

# Unit Condition Follow-up Process Tenant Questions and Answers



## 1. What is the Unit Condition Follow-up Process?

It is how Toronto Community Housing deals with units that have:

- Excessive Clutter – learn more here
- Fire safety problems
- Tenants' health and safety concerns
- Pests
- Cleanliness/health hazard concerns

## 2. What are the stages in the new process?

There are four stages for staff to follow:

- **Stage 1: Identify** (staff note units with concerns)
- **Stage 2: Notify** (staff inform tenants about concerns with their unit)
- **Stage 3: Plan** (staff support tenants to develop a plan to improve their unit)
- **Stage 4: Follow-Up/Resolution** (staff visit unit to ensure the plan is working and the unit condition is maintained)

## 3. How will the Unit Condition Follow-up Process help staff?

The new process will help staff:

- decide how to respond to urgent problems;
- prioritize cases;
- work with the City and other external partners;
- work with tenants towards realistic progress; and
- use the legal process as a tool when working with tenants to keep them housed.

This new way is already being used in some areas. It is working well.

## Unit Condition Follow-up Process Tenant Questions and Answers



### **4. Will this process help tenants?**

It is always hard to tell if a new process will work for everyone. We have trained staff based on experiences and learnings which have worked for front-line staff and managers. There aren't always easy ways to fix some problems. The new process will help staff find answers and ways to meet individual tenant needs.

### **5. What is excessive clutter?**

Excessive clutter is when a person has collected many items without discarding enough of them. This affects daily living because the person's belongings interfere with activities. For example, *a person can't sleep because their bed is covered in piles of stuff.*

Excessive clutter can strain relationships with neighbours, friends and family. People can't visit because they have a hard time entering and moving around or there is no place for guests to sit.

### **6. Is hoarding different from excessive clutter?**

Hoarding is more serious than just having a lot of stuff; it's a behaviour that really affects a person's life. Toronto Community Housing uses the term "excessive clutter" because our role as a landlord is to focus on the health and safety of the unit.

### **7. What is hoarding?**

Hoarding is a problem that involves acquiring and failing to discard a large number of things that others would consider to be of little value. The problem is serious when it affects daily living and the function of a room. This may cause distress and affect a person's ability to function.

Just like any excessive clutter situation, hoarding can (and usually does) create health and safety concerns both in the unit and in neighbouring units. Many doctors define hoarding as a mental health issue.

## Unit Condition Follow-up Process Tenant Questions and Answers



### 8. How are problems identified?

Employees use a tool to rate the amount of clutter during annual unit inspections. The tool helps staff understand the differences between major, minor and no clutter.

Staff use this tool, along with additional information from unit inspections or other visits, to provide a detailed picture of a unit, which helps them determine what is best when following up.

### 9. What staff will be familiar with the new follow-process?

- Superintendents
- Tenant Services Coordinators
- Health Promotion Officers
- Community Safety Promotion Officers
- Community Housing Supervisors
- Community Safety Patrol Officers and Special Constables
- Operating Unit Managers
- Community Health Managers

### 10. Can tenants be evicted because of their unit condition?

Eviction is a last resort for Toronto Community Housing. If we start the eviction process, it is because we want to build a plan with a tenant to solve the problem.

If a tenant receives legal notices from Toronto Community Housing about their unit condition, they should speak with their local legal aid clinic about it. Operating unit staff can provide contact information for the local legal aid clinic.

## Unit Condition Follow-up Process Tenant Questions and Answers



### **11. Where can tenants get outside help?**

Many agencies and organizations can help tenants. If tenants feel they need help with their unit, they should speak with a local staff member. They can also call 211 to help find support.

### **12. How can tenants report unit condition problems?**

Tenants who think their unit or a neighbour's unit has problems should call the Client Care Centre **416-981-5500**. Callers will be asked to describe the problems. They will be noted in EasyTrac and assigned to staff for follow up. If it's easier to speak with local staff, tenants may do that, too.

A fact sheet for tenants to help you deal with clutter is available [here](#).