



Tenant Representative Code of Conduct

Policy Owner: Resident and Community Services

Approval: Executive Leadership Team

First Approved: November 2011

Effective Date: February 6, 2015

Policy Statement

Through tenant engagement initiatives, Toronto Community Housing facilitates the participation of tenants in issues that have an impact on their buildings and their communities. In meeting its mission, Toronto Community Housing applies its resources to support meaningful engagement, reduce barriers and spark social change.

Tenant representatives have a special role in creating healthy communities; in advocating for the interests of tenants; and in participating with management and staff in the local decision-making process. Tenant Representatives are not, however, responsible for decisions made by Toronto Community Housing and are not agents of the organization.

This Code of Conduct is intended to standardize the day-to-day conduct of Tenant Representatives. Toronto Community Housing abides by a number of laws and policies, which are appended for reference.

Tenant Representatives have a responsibility to act in good faith when representing their communities.

These guidelines provide a framework within which Toronto Community Housing can meet the following objectives:

- Outline and standardize the code of conduct of Tenant Representatives
- Maintain high ethical standard, good judgment, accountability and conduct for Tenant Representatives
- Support activities that will enable Tenant Representatives and Tenant Councils to become more involved in governance and decision-making in their communities.



The purpose of these guidelines is to outline and standardize the code of conduct of Tenant Representatives while maintaining high ethical standard, good judgment, accountability and conduct for Tenant Representatives.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all Tenants Representatives of Toronto Community Housing who act on behalf of, or represent other tenants within Toronto Community Housing bodies, workgroups, issues-based groups, committees, or other forums.

Definitions

Tenant Representative: any individual, residing in a Toronto Community Housing unit who is formally elected/acclaimed through the Tenant Engagement System. The Tenant Representative acts as a liaison between Toronto Community Housing and the individuals and communities they represent.

Policy Details

Respecting the Different Roles of Tenant Representatives and Staff

- Tenant Representatives and staff will respect their mutual roles and responsibilities
- Toronto Community Housing will not give Tenant Representatives any special benefit or consideration because of their position
- Tenant Representatives do not have authority over staff or other tenants
- Staff are accountable for meeting their commitments to tenant representatives in the context of joint activities
- All interactions between Tenant Representatives and staff will be governed by principles of respect and the understanding that Tenant Representatives and staff have different roles in the organization
- Arising conflicts or concerns should be processed using established channels. (i.e. Human Rights and Equity)



Conflict of Interest

A Conflict of Interest occurs when personal or business interests affect a Tenant Representative's ability to fairly and objectively represent the best interests of all tenants. The interest may benefit family, friends or a business enterprise with which the Tenant Representative is associated. *(For example, participation on a hiring panel when a relative, friend or business associate is applying for a job or a contract with Toronto Community Housing or any of its subsidiaries).*

Tenant Representatives:

- Must not use their position for personal gain. (For example, they will not use their position to market/promote any business opportunities without prior approval from Toronto Community Housing)
- Must not use confidential information that they have access to because of their position. (For example, they will not share confidential information about a contract or potential vendor or supplier)
- Must not use Toronto Community Housing materials or facilities for personal gain. (For example, they will not rent out Toronto Community Housing office space or equipment, or use Toronto Community Housing office space for their own business or commercial activities)
- Must not be a full-time and/or permanent staff member of Toronto Community Housing or its subsidiaries
- Personal gain also means gains for a family member or friend of the Tenant Representative

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

All Tenant Representatives must identify to Toronto Community Housing and/or other Tenant Representatives when they are in a possible conflict of interest and must abstain themselves from any discussion or decision on matters in which they have or may have a conflict of interest.

Diligence in Carrying out Responsibilities

Tenant Representatives who are acting on behalf of other tenants are in a position of trust.

Tenant Representatives:



- May seek reimbursement only for legitimate, agreed upon expenses incurred in the performance of the position. (*For example, travel expenses*)
- Must, when money is involved :
 - Take reasonable care in management and accounting of funds by submitting receipts to the Community Services Coordinator within 14 days of an event (*For example: if you spend \$100.00 on a community barbeque, you must submit \$100.00 of receipts to the Community Services Coordinator no more than 14 days after the event*) See, Expense Reconciliation Procedures for Toronto Community Housing Tenant
 - Report back on the event to the Tenant Council with details of expenditures. See, *Expense Reconciliation Procedures for Toronto Community Housing Tenant*
 - Take reasonable care and precautions where property and materials or facilities are made available for use

If you fail to strictly adhere to these guidelines, you are considered in breach of the Code of Conduct (breaches involving Toronto Community Housing funds are considered severe) and subject to removal from the office of Tenant Representative.

Harassment

Harassment means improper comment or conduct that a person knows or ought to know would be unwelcome, offensive, embarrassing or hurtful or any violation of the Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy.

Tenant Representatives:

- Must not exert or attempt to exert undue or inappropriate influence on tenants or staff or behave in a manner that may reasonably be perceived as intimidating or threatening
- Must not try to influence outcomes (such as how a tenant might vote) with threats, bribes or undue pressure
- Must not behave in an abusive way towards other tenants or staff, including but not limited to the following:
 - Initiating or spreading hurtful rumors
 - Swearing at someone (includes using obscene language, name calling etc.)
 - Using insulting behaviour (includes words and gestures)



- Electronic or physical display of pornography
- Making physical threats
- Assaulting someone physically or sexually
- Creating unwanted sexual advances
- Making threatening gestures or remarks
- Or any other violation of the Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy

If you fail to strictly adhere to this responsibility, you are considered in breach of the Code of Conduct (breaches involving harassment are considered severe) and subject to removal from the office of Tenant Representative.

Discrimination

Discrimination is any practice or behaviour, whether intentional or not, which has a negative effect on an individual or group based on prohibited grounds including but not limited to: disability, gender, race, receipt of public assistance, sexual orientation, unrelated to the person's abilities or objective considerations relating to the decision that is to be made.

Discrimination can arise as a result of direct or indirect unequal treatment of another or the effects of unequal treatment of others.

In order to avoid acts of discrimination treat all tenants equally.

Tenant Representatives:

- Must respect the dignity and rights of all tenants and staff.
- Must conduct their business as Tenant Representative in a way that is inclusive of all tenants.

If you fail to strictly adhere to this responsibility, you are considered in breach of the Code of Conduct (breaches involving discrimination are considered severe) and subject to removal from office within the Tenant Engagement System.

Breach of the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for Tenant Representatives was developed as a reference to guide tenant representatives in fulfilling their defined roles and responsibilities.



Reporting Violations of the Code of Conduct

It is the shared responsibility of staff and Tenant Representatives to ensure that the community standards are implemented and maintained. Remedies must be sought when the community standards are violated using established channels, including but not limited to the Toronto Community Housing Tenant Complaint Process and the Human Rights and Equity Unit.

Consequences as a Result of Breaches

- Violation may result in resignation of the Tenant Representative's ability to serve in a capacity in Toronto Community Housing, and/or removal from office within the Tenant Engagement System.
- In certain circumstances, Tenant Representatives in breach of the Code of Conduct may also be violators of legislation which could result in other sanctions as dictated by law (For example: violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code).
- Tenants/Tenant Representatives complaining about a matter concerning a Tenant Representative or disputing an action taken as a consequence of a violation of this Code of Conduct can use the Toronto Community Housing Tenant Complaint Process.

Implementation of the Code of Conduct

- The Code of Conduct for Tenant Representatives will be communicated to all tenants as part of the Tenant Engagement System, in the languages identified for tenant communication.
- It is the Tenant Representative's responsibility to review and understand the contents of the Tenant Representative Code of Conduct Guidelines and seek whatever clarification from the appropriate staff.

Compliance and Monitoring

The Code of Conduct for Tenant Representatives will be communicated to all tenants as part of the Tenant Engagement System, in the languages identified for tenant communication.



It is the Tenant Representative's responsibility to review and understand the contents of the Tenant Representative Code of Conduct Guidelines and seek whatever clarification from the appropriate staff.

Action will be taken against Tenant Representatives who do not follow these guidelines, including removal from the office of Tenant Representative.

Governing and Applicable Legislation

- *Housing Services Act*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Ontario Residential Tenancies Act*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act*

Related Policies and Procedures

- Roles and Responsibilities for Tenant Representatives
- Tenant Complaint Process
- Distribution and Allocation of Use of Space Funds Policy
- Distribution of Tenant Council Funds Policy
- Expense Reconciliation Procedures for Toronto Community Housing Tenants Guidelines

Commencement and Review

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Approval
First approval:	November 2011	New	Executive
Revision # 1	January 2015	Minor changes – updated references to legislation, policy and staff titles	Executive Leadership Team
Last review:	January 2015		

Next Scheduled Review Date: January 2016