

Utility Allowance

When utilities are paid directly by the tenant, a calculation called the Utility Allowance must be made to determine a reasonable cost to associate with those utilities. In Alameda County, the Housing Authority of Alameda County (HACA) determines what the reasonable cost is associated with those utilities and publishes annually a Utility Allowance Schedule based on the # of bedrooms in a unit.

Maximum Allowable Rent

The maximum amount of rent a property can charge BMR tenants, assuming there is no utility allowance or required tenant fees. It is published annually by the City of Emeryville based on the # of bedrooms in a unit and the income tier associated with the unit.

Maximum Tenant Rent

The maximum amount of rent a tenant shall pay for a BMR units. It is calculated by deducting the applicable Utility Allowance, and any required tenant fees, from the Maximum Allowable Rent.

Sample Calculations

A. Maximum Allowable Rent

One Bedroom (50% AMI)	\$1,598
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B. Utility Allowance (1 Bedroom)

Electricity Heat	\$ 37
Electricity Cooking	+ \$ 9
Other Electricity	+ \$ 65
Electricity Water	+ \$ 52
Water	+ \$ 69
Trash	+ \$ 40
Utility Allowance Total	\$ 272

C. Required Tenant Fees

Rental Insurance	\$ 20
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D. Maximum Tenant Rent

A. Maximum Allowable Rent	\$1,598
B. Utility Allowance	(-) \$ 272
C. Other Required Fees	(-) \$ 20
Maximum Tenant Rent	\$1,306



Maximum Allowable Rent, Utility Allowances & Required Fees For Emeryville BMR Property Managers/Owners

What is purpose of Utility Allowance?

A Utility Allowance ensures that BMR tenants can afford their housing costs and are not unfairly burdened by utility costs, especially in buildings where the tenant is responsible for paying utilities separately.

How do I know what utilities to include in the utility allowance?

Gas, electricity, water, sewer, and trash are the most common utilities allowed to be considered in determining the utility allowance. Identify the utilities tenants will be required to pay when determining your utility allowance.

Do I include sub-metered utilities in the utility allowance calculation?

Yes, if a tenant is required to pay sub-metered utilities, like water, trash or sewer for their unit, then these utilities must be included in the utility allowance calculation.

Who ensures that tenants are not being charged more than the maximum allowable rent?

The City of Emeryville monitors every BMR property, annually, to ensure they are not charging tenants more than the maximum allowable rent. If the property is found to be in noncompliance with the published maximum allowable rent, due to the miscalculation of the Utility Allowance the BMR Property would be issued a Notice of Violation with a corrective action plan.