees are sometimes higher than at public colleges, and they may have different programs.

Make sure that the private post-secondary school or college you want to attend is accredited with the provincial government. Accredited means the school or college has passed tests for educational standards.

You can contact the Private Career Training Institutions Agency (PCTIA) to find out which schools are accredited. Call toll-free 1 800 661-7441. The PCTIA website is: www.pctia.bc.ca

To find private post-secondary schools and colleges, look in the yellow pages, under Schools.

English classes for adults

There are many English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to help adults learn to speak, read, and write English.

English Language Services for Adults (ELSA)

Adult immigrants who need to learn English can go to free government-sponsored ESL classes. These free classes are called English Language Services for Adults (ELSA). Some

ELSA classes have child care. (For other child care services, see Chapter 6.) Find out more about this, and other English language services at: www.WelcomeBC.ca/LearnEnglish



In Dawson Creek, the Literacy Society provides language testing, English training and tutoring. The society's offices are child friendly and childcare is provided during some classes.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

ESL Settlement Assistance Program (ESL SAP)

In many areas of B.C., trained tutors help newcomers learn English.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca



College and public school English classes

Adult immigrants can also attend a full-time or part-time English class at a college or public school. These schools may offer free ESL classes or charge fees for classes. The provincial government may help pay the fees for students with low incomes. For information on the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program, visit: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/explore/grants-scholarships/adult-basic-education

Private English schools and tutors

Many private English schools and private tutors also teach English. These classes may be more expensive than classes in public schools and colleges, and are not always accredited with the provincial government. Look in the yellow pages, under Language Schools, for a listing of ESL schools, or search on the Internet. Find out if they are accredited by the government. For information on ESL classes, visit: www.elsanet.org/esldirectory/index.php

Continuing education for adults

Some adults in British Columbia want to start a program or continue their studies. Adults take courses to improve their reading or math skills, to finish secondary (high) school, to learn new job skills, or for enjoyment. Many adults attend full-time classes during the day.

Some working people study part-time. Many colleges, universities, and secondary schools offer full-time or part-time programs in the evening.

Adults can take upgrading courses to Grade 12 free of charge. You can take courses at a public school, a college, or on the Internet. For information about adult education programs, phone your local community college or visit: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/abesap.htm

In Dawson Creek adults can take upgrading courses to finish Grade 12.

Northern Lights College Workforce Training and Continuing Education Department
11401 8th Street
Tel: 250 784-7587
Toll-free: 1 866 463 6652
www.nlc.bc.ca/programs/workforcetraining.aspx

Distributed (distance) Learning for adults

Some adults want to study at home or cannot go to classes. Many colleges and universities offer classes on the Internet, by correspondence (by mail), and by telephone. You can get information from Thompson Rivers University Open Learning at 1 800 663-9711. Visit their website at: www.tru.ca/distance. You can also look online for post-secondary courses at: www.bccampus.ca

In Dawson Creek, Northern Lights College offers courses online and by video conference.

Early Childhood Education and Care, Education Assistant, and Information and Communication Technology are offered entirely online. Several university arts and sciences courses are delivered by video conference to students in communities near Dawson Creek such as Tumbler Ridge, Fort Nelson, or Chetwynd.

Chapter 5: Education

Northern Lights College
11401 8th Street
Tel: 250 782-5251
[www.nlc.bc.ca/Programs/
DistanceOnlinePrograms.aspx](http://www.nlc.bc.ca/Programs/DistanceOnlinePrograms.aspx)

Universities

The nearest university campus to Dawson Creek is in Fort St. John.

University of Northern B.C.

Fort St. John Campus
P.O. Box 1000, 9820 120th Avenue
Fort St. John, B.C., V1J 6K1
Tel: 250 787-6220
Toll-free: 1 800 935-2270

Prince George Campus
3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9
Tel: 250 960-5555
www.unbc.ca

Other B.C. Universities

You can also take online courses from these universities.

Capilano University
2055 Purcell Way
North Vancouver, B.C. V7J 3H5
Tel: 604 986-1911
www.capilanou.ca

There are also campuses in Sechelt and Squamish.

Emily Carr University of Art and Design
1399 Johnston Street, Granville Island
Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3R9
Tel: 604 844-3800
Toll-free: 1 800 832-7788
www.ecuad.ca

Kwantlen Polytechnic University
12666 72nd Avenue
Surrey, B.C. V3W 2M8
Tel: 604 599-2100
www.kwantlen.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Langley, Richmond, Cloverdale, and Surrey.

Royal Roads University
2005 Sooke Road
Victoria, B.C. V9B 5Y2
Tel: 250 391-2511
www.royalroads.ca

Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6
Tel: 778 782-3111
www.sfu.ca

Thompson Rivers University
Main Campus
900 McGill Road
Kamloops, B.C. V2C 0C8
Tel: 250 828-5000
www.tru.ca

University of British Columbia
2329 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z4
Tel: 604 822-2211
www.ubc.ca



University of the Fraser Valley

33844 King Road
Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 7M8
Tel: 604 504-7441
Toll-free: 1 888-504-7441
www.ufv.ca

There are also campuses in Abbotsford, Agassiz, Chilliwack, Hope, and Mission.

University of Victoria

Box 1700
Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2
Tel: 250 721-7211
www.uvic.ca

Vancouver Island University

900 – Fifth Street
Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 5S5
Tel: 250 753-3245
Toll-free: 1 888 920-2221
www.viu.ca

There are also campuses in Cowichan, Parksville, and Powell River.

Colleges

You can take college courses in Dawson Creek that will prepare you for a career or university.

Northern Lights College

The Dawson Creek campus of Northern Lights College has centres of excellence that train in developing alternate energy sources and in aerospace technologies.

11401 8th Street
Dawson Creek, B.C.
Tel: 250 782-5251
Toll-free: 1 866 463-6652 (1 866 INFO-NLC)
www.nlc.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Atlin, Chetwynd, Dease Lake, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, and Tumbler Ridge.

Other B.C. Colleges

Camosun College

3100 Foul Bay Road
Victoria, B.C. V8P 5J2
Tel: 250 370-3000
www.camosun.bc.ca

College of New Caledonia

3330 – 22nd Avenue
Prince George, B.C. V2N 1P8
Tel: 250 562-2131
Toll-free: 1 800 371-8111
www.cnc.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Burns Lake, Fort St. James, Fraser Lake, Mackenzie, Quesnel, Valemount, and Vanderhoof.

College of the Rockies

Box 8500
2700 College Way
Cranbrook, B.C. V1C 5L7
Tel: 250 489-2751
Toll-free: 1 877 489-2687
www.cotr.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Creston, Fernie, Golden, Invermere, and Kimberley.

Douglas College

700 Royal Avenue
New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2Z4
Tel: 604 527-5400
www.douglas.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Coquitlam and Maple Ridge.

Langara College

100 West 49th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 2Z6
Tel: 604 323-5511
www.langara.bc.ca

Chapter 5: Education

North Island College

2300 Ryan Road
Courtenay, B.C. V9N 8N6
Tel: 250 334-5000
Toll-free: 1 800 715-0914
www.nic.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Campbell River, Port Alberni and Mount Waddington, and a learning centre in Ucluelet.

Northwest Community College

5331 McConnell Avenue
Terrace, B.C. V8G 4X2
Tel: 250 635-6511
Toll-free: 1 877 277-2288
www.nwcc.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Hazelton, Houston, Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Queen Charlotte Village, Masset, Nass Valley, Smithers, and Skidegate (Kaay Llnagaay).

Okanagan College

1000 KLO Road
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 4X8
Tel: 250 762-5445
www.okanagan.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Penticton, Salmon Arm, and Vernon.

Selkirk College

Box 1200
301 Frank Beinder Way
Castlegar, B.C. V1N 3J1
Tel: 250 365-7292
Toll-free: 1 888 953-1133
www.selkirk.bc.ca

There are also campuses in Grand Forks, Kaslo, Nakusp, Nelson, and Trail.

Vancouver Community College

1155 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5T 4V5
Tel: 604 871-7000
www.vcc.ca

Institutes

British Columbia Institute of Technology

3700 Willingdon Avenue
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3H2
Tel: 604 434-5734
Toll-free: 1 866 434-1610
www.bcit.ca

Justice Institute of British Columbia

715 McBride Boulevard
New Westminster, B.C. V3L 5T4
Tel: 604 525-5422
Toll-free: 1 888 865-7764
www.jibc.ca

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

4155 Belshaw Street
Merritt, B.C. V1K 1R1
Tel: 250 378-3300
www.nvit.bc.ca

Chapter 6: Help for Individuals and Families



- Employment and income assistance
- Food banks
- Crisis centres
- Emergency shelter
- Abuse and violence
- Seniors' programs and benefits
- Help for young people
- Support for gay, lesbian, and transgendered people
- Help for families
- Child care

Employment and income assistance (welfare)

If you do not have enough money to live on, you can apply for financial help from the provincial government. This help is called the B.C. Employment and Assistance (BCEA) Program. It is also called welfare or income assistance. It is only for permanent residents and refugee claimants.

When you apply, the government will check your financial situation (your income, expenses, and things you own) to decide if you are eligible. Contact an Employment and Assistance Office at 1 866 866-0800 to talk about your application. Visit the website at: www.eia.gov.bc.ca/bcea.htm

For More Information

- Employment and Income Assistance Office in Dawson Creek
10103 13th Avenue
Toll-free: 1 866 866-0800
www.eia.gov.bc.ca/publicat/bcea/BCEA.htm
- Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html
- Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Chapter 6: Help for Individuals and Families

Sponsorship breakdown

Some people are sponsored by a family member to come to Canada. Sometimes there are changes or problems in the family, such as a marriage breakdown. If this happens, the sponsor is still responsible for the relative. If the sponsored person gets income assistance (welfare), the sponsor is responsible for paying the money back to the provincial government.

For information about sponsorship breakdown, contact the B.C. Ministry of Social Development at 1 877 815-2363, or visit: www.eia.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/2005/Sponsorship_Default.htm

For help in cases of abuse or to find an emergency shelter, see Abuse and Emergency shelter later in this chapter, or contact the Dawson Creek Literacy Society for help.

Food banks

Dawson Creek has several programs to make sure people in need get food.

The Salvation Army runs a food bank and has a soup kitchen for people in need. The food bank also has a drop-in from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday to Friday with free bread, doughnuts, and coffee.

The Salvation Army
1019 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-8669

St Mark's Church has a food bank and soup kitchen on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

St Mark's Church
1300 104th Avenue
Tel: 250 782-2636

The Dawson Creek Literacy Society also has a food share program. The Good Food Box provides a box of fresh fruit and vegetables for \$15 per month.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Food banks are not run by the government. People in the community donate the food. If you want to donate food, there are boxes in many food stores, churches, and other places. For information about food banks in B.C. visit: www.foodbanksbc.ca

Crisis centres

Some newcomers have problems adjusting to their new country. They get extremely sad or upset. Some people may even think about suicide. Most B.C. communities have crisis centres to help people in emotional crisis, such as depression, suicidal thoughts, or family and marriage problems.

If you are in a crisis, call the Distress Phone Services at 1 866 661-3311 or 1 800 784-2433 (1 800 SUICIDE) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You can also visit the Crisis Centre website at: www.crisiscentre.bc.ca



For support and information, young people can visit: www.YouthInBC.com and adults can visit: www.CrisisCentreChat.ca

In Dawson Creek women in crisis can call the Mizpah Transition House at 250 782-9176.

The Crisis Prevention Intervention and Information Centre For Northern BC has 24-hour help lines for people in crisis.

Youth in crisis, toll-free: 1 888 564-8336
Adults in crisis, toll-free: 1 888 562-1214

The Ministry of Children and Family Development operates an emergency telephone line for children. If you or someone you know needs help of any kind, anytime of the day or night, call 310-1234 (no area code needed). This is a toll-free call, and can be made from a pay phone. To use the Telephone Device for the Deaf, dial 1 866 660-0505. You can also visit the website at: www.safekidsbc.ca

Homelessness

If you leave your home because of an emergency or because you are worried about your safety, you may need to find emergency shelter.

Contact the Dawson Creek Literacy Society. They can help you find a place to stay.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

If you experience violence in your family and need a new place to live in an emergency, please see Abuse in the family, below.

In Dawson Creek, the Salvation Army has programs to help families in poverty.
Tel: 250 782-8669

Help for victims of trauma

Some people may have suffered from grief or trauma before coming to Canada. For example, they may have experienced torture or the trauma of war. They may also have experienced the loss of loved ones. There are groups that give help and counselling to these people and their families.

For more information about getting help in Dawson Creek, contact

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Children Who Witness Abuse

In Dawson Creek the South Peace Community Resources Society provides counselling for children, aged 3 to 18 years, who have witnessed abuse.

South Peace Community Resources Society
10110 13th Street
Tel: 250 782-9174
www.spcrs.ca

The Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST) also provides support. It provides service in English and other languages.

Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)
Toll-Free: 1 866 393-3133.
www.vast-vancouver.ca

Chapter 6: Help for Individuals and Families

Abuse and violence

There are many forms of abuse, both physical and emotional. When one person assaults (attacks), hurts, mistreats, or threatens another person, it is called abuse. In Canada, all violence and threats of violence are against the law. The police can arrest someone who assaults or threatens to attack another person. The person could get a fine or go to jail.

Abuse is always wrong. If someone abuses you, it is not your fault. You can get help to get away from the person who abuses you.

Sexual assault

Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact without a person's consent. Sexual assault can range from unwanted sexual touching to forced sexual intercourse (sometimes called rape). Sexual assault is against the law, even if it is done by a spouse, a relative, or a friend. If you have been sexually assaulted, call VictimLink BC at 1 800 563-0808. They will help you to see a doctor, talk to a counselor, report to the police, and get other support services. If you are in danger or want to report the sexual assault, call the police. For more information, visit: www.victimlinkbc.ca

If you are in immediate danger, call 9-1-1. You should call the police even if the sexual assault happened in the past. The non-emergency phone number for the Dawson Creek RCMP is 250 784-3700.

There are other organizations that help women who have been sexually assaulted. You can call the Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) Rape Crisis Centre. The

crisis line is available 24 hours a day.

Toll-free: 1 877 392-7583

www.wavaw.ca

Abuse in the family

Abuse can happen in families. A family member can be a wife, husband, common-law wife or husband, or same-sex partner. Children, parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, and in-laws are also family. There are many forms of abuse that can happen in a family. For example, hitting or kicking someone, or using a weapon to hurt someone, is physical abuse. Forcing sex on someone is sexual abuse. Threatening to take away their children, not letting someone talk to friends or family, or not letting the person go out of the house are forms of emotional abuse. Threatening to take away immigration sponsorship is also abuse. Not letting a person get or keep a job, get job training, or have money, are forms of financial abuse. Not letting someone practise their religion is spiritual abuse. Using religion as a reason to hurt or control someone is also abuse.

If you are a permanent resident of Canada, you will not be deported if you leave an abusive family situation. Your sponsorship cannot be taken away after you become a permanent resident. If you are not yet a permanent resident, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) will carefully evaluate your special case before making a decision.

If you need help

- If you are in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- Call VictimLink BC at 1 800 563-0808 or go to: www.victimlinkbc.ca. They



can give you information and referrals to agencies and services to help you. They also provide immediate support for victims of family and sexual violence. This service is available in 110 languages.

- Call a Transition House or Safe Home Program. Transition houses help women (with or without children). They are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They give safe temporary shelter, usually up to 30 days. You can get help to find counselling and medical help. In Dawson Creek women can call the Mizpah Transition House at 250 782-9176, for 24-hour shelter.

Child abuse and neglect

Sometimes parents do not take proper care of their children. They may hit or neglect their children—for example, they may leave young children under 12 years old at home alone. There are laws to protect children in these situations.

If you think a child needs help, call the Helpline for Children. Dial 310-1234 from anywhere in B.C. No area code is needed. You can phone this number 24 hours a day. The government may send a social worker to check on a child.

If social workers think the child is in danger, they can take the child out of the home to a safe place. If this happens, the parents should get legal help immediately. If you believe that a child is in danger, abused or neglected, the law says you must report it.

Elder abuse and neglect

Seniors are people 65 years or older. Sometimes seniors are abused physically, emotionally, sexually, or financially. They may be neglected or they may neglect themselves.

If you, or someone you know, is being abused or neglected, call VictimLink BC.

Toll-free: 1 800 563-0808

www.victimlinkbc.ca

Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support

Toll-free: 1 866 437-1940

www.bcceas.ca

Animal abuse

Sometimes people abuse or neglect animals. They may be pets (such as dogs, cats or birds), farm animals, or animals in zoos or game farms.

Animal abuse is against the law. If you think an animal is being abused or neglected, you should report it. Contact the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BCSPCA).

Toll-free: 1 800 665-1868

www.sPCA.bc.ca

SPCA South Peace Branch

637 114th Avenue

Tel: 250 782-2444

www.sPCA.bc.ca/southpeace

Problems with alcohol, drugs, and gambling

If you need information and support for addiction, there is information online in Punjabi, Arabic, Chinese, Farsi/Dari, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Japanese, Vietnamese and French at: www.heretohelp.bc.ca/other-languages

Chapter 6: Help for Individuals and Families

To find an agency in your community that helps with alcohol and drug problems, call the Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Line at: 1 800 663-1441. This service is available in other languages. You can phone these numbers 24 hours a day, or visit the website at: www.bc211.ca

For gambling problems, call the Problem Gambling Help Line at 1 888 795-6111. This service is available in other languages. You can also look in the blue pages of the telephone book, in the Government of British Columbia section, under Addiction Services.

For help with an addiction issue in Dawson Creek, call the Northern Health Unit addiction line at 250 782-4410.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is for people who want to stop drinking alcohol.

To find a meeting in Dawson Creek, go to www.area78.org/findmeeting or call 780 532-1772.

Al-Anon is for people who have a friend or family member who is an alcoholic. Download a list of meetings in Dawson Creek: www.bcyukon-al-anon.org/~bcyukon-al-anon/pdf/DISTRICT29.pdf

Contact Al-Anon for more information. Call toll-free: 1 888 425-2666
www.bcyukon-al-anon.org/contacts.html



Seniors' programs and benefits

Housing

B.C. Housing has programs for seniors with low incomes. (For information on low-cost housing for seniors, see Chapter 2, under Low-cost housing.) One of BC Housing's programs is called Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI). This program provides funding to help low-income seniors and people with disabilities stay in their own homes.

To find out if you qualify for HAFI, call BC Housing at 1 800 407-7757 or visit the BC Housing website at: www.bchousing.org/HAFI. Information about HAFI is available in English, Punjabi, and Cantonese.

Seniors' groups

Most communities in B.C. have seniors' groups. These groups usually have programs and activities for seniors. Some have special services such as counselling, medical clinics, and legal advice.

In Dawson Creek, workers and volunteers with Better at Home help seniors with chores like yard work, snow removal and



housekeeping so that older residents can continue to live independently in their homes.

Better at Home
Tel: 250 782-1138
www.betterathomedc.org

For more information on seniors' programs and services, contact the Seniors Health Care Support Line. Call 1 877 952-3181 and ask for a free copy of the BC Seniors' Guide. This Guide is available in English, Chinese, Punjabi, and French. It is also online at: www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsguide

Help for young people

Many communities have agencies with special counsellors to help young people. Counsellors can answer questions and give advice about pregnancy, drugs, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and other problems. Options for Sexual Health has a clinic at the Dawson Creek Health Unit.

Options for Sexual Health
1001 110th Avenue
Tel: 250 719-6500
www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/providers/opt-dawson-creek

There are community agencies to help children and young people. Big Sisters and Big Brothers match an adult and a child. The adult acts like an older sister or brother to the child. Boys and Girls Clubs also help young people—for example, the clubs have many after-school programs. Children can play team sports and learn new skills.

- The Kids Help Phone, at 1 800 668-6868, is a 24-hour help line for children and

youth. You can get immediate help and information. You do not have to tell them your name. The information you give them is confidential (they do not tell anyone else). In B.C. you can also call the Helpline for Children at 310-1234 (no area code required).

- The Youth Against Violence Line, 1 800 680-4264, is a 24-hour help line. You do not have to tell them your name and the information you give them is confidential. Young people can report crimes and violence, and get help. Anyone can call for information about gangs, bullying, and other problems young people may have. This service is available in 130 languages.
- In Dawson Creek the South Peace Community Resources Society's Reconnect Program helps youth who live on the streets or are at risk of living on the streets. The program provides crisis intervention, counselling, and activities that build life skills.

South Peace Community Resources Society
10110 13th Street
Tel: 250 782-9174
www.spcrs.ca

Support for gay, lesbian, and transgendered people

There are agencies where gays and lesbians can go for information and advice in their own language. Call Qmunity (B.C.'s Queer Resource Centre) at 1 800 566-1170. Visit the website at: www.qmunity.ca

Chapter 6: Help for Individuals and Families

Options for Sexual Health has a clinic at the Dawson Creek Health Unit.

Options for Sexual Health
1001 110th Avenue
Tel: 250 719-6500
www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/providers/opt-dawson-creek

The Dawson Creek Pride Society has a Facebook page: www.facebook.com/DawsonCreekPride

Gay and lesbian youth can get help and advice at the Pride Education Network.

Pride Education Network
E-mail: info@pridenet.ca
www.pridenet.ca

Parents of gay and lesbian children can get help and advice at PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). Visit the website at: www.pflagcanada.ca

Help for families

The city's Community Services Department has morning and out of school care programs for children from kindergarten to 12 years old at Canalta School (1901 110th Avenue) and Tremblay School (11311 13A Street). Full day child care is available for non-instructional days and for spring and winter breaks. There is a full summer program at the Youth Care Centre (1017 – 105th Avenue).

Community Services Department
Tel: 250 784-3604
www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/communityservices/out-of-school-care/

The Supported Child Development Program works with families to provide the best supports for children.

Supported Child Development Program
Unit 7 – 10200 8th Street
Tel: 250 782-1138 ext 223

Benefits for families with children

You can apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit for children under 18 years old. The federal government sends monthly cheques to some families. The cheque is usually sent to the mother. If you are a low-income working family with children, you may be eligible for the B.C. Benefits Family Bonus. To find out



about these benefits, call 1 800 387-1193 or visit the website at: www.servicecanada.gc.ca. You can also talk with a settlement worker to get more information.

Child care

Types of child care

Parents who work or go to school may need someone to take care of their children. If you do not have a family member to take care of your children, there are two different kinds of child care available: licensed child care and



unlicensed child care. The B.C. government checks all licensed child care centres. For more information, contact the licensing officer at your local Community Care Licensing Program. You can look up the Health Authority Community Care Licensing Programs at:

www.health.gov.bc.ca/ccf. Babysitters and unlicensed family day cares are not checked.

Licensed child care

- A group child care centre (day care) is usually in a community centre, church or school. It takes children between 18 months and five years old. The workers have special training. Child care centres are usually open all day.
- A licensed family day care takes babies and children of all ages. It can take up to seven children. This kind of care is in the caregiver's home. You can take your child there every day.
- A pre-school program provides learning activities and games for children for up to four hours a day. Pre-school programs are usually for children three to five years old.
- Out-of-school care is a program for school-age children at or near their school. It is before and after school and on school holidays. These programs are usually for children five to 12 years old.

Unlicensed child care

Unlicensed or Licence-not-required (LNR) child care providers can only care for two children or one group (brothers and sisters) of any age at one time, in addition to their own children.

Unlicensed child care providers may or may not have formal child care training or experience. They set their own hours of operation, fees, and operating policies. Parents must judge the quality of care provided in any unlicensed child care arrangement.

LNR child care providers are encouraged—*but not required*—to register with their local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program. If they have registered, it means they have met important requirements, such as:

- criminal record check (for everyone over age 12 living in the home)
- character references
- home safety assessment
- physician's report on their physical and emotional capacity to care for children
- first aid training
- child care training courses or workshops

Families using a Registered Licence-Not-Required child care provider are eligible for a higher Child Care Subsidy rate than a non-registered Licence-Not-Required.

For more information call 1 888 338-6622 or visit: www.ccr.bc.ca

Contact the Northern Health Authority.

Northern Health Authority Community Care Licensing Office
1001 110th Avenue
Tel: 250 719-6500
www.northernhealth.ca/YourHealth/CommunityCareLicensing.aspx

Chapter 6: Help for Individuals and Families

Choosing child care

Parents' Guide to Selecting and Monitoring Child Care in BC is a booklet that can help you decide what kind of child care you need. You can get the booklet on-line at: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/publications.htm

In Dawson Creek you can find a list of licenced child care facilities at www.healthspace.ca/nha

Finding child care

The B.C. government has Child Care Resource and Referral offices that help parents find child care. For information, visit the website at: www.ccr.bc.ca

The South Peace Community Resources Society will help people find child care in Dawson Creek.

South Peace Community Resources Society
Tel: 250 782-1138
www.spcrs.ca

The Northern Health Authority has an online list of licenced child care facilities at www.healthspace.ca/nha

You can also:

- Ask a worker at the Dawson Creek Literacy Society, 250 782-4211, to help you.
- Call the Ministry of Children and Family Development at 1 888 338-6622.
- Call Service BC toll-free: 1 800 663-7867.
- Look in the yellow pages, under Day Care Centres or Pre-School Centres.
- Get advice from friends and neighbours.

- Look in the classified advertisements in the newspaper for babysitters and child care (day care) centres.
- Look for advertisements on notice boards in your community.

You may need to talk with several people and visit several places to find child care you like.

Child care costs

Full-time child care is expensive. The provincial government may pay for all or part of the cost for some low-income families. This is called a child care subsidy. For more information, call the Child Care Subsidy Service Centre at 1 888 338-6622. If you do not speak English, ask for someone who speaks your language. Visit the website at: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/subsidy_promo.htm

To find out if you are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy, visit: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/eligibility.htm

For help with the application form, contact the Dawson Creek Literacy Society.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

The Canada Child Tax Benefit is a monthly payment to help families with the cost of raising children under age 18. To qualify, at least one parent must be a resident of Canada and both parents must send in their income tax forms every year, even if they have no income to report. To apply, call 1 800 387-1193. For information, go to:



www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/cctb/menu-eng.html. You can also talk to a settlement worker at your local immigrant settlement agency.

You will need receipts from your child care centre. If you pay an individual for child care, you will also need receipts that contain their full name and their Social Insurance Number.

Children who need extra support

Some children need special care. They may have a physical disability or a learning problem. For information on programs that may be available for your child with special needs, visit: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/my_childs_special_needs.htm or call 250 952-6044.

Some child care centres can give your child extra care to be able to participate in a regular child care setting. To learn more about the Supported Child Development program, visit: www.scdp.bc.ca, or call a Child Care Resource and Referral office at 1 888 338-6622 (www.childcarechoices.ca).

In Dawson Creek, the South Peace Community Resources Society will help newcomer families with children who may have social and language needs.

South Peace Community Resources Society
10110 13th Street
Tel: 250 782-9174
www.spcrs.ca

Starting your own child care program

What if you want to start a child care centre? You need a licence to take care of more than two children who are not your own. You do not need a licence to look after one or two children. For more information, visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/ccf/child_care.html. You can also contact the licensing officer at the Northern Health Authority Community Care Licensing Program.

Northern Health Authority Community Care Licensing Program
1001 110th Avenue
Tel: 250 719-6500
www.northernhealth.ca/YourHealth/CommunityCareLicensing.aspx

In Dawson Creek, the South Peace Community Resources Society will work with people who want to start a child care centre to help them prepare to be licenced. For more information, call 250 782-1138.

Chapter 7: Cars and Driving



- Driving in B.C.
- Insurance
- Driver's licence
- Traffic laws
- Car crashes
- Buying a car
- Winter and summer driving



Driving in B.C.

- In Canada, people drive on the right side of the road.
- You must have a valid licence and vehicle insurance to drive in B.C.
- You must respect the rights of cyclists and pedestrians (people walking), and stop for pedestrians crossing the street.
- You must not leave young children alone in a car.

ICBC

In B.C., the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) is responsible for:

- basic vehicle insurance (called Autoplan)
- driver licensing and B.C. Identification Cards
- claim service if you have a crash

ICBC is owned by the B.C. government.

ICBC's website (www.icbc.com) has a lot of useful information about driving in B.C. Some is available in Chinese and Punjabi.

Basic insurance

You must not drive a car without insurance. Every car in B.C. must have basic Autoplan insurance. Basic insurance pays for the damage to someone else's car if you cause a crash. It also pays costs for anyone hurt in the crash.

You can buy Autoplan insurance for your vehicle at any Autoplan broker office.



Autoplan brokers are independent businesses that sell vehicle insurance for ICBC. To find registered Autoplan brokers in Dawson Creek, visit the ICBC website at: www.icbc.com/autoplan/broker

Many things affect the cost of your car insurance—for example, where you live, the type of car you have, if you use your car for work or just for pleasure, and your driving record.

More protection

When you go to the Autoplan office, ask about more protection. A bad crash may cost more than your basic insurance covers. You can also buy other kinds of insurance—for example, if you damage your own car. You do not have to buy these other kinds of insurance, but it is a good idea to get as much protection as possible.

If you were a safe driver in your country, you can ask your insurance company in that country to write a letter about your insurance claims record. This must be an official letter. It must be in English on the company's letterhead. If the letter is not in English, you must get it translated. Take the letter with you when you buy your insurance. You may get a safe driving discount.

You can find more information about this lower rate (discount) at: www.icbc.com/autoplan/moving/moving-to/newres-discount

Driver's licence

All drivers in British Columbia must have a valid (legal) driver's licence. If you have a valid

driver's licence from your country or from another province of Canada, you can use your licence for 90 days. You must apply for a B.C. licence within 90 days.



If you are a visitor, you can drive in B.C. for up to six months with a valid driver's licence from your country.



The process for getting a B.C. driver's licence depends on the country where you already have your licence. You may be able to get a B.C. driver's licence right away, or you may need to pass knowledge and road tests first. Go to the Driver Licensing section of: www.icbc.com to find out what you need to do.

There are guides and other supports at: www.icbc.com to help you prepare for these tests. You can also visit a B.C. driver licensing office. To find the phone numbers and locations of these offices, go to: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/find-licensing or look in the grey pages of the telephone book, under ICBC—Driver Licensing Services. Many ICBC services are available in Chinese and Punjabi, and driver licensing offices have telephone translation services in more than 170 languages.

Chapter 7: Cars and Driving

To find out what the signs, signals, and lane markings along the roads in B.C. mean, visit: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/getting-licensed/pass-veh/roadsense-drivers and review Chapter 4 of the Learn to Drive Smart guide. You can also take a practice test at: <http://apps.icbc.com/licensing/opkt/sign>

For more information, go to the Service BC Centre in Dawson Creek.

Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html

Applying for a driver's licence

In B.C. you need different types of licences to drive a motorcycle, bus, large truck, or taxi.

To apply for a B.C. driver's licence, you must be 16 years old or older. If you are under 19 years old, a parent or guardian (someone who is responsible for you) must sign the application.

You can apply for a driver's licence at the Service BC office in Dawson Creek.

Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html

You will need to take two pieces of identification (ID).

To find out what ID documents you need, and to find out how much you will need to pay,

go to: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/getting-licensed/pass-veh/knowledge-passenger

Knowledge test

To get a driver's licence you must know the driving rules in British Columbia. You can find the *Learn to Drive Smart* guide at: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/getting-licensed/pass-veh/roadsense-drivers, or visit the Dawson Creek Service BC office for a free copy. It has information about learning to drive, B.C.'s traffic laws, the rules of the road, and safe driving. When you have studied the guide, you can find practice tests at: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/getting-licensed/pass-veh/opkt to help you prepare.

When you are ready to take the knowledge test, visit the Service BC office in Dawson Creek. The test is on a computer. You must answer at least 40 out of 50 questions correctly to pass. You will also have a vision test. If you use glasses or contact lenses, wear them to take the vision test.

Knowledge tests are available in English, Arabic, Croatian, Farsi (Persian), French, Punjabi, Russian, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. If you need a translator, check with the ICBC driver licensing office.

Graduated Licensing Program

If you have had a driver's licence for at least two years, you may not need to go through the Graduated Licensing Program. See: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/getting-licensed/graduated-licensing for more information on what documents you will need to prove your driving experience.



If you have never had a driver's licence before, you will have to go through B.C.'s Graduated Licensing Program.



Learner stage

When you pass the knowledge and vision tests, you will get a learner's licence. This licence is good for two years and has some restrictions.

You can practice driving with this licence, but you must always have someone 25 years old (or older), who has a full privilege driver's licence, sitting next to you. Your car must have a sign with the letter "L" (for learner) on it. You can find a list of all restrictions at: www.icbc.com/licensing/lic_getlic_passenger_learner.asp

If you have never had a driver's licence, you may want to take driving lessons or an ICBC-approved course from a driving school. You may take the road test 12 months after getting your learner's licence.

To book a road test in Dawson Creek, contact the Service BC office.

Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html



Novice stage

When you pass the road test, if this is your first driver's licence, your car must have an "N" sign (for novice) on it for 24 months.

You can have only one passenger with you—unless there is a licensed driver 25 years or older beside you or the passengers are close family members (parents, spouse, brother or sister). You must not drive after consuming any alcohol. You can find a list of all restrictions at: www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/getting-licensed/graduated-licensing/novice-stage

After 24 months of the novice stage, you can take a second road test and get a full-privilege licence.

Road test

During the road test, an ICBC driver examiner will come with you to test how safely you drive. If you pass the road test, you will get a B.C. driver's licence. If you fail the test, you will need to practise more. Ask when you can take the test again.

There are fees for the knowledge test, road test, and driver's licence.

Driving schools

Driving schools can help you learn to drive. You may be able to find a teacher who speaks your language. Look in the yellow pages, under Driving Schools, to find a list

Chapter 7: Cars and Driving

of schools in your area. Make sure it is an ICBC-licensed driving school. To find ICBC-licensed driving schools in Dawson Creek, go to: www.dtcbbc.com/resource/all_sch.htm

Traffic laws

Speeding

In most cities the speed limit is 50 kilometres per hour (km/h). Outside cities, the speed limit is usually higher. Watch for speed limit signs. Near parks and schools, the speed limit is usually 30 kilometres per hour (km/h). The fines for speeding (driving faster than the speed limit) can be very expensive. If you do not pay the fine, you will not be able to renew your driver's licence.

Seat belts

Seat belts can protect you from injuries or death. In British Columbia, all drivers and passengers must wear seat belts. The police can give you a ticket, and you will have to pay a fine if you or other people in your car are not wearing a seat belt.

Child safety seats

You can find details about child safety seats in the Road Safety section of: www.icbc.com/road-safety/safer-drivers/child-seats. Some information is available in Chinese and Punjabi.



A baby or a young child under nine years old must sit in a special safety seat. A child must not sit on an adult's lap.

All babies from birth to one year AND up to 9 kg (20 lb.) must be in a child car seat that looks towards the back of the car (rear-facing). Never put a child car seat in the front passenger seat.

Children over one year AND 9 kg to 18 kg (20 to 40 lb.) can be in a rear or forward-facing car seat, depending on the child's weight. The car seat manufacturer will provide the weight limits for the seat.

The British Columbia Automobile Association (BCAA) Road Safety Foundation recommends keeping your child facing the rear of the vehicle for as long as possible. A rear-facing seat is the safest option as long as the child's weight is within the limit.

Forward facing seats must always be used with a tether.

All children over 18 kg (40 lb.) must use a booster seat until they are nine years old, or until they are at least 145 cm (4 ft. 9 in.) tall.

All children over nine years old must use regular seat belts.

For more information, visit the BCAA website at: www.bcaaroadsafety.com/child-passenger-safety/children-1-to-4-years-old

Children in cars

Children under 12 years old should ride in the back seat of a car. In a car crash, an airbag can seriously injure a child sitting in the front seat.



Check with an expert to find out if you have put in your child car seat correctly. For information and help, call the BCAA Road Safety Foundation at 1 877 247-5551 or visit: www.bcaaroadsafety.com/child-passenger-safety/

For more information, visit the BCAA website at: www.bcaaroadsafety.com/child-passenger-safety/children-1-to-4-years-old

Drinking and driving

British Columbia has very strict laws about driving after you have been drinking alcohol. If the police stop you after you have been drinking alcohol, you could have your vehicle taken away, lose your driver's licence, pay fines, and go to jail.

Traffic tickets

You have to pay a fine if the police catch you breaking traffic laws, such as driving through a red light or using handheld devices, such as cell phones or iPods, while driving. If the police stop you for breaking a traffic law, stay in your car. The police officer will come to your car to talk to you.

You do not pay the police officer who gives you the ticket. You can pay by bringing your ticket and payment to one of these locations:

- any ICBC driver licensing office
- most Autoplan brokers
- any ICBC claim centre
- provincial court registry
- Service BC centre

You can also pay the fine by sending a cheque to the address on the ticket, or on the Internet using a credit card. Look for the website on the ticket.

If you disagree with the ticket, you can go to court. The judge will decide if you have to pay.

Drivers who get tickets may have to pay an extra premium to ICBC, or they may even have to give up their licence.

Special lanes

In some cities and on some highways, there are special lanes for buses. In some cities there are special lanes for bicycles. On some highways there is a special lane for cars with two or more people. This is called a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane. Pay attention to these special lanes. You can get a traffic ticket if you drive in the wrong lane.

Parking tickets

There are no parking meters in Dawson Creek. You cannot park downtown for longer than two hours, unless otherwise posted. The city does not give parking tickets to many vehicles unless there is a problem, but it will ticket a vehicle that is parked in a disabled parking spot without a permit.

In other cities, you may have to pay a fine if you get a ticket for parking in a no parking area or if you do not put enough money in a parking meter. Be sure to check the signs on the street. In many places, you can only park at certain times of the day. For example, some signs or parking meters say: "No Parking Between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m." If you park at these spaces between those hours,

Chapter 7: Cars and Driving

your car will get a ticket and will be towed away. You cannot park in front of a fire hydrant (which firefighters use to get water to a fire), or at places where public buses stop to pick up passengers.

You can also get a ticket and be towed from parking lots if you have not paid enough money.

Disabled parking

Some parking places have a special sign. These parking places are reserved for people with a physical disability. You must not park there unless you have a special permit. Talk to your doctor if you need a disabled parking permit.

Car crashes

If you have a crash, you must:

1. Dial 9-1-1 if anyone is hurt.
2. Write these down:
 - name, address, and phone number of each driver
 - driver's licence number of each driver
 - car licence plate number of each driver
 - insurance information for vehicles not insured by ICBC
 - police file number if it is a serious crash

You should also note:

- date, time, and location of the crash
- weather conditions
- what direction you and each other driver were travelling
- where your vehicle was, and where the other vehicle was

3. Give your information to the other driver.
4. Get the name, address, and phone number of anyone who saw the crash (a witness).

Reporting to the police

If you need the police to come, call 9-1-1 or the emergency number in your area. If it is not an emergency call the Dawson Creek RCMP at 250 784-3700.

Reporting to ICBC

You should phone ICBC as soon as possible after a crash.

ICBC's Dial-a-Claim Centre is open 24 hours a day. Call 1 800 910-4222. Telephone translation service is available in more than 170 languages.

Some claims can be reported online. Go to: www.icbc.com/claims/report-online

Buying a new or used vehicle (car or truck) from a dealer

Car dealers sell new and used vehicles. Before you start looking, know how much money you can spend and what kind of vehicle you need. It is a good idea to look on the Internet or go to several dealers to compare prices before you buy. You can bargain with the salesperson to get a lower price.

If you are buying a used vehicle, the dealer must tell you its history and make sure it is safe. You should test drive the vehicle and make sure that all promises the dealer makes



are written into the purchase agreement and anything you sign.

Make sure the dealer you buy your car from is licensed by the Motor Vehicle Sales Authority of B.C. (VSA). This agency has information about buying a car. It also may be able to help if you have a problem or complaints.

Go to the Consumer Resources section of the website at: www.vehiclesalesauthority.com to watch videos about buying vehicles in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Punjabi.

The names of dealers are in the yellow pages, under Automobile Dealers–New Cars or Automobile Dealers–Used Cars. Most dealers also have websites with prices of and information about the vehicles they are selling.

Warranties

New cars have a warranty from the company that made them. If you buy a used vehicle from a dealership, it may also have a warranty. Having a warranty means the dealer will replace or repair certain parts for free or at a lower price.

There are many types of warranties. Some may cover only some things. Before you buy a car, find out what the warranty covers and how long it lasts.

Getting a loan

If you are borrowing money to buy a car, ask a bank or credit union for a loan with a low interest rate. A car dealer may also have loans available. Check at several places to see what the interest rate will be for your loan. Do not leave a dealership with a vehicle if the terms of the loan are not final.

Buying a used car from another person

You can buy a car directly from the owner. Check the classified advertisements in the newspaper or look for special newspapers that only advertise vehicles. You can also search online.

Always test drive a car before you buy it. Take along someone who knows about cars for advice. Remember, some people may try to sell you a car with problems. For tips about buying used vehicles, visit the Consumer Resources section of the Motor Vehicle Sales Authority of B.C. website at: www.mvsabc.com/consumer-resources or ICBC at: www.icbc.com/road-safety/safer-vehicles

Many people who say they are selling their own vehicle are really unlicensed dealers, called curbers. They may have lower prices but you take more risks. For example, the car may not be safe. If you have problems, you will also not be able to take the vehicle back or get help from the Vehicle Sales Authority.

You should check the history of the car before you buy it to find out if it has been in a crash or has other problems. You can get history reports at: www.icbc.com or www.carproof.com. There is a fee for both services, but the money you spend could save you from making a big mistake.

For more information, call any B.C. Autoplan broker. Look in the yellow pages, under Insurance Agents and Brokers, or visit www.icbc.com/autoplan/broker. You can also call the Service BC office in Dawson Creek at 250 784-2224, to ask about vehicle inspections.

Chapter 7: Cars and Driving

Check for liens

Sometimes, a private seller has the ownership papers but still owes money on the car. If you buy the car, you may have to pay the money still owed on it. This is called a lien. It is important to ask for a lien search. Service BC Centres do lien searches. You will need the year, make (model), and serial number of the vehicle. There is a fee for this service. This service is included in a CarProof report. Licensed dealers must sell cars that have no liens.

Vehicles from outside B.C.

If you buy a used car from outside of B.C., or if you buy a car that has been modified (changed), you must pay to have it inspected (checked) before you can register it. Only government-approved garages can do this inspection. Look in the yellow pages, under Vehicle Inspection Service. For more information, call any B.C. Autoplan broker. Autoplan brokers are listed in the yellow pages under Insurance Agents and Brokers. Look for a Service BC office in communities that do not have these services. In Dawson Creek, contact Service BC.

Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html

Registration and insurance

You must register your car, buy licence plates, and buy car insurance. You can do this at any Autoplan (insurance broker) office. Autoplan offices are listed in the yellow pages, under Insurance Agents and Brokers.

Driving

Visit the DriveBC website to get up to date road conditions and driving tips:
www.drivebc.ca

You can find driving routes for cities and regions across British Columbia:
www.hellobc.com/british-columbia/transportation-maps/maps.aspx

You can also use the distance chart (www.th.gov.bc.ca/popular-topics/distances/calculator.asp) to find out how far other cities and towns are from each other, and how long it will take you to drive from one community to another. For example, Dawson Creek is 405 kilometres from Prince George and it will take approximately four and one half hours to drive there.



Winter driving

Dawson Creek has cold weather and heavy snowfall in the winter. It is important to be prepared for winter driving conditions.

To winterize your car, you need to do these things:

- Have the right tires on your vehicle. If your vehicle has all-season tires and you live in or travel to areas where it snows regularly, you should change all four to winter tires.
- Make sure your battery is in good condition.
- Keep antifreeze in the radiator. Have your radiator tested to make sure it will not freeze in very cold weather.
- Make sure your windshield wipers are in good condition, and that the tank that holds your windshield washer fluid (reservoir) is full.
- Some roads outside cities have lots of snow and ice. The police may require your car to have snow tires or chains to travel on these roads.
- Keep an emergency kit in your car. Put warm clothing, dry food, water, a blanket, a shovel, and a flashlight in the kit.

You can talk to the people at your garage, service station, or dealership for information and advice about winter car care. For daily information about road conditions in and near Dawson Creek and in other parts of B.C. visit: www.drivebc.ca

Summer driving

Some areas of the province, like the Okanagan Valley, can have very hot temperatures in the summer. Dawson Creek usually has warm summers. On hot days, the temperature inside a parked car can be very high.

Here are some tips:

- Never leave children or pets in a parked car on a warm day.
- Bring lots of drinking water with you in the car.
- Before going on a long trip, take your car in for a safety check. Your local garage or the service department of your car dealer can help you. They should check the tires, engine, brakes, and radiator.

Chapter 8: Employment and Business



- Social Insurance Number
- Finding a job
- Applying for a job
- Discrimination
- Credentials
- Working
- Laws about working
- Getting paid
- Losing your job
- If you get hurt at work
- Harassment at work
- Starting your own business

Social Insurance Number



To work in Canada or to have access to government programs and benefits, you need a Social Insurance Number (SIN). When you arrive in Canada, you must apply for your SIN in

person. For information on how to apply and what documents you will need, please call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) or visit the Service Canada website: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sin/apply/how.shtml

If you do not speak English or French, you may want to bring an interpreter with you.

Remember that your SIN is confidential and has important information about you. Visit this website to read the Social Insurance Number Code of Practice:
www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/about/reports/sin/cop/toc.shtml

Service Canada
103 – 1508 102nd Avenue
Toll-free: 1 800 622-6232
www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/sc-dsp.cgi?rc=5996&ln=eng

Finding a job

Dawson Creek is expected to have some of the fastest job growth in the province over the next few years. Between now and 2020, the northeast region of B.C. will see new jobs in



transportation and warehousing, professional scientific fields, hospitality, health care, utilities, oil and gas, and construction.

Dawson Creek is a growing and energetic city. Oil and gas exploration and drilling provide many kinds of jobs. Businesses in and near Dawson Creek need skilled trades workers, labourers and people to work in service and hospitality industries.

Where to look for a job

There are several programs and services to help people in Dawson Creek find a job:

- The WorkBC Employment Services Centre has a job board and lists jobs online. WorkBC in Dawson Creek offers workshops to help you with your resume and interview skills.
- The Dawson Creek Literacy Society can help you in your job search. Staff can help you with your résumé or application.

WorkBC Employment Services Centre
1105 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-8744
www.jobsearchonline.bc.ca

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Other helpful resources:

- To find all job postings in B.C., visit the WorkBC website at: www.workbc.ca/
- www.jobbank.gc.ca
- BC Public Service Job Postings at: employment.gov.bc.ca
- www.workopolis.com
- www.bcjobnetwork.com
- Look in the classified advertisements in newspapers and on the Internet: www.dawsoncreekdailynews.ca
- Tell many people that you are looking for a job. Friends, relatives, teachers, neighbours, and counsellors may know about jobs.
- Check notice boards in your community for job advertisements.
- Look for help wanted signs outside businesses and stores.
- Apply at the human resources department of hospitals, hotels, and large companies.
- Phone or visit companies that might hire you. Some companies have jobs, but they do not advertise them. Use the yellow pages or Internet to find where to go. For example, if you are a car mechanic, look under Automobile Repairing and Service for your community.
- Look in the yellow pages or search the Internet for private employment agencies. An employment agency must not charge you a fee for finding you a job.

Chapter 8: Employment and Business

How to apply for a job



Application forms

Many companies have application forms. Bring all the information you need to fill in the form or take the application form home to complete. Government and large companies may have their application forms on the Internet.

References

Employers usually want references (names, addresses, and phone numbers of people who can recommend you for the job). Some employers may also want a criminal record check (an official paper from the police which shows that you have no criminal record). Some employers may ask you for a health check.

Résumés

Many companies ask for a résumé. This is a written summary of your work experience and education. Some companies want you to send your résumé by e-mail. Some employers may also ask for a short cover letter that explains why you are applying for the job in their company.

In Dawson Creek the WorkBC Employment Services Centre has workshops where you can learn about writing a résumé and a cover letter.

WorkBC Employment Services Centre
1105 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-8744
www.jobsearchonline.bc.ca

You can also ask the Dawson Creek Literacy Society for help with your résumé or cover letter.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

There are also businesses that write résumés for you. They charge a fee. Look in the yellow pages, under Resume Service.



Job interviews

At a job interview, the employer will ask questions about your education, skills, and work experience. Often employers ask questions such as:

- Why do you want to work here?
- Why do you think you are the best person for the job?
- Tell me about yourself.



Employers want you to explain your skills. They expect you to show interest in their business. Practise answering questions before the interview.

You may want to learn about the company before your interview. Visit: www.workbc.ca/Job-Search-Tools/Pages/Prepare-For-Interviews.aspx to find out what information you can research as you prepare.

At the interview, you can also ask the employer questions about the job. For example, ask about the duties, the salary, and the hours of work. Also ask about benefits, such as medical and dental insurance, and vacation time.

You can find information about writing résumés and cover letters, and tips for job interviews at: www.workbc.ca/Job-Search-Tools/Pages/Job-Search-Tools.aspx

Employment programs

There are courses to teach you how to look for a job. There are also job training courses. In many of these programs, you are paid while you learn new skills. In Dawson Creek, go to the WorkBC Employment Services Centre or talk to people at the Dawson Creek Literacy Society.

WorkBC Employment Services Centre
1105 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-8744

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Discrimination

There are laws to protect workers from unfair treatment. For example, an employer must hire employees on the basis of qualifications. Employers cannot refuse to hire you because they do not like your skin colour or your religion. This is discrimination. Other kinds of discrimination are also against the law. It is discrimination if someone does not give you a job because of your sex, age, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation.

If you have a problem with discrimination, and you want advice, call the B.C. Human Rights Coalition. If you want to make an official complaint, contact the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal. You can get guides and complaint forms at: www.bchrt.bc.ca

If the employer is federal—for example, government, post office, or airlines—contact the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

See the listing for human rights organizations at the end of this chapter.

Have your qualifications assessed

How your qualifications are assessed in B.C. depends on whether your occupation is regulated.

Regulated occupations

More than 280 occupations in B.C. are regulated. In order to work in these occupations, you need to be certified.

Each regulated occupation has different standards to become certified. A regulatory authority establishes and upholds these

Chapter 8: Employment and Business

standards, and assesses the qualifications of internationally trained applicants. Download this document (www.welcomebc.ca/local/wbc/docs/immigration/Regulatory_Organization.pdf) to find out which regulatory authority is responsible for your occupation.

If your occupation is regulated, find out what you will need to become certified. The first step is to contact your regulatory authority to learn what information you must provide, how long it will take, how much it will cost and other requirements. Many regulatory authorities post the requirements on their websites.

You may be asked to:

- complete an application form and provide documents. This usually includes educational transcripts, reliable references, employment history, a resumé and a completed application form. Find out what documents you will need from the regulatory authority.
- have your educational credentials assessed. Some regulatory authorities will assess your educational credentials themselves, and others will use an outside organization. The International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) will assess your education credentials on a fee-for-service basis. Before paying to have your credentials assessed by ICES, contact the regulatory authority to find out what they require. You may not need an ICES assessment.

As part of the assessment process, you will likely be required to take exams and pay fees. The cost of the assessment will vary, depending on the occupation and the regulatory

authority. You can expect to pay anywhere from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. You may qualify for program and financial support for an assessment. For more information, visit these websites:

- www.skillsconnect.ca/
- www.success.bc.ca/FCRloan

Regulatory authorities may:

- contact your work references to verify your experience;
- ask for a practical assessment of job-related skills;
- ask to interview you;
- ask you to provide more documents or information.

It will take between few weeks to several months to verify your credentials.

Non-regulated occupations

Employers in non-regulated occupations will decide if they will recognize your qualifications. Many employers will ask for an assessment of your educational credentials and/or previous work experience.

You can ask the employer you wish to work for if they require an independent assessment of your educational credentials and past work experience. They will tell you what they expect for a position with the organization.

Upgrading

You may need to upgrade your qualifications in order to become certified and/or employed.



- Regulatory authorities often have links with specialized educational or “bridging” programs to help people with international qualifications.
- Sign up for an English as a Second Language program to improve your language skills. See Chapter 5 for information. If your occupation is regulated, verify the English Language Benchmark required for certification to make sure you receive the appropriate training level. Check with the regulatory authority to make sure you are taking the appropriate course.
- Find post-secondary institutions that offer upgrading programs for your career. You can contact them directly. See Chapter 5 for a list of post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. For regulated occupations, check with the regulatory authority to make sure that the program is recognized.
- Ask about the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program – an individualized employment bridging program providing assistance with the assessment and career planning process, skill upgrading, workplace language supports and workplace practice opportunities. Go to: www.skillsconnect.ca
- Contact the InfoCentre for Skilled Immigrants at: www.skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca

If you require upgrading in order to work in your occupation, you should look for a program as soon as possible. This includes ensuring that your English language ability

meets the standards required for certification and/or employment.

Questions?

Occupational Guides for Immigrants to B.C. can answer many of your questions. They will also help you understand how your occupation is practiced in B.C. Go to: www.welcomebc.ca/Work/find-a-job/occupational-guides.aspx. If there is no guide for your occupation, please visit the page again as new guides are regularly being added.

To find out more, you can also contact the following:

- International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) at: www.bcit.ca/ices
- Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials at: www.cicic.ca/2/home.canada
- Skills Connect for Immigrants Program at: www.welcomebc.ca/wbc/immigration/come/lmp/employment_services/skillsconnect/index.page
- Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre at: www.skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca

Working

Laws about working

In British Columbia, there is a law to protect most workers. It is called the Employment Standards Act. Both workers and employers have responsibilities under this Act. If your employer is not obeying these laws, discuss the problem with your employer. If you still have a problem, phone the Employment Standards Branch. If you belong to a union, the

Chapter 8: Employment and Business

Employment Standards Branch cannot help you. You must talk to someone in your union.

For information about the Employment Standards Act, contact the Employment Standards office in Dawson Creek.

Employment Standards Office
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2390
www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb

If you are an employer, it is important for you to obey the laws of the Employment Standards Act.

Hours of work and overtime

Workers in British Columbia usually work 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week. If employers ask you to work more than this, they must pay you more money. This is called overtime pay. It is at least one-and-a-half times your hourly pay. This is called time and a half.

If you go to work as your employer asks you to do, you must be paid for at least two hours of work. This is true even if there is no work to do or if you worked fewer than two hours.

Time off

After you have worked for five hours, your employer has to give you a 30-minute break. The employer does not have to pay you for the time of your break.

You may work a split shift (for example, in the morning, and then again in the evening). The time between when you start your first shift and the time you finish your last shift cannot be more than 12 hours.

In a work week, you should have a break of at least 32 hours. If your employer asks you to work during the 32 hours, you must receive one-and-a-half times your hourly pay.

Getting paid

Most workers get paid by cheque every two weeks or twice a month. Your employer must pay you within eight days after the end of each pay period and give you a pay slip with every cheque. The pay slip should show the hours you worked, including overtime, your rate of pay, the amount you were paid, and deductions from your pay.

Deductions

The law says that an employer must deduct money from your paycheck to pay for the following:

- **Canada Pension Plan (CPP):** When you work in Canada, some money is deducted from your paycheck each month. The money goes to the federal government so when you retire, you get a government pension cheque every month. CPP is only for people who have worked in Canada. You can get CPP at age 60 (before you are officially a senior).
- **Employment Insurance (EI):** You pay money into this insurance each month that you work. If you lose your job, you may receive money from the government while you look for a new job.
- **Income tax:** This money helps to pay the costs of government expenses, such as health care, roads, and education.



- **Taxable benefits:** Your employer may pay some or all of the premiums for some benefits, such as a dental plan. The amount the employer pays is a taxable benefit. This means you will pay tax on it.
- **Union dues:** If you are in a union, and the union has an agreement with your employer, some money will be deducted to pay for the union dues.
- **Voluntary deductions:** A worker may give the employer written permission to deduct money for other things, such as additional hospital or life insurance, charitable donations, or Canada Savings Bonds.

Minimum wage

As of May 1, 2012, the minimum wage in British Columbia is \$10.25 per hour.

Both full-time and part-time workers must get at least the minimum wage.

Some workers are not paid by the hour—for example, farm workers picking fruits and vegetables by hand are often paid a piece rate (how much they pick). Ask how you will be paid before you start work.

Children and work

Children under 15 years old cannot work during school hours. To hire them when they are not in school, an employer must get permission in writing from the parents. Children under 12 years old must have a permit of employment from the Employment Standards Branch. But children are allowed to do small jobs before or after school, such as delivering newspapers or babysitting.

Joining a union

A union is a group of employees who join together to talk about wages and working conditions with the employer. Everyone has the right to belong to a union at work. In some jobs, all employees must join the union.

If you have a problem with your employer, tell someone in the union. That person will speak to the employer about your problem. For more information about unions, contact the B.C. Federation of Labour. (See the listing at the end of this chapter.)

Vacations

All workers must get at least two weeks of paid vacation every year. If you leave your job before you take your vacation, your employer must give you some extra money (vacation pay). It is at least 4% of your earnings. After five years of work, you should get three weeks of vacation and 6% vacation pay.

Holidays

In British Columbia, there are 10 statutory (by law) holidays. Employers must give workers the following statutory holidays:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Family Day (Second Monday in February)
- Good Friday (Friday before Easter Sunday)
- Victoria Day (Monday before May 24)
- Canada Day (July 1)
- B.C. Day (first Monday in August)
- Labour Day (first Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving (second Monday in October)
- Remembrance Day (November 11)
- Christmas Day (December 25)

Chapter 8: Employment and Business

If you have worked for your employer for one month or more, and if you have worked at least 15 of the 30 days before the holiday, you should get an average day's pay for that holiday. Also, if you work on any of these days, your employer must pay you overtime pay.

For more information about being paid for working statutory holidays, visit: www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/statutory_holidays.htm. You can also contact the Employment Standards Branch for more information. (See the listing at the end of this chapter.)

Maternity and parental leave

A working pregnant woman may take 17 weeks maternity leave from work without pay. This can start up to 11 weeks before the baby is born. She may also take up to 35 weeks of parental leave after the baby is born. The maternity and parental leave can be a total of 52 weeks off work. She may apply for money from Employment Insurance (EI) during her maternity leave. The father of a baby or a parent who adopts a child may take up to 37 weeks of parental leave.

Compassionate care leave

If a close member of your family is very ill or dying, your employer must give you a leave from work. By law you can take up to eight weeks of compassionate care leave without pay in a six-month period. Some employers will give you a leave with pay for a shorter time. For more information go to: www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb

Losing your job

If you have worked for an employer for less than three months, your employer can let you go without giving you notice or extra pay. Giving notice means telling you in writing before your job ends. If you have worked for more than three months, your employer must give you one week's notice or pay you one week's pay. If you have worked for a year, your employer must give you two weeks' notice or pay you two weeks' pay. In extreme cases, an employer may have "just cause" to fire an employee without notice or pay. If your employer says they do not need to give you notice or pay, you should talk to the Employment Standards Branch. (See the listing at the end of this chapter.)

When you leave a full-time job, your employer must give you a record of employment. You need this paper to apply for Employment Insurance (EI). If you are fired or if you quit your job, you may not be able to get Employment Insurance.

Employment Insurance (EI)

EI is money the government gives to someone who loses a job. When you work, some money is deducted from your paycheck each month. Then if you are laid off, you may get money each month while you are looking for a new job.

You must have worked a certain number of hours to get EI. You may not get EI if you are fired or if you quit your job. You can call Employment Insurance at 1 800 206-7218, or go to the website at: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/



Income assistance

If you have been unemployed for a year, your EI payments may stop. You may then qualify for help from the provincial government.

This help is called B.C. Employment and Assistance, income assistance, or welfare. To find out if you are eligible, call the employment and assistance centre at 1 866 866-0800 to talk about your application or visit the Ministry of Social Development's website at: www.eia.gov.bc.ca/bcea.htm

In Dawson Creek, contact the Service BC centre at:

Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html

If you get hurt at work

WorkSafeBC (Workers' Compensation Board of BC) is an agency that works with companies and workers to prevent injuries at work. It also helps workers who get hurt at work. If you cannot work because you got hurt or sick as a result of your work, you may get compensation (money) from WorkSafeBC for medical care and lost wages. Employers, not workers, have to pay for WorkSafeBC coverage.

If you have an accident at work, get help right away. Call or go to the first aid attendant, if there is one. You must go to your supervisor right away and if you can, bring a witness (someone who saw the accident). You have to fill out a report form, and the witness and supervisor need to sign

it. Also, take the form with you if you need to see a doctor. If you miss work because of your injury or sickness, call the WorkSafeBC claim line at 1 888 WORKERS (1 888 967-5377) during business hours.

Employers have the legal responsibility to make sure workplaces are safe and healthy. Your employer must make sure you get the proper training and have the information you need to stay safe. As a worker, you must follow safety instructions, use proper safety equipment, and wear the right kind of clothing.

For more information, call WorkSafeBC at 1 888 WORKERS (1 888 967-5377), or go to: www.worksafebc.com. Workers who call WorkSafeBC can get help in more than 170 languages. There are also printed materials on different subjects in Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Punjabi, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish, and French.

Harassment at work

If you are treated badly at work for no reason, this is called harassment. If an employer or other workers call you racist or offensive names, this is called discrimination. It is against the law. If an employer or other workers make unwelcome sexual advances, this is called sexual harassment. It doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman, it is still against the law.

If someone is harassing or discriminating against you, you should report it. Many disputes get settled before they become official. Make sure you write down what happened and have witnesses, if possible. If you belong to a union, talk to them. If you do not know who to talk to, contact an immigrant settlement agency for information.

Chapter 8: Employment and Business

For advice, you can contact the B.C. Human Rights Coalition. To make an official complaint, contact the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal. You can get guides and complaint forms at: www.bchrt.bc.ca. If you work for a federal employer—for example, government, post office, or airlines—you should contact the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

You can watch videos about harassment, discrimination, and human rights in English, Mandarin, and Punjabi at:
www.justiceeducation.ca/resources/human-rights-in-bc

See the listing for human rights organizations at the end of this chapter.

Starting your own business



Dawson Creek is a great place to start or expand a business. The city's economy is strong, and oil, gas, and energy companies are investing in the area. As more people come to Dawson Creek to work, there is a growing need for businesses to provide goods and services.

There are many rules for starting a business. Businesses must be registered and, in some cases, licensed by the government. There are government programs that can help you start a business.

Small Business BC can give you information and resources to start a business. It offers seminars on more than 50 different subjects, including regulations, government help and training, and business advisors can help you get started. Call 1 800 667-2272. Visit the website at: www.smallbusinessbc.ca. There is also good information at: www.workbc.ca/Workplace-Resources/Pages/Workplace-Resources.aspx

Community Futures Peace-Liard has programs and services to help people start and grow their businesses.

Community Futures Peace-Liard
904 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-8748
www.communityfutures.biz/

You can get a City of Dawson Creek business licence application online at:
www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/development/business-licences/

Dawson Creek City Hall
10105 12A Street
Tel: 250 784-3600
www.dawsoncreek.ca

Women interested in starting their own business can contact the Women's Enterprise Centre. It has offices in Vancouver, Victoria and Kelowna. www.womensenterprise.ca



Where to go for help

Dawson Creek Literacy Society

929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

WorkBC Employment Services

1105 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-8744
www.jobsearchonline.bc.ca

Community Futures

Community Futures Peace-Liard has programs and services to help people start and grow their businesses.
904 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-8748
www.communityfutures.biz/

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Citizenship and Immigration Canada can provide information about getting a permanent resident card or work permit.
Toll-free: 1 888 242-2100
www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/index.asp

Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP)

This program helps people who want to work in skilled trades. If you are already a skilled worker, STEP can help you:

- get your skills recognized
- get the certification you need
- connect with training programs and employers

If there is no training program in your community and there is demand for one, STEP can create a training program.

There is a STEP office one hour away from Dawson Creek in Fort St. John.
201 – 9807 101st Avenue
Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 3Y6
Tel: 250 785-8818
www.stepbc.ca

Employment Standards Office

1201 – 103rd Avenue
Dawson Creek, B.C. V1G 4J2
Tel: 250 784-2390
Toll-free: 1 800 663-3316
www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb

B.C. Human Rights Coalition

1202 – 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
Toll-free: 1 877 689-8474
www.bchrcoalition.org

B.C. Human Rights Tribunal

1170 – 605 Robson Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5J3
Toll-free: 1 888 440-8844
www.bchrt.bc.ca

Canadian Human Rights Commission

Toll-free: 1 888 214-1090
www.chrc-ccdp.ca

B.C. Federation of Labour

200 – 5118 Joyce Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5R 4H1
Tel: 604 430-1421
E-mail: bcfed@bcfed.ca
www.bcfed.com

Chapter 9: The Legal System



Canada's legal system

Newcomers to Canada often bring ideas about the law and legal system (how the laws works) from their own countries. It is important to understand the laws and the legal system in Canada.

Canada's legal system and political system came from Britain. We got our ideas of personal rights and freedoms from the British system. In Quebec, parts of the legal system also came from France.

In Canada, the courts are separate from the government. Canadians elect their governments. The governments make the laws.

There are three levels of government: federal (for all of Canada), provincial, and municipal (for towns and cities). Each level of government makes laws. The courts enforce the law, but they are separate from the government.

Canada has a law called the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These rights and freedoms are very important to Canadians. They include the right to free speech, freedom of religion, freedom to live and work anywhere in Canada, and the right to participate in peaceful political activities.

Read the Charter of Rights and Freedoms at: lawslois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html



Human rights

Canada and British Columbia have human rights laws to protect people from many kinds of discrimination. Generally, it is discrimination if someone does not give you a job or a place to live because of your colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, or age. It is also unlawful not to hire someone because of a prior criminal conviction that is not related to the job for which they are applying.

Generally, it is also discrimination for hotels, restaurants or other businesses open to the public to refuse service. However, there are some exceptions. For example, bars cannot serve people under 19 years old, there can be separate bathrooms for men and women, and seniors' housing may not rent to people under 55 years of age.

You can get help if you have a problem with discrimination. If your problem is with a federal government department, bank, telecommunications company (telephone, Internet, TV, or radio), or transportation company (airline or train), contact the Canadian Human Rights Commission. (See the listing at the end of this chapter.)

If your problem is with a provincial government department or agency, a landlord or local business or service, contact the B.C. Human Rights Coalition. (See the listing at the end of this chapter.) To make an official complaint, contact the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal. You can get guides and complaint forms from their website at: www.bchrt.bc.ca. (See the listing at the end of this chapter.)

For more information on human rights, visit: www.ag.gov.bc.ca/human-rights-protection. You can watch videos about human rights in English, Mandarin, and Punjabi at: www.justiceeducation.ca/resources/human-rights-in-bc

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

The law in B.C. protects your privacy. People and agencies cannot get or use your personal information, such as your name, address, birthdate, or Social Insurance Number without your permission. The law also gives you the right to see information about yourself—for example, your medical records. You also have the right to see any reports about you—for example, by teachers, employers, or the police.

Gay, lesbian, and transgendered people

In Canada, it is socially and legally acceptable to be gay or lesbian (homosexual). Gays and lesbians have the same rights and freedoms as all Canadians. They can get married, adopt children, and be on their same-sex spouse's medical and pension plans. (For information on agencies and support groups, see Chapter 6.)

The courts

Different courts deal with different kinds of legal problems. The main courts are:

- Supreme Court of Canada
- B.C. Court of Appeal

Chapter 9: The Legal System

- B.C. Supreme Court
- Provincial Court of B.C. This court has five divisions:
 - criminal court, for most criminal cases except very serious crimes (These are dealt with by the B.C. Supreme Court.)
 - traffic court, for traffic tickets
 - family court, for divorce, custody of children, and adoptions
 - youth court for young people from 12 to 17 years old
 - small claims court for disagreements about business and money under \$25,000

Dawson Creek Law Courts
205 – 1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2278

Being a witness

A person who sees something happen, such as a car crash or a crime, is called a witness. Witnesses are very important in Canadian law. The information a witness gives may help the police find a criminal or find out who caused a car crash. If you are a witness, it is your duty to inform the police and go to court if required. If you see a car crash, give your name and phone number to the driver who may require a witness.

Help for victims of crime

The person who is hurt in a crime is called a victim of crime. If you are a victim of crime, you can get information and support from a victim service worker.

In Dawson Creek, you can call the RCMP for Victim Services at 250 784-3700.

You can also call VictimLink BC at 1 800 563-0808. They are available 24 hours a day.

The police

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is Canada's national police force and has a station in Dawson Creek. The RCMP provide all police services to the city.

RCMP
1230 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-3700 (non-emergency)

Role of the police in Canada

In Canada, the police are separate from the government and the army. The police are part of the community. Their duty is to protect the people in the community.

Calling the police

Many cities and towns have two telephone numbers for the police. One is an emergency number and the other is a non-emergency number.

In Dawson Creek, call 250 784-3700 for non-emergencies.

If you or someone else is in danger, or if a serious crime has just happened, call 9-1-1. The 9-1-1 call is free, even from a pay phone. You can ask for help in your own language. Learn to say the name of your language in English to tell the operator. In some communities, the emergency number is not 9-1-1. It is different. Look in the front pages of the telephone book for the number in those areas.



Call the police non-emergency number if no one is in danger or time has passed since the crime happened. Look in the front pages of the telephone book for this number. If you are not sure which number to call, call the emergency number. Tell the police what is happening. They will help you. You can call the police any time, day or night.

For more information on emergencies, visit: www.ecomm911.ca

Police arrests

There are rules for the police when they are arresting people. Police officers have to say who they are and show their identification document or badge. They must explain why they are arresting you and tell you what your rights are.

When the police arrest you or ask you questions about a crime, the officers must let you phone a lawyer right away. They have to let you talk to a lawyer alone.

If you do not know a lawyer or cannot afford one, you can ask the police for the legal aid phone number. The police officer must give you the legal aid phone number and let you call them. (For more information about legal aid see the listing at the end of this chapter.)

When the police officer asks, you should give your name and address. You do not have to say anything more until after you talk to a lawyer. Within 24 hours, the police must take you to court or let you go.

If you have a complaint against the municipal police, you have a right to say

what happened. You can contact the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner. Call 1 877 999-8707, or visit: www.opcc.bc.ca

If you have a complaint against the RCMP, you can contact the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP (CPC).

Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP

Toll-free: 1 800 665-6878

www.cpc-cpp.gc.ca

Going to court

In Canada, laws are made by the federal and provincial governments, and by past decisions of the courts. The courts uphold the law but they are separate from the government. Everyone must obey Canada's laws. Members of the police, the army, and the government must also obey the law.

If you go to court and you do not speak enough English, you can ask for an interpreter who speaks your language. It is your responsibility to ask for an interpreter. For a criminal trial, people who speak French can ask for the whole trial to be in French. They must do this before the trial begins.

Hate crimes

It is against the law if someone hurts you, or says they will hurt you because of your skin colour, religion, national origin, sex, or sexual orientation. Call the Dawson Creek RCMP at 250 784-3700 for help. You can also contact VictimLink BC at 1 800 563-0808.

Chapter 9: The Legal System

Assault, sexual assault, and abuse

If someone hits or hurts you, it is called assault. If someone says he or she will hit you or hurt you, and you believe that person will do it, it is also assault. It is against the law for someone to assault you. Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact without a person's consent. Sexual assault can range from unwanted sexual touching to forced sexual intercourse (sometimes called "rape"). If you have been assaulted or sexually assaulted, call the police. You can also call VictimLink BC at 1 800 563-0808.

When one person hurts, mistreats, or threatens another person or an animal, it is called abuse. In Canada, abuse is against the law. (See Chapter 6 to find out about agencies and services that can help you.)

Young people and the law

Sometimes children break the law. In Canada, there is a special law for children 12 to 17 years old. It is called the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Young people do not go to the same court as adults. They go to a youth court. (This is also true for an older person who was under 18 years old at the time of the crime.) The judge in youth court will make sure the young person gets a lawyer.

People 18 years or older who break the law are considered adults under Canadian law. They have to go to adult court.

Families with children in trouble with the law can get advice from probation officers or youth workers. These government services

have different names in different areas. Call the Dawson Creek Literacy Society at 250 782-4211 about these services.

Families and the law

Families in B.C. who are going through separation or divorce can get help from Family Justice Centres. The centres have counsellors who help couples to make an agreement about their children and support money. The counsellors may help couples reach an agreement without going to court.

For information on family law in B.C., visit the Legal Services Society's family law website at: www.familylaw.lss.bc.ca

Finding a lawyer

If you have a legal problem, you may need a lawyer. Sometimes a lawyer can help you solve a problem before you go to court.

How to find a lawyer:

- Ask your friends.
- Talk to the people at Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca
- Call the Lawyer Referral Service. This service will give you the name of a lawyer who will talk to you for up to 30 minutes for \$25 plus taxes. The service is run by the Canadian Bar Association. Call 1 800 663-1919. This service is listed in the yellow pages, under Lawyers—Referral and Regulation.



Help if you cannot afford a lawyer

Legal aid

Legal aid is a free service for low-income people with legal problems. People at Legal aid can help with criminal law, family law, and some areas of immigration law. Legal aid is run by the Legal Services Society of B.C.

For Legal Aid in Dawson Creek:
201 – 10300 10th Street
Tel: 250 782-7366
www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/legalaidoffices.php

Access Pro Bono Society of B.C.

Volunteer lawyers give free help to people with low incomes. Toll-free: 1 877 762-6664. Visit the website at: www.accessprobono.ca

BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support

Legal assistance is available for older adults (55 years and older) who are experiencing elder abuse (See Chapter 6 for information about elder abuse). Toll-free: 1 866 437-1940. Visit the website at: www.bcceas.ca

For more legal information

The Immigrant Public Legal Education & Information (PLEI) Consortium Project

The PLEI Consortium Project helps deliver public legal education and information for immigrants in Metro Vancouver. The website has information about employment, residential tenancy (renting a place to live), family law and domestic violence. Go to: www.immigrantlegal.ca

Dial-a-Law

You can phone Dial-a-Law for free information about the law. This is a library of recordings by lawyers. Toll-free: 1 800 565-5297

Multilingual Legal website

The Multilingual Legal website has legal information in different languages for community workers and newcomers. Go to: www.mosaicbc.com/multilingual-legal-publications

Multilingual Legal Glossary

You can look up Canadian legal terms online. The definitions are in simple English. They are also translated into Chinese, Farsi (Persian), Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Go to: www.legalglossary.ca

Chapter 9: The Legal System

Justice Education Society of BC

If you want to know how the court system in B.C. works or get information about the court system, call the Justice Education Society of BC. School classes and other groups can ask for a tour of their nearest courthouse.

Justice Education Society of BC
Tel: 604 660-9870 (Vancouver)
www.justiceeducation.ca

People's Law School

The People's Law School offers special ELSA classes and legal information workshops to help newcomers understand Canadian and B.C. laws. These classes are free. For more information on the ELSA program about laws, call 604 331-5408 or visit the website: www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/programs. Check the calendar at: www.publiclegaled.bc.ca for workshops online and in your community.

The People's Law School also has free publications in easy English and in some other languages. For more information, call 604 331-5400 or visit the website at: www.publiclegaled.bc.ca

For more information

B.C. Human Rights Coalition

1202 – 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
Toll-free: 1 877 689-8474
www.bchrcoalition.org

B.C. Human Rights Tribunal

1170 – 605 Robson Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5J3
Toll-free: 1 888 440-8844
www.bchrt.gov.bc.ca

Canadian Human Rights Commission

Toll-free: 1 888 214-1090
www.chrc-ccdp.ca

Immigrant Legal – B.C.'s Immigrant Tool Kit

www.immigrantlegal.ca/

Chapter 10: Government and Citizenship



- Government: federal, provincial, municipal
- Multiculturalism
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Permanent Resident Card
- Sponsoring a relative
- Becoming a Canadian citizen
- Rights and responsibilities

Government

Canada has three levels of government: federal, provincial or territorial, and municipal. These governments are all elected by the citizens of Canada.

Federal government: Government of Canada

The federal government has responsibilities such as immigration, defence, and trade with other countries. The names and telephone numbers of federal government departments are listed in the blue pages of the telephone book, under Government of Canada.

If you do not know the department to call, there is a toll-free number on the first page of the Government of Canada section: 1 800 622-6232. You can get information on how to contact federal government departments and agencies. You can also get

this information in English and French at: www.canada.gc.ca, or by visiting the Dawson Creek Service Canada Centre.

Service Canada
103 – 1508 102nd Avenue
Toll-free: 1 800 622-6232
www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/sc-dsp.cgi?rc=5996&ln=eng

There must be a federal election every five years. The Prime Minister decides when it will be. The last federal election was on May 2, 2011.

There are 36 federal ridings in British Columbia. Each riding elects one Member of Parliament (MP). The MP has an office in the community called a constituency office. MPs also work in Ottawa, where Parliament meets. If you have a problem that relates to the federal government, such as immigration or citizenship, your MP may be able to help you.

Chapter 10: Government and Citizenship

Dawson Creek is in the Prince George-Peace River federal riding.

You can use your postal code (part of your mailing address) to find your MP at this website: www.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC

For more information about voting in federal elections, contact Elections Canada.

Elections Canada
257 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0M6
Toll-free: 1 800 463-6868
website at: www.electionscanada.ca.

You can also visit the Service Canada office in Dawson Creek.

Service Canada
103 – 1508 102nd Avenue
Toll-free: 1 800 622-6232
www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/sc-dsp.cgi?rc=5996&ln=eng

Provincial government: Government of British Columbia

Canada is divided into 10 provinces and three territories. Each province and territory has its own government. The responsibilities of provincial governments include education, highways, and hospitals. The names and telephone numbers of provincial government departments are listed in the blue pages of the telephone book, under Government of British Columbia.

You can get information about provincial government departments at Service BC. Call 1 800 663-7867, and operators at

this toll-free number will transfer your call to government offices. You do not need to pay long distance costs. The provincial government's homepage is at: www.gov.bc.ca

In Dawson Creek you can go to a Service BC office for government services, such as applying for income assistance, paying traffic tickets, and buying government licences.

Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html

Provincial Elections

British Columbia has a scheduled date for provincial elections: the second Tuesday in May, every four years. The last one was on May 14, 2013.

There are 85 provincial ridings (constituencies) in British Columbia. Registered voters in each riding elect one Member (MLA) to represent them in the Legislative Assembly. The MLA has an office in the community called a constituency office. MLAs also work in Victoria, where the Legislature meets. If you have a problem that relates to the provincial government, such as health or education, your MLA may be able to help you.

Dawson Creek is in the Peace River South riding. Find your MLA at this website: www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm

To vote in B.C., you must be registered. You can register to vote if:

- you are a Canadian citizen
- you are 18 or older



- you have lived in B.C. for the past six months
- you are not disqualified from voting

Register to vote at: www.elections.bc.ca/ovr
or 1 800-661-8683.

For more information about voter registration, the provincial electoral process, or voting in provincial elections, please contact Elections BC.

Elections BC
PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria B.C., V8W 9J6
Toll-free: 1 800 661-8683
E-mail: electionsbc@elections.bc.ca
www.elections.bc.ca

Local government

Cities, towns, or villages in British Columbia are known as local or municipal governments.

Local governments provide police service, fire protection, garbage collection, drinking water, sewers, and recreation (parks and community centres). Telephone numbers for Dawson Creek are listed in the blue pages of the telephone book, under Municipalities and Regional Districts.

Dawson Creek City Hall
10105 12A Street
Tel: 250 784-3600
www.dawsoncreek.ca

The city of Dawson Creek has a mayor and six councillors.

Every municipality in British Columbia is part of one of 27 regional districts.

Municipalities generally provide services in urban areas (cities, towns, and villages) and areas outside municipalities are administered by regional districts. Dawson Creek is in the Peace River Regional District, which provides services such as waste management, recreation, and sewage collection and disposal for the region.

Peace River Regional District
1981 Alaska Avenue
Tel: 250 784-3200
www.prrd.bc.ca

Every local government has a town hall you can visit to pay property taxes and utility bills, get a licence to operate your business or have a dog, and register to vote in a municipal election. Town or city halls and websites are also a good place for information about the community, services, parks, recreation, and other programs for residents.

Elections for municipalities, regional districts, and school boards are held every three years. The next local government election will be held in November 2014.

School District 59

When voters choose their municipal government, they also elect school trustees. There are seven school trustees with School District 59, Peace River South in Dawson Creek. School district and municipal elections are held at the same time.

School District 59, Peace River South
11600 7th Street
Tel: 250 782-8571
www.sd59.bc.ca

Chapter 10: Government and Citizenship

Vital statistics

For birth, death, and marriage certificates, and name changes, call the Service BC information line at 1 800 663-7867 and ask to be connected to the Vital Statistics Agency. You can also visit the website at: www.vs.gov.bc.ca

Multiculturalism



Canada is a multicultural country. People have come to Canada from many different countries and cultures. The government encourages people to take pride in their language, religion, and culture. It also encourages all Canadians to treat each other with respect.

Canada has a culture of acceptance and diversity (accepting people who are different from you). Canadian law upholds individual rights and freedoms, such as freedom of speech and religion, and same-sex marriage. (See Human Rights in Chapter 9.)

People living in Canada have a responsibility to take part in Canadian society. You can start by taking part in your community.

Here are some ways you can do this:

- Meet your neighbours.
- Join in neighbourhood activities.
- Go to meetings in your community or at your children's school.
- Volunteer in your community. (For more information on how to volunteer, see Chapter 11.)

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) call centre

You can get general information about citizenship and immigration from the CIC call centre. On a touch-tone telephone, you can listen to recorded information about permanent residence and refugee claims. You can also hear information about visiting Canada, working or studying in Canada, and sponsoring a relative. Information on becoming a Canadian citizen is also available from the call centre.

Contact the call centre toll-free at 1 888 242-2100. If you need more information, you can speak to someone in English or French. The CIC website is: www.cic.gc.ca

Permanent resident card

The Permanent Resident Card is a wallet-sized plastic card. It is the official proof of your status as a permanent resident in Canada. All permanent residents who want to come back to Canada on a commercial carrier (airplane, boat, bus, or train) must show this card. You can also use your Permanent Resident Card as identification to request other government documents (health card or Social Insurance



Number), to use government services, or to open a bank account.

If you are a new permanent resident, you will automatically receive your card by mail at your address in Canada. If you do not have a Canadian mailing address before you arrive in Canada, you must give your new address to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) as soon as possible.

If you change your Canadian address before you receive your card in the mail or at any time while you are here, you must tell CIC your new address. You can do this online at: www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/change-address.asp or by calling CIC.

If your Permanent Resident Card is expired (outdated), lost, or stolen, you can apply for a new one.

For further information and questions on the Permanent Resident Card, go to: www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/pr-card/ or call CIC at 1 888 242-2100.

Service Canada
103 – 1508 102nd Avenue
Toll-free: 1 800 622-6232
www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/sc-dsp.cgi?rc=5996&ln=eng

Sponsoring a relative

If you are a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen, you may sponsor (help) a relative to come to live in Canada. To do this, you must be 18 years or older. You must prove that you have enough money to

take care of your relatives while they settle in Canada. When you sponsor relatives, you must give them basic support—for example, medical and financial support. You are responsible for them for up to 10 years.

For information on which relatives you can sponsor, and the application costs, contact the CIC call centre at 1 888 242-2100, or visit the website at: www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/sponsor/index.asp

Becoming a Canadian citizen



The moment you arrive in Canada, you can get ready to become a Canadian citizen. You will need to show a commitment to Canada by living here, learning to speak and write in English or French (the official languages), learning about Canada, and obeying Canadian laws.

Chapter 10: Government and Citizenship

To be eligible for Canadian citizenship, you:

- must be a permanent resident
- must live in Canada for at least three years before applying to become a citizen
- will need to know either English or French
- will need to show that you know about Canada's history, institutions, and traditions, and the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of being a citizen
- must be 18 years old or more to apply for yourself
- must pass a citizenship test if you are 18 years of age or older
- must attend a citizenship ceremony and take the oath of citizenship

Adults who are 55 years old or older do not have to know English or French, or about Canada's history and traditions, but they are encouraged to learn.

When you apply for citizenship, you may also apply on behalf of children who are not 18 years old yet. These children must be permanent residents of Canada. They do not need to meet the residency, language, or knowledge requirements.

For more information and to apply to become a Canadian citizen, visit: www.cic.gc.ca or call Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) at 1 888 242-2100.

Ask for the application for citizenship forms. You will need an application form for each adult and child in your family. Complete the

application form(s), attach all the necessary documents and fees, and mail the application to the Citizenship Case Processing Centre. The address is on the forms. If you need more information, go to: www.cic.gc.ca or call the CIC call centre.

To learn more about Canada and the meaning of Canadian citizenship, read the free study guide for the citizenship test called *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship* available online at: www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/discover

Citizenship test

Most people have to take a citizenship test before they can become Canadian citizens. The test has questions about Canada's history, traditions, symbols, and government. The questions are based on Canada's citizenship study guide, called *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*. Everyone who applies for citizenship gets this guide. Study the guide before you take the test. You can also practise sample questions on the Internet. For more information, visit: www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/discover/questions.asp

Only people between 18 and 54 years old have to take the citizenship test. If you are 17 or younger, or 55 years or older, you do not have to take the test.

Citizenship Hearings

You may be asked to have an interview with a citizenship judge if the judge needs more information about your application. The information that you give will help the judge make a decision.



Citizenship classes

You may want to join a citizenship class to help you prepare for the citizenship test. For information, call your local immigrant settlement agency, school, community college, or library.

Rights and responsibilities

In Canada, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments protect the rights and freedoms of individuals. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is part of Canada's Constitution Act of 1982. It protects the rights and freedoms that Canadians believe are necessary in a free and democratic society. The Charter guarantees certain political rights to Canadian citizens. It also guarantees civil rights to everybody in Canada. You can read the Charter at: www.laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects:

- the freedom to express your beliefs and opinions freely (including through newspapers, television, radio, and Internet)
- the freedom to associate with anyone you wish and gather peacefully with other people
- the freedom to practise any religion or no religion
- the right to live anywhere in Canada
- the right to protection from unlawful or unjust arrest or detention by the government. You also have the right to

due legal process under Canadian law. This means that the government must respect all your rights under the law.

- the right to equality. You cannot be discriminated against because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.
- the same rights whether you are a woman or a man
- the right to receive services from the federal government in English or French

Gays and lesbians also have the same rights as everyone else in Canada and are protected against discrimination under the law. In 2005, Parliament passed a law making it legal for couples of the same sex to marry. The law also respects religious freedom, so no official of a religious group can be forced to marry same-sex couples if it goes against their beliefs.

While you live in Canada, your rights in the list above are protected. You also have responsibilities, such as:

- voting in Canada's democratic elections
- learning English or French or both
- working to take care of yourself and your family
- helping others in your community
- protecting Canada's heritage and natural environment

Chapter 10: Government and Citizenship

If you become a Canadian citizen, you will have the right to:

- vote in federal, provincial or territorial, and municipal elections
- be a candidate in elections
- apply for a Canadian passport and enter and leave the country freely

You will also have the legal duty to report to the police any crimes you know about or see happen. You may also be asked to help the criminal justice system by sitting on a jury, being part of a court case to decide if someone is guilty or innocent of committing a crime. For more information about jury duty, see: www.justice.gc.ca/eng/dept-min/pub/just/09.html

Leaving Canada

To remain a permanent resident, you must live in Canada for two of the last five years. If you live outside Canada longer, you may lose your permanent resident status and receive a removal order. A removal order means you must leave Canada permanently. Check with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to find out if you need to renew your permanent resident card.

You can leave Canada for short holidays or family visits. When one parent leaves Canada with the children, the other parent must write a note giving permission for the children to travel.

If you leave Canada for a longer time, be sure to tell the Canada Revenue Agency. You may need to file an income tax return even if you live somewhere else that year.

Deportation

Sometimes the Canadian government orders a permanent resident to leave Canada permanently. This is called deportation. Deportation means that once you leave Canada, you cannot return.

Here are some reasons why people may be deported:

- They were convicted of a serious crime before they came to Canada and they did not tell Citizenship and Immigration Canada about it.
- They were convicted of a serious crime while in Canada.
- They lied or used false documents to enter Canada.
- They were involved in organized crime.
- They were involved in terrorism.

If the Canadian government decides to deport someone, that person should get information about immigration laws from CIC. There are also lawyers who specialize in immigration laws. To find a lawyer, look in the yellow pages, under Lawyers, or see Chapter 9.



- Cultural activities
- Volunteering
- Community centres
- Seniors' programs
- Libraries
- Sports and outdoor activities
- Parks

Cultural activities

Dawson Creek is a growing and vibrant community with a full cultural life. The city has arenas to host large concerts and smaller buildings for community plays and performances.

You can get information about cultural activities in your area from newspapers, libraries, or online at:

- www.dawsoncreekeventscentre.ca
- www.kpac.pris.ca
- www.dawsoncreek.ca/residents/arts-culture/

The Dawson Creek Art Gallery offers programs, art classes, public events, and exhibits.

101 – 816 Alaska Avenue

Tel: 250 782-2601

www.dcartgallery.ca

The Dawson Creek Literacy Society hosts events to welcome newcomers to the community.

929 102nd Avenue

Tel: 250 782-4211

dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Dawson Creek Visitor Information Centre has information about your new community and its activities.

900 Alaska Avenue

Tel: 250 782-9595

www.tourismdawsoncreek.com

Chapter 11: Community, Culture and Sports

Volunteering

Volunteering is an important part of Canadian life. It is a good way to meet new people, learn new skills, and get Canadian work experience. A volunteer helps people without getting paid. Most communities need volunteers. You can help at your children's school, at a local hospital, or at a community agency.

Talk to the people at the Dawson Creek Literacy Society about ways you can volunteer in your new community.

Dawson Creek Literacy Society
929 102nd Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4211
dawsoncreekliteracy.ca

Community centres



Most cities and towns have community centres. They usually have swimming pools, ice rinks, tennis courts, and playgrounds. Community centres may have classes in arts and crafts, dancing, physical fitness, computers, and English as a Second Language (ESL).

Each season, community centres usually publish a flyer (a special newspaper) with a

list of programs, their times, and how much they cost. Community centre programs are usually not expensive.

There are many activities to enjoy in Dawson Creek at any time of year.

The new South Peace Community Multiplex at 300 Highway 2 includes an aquatic centre, a concert and entertainment arena, and an equestrian centre:

- At the Kenn Borek Aquatic Centre there are swim lessons for all ages as well as fitness classes in the pool.
Tel: 250 782-7946
www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/communityservices/kenn-borek-aquatic-centre
- Big name acts perform and large sport and community events are held at the Encana Centre, which seats 4,500 people.
www.dawsoncreekeventscentre.ca
- Horse shows and training are held at the Lakota Agriplex.
www.lakota-agriplex.ca

You can learn to skate or enjoy ice sports such as hockey and figure skating at the two community ice arenas at 1101 106 Avenue.

- Kin Arena, Tel: 250 782-6441
- Memorial Arena, Tel: 250 782-2229

www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/communityservices

Dawson Creek Curling Rink
1113 106th Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4080
www.dccurling.ca

For fitness classes and other community recreation activities go to: www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/communityservices

Seniors' programs

Seniors are people 65 years or older. Most communities in B.C. have seniors' groups. They usually accept people 55 years or older. These groups have programs and activities for seniors.

There are many activities for seniors in Dawson Creek.

The Senior Citizens' Hall has social events and activities and is a great place to meet people.

The Senior Citizens' Hall
1101 McKellar Avenue
Tel: 250 782-7620

Seniors can get fit outdoors at the Seniors' Outdoor Fitness Park in Kin Park, which has 16 workout stations. Enter the park from 110th Avenue.

You can also call the Health and Seniors Information Line at 1 800 465-4911 or contact the Seniors Service Society at 604 520-6621, www.seniorsservicesociety.ca

Seniors may get a discount or get in free in many places if they show their BC Services Card—for example, in provincial parks, art galleries, museums, movies, theatres, hotels, and restaurants. Seniors may also get special low prices on buses, ferries, trains, and airplanes. For a list of seniors' centres and activities, visit: www.senioryears.com/bc.html

Libraries

You can borrow books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, and eBooks from the Dawson Creek Municipal Library. The library has programs and activities for children, including pre-school story time, a babies and books program and a summer reading program. The library has books, magazines, and DVDs for children and for teens.



The library has large print and audio books for people who cannot see well, and programs to get books to seniors and people who cannot go to the library.

The library is a good place to meet people in the community.

Library staff can help you find information on almost any topic. Libraries also have computers you can use to find information, write letters, or send e-mail. Some library services are available to you on your own computer.

Public libraries are free to use. You need a library card to borrow books or other items. You can apply for a card at your local library. Bring some identification (ID) with your name and address on it. You can also borrow books from other public libraries in B.C. with your local library card and ID.

Chapter 11: Community, Culture and Sports

Dawson Creek Municipal Library
1001 McKellar Avenue
Tel: 250 782-4661
dawsoncreek.bclibrary.ca

Ethnic media

All newspapers, radio, and TV programs in Dawson Creek are in English. To find out about newspapers, radio, and TV programs in your language, visit: www.bcethnicmedia.ca

Sports and outdoor activities



Dawson Creek is an active community. People here enjoy sports and outdoor activities all year.

Soccer, slow-pitch, and baseball are played at the Multiplex sports fields and at five minor ball diamonds. There are also tennis courts, a skateboard park, senior's fitness equipment, and several playgrounds. The city has 6.5 kilometres of walking trails and two golf courses.

For bird watchers there are many species that can be seen at McQueen's Slough.

From Dawson Creek, take Highway 49 east. Turn north (left) onto Rolla Road.

In the area around Dawson Creek you can camp, fish, hike, view wildlife, or go rock climbing.

In the winter months, cross country skiers enjoy 23 kilometres of intersecting trails at nearby Bear Mountain Nordic Ski Trails. Bear Mountain Ski Hill, just minutes away from the city, features 10 ski runs for skiers of all abilities.

Students play sports at school. Community centres have many low-cost sports programs. People can also join private sports clubs. For more information on private sports clubs, look in the yellow pages, under Clubs.

There are many good fishing lakes and rivers near Dawson Creek. You must have a licence to fish in B.C. fresh waters. You can get a freshwater licence online at: www.fishing.gov.bc.ca or from a Service BC centre.

Service BC
1201 103rd Avenue
Tel: 250 784-2224
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/dawsoncreek.html

Parks

Municipal parks

Dawson Creek has parks where you can be active, go for a walk, or enjoy local history.



- Kin Park has a walking trail and a senior's fitness park.
- At Mile Zero Park the Walter Wright Pioneer Village shows what life was like when Dawson Creek was a new village. The park also has plant and flower gardens at Gardens North.
- Bear Mountain Community Forest is a short drive from Dawson Creek

Provincial parks and national parks

British Columbia has more than 1,000 provincial parks and protected areas, and 7 national parks. Many of these are very large and have beautiful forests, rivers, mountains, and lakes. People can visit provincial and national parks for hiking, camping, skiing, boating, and fishing.

Visitors should keep parks clean and safe. You should put all garbage in garbage cans. If there are no cans nearby, take your garbage home with you.

There are several Provincial Parks near Dawson Creek where you can camp, swim, or enjoy a picnic. These include Peace River Corridor Provincial Park, Kiskatinaw Provincial Park, and Swan Lake Provincial Park.

To see a map of the parks in B.C. and their facilities, visit the BC Parks website at: www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks

For information on national parks, call 1 888 773-8888 or visit the website at: www.pc.gc.ca

Campgrounds and picnic sites

Many national and provincial parks have campgrounds and picnic sites. Campgrounds usually have campsites with a picnic table, a firepit, and space for a tent or camper. People can camp overnight for a fee. Picnic sites can be used only during the day. They are usually free.

You can reserve a campsite in some parks. To reserve a campsite in a provincial park, call 1 800 689-9025 or visit: www.discovercamping.ca

To reserve campsites in national parks call 1 877 737-3783 or visit: www.pccamping.ca

There are also private campgrounds in all parts of the province. People can usually make reservations for a private campground. Most have services such as laundromats and grocery stores. Private campground fees are usually higher than fees at provincial or national campgrounds. To find private campgrounds, look in the yellow pages, under Camping Grounds and Recreational Vehicle Parks or visit: www.campingrvbc.com

Back country recreation sites and trails

While many beautiful parts of British Columbia are in parks, there is much more to explore. Recreation sites and trails are on Crown land (owned by the B.C. government). You can usually only reach them by driving on gravel (unpaved) roads. Basic services (toilets, fire rings and picnic tables) are provided. For more information, visit www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca

Chapter 12: Environment



Environment

B.C. has beautiful mountains, rivers, lakes, beaches, and forests. But we are using up our natural resources, such as water, forests, and energy. Our environment (air, water, land, forests) is changing.

The climate is also changing. The earth is warming up. This happens because of gases from industry, farming, and cars. These are called greenhouse gases. The government and environmental organizations are working with communities and industry to reduce these gases.

British Columbians need to protect their environment. You can do your part. Everything you do affects the environment. For example, how much electricity, water, natural gas, or gasoline you use; what you buy and what you throw away as garbage.

When you are shopping, travelling, and using water or energy, think about your choices. Think about the environment.



Garbage and recycling

In Dawson Creek, the city will pick up to two garbage bags or containers of garbage from the curb in front of your home each week. To find out which day your garbage will be picked up call the city's utility department at 250 784-3610 or find your garbage day on the online map at: www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/finance/utilities/

You can reduce what you throw away as garbage. If you buy food and other things with less packaging, there is less garbage.

You can also recycle. This means using things again and not putting them in the garbage. In many towns and cities in B.C., people put things such as bottles, cans, paper, plastic, and newspapers in special blue boxes. These are picked up for recycling. You pay a small amount of money when you buy drinks in bottles and cans. You can return the empty bottles and cans to the store where you bought them, or to recycling depots for a refund (get your money back).

Dawson Creek encourages recycling and has several ways to reduce waste by recycling:

- The Dawson Creek Recycling and Bottle Depot takes most household recyclable goods. Visit the depot at 925 100th Avenue.
- Compostable materials such as grass clippings can be brought to the city compost site at 941/949 99th Avenue.

Check with city hall about any other recycling services.

Dawson Creek City Hall

10105 12A Street

Tel: 250 784-3600

www.dawsoncreek.ca/cityhall/departments/water/recycling/

You can also call the BC Recycling Hotline at 1 800 667-4321 or go to: www.rcbc.bc.ca

Many things can hurt wild animals and the environment. For example, plastics, used motor oil, paints, and other chemicals can kill birds, fish, and animals. Find out where these things can be recycled properly in your area by calling the recycling hotline.

When you travel, do not throw garbage by the road. There are garbage cans in most public places, such as parks, malls, stores, and highway rest areas. Some public places have recycling.

If you live outside major cities, be very careful around bears. Every year, many bears are destroyed because of problems between people and bears. Most of these problems begin when people let bears find food near their home. Make sure your garbage bins are tightly closed, don't leave pet food outside, and clean your barbeque every time you use it. For more information, visit the Bear Aware program at: www.bearaware.bc.ca

It is against the law to litter (throw garbage on the ground). You may have to pay a fine of up to \$2,000 for littering.

Chapter 12: Environment

Paying for energy

In British Columbia, most energy for heating and lighting homes and businesses comes from electricity, oil or natural gas companies. These companies are called energy utility companies (utilities).

You have to pay each month for the gas and electricity you use. How much you pay depends on how much you use. If you rent your home, your utility costs may be included in your monthly rent. If you own a house or apartment, you will receive a bill by mail or e-mail each month from the utility company.

You can pay your bill by mail, on the Internet, or at your bank or credit union.

Saving energy



You can save money and help the environment by using less energy. Here are some ways of saving energy.

Saving energy in your home

Lighting

- Change your regular light bulbs to low-energy compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs).
- Lamps or work lights let you to put light where you need it.
- Turn off lights when there is enough natural light and when you leave the room, even if it's only for a few minutes.
- Use timers, dimmer switches, and motion sensors. Motion sensors turn the lights on when you walk into a room, and off when you leave. They will help you use only as much electricity as you need to light your home.

Heating

- Turn the thermostat down overnight or when you are not home. Turning the thermostat down can save 5% to 10% of your heating costs.
- Change furnace filters at least every three months. Clogged filters cut the airflow, making your furnace work harder.
- Seal gaps and cracks with caulking and weather stripping to cut heat loss by up to 10%.

Appliances (for example, stove, refrigerator, dishwasher)

- Use smaller appliances, such as a microwave or toaster oven instead of the regular oven.
- Only turn on the dishwasher when it is full, and use the “no heat” dry button. This means water will drip off your dishes, instead of heating them up to dry.



- Using cold water is the best way to use less energy when washing your clothes.
- Hang your clothes to dry instead of using a clothes dryer.

For more information and tips, visit:
www.bchydro.com/guides_tips or
www.livesmartbc.ca

Save energy at work

- Turn off lights in areas that you are not using and when there is enough light from outside.
- Turn off your computer and monitor when you are not using it.
- Turn off office machines, such as photocopiers and printers, when you are not using them.
- Adjust window blinds to keep heat out in the summer and in during the winter.

For more information and tips, visit:
www.bchydro.com/worksmart

Saving water

We need to save water and keep it clean. Do not put harmful chemicals such as motor oil and gasoline down toilets or drains. It all goes back into the water system.

Use less water in your home

Kitchen

- Do not let the water run while cleaning fruits and vegetables. Rinse them in a pot and use the leftover water for your plants.
- Compost leftover food, fruit and vegetable peelings and other food waste

instead of throwing it into the garbage or using a garbage disposal (garburator). Composting means letting the unused fruits and vegetables rot, and using it as fertilizer in the garden.

- Buy low phosphate or phosphate-free detergents. Read the labels before you buy.

Bathroom

- You save more water and energy by taking quick showers instead of baths. Use a timer to help take shorter showers.
- Use a low-flow showerhead that uses only nine litres of water per minute. It will save you money because you do not need to heat as much water.
- Replace old toilets with dual-flush or low-flush toilets. They use six litres of water or less per flush.
- Check your toilet and taps for leaks. Even a small leak can add up to hundreds of litres of water a year. It is easy and cheap to replace a washer (rubber ring) in a water tap.
- Do not leave the faucet running when brushing your teeth, washing your face, or shaving.

Laundry

- Use a full load in the washer whenever possible. For small loads, change water levels to match the amount of clothes.
- Don't use the "permanent press" wash cycle. It uses as much as 20 litres more water to rinse the clothes an extra time.

Chapter 12: Environment

Outdoors

You use a lot of water when you wash your car or water your garden and lawn. Dawson Creek saves water by limiting how many days people can use water outdoors from May to September.

- Homes with even numbered street addresses (2,4,6,8,10, etc.) can water outdoors on Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- Homes with odd numbered street addresses (1,3,5,7,9, etc.) can water on Thursdays and Sundays.
- Hoses used for washing boats and vehicles must have automatic shut-off valves.

Here are some ways to save water:

- Use a system that drips water instead of sprinkling it in the air to water your garden.
- Set timers for your watering system so it turns off automatically.
- If you use sprinklers, set them up properly so that water goes on the plants, not the driveway or patio.
- If you use a hose to water, use one with a water-saving water gun spray head and shut-off nozzle.
- Use a rain barrel to collect rain water.
- Include a pond or other water feature in your garden to use as a water reservoir.
- Let your grass grow a little longer. This allows the roots to be more shaded so that they hold water better. Set your mower blades to five to eight centimetres.

For more information on ways to save water at home, go to: www.waterbucket.ca, or the websites of your local government or water utility.

Energy Star products



Look for products with the Energy Star label. They use less

energy, save money, and help protect the environment. For more information, go to the website: oee.nrcan.gc.ca/energystar

Programs to help you save energy and money

There are programs to help you save energy and money. For example, you can get help from utility companies and the government to make energy-saving improvements in your home.

You can also get a company to look at your house or apartment. They will tell you what kind of changes you can make to use less energy. This is called an energy audit. See the listing at the end of this chapter.



For more information

Natural Resources Canada

(Government of Canada)

Toll-free: 1 800 387-2000

www.oeenrcan.gc.ca

www.ecoaction.gc.ca

LiveSmartBC (Government of B.C.)

www.livesmartbc.ca

BC Hydro

Toll-free: 1 800 224-9376

www.bchydro.com

FortisBC

Toll-free: 1 866 436-7847

www.fortisbc.com

BC Ministry of Environment

www.env.gov.bc.ca/cas

BC Sustainable Energy Association

www.bcsea.org

Abbreviations and acronyms

In Canada, many people use short forms made from the first letters of the words in a group of words. Sometimes we say these letter by letter. For example, we say “E-S-L” for English as a second language. These abbreviations are pronounced letter by letter:

ATM Automated Teller Machine
B.C. British Columbia
BCEA British Columbia Employment and Assistance
BCSPCA BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
CPP Canada Pension Plan
CIC Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CPR Canadian Pacific Railway
EAS Employment Assistance Services
EI Employment Insurance
ESL English as a Second Language
GAR Government Assisted Refugee
GIC Guaranteed Investment Certificate
GIS Guaranteed Income Supplement
GST Goods and Services Tax
ICBC Insurance Corporation of British Columbia
ID Identification
MSP Medical Services Plan
OAS Old Age Security
PST Provincial Sales Tax
RCMP Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RESP Registered Educational Savings Plan
RRSP Registered Retirement Savings Plan
TV Television
WCB Workers’ Compensation Board/WorkSafeBC
YMCA Young Men’s Christian Association
YWCA Young Women’s Christian Association

Sometimes we pronounce these short forms as a word. For example, we say the word CANN for Community Airport Newcomers Network. These acronyms are pronounced as words:

ABESAP Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program
CANN Community Airport Newcomers Network
ELSA English Language Services for Adults
ICES International Credential Evaluation Service
PIN Personal Identification Number
SAFER Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters
SIN Social Insurance Number

Symbols

9-1-1 13

A

Abuse 61

Airlines 23

Ambulance 45

Apartment 25

B

Bank machines 36

Banks 35

B.C. Benefits Family Bonus 66

BC HealthGuide 43

B.C. health insurance 41

B.C. Identification card (BC ID) 70

Bicycles 22, 75

Buses 23

Business, starting your own 90

C

Canada Pension Plan (CPP) 86

Canadian citizenship 102

Canadian money 14

Cars 22, 70

Cash 14, 36

Cheque 36

Child care 66

Children and work 87

Child safety seats 74

Child Tax Benefit 12, 39, 66

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) 102

Climate 112

Colleges

Continuing education 54

Distance education 53

ESL 54

List of colleges 57

Community centres 108

Compassionate care leave 88

Continuing education 55

Court 93

Credentials 84

Credit card 36

Credit unions 35

Crisis centres 60

Cultural activities 107

D

Debit card 36

Deductions 86

Dentist 46

Deportation 106

Discrimination

Housing 27

Job 83

Distributed (distance) learning 52

Doctors 44

Drinking and driving 75

Driver's licence 71

Applying 72

Graduated Licensing Program 72

Driving schools 73

Duplex 24

E

Education system 49

Elementary schools 50

Emergencies

Calling police 13

Medical emergencies 44

Emergency Shelter 61

Employment and income assistance (welfare) 59

Employment Insurance (EI) 88

Deductions 86

Energy 112

Saving energy 114

English as a Second Language (ESL) 54

Environment 112

Index

Ethnic media 110
Eviction 31
Eye exams and eyeglasses 47

F

Federal government 99
Food banks 60
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act 93
French
 Francophone settlement services 23
 French and Francophone education programs 52

G

Garbage and recycling
 and the environment 113
Gay, lesbian and transgendered people 65
Goods and Services Tax (GST)
 And banking 38
Government 99
Government-assisted refugees (GAR) 11
Graduated Licensing Program 72
Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) 40

H

Harassment 89
Hate crimes 95
Health
 Health insurance 41
 Health services 42
 Mental health 48
Healthy Kids Program 45
Help
 For addictions 63
 For legal problems 96
 For victims of abuse and violence 61, 62
 For victims of a crime 94
Holidays 87
Hours of work 86
Housing
 Emergency housing 61
 Finding housing 26

Types of housing 24
Human rights 93, 98
 Gay, lesbian, and transgendered people 93

I

Income assistance 89
Income tax 38, 86
Independent schools 52
Insurance
 Car 70
 House 29
 Medical 41
Internet 37
 Banking by internet 37
 Getting internet service 30

J

Job
 Finding a job 80
 Losing a job 88

L

Landlord 31
Law 92
Lawyer 96
Legal system 92
Libraries 109
Loans 37
Losing your job 88
Low-cost housing 25

M

Mail 30
Maternity and parental leave 88
Medical insurance 41
Medical Services Plan (MSP)
 Fees and assistance 42
Mental health centres 48
Metric and imperial measure 14
Minimum wage 87
Money 14

Banking 35
 Borrowing and owing money 37
 Sending money 37
 Mortgage 37
 Multiculturalism 102
 Municipal government 101

N

Nurse 43

O

Old Age Security Pension (OAS) 40
 Optometrists 47
 Outreach 61
 Owing money 37

P

Parental leave 88
 Parks 110
 People with disabilities
 Health care 48
 Property tax deferral 39
 Transportation 22
 Permanent resident card 102
 Personal safety 13
 PharmaCare and Fair PharmaCare 47
 Pharmacist 43, 46
 Police 94
 And reporting car accidents 76
 And victims of crime 62
 Arrests 95
 Post-secondary education 53
 Premium assistance for MSP 42
 Prescription drugs 46
 Private insurance 42
 Private schools. *See* Independent schools
 Property taxes 39
 Protection of Privacy Act 93

R

Rape
 Victim services 62
 Recycling
 Recycling and the environment 113
 Recycling services 30
 Refugee claimants 10
 Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) 102
 Health care 42
 Renting 26

S

Seat belts 74
 Secondary schools 50
 Seniors' programs and benefits 64
 Seniors Supplement 40
 Service BC
 Cars and driving 75, 78
 Sexual assault 62
 Shopping 14
 Social customs 15
 Social Insurance Number 80
 Special needs 51
 Sponsoring 103
 Sponsorship breakdown 60
 Sports 110
 Subsidized and low-cost housing 25
 Subsidized housing 25

T

Taxable benefits 87
 Taxes 38, 86
 Taxis 21
 Telephone books 18
 Telephones 16
 Banking by telephone 37
 Getting telephone service 30
 Tenancy agreement 28, 29
 Disagreements and disputes 31

Index

Trains 23
Transportation 20
Trust companies 35

U

Unions 87
 And laws about working 86
 Union dues 87
Universities 53
 Continuing education 55
 Distance education 55
 ESL 54
Utilities
 And renting a place to live 29
 Utility services 32

V

Vacations 87
Victims
 Help for victims of crime 94
 Help for victims of trauma and family violence 61
Voluntary deductions 87

W

Walk-in clinics 45
Walking 22
Winter
 Driving 79
Witness 94
Working 85



Questionnaire

1. How did you find out about the B.C. Newcomers' Guide?

- ☐ Family
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Immigrant settlement agency
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. What information in this guide did you find helpful? (for example, education, health care, legal system)

3. What do you think we could do to improve this guide?

4. Did you read the guide:

- ☐ In print
- ☐ On the Internet
- ☐ Both



Questionnaire

5. If you read the guide both in print and on the Internet, which way was more useful?

6. Do you have any suggestions for other information you would like to see included?

Thank you for your feedback!

Please send your questionnaire to:

Mail:
B.C. Newcomers' Guide Feedback
800 – 360 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 6B2

E-mail: WelcomeBC@gov.bc.ca

Please include "B.C. Newcomers' Guide Feedback" in the subject line.

Map of British Columbia



