

# Tenant Guide

Living in your Toronto Community Housing home



Toronto  
Community  
Housing

Our Team and How We Serve You



Your Home



Common Areas



Your Tenancy



Your Safety



Getting Involved



Services and Supports



# Learn More

You can find more information about Toronto Community Housing news, meetings, policies, forms, and templates at [www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca).

You'll find the latest versions of the following:

- Accessibility Policy
- Accessible Customer Service Policy
- Consent to Disclose Information form
- Documents for accommodation requests
- Eviction Prevention Policy for Non-payment of Rent (Arrears)
- Policy on Evictions for Cause
- Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy
- Leasing video and package
- Tenant Transfer Policy
- Unit Condition Follow-Up Process
- Visitor and Guest Policy

**To get a printed copy of any policy, you can:**

- 1. Print it online**
- 2. Visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office**
- 3. Contact the Client Care Centre at 416-981-5500 or [help@torontohousing.ca](mailto:help@torontohousing.ca)**

This book was accurate at the time of publishing. Send corrections to [help@torontohousing.ca](mailto:help@torontohousing.ca).  
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# Welcome

Owned by the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing provides homes to about 58,000 households in neighbourhoods across the city. We strive to deliver clean, safe, well-maintained and affordable housing, and connect residents to services and supports. We work with many partners to foster opportunities that can improve well-being and quality of life in our communities, helping make Toronto a better place to live.

This is your guide to living in your Toronto Community Housing home. It has details about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It also has information about how to make your home a great place to live.

We thank the many staff and residents, and the members of the Tenant Communications Workgroup, who contributed their ideas and feedback to make this guide **yours**. Keep this guide handy and contact us any time you need help.

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**Important:** The Tenant Guide is intended to be a quick source of information for you. The information in this guide may change over time or become out of date. The information in this guide should not be taken as legal advice. If there is any conflict between what is written in this guide and any law of Canada (federal, provincial, or otherwise), or any Toronto Community Housing policy, procedure, or guideline, then the law, policy, procedure, or guideline prevails. Nothing in this guide should be seen as a promise that Toronto Community Housing will do something or will not do something, an offer or an agreement.

**If my guide is lost, please return it to:**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address**

\_\_\_\_\_

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# Our Toronto Community Housing Team and How We Serve You

Toronto Community Housing has about 1,600 employees who work to provide the services and information you need about repairs, your lease, local services and support and safety.

## **Client Care Centre**

The **Client Care Centre** can be reached 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Agents respond to calls and can help you with building emergencies.

They can also answer questions about your tenancy and repair requests. Call **416-981-5500** or email **help@torontohousing.ca**.

## **Superintendent**

Your Superintendent works in your building or complex. He or she looks after day-to-day maintenance and completes service requests made by calling **416-981-5500**. Superintendents work between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

For after-hours service, contact the **Client Care Centre**.

## **Tenant Services Coordinator**

Your Tenant Services Coordinator is responsible for renting out units, meeting with residents for lease signing, and calculating rent. You can contact your Tenant Services Coordinator with questions about your rent or any other tenancy matters.



## **Community Services Coordinator**

Your Community Services Coordinator works with residents, local leaders, and agencies to identify your community's needs and support resident leadership and involvement. They:

- Work with you to reach common goals
- Connect you and your neighbours within Toronto Community Housing to available services, opportunities and other supports you may need.

## **Community Patrol Officers**

Our Community Patrol Officers and Special Constables, as well as private security companies, work in partnership with the Toronto Police Service to keep our communities safe. These officers can be seen on site in our communities. They also respond when tenants call the Community Safety Unit at **416-921-2323**.

## **Community Safety Advisors**

Community Safety Advisors can identify the appropriate internal resources and external agencies to help solve or address safety concerns in your communities. Community Safety Advisors also provide support for resident-led safety councils.

## **Community Housing Supervisor**

Community Housing Supervisors manage the teams that work in your buildings and they support the coordination of repairs in your community. They manage your building staff team.

## **Operating Unit Manager**

The Operating Unit Manager manages the team that works in your local Operating Unit office.

## Property Management Staff

Toronto Community Housing works with four service providers that support us in managing some of our properties. The property management companies are slightly different in the day-to-day operation of buildings. You will still have a Superintendent on site. However, their office structures are different.

You can contact the **Client Care Centre** about:

- a new repair that is needed in your unit
- a repair that was requested or completed
- how to make a complaint
- a letter you received
- your last call to the **Client Care Centre**

Be sure you ask for a reference number for each request you make.

If you need to speak with someone about your lease, your rent or your account, visit your local Property Management office.

Use a **reference number** to follow up on your request



When you call the **Client Care Centre** at **416-981-5500** to request a repair or ask a question about your tenancy, our agents will give you a **reference number**. This is your reference number. Use the number to follow up on your request. Be sure to ask for a reference number every time you call.

I have questions about...

a repair                      how to make a complaint

my account                  my tenancy

my last call                  Ask us.

## How to Contact Toronto Community Housing

Toronto Community Housing properties are organized into Operating Units across the city. This puts services closer to residents.

You can contact us:

### **In person**

If you want to talk to someone in person, you can talk to your Superintendent but you may have to visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office (for some buildings). For faster service, call ahead to make an appointment. If you aren't sure where your Operating Unit or Property Management office is, the **Client Care Centre** can tell you which office to visit.

### **By phone**

You can also reach the **Client Care Centre** 24 hours a day at **416-981-5500**.

### **By email**

Email us at **help@torontohousing.ca**, if your matter is not urgent.

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**Office hours:** Operating Unit and Property Management offices are typically open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. They are closed on weekends and holidays. If these hours are different for your Property Management office, the appropriate hours will be posted on the office door.

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## Your Local Operating Unit or Property Management Staff

These staff members serve residents in your building. You can ask them for information and for things you need.

When you visit an office to speak with someone in person, you can:

- Ask questions about your lease.
- Ask questions about your rent.
- Pay your rent.
- Request a transfer to a different unit.
- Get copies of Toronto Community Housing resident policies.
- Ask any questions you have about your tenancy or your account.
- Fill out forms for reporting a change in income, for completing your annual rent review, for having someone new move into your home or if someone is moving out.

## Your Local Staff

Write the contact information of your Operating Unit or Property Management office and other important people here.

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**Important:** They'll help you with the services and the things you need.

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(You will get this information when you sign your lease, or you can also call the **Client Care Centre** at **416-981-5500** at any time.)

**OPERATING UNIT (OU) name:**

**OU letter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPERTY MANAGEMENT** company name (if applicable):

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Office address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Fax number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Operating Unit Manager:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Office hours: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Housing Supervisor:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Office hours: \_\_\_\_\_

**Building's Superintendent:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Office hours: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tenant Services Coordinator (TSC) or Property Administrator:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Services Coordinator (CSC) Engagement:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Services Coordinator (CSC) Access:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Services Coordinator (CSC) Support:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Safety Advisors (CSA) :**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

# Tenants' Rights and Responsibilities

As a tenant, you have the right to:

## **Security of tenancy**

You may live in your unit until:

- You give proper written notice to the landlord (Toronto Community Housing) or
- The landlord ends your tenancy for breaking rules of the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

## **Notice before entry**

- A landlord (Toronto Community Housing) must provide 24 hours written notice before entering your unit, unless there is an emergency.
- A Toronto Community Housing staff person or contractor who enters your unit must have a reason for entering that complies with the *Residential Tenancies Act* or your lease.

## **As a tenant, you and anyone living with you must comply with the responsibilities of your lease.**

This includes, but is not limited to, the following responsibilities:

- Pay your rent on time, every month.
- Keep your unit clean and in good condition.
- Repair or pay to repair damages that you or your visitors or your guests cause. (This does not include repairs for regular wear and tear.)
- Be responsible for your actions and the actions of the other members of your household, your visitors, your guests, their pets and your pets.

- Respect your neighbours by not making too much noise, controlling and cleaning up after your pets, and helping to keep common areas clean by using the garbage bins provided.
- Respect all property in our communities, including rental units, personal property, common spaces and offices.
- Follow Toronto Community Housing policies and all applicable laws.
- Get household insurance for your belongings. This is usually called contents or renters' insurance (see page 29).
- Ask your Superintendent for help if you need your lock changed.

### **Do not change locks yourself.**

- Tell your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator, in writing, within 30 days, if someone moves in or moves out of your unit.
- Report changes to your income within 30 days of the change to your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator.
- You must not sublet your unit.

### **Human rights**

Toronto is made up of many peoples and cultures. Toronto Community Housing embraces this diversity and is committed to providing an inclusive housing and working environment where everyone is valued equally and treated fairly. Residents, visitors, guests and staff have the right to live and work in a safe environment of mutual respect, free from discrimination and harassment in all forms.

Toronto Community Housing has a Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy that reflects the requirements of the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

Anyone who believes that they have been harassed and/or discriminated against under this policy may file a complaint if they are unable to resolve it with their Operating Unit or Property Management office.

If you need more information about human rights at Toronto Community Housing, or want to read the policy, visit our website [www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca) or email [humanrights@torontohousing.ca](mailto:humanrights@torontohousing.ca).

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**Important:** A video about tenant responsibilities (in many languages) is available online at [www.torontohousing.ca/lease](http://www.torontohousing.ca/lease).

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## Toronto Community Housing's Rights and Responsibilities

### **Responsibilities**

As your landlord, we:

- Provide services as set out in your lease, under the law, or both.
- Keep your rental property well maintained and respond to repair requests within five days.
- Comply with local health, safety, and property standards and bylaws.
- Provide proof of payment when requested.



- Process your annual rent review, if you pay rent-geared-to-income.
- Provide 24-hours' notice before entering your unit unless there is an emergency (flood, fire, life-threatening event or life-safety check), in which case, staff can enter the unit.
- Provide accessible customer service to persons with disabilities.

## **Rights**

As your landlord, we:

- Collect a rent deposit of one month's rent if you pay market rent.
- Deposits will be used as the rent payment for the last month of your tenancy.
- Deposits cannot be used for any other reason, such as to pay for damages.
- A landlord must pay interest on the deposit every year.
- Pursue eviction of tenants who pay their rent late or break the law on Toronto Community Housing property.

You can find more reasons for eviction on page 50.

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**Important:** Toronto Community Housing does not want to evict you. We want to work out problems early so you can keep your home. We are committed to working with residents that may be having financial difficulties. Please contact your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator if you cannot pay your rent, or if you have other problems related to your tenancy.

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## Toronto Community Housing's Service Commitment

You can reach Toronto Community Housing's Client Care Centre 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. We'll do our best to look after your needs.

### **Repairs and maintenance**

To request a repair, please call the Client Care Centre at **416-981-5500**.

- We respond to requests for repairs and maintenance within five business days.
- We will work with you to find a lasting solution.
- If it is not an emergency, you can send an email to **help@torontohousing.ca**. Our agents will give you a reference number. This is your personal reference number to use when you follow up on your request.
- Be sure to ask for a reference number every time you call.

### **Emergency repairs**

When you call for an emergency repair, a staff person will be at your home within four hours, depending on the type of repair. We will try to fix the problem or stop it from getting worse. If the repair is a temporary fix, your request is then treated as a regular repair and staff will respond to it within five business days.

### **Accessible customer service**

Toronto Community Housing's Accessible Customer Service policy follows the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

To learn more about this law, visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at [www.mcass.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca).



The Accessible Customer Service policy follows these principles:

1. Customer service will be provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. Customers with disabilities shall fully benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way, as all other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary.
3. Customers with disabilities will be provided the same opportunity to access our services as all other customers.

To learn more about the policy, visit our website at [www.torontohousing.ca/accessibility](http://www.torontohousing.ca/accessibility).

## Toronto Community Housing Complaint Process

We care about your concerns and complaints. Our goal is to provide good service for residents. However, we cannot address concerns if you don't tell us. You can express your concern or complaint in many ways. You can contact us using any of the methods below to report concerns with customer service, the quality of repair work in your unit or community, or Toronto Community Housing business practices.

1. **In person:** Speak to your Operating Unit Manager or staff in the Property Management office.
2. **In writing:** Write to staff at your Operating Unit or Property Management office using email or regular mail.
3. **By phone** at **416-981-5500**, or
4. By email to [help@torontohousing.ca](mailto:help@torontohousing.ca).

## Remember to ask for a reference number.

Use this number every time you speak with us to follow up on the progress of the resolution of your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received, talk to the Operating Unit or Property Manager. He or she will record your complaint and try to resolve it within 10 business days. If you are still not satisfied with the service or with the handling of your complaint, call **416-981-5500**. Your complaint will be recorded, and a senior manager will contact you within five business days.

## What happens after you make a complaint?

The staff person who receives your complaint will confirm receipt within **two business days**.

## When will you get a response?

A staff person will respond to you within **10 business days**. They will tell you how your complaint will be resolved and how long it might take to resolve the complaint.

## Do What's Right: Report fraud and waste, right away

Fraud affects everyone at Toronto Community Housing. Funds lost through fraudulent activity prevent Toronto Community Housing from investing in much-needed capital repairs.

- Delaying repairs to vacant units prevents clients on the wait list from moving into an apartment sooner.
- Vandalism diverts funding from repair priorities.
- Wasteful activities may cause you and your community to wait longer for needed repairs.

Toronto Community Housing has hired an independent service to take calls about fraud. You can report your concerns without giving your name. You can report your concerns in your preferred language, at any time.

The Investigations Unit of the Internal Audit Department, an independent unit reporting directly to Toronto Community Housing's Board of Directors, will investigate your concern.

If you see or think a staff member or resident has committed fraud, report it right away.

- Call the *Do What's Right* phone number at **1-877-993-6744** any time.
- Visit **[www.tnwgrc.com/torontocommunityhousing](http://www.tnwgrc.com/torontocommunityhousing)** to report online any time.
- Write and mail a report to:  
Chief Internal Auditor  
c/o Toronto Community Housing  
931 Yonge Street  
Toronto, ON M4W 2H2
- You can download a template to help you at **[www.torontohousing.ca/report\\_fraud\\_or\\_waste](http://www.torontohousing.ca/report_fraud_or_waste)**

# Your Home

## Information for Successful Living



### 1. Moving in

Before you move in, your home is cleaned, repaired and inspected. It is also sprayed for pests, if needed. Your Superintendent will do a move-in inspection with you and will go through the types of changes you can and cannot make to your home. He or she will also note any repairs that you point out, explain to you what chargebacks are and give you a list of chargebacks for your home.



### 2. Elevators and deliveries

Each Toronto Community Housing property is different.

- If you are moving into an apartment building, speak with your Superintendent to reserve an elevator. You can also contact the **Client Care Centre**. An agent will give you a reference number and arrange with your Superintendent to put the elevator on service.
- On the day of your move, you must contact the **Client Care Centre** two hours before you move to have someone put the elevator on service.
- If you are having small or large items, such as furniture, delivered to the building, ask your Superintendent about how deliveries are handled at your building.

### 3. Decorating

Enjoy making your unit comfortable. It's your home.

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**Remember:** Under the terms of your lease, permanent changes are not allowed when decorating.

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- If you do make permanent changes, you will be charged for the cost of returning your unit to the way it was when you moved in.
- Flooring cannot be changed.
- Doors, cabinets, or plumbing and light fixtures cannot be removed.
- Only sticky picture hooks that will not damage walls can be used. Nails or hooks cannot be used for hanging pictures.

If you have more questions about the “dos” and “don’ts” of decorating, speak to your Superintendent or call the **Client Care Centre**.

#### 4. Utilities



- Your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator will tell you which utilities you have to pay for directly and which ones are included in your rent.
- If you pay rent-geared-to-income, the amount you pay for utilities will be different depending on the size of your unit. The amounts are set in the *Housing Services Act* and the City’s rent-geared-to-income guidelines.
- If you are responsible for paying for electricity, call Toronto Hydro at **416-542-8000** or visit **[www.torontohydro.com](http://www.torontohydro.com)** to set up your account before your move-in date.

If you are responsible for paying for gas, call Enbridge at **1-888-427-8888** or visit **www.enbridgegas.com** to set up your account before your move-in date.



## 5. Phone, cable, and internet

Phone, cable and internet are not included in your rent. You can choose any of the companies that provide service in Toronto. Make appointments with the phone or cable company during the day, from Monday to Friday, so your Superintendent can be there if the technician needs access to a restricted area of the building. If you live in a building with an enter-phone system and you find it is not working, check with your cable provider to see if their service works with the enter-phone system.

## 6. Appliances

Every Toronto Community Housing unit comes with a fridge and stove. They will work better if you clean them regularly. If your fridge or stove needs to be repaired, call the **Client Care Centre**. Agents can arrange for service during regular business hours. Many buildings have common laundry rooms that are open and closed at specific times. Tenants are not permitted to install a washing machine, dryer, or dishwasher in their homes. Installing these machines in your home can damage the plumbing in your building, cause floods or loss of water for you or your neighbours, or create other problems. If you install appliances without written consent, they will be removed and you will be charged for any needed repairs by the landlord.



## 7. Window air conditioners and satellite dishes

You must get written permission from your Operating Unit or Property Management office before you install a window air conditioner or a satellite dish. A recognized professional must install these items to meet defined safety regulations and avoid safety hazards. You must provide proof that they were installed safely.

The Operating Unit or Property Manager can provide a list of qualified contractors to install these fixtures.

If you install a window air conditioner or satellite dish without written permission, you will be charged for the removal and any repairs that are needed.

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**Please note:** If you install a satellite dish, it is mandatory that you have insurance for your home. More information about insurance can be found on page 29.

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## 8. Pet care

We know how important your pet is to you. We provide a pet-friendly environment. Please note that City bylaws allow a maximum of three dogs per household. You can have no more than six of any combination of dogs, cats, ferrets and rabbits at any time in your home. You are responsible for your pet's behaviour. You are also responsible for the behaviour of the pet of a visitor or guest. This includes excessive noise made by the pet, as well as cleaning up after the pet.

## **If you, or your visitor or guest, have a pet, you need to follow these guidelines:**

- Keep your pet on a leash in common areas, e.g., when you leave your unit and when going outdoors.
- Be sure that your pet does not damage property or the belongings of others, is not a nuisance, or does not create unreasonable disturbances, as stated in your lease.
- Never leave your pet alone on your balcony.
- Stoop, scoop and bag your pet's waste, responsibly, every time.
- Dispose of pet waste responsibly:
  - Use outdoor garbage bins when walking your pet
  - Never discard cat litter waste in the toilet
  - Double bag all pet waste (cat litter, bird cage linings) securely for garbage chute disposal.

To find out if you need a licence for your pet and for other rules about pets, call the City of Toronto at **416-338-7387** or visit [www.toronto.ca/animal\\_services/licensing.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/animal_services/licensing.htm).

If your neighbours' dog barks all the time or they never pick up after their pet, or you have other pet complaints, contact **416-338-7297** or [animalservices@toronto.ca](mailto:animalservices@toronto.ca).

Complaints about neighbours' pets must be logged with this service before Toronto Community Housing staff can follow up with your neighbours about your concerns.

## **9. Window safety**

Window locks are used in apartment buildings to protect people and pets from falling through window screens. They can be opened 10 centimetres to let in fresh air and keep you safe.

Window locks or screens are there to keep you safe. Please do not damage, tamper with, or remove window locks or screens in your unit. Doing this will put the safety of children or pets, who are living in your home or who are visiting, at risk. This also violates the terms of your lease, and you may be charged for repairs. Please report any window locks or screens that need repair by talking to your Superintendent or by calling the **Client Care Centre**. We'll address the problem within five business days, like a normal repair.

## 10. Balconies

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**For your safety:** Never leave children or pets alone on your balcony.

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**These items are not allowed on your balcony.**

- **Carpets:** Wet carpets can damage concrete and wood.
- **Barbecues:** They are fire hazards.

**Your balcony is not a clothesline.** Use a drying rack to dry clothes.

**Your balcony is not for storage.** It creates a fire hazard. You will be asked to clean it up.

**Never throw anything off your balcony.** You can seriously injure people below or cause damage to property if you do this. Put cigarette butts in an ashtray; you can be fined for throwing them off your balcony.

**If you want to install pigeon netting,** you must get written permission from your Operating Unit or Property Management office.

**If you want to put a satellite dish** on your balcony, you must get written permission from your Operating Unit or Property Management office (see page 25).

## 11. Keys and fobs

Toronto Community Housing will give you keys or fobs for your unit and for your mailbox. You may also receive security fobs to use for the building's main entrance and other common spaces.

- If you need extra copies of your key or have lost your keys and need to have your locks changed, talk to your Superintendent.
- In an emergency or after hours call the **Client Care Centre** at **416-981-5500**. It may take one to four hours for someone to respond.
- Residents are not allowed to change or add locks. Adding or changing locks is a violation of your lease. If your lock has to be broken to enter your unit, you will be charged for the repairs.
- Do not give copies of your keys or fobs to people who are not part of your household. This puts everyone's safety at risk and violates your lease.
- When you move out, return your keys to your Superintendent on your last day.

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**Important:** You will be charged up to \$99 to replace locks and \$25 for fobs.

(This is the rate as of December 2014. Charges may increase in future years.)

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## 12. Insurance

Do you have insurance for your belongings? You are responsible, under your lease, for getting insurance for your belongings. This type of insurance is usually called contents insurance or renters' insurance.

Toronto Community Housing's insurance will not pay to replace your belongings if something such as fire, flood, or other emergency damages your unit.

If some or all of your income is from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program, these programs may cover the cost of contents insurance. You need to speak with your case worker for more information.

### **What will insurance do?**

If your unit is damaged by flood, fire or any other incident, insurance can help you pay to replace your belongings. It may also help pay for legal costs if your actions cause a fire for example. It may also cover the cost of a hotel stay or a replacement unit if you have to leave your unit for a period of time because of the damage or the emergency.

### **Affordable insurance**

Marsh Canada provides insurance designed for tenants who live in social housing. You can get information about rates and coverage at <http://tenant.hscorp.ca> or by calling **1-866-940-5111**.

If you have questions about what kind of insurance is right for you, call the Insurance Bureau of Canada at **416-362-9528**, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### 13. Maintenance and repair

You can help Toronto Community Housing keep your unit in good condition by calling the **Client Care Centre** at **416-981-5500** right away when repairs are needed. If you wait, a problem could become worse and you may be charged for some or all repairs.

### 14. Heating

Building staff monitor the temperature in most buildings. According to the Toronto Apartment Minimum Temperature Bylaw, building temperatures should be at least 21 Celsius from September 15 to June 1. We use this bylaw to decide when to turn the heat on and off. If you are concerned about the temperature inside your unit, call the **Client Care Centre**.

### 15. Garbage, organic waste and recycling

Rules about garbage disposal may vary by property. Please be sure to separate your recycling items from your organic waste. Check signs at your property or ask your Superintendent for necessary information. Take your waste to the right chutes or containers in your building, or to dumpsters outside your building.

Please do your share and:

- Tie all garbage in small plastic bags.
- Double-bag cat litter and diapers, and include them with other organic waste.
- **Avoid putting glass, aerosol cans, or large items down the garbage chute.** Ask your Superintendent where to dispose of these items.
- Ask your Superintendent about where to bring furniture or other large items for the garbage.



## 16. Pest control

Unfortunately, cockroaches, bedbugs, mice, and other pests can sometimes get into homes. They are harder to control in places that are cluttered or overcrowded.

You can help us control pests on your property:

- Keep your unit clean and clutter-free.
- Do not feed pigeons, squirrels or stray animals. They can attract other pests.
- Do not pick up furniture that others have thrown away, as it could be infested.
- Do not put any garbage in hallways or on the floors of chute rooms, as this contributes to infestation. Make sure all garbage is placed into the garbage receptacle and the hatch is fully closed. Larger items that do not fit into the chute must be brought to the bulk garbage area.

Bed bugs are a problem in many cities in North America, including Toronto. The only way to control them is to treat infested units right away. There are non-chemical treatment options available. If you throw out pest-infested furniture or mattresses, ask your Superintendent for plastic to wrap these items before taking them out of your unit. Never leave anything in the hallway.

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**Important:** Report pests to your Superintendent or call the Client Care Centre. There is no charge for pest control or treatment, unless you fail to prepare your unit or you refuse to let the contractor in.

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You will receive instructions on how to prepare your unit for treatment.

## 17. Annual unit inspections



Once every year, your Superintendent will inspect your unit to make sure:

1. Your unit's smoke alarms (and carbon monoxide alarms, if applicable) are working.
2. Window screens are not damaged and window locks are in place and not tampered with.
3. Appliances are clean and working.
4. There is no excessive clutter or fire hazards.
5. There are no major repairs needed.

The annual unit inspection is a time to check for capital repair needs and compliance with municipal licensing standards. For example, if you are living in a townhouse, during the annual unit inspection, staff will make sure there are no modifications in the basement.

Every month, Toronto Community Housing staff test fire alarms and other life safety systems in the common areas of your building.

## 18. Access to your unit



Your unit is your home and we respect this fact. However, there may be times when Toronto Community Housing or Property Management staff and contractors need to enter it. They may need to enter your unit in an emergency, to make repairs, to



inspect your unit, or to show it to new tenants if you are moving out.

The *Residential Tenancies Act* requires that we give you at least 24 hours written notice before entering your unit—except in the case of an emergency.



## 19. Accessible accommodation

Toronto Community Housing accommodates residents with physical disabilities through upgrades to units (e.g., installing grab bars, door widening etc.) and common areas in buildings and, in some cases, moving to a more suitable unit. To learn more about how to get this help, talk to your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator about completing the necessary paperwork to request accessible accommodations.

# Common Areas

## Information for Common Areas



### 1. No smoking in common areas

In Ontario, it is against the law to smoke in common areas of apartment buildings. Common areas include elevators, stairwells, hallways, parking garages, laundry rooms, lobbies, gyms, garbage or recycling rooms, and party or entertainment rooms. If you or someone in your household is caught smoking in a common area, you could face a fine of up to \$5,000 from the City of Toronto.

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**Important:** It is against the law in Toronto to smoke within nine metres (about 30 steps, or the length of a small bus) of any entrance or exit of a public building. This includes all Toronto Community Housing apartment buildings and offices.

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If you are smoking in your unit, keep the unit doors closed so smoke doesn't travel down the hallway. If you smoke on your balcony, check with neighbours to make sure they are not affected by second-hand smoke. Never throw cigarette butts off the balcony. You can be fined for doing so.

### 2. Share the air

Products like hair gel, soap, perfume, and lotion contain chemicals and scents that affect other people's health, and may make them feel sick. Never use aerosol sprays or powders in common

hallways. Please consider using “scent-free” products in other common areas. Your choice affects your neighbours.

### 3. Laundry rooms

Most Toronto Community Housing buildings have laundry rooms with coin or card-operated washers and dryers. Hours and prices are posted in each laundry room. If you see a machine that is not working, or a machine keeps your coins, call the number posted in your laundry room.

### 4. Recreation rooms

Many Toronto Community Housing buildings have recreation rooms, meeting rooms and gyms. Residents and resident groups can book these rooms for meetings, parties or other events. A fee may be charged and insurance may be required.

To find out how you can book a space, read the Non-Residential Space Use policy. To get a copy of this document:

- Check **[www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca)**, or
- Visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office, or
- Call the **Client Care Centre**, or
- Send an email to **[help@torontohousing.ca](mailto:help@torontohousing.ca)**.

### 5. Hallways

All hallways in Toronto Community Housing buildings must be kept free of furniture, carpets (unless installed by Toronto Community Housing), scooters, bicycles, strollers, walkers, or items you have to throw in the garbage. Bring household waste and large garbage items to the designated area of your property.

If you have questions about how and where to throw away old furniture or large items:

- Ask your superintendent, or
- Call the **Client Care Centre**. Never leave items in hallways. This is a fire hazard.

## 6. Outdoor spaces

Residents are welcome to use outdoor spaces — e.g., private resident spaces, such as a backyard — in a fair and reasonable way. Doing so helps to maintain safety and allows everyone to enjoy the outdoors in their community.

If you would like to host an event in a common outdoor space, you must get approval from staff and be considerate of noise restrictions. To book your space or event, contact your Superintendent. If you have other questions talk to staff in your Operating Unit or Property Management office.

### *Outdoor parties*

Residents are welcome to have private parties within their backyards. You are responsible for the actions of your guests and visitors. Remember, you need to stay within your backyard space and respect your neighbours' expectations of noise and cleanliness.

If you plan to host an outdoor barbeque or a social gathering in a common area, you must get permission from local staff. You can find out how to do this in Toronto Community Housing's Non-Residential Space Use policy.

Unauthorized events in any common spaces are not permitted. If you are affected by an unauthorized event in your community, call the **Community Safety Unit** at **416-921-2323** to report your concerns.

## 7. Outdoor wading and swimming pools

If you have either an outdoor swimming pool or a children's pool in your outdoor space that is 24 inches or deeper, you must have a pool enclosure. This is a City of Toronto bylaw. For more information, call **311**.

## 8. Parking

To qualify for tenant parking:

- A household must be in good rental standing with Toronto Community Housing.
- The ownership of the vehicle must be registered to a household member who is on the lease. The address must be a Toronto Community Housing unit where the household member is living.
- The license plate sticker must be valid and up to date.

To rent a parking spot, you need to go to your Operating Unit or Property Management office, during office hours, and register for a parking permit.

A household member must:

- Read and follow the Tenant Vehicle Parking Terms and Conditions.
- Complete and sign the Tenant Vehicle Parking Registration Form.
- Show proof of vehicle ownership and insurance when registering.

Visitor parking is available for any person visiting your property or for residents visiting a Toronto Community Housing property where they are not registered to park. There are two types of visitor parking lots:

- **Pay-and-display parking lots:** Vehicles parked at these lots must purchase a pay-and-display ticket and follow the display instructions.

- **Non-pay-and-display parking lots:** Vehicles parked at these lots must display a completed Visitor Parking Permit. You must follow the instructions on the back of the permit and obey the signs at the location.

You can speak to your Superintendent to find out if visitor parking is available. You can then request a Visitor Parking Permit from your Operating Unit or Property Management office or Superintendent. A household is eligible for nine visitor parking permits per month.

You can find more details online at

**[www.torontohousing.ca/parking\\_toronto\\_community\\_housing](http://www.torontohousing.ca/parking_toronto_community_housing)**.

To report a parking violation, call Toronto Community Housing's Community Safety Unit at **416-921-2323**.

All Toronto Community Housing officers are authorized to write City of Toronto parking tickets. They can also have illegally parked cars towed from Toronto Community Housing property.

If you get a parking ticket, read and follow the instructions about fine payment and dispute options on the back of the ticket (see Trial Option 3).

## Tell us what you think of your Tenant Guide.

Submit your survey today!

We'd really like to know what you think about the Tenant Guide. Your opinion matters!

All responses are strictly confidential. Please fill out the survey on the back of this page.

(You must be age 18 or older to participate.)

**If you submit your completed survey by June 30, 2015, you will be entered into a random draw to receive a whistle keytag with a light. There are 100 keytags to be won!**



Three ways to get the survey to us:

1. Visit [www.torontohousing.ca/tenant\\_guide\\_survey](http://www.torontohousing.ca/tenant_guide_survey) OR
2. Tear out this page with the completed the survey on the back, fold it in half, and give it to your Superintendent who will put it in a sealed envelope. (You can put it in a sealed envelope yourself if you want.) OR

3. Tear out this page with the completed the survey on the back and mail it to:

**Tenant Guide Survey**  
**Toronto Community Housing**  
**931 Yonge Street, 7th floor**  
**Toronto, ON M4W 2H2**

To be entered into the draw for a keytag with lights, you must provide your full mailing address below. (Your survey responses will still be confidential.)

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**Overall, how would you rate this Tenant Guide?**

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very poor

**How did you hear about the Tenant Guide? (Check all that apply)**

- A neighbour
- Toronto Community Housing employee
- Poster in my building / community
- A community agency
- At a building meeting or community meeting
- Other. Please write in:
- Don't remember



**How easy was it for you to find the information you were looking for in the Tenant Guide?**

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult
- I was unable to find the information I was looking for in the Tenant Guide
- I wasn't looking for any specific information

**How easy was it to understand the information in the Tenant Guide?**

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult

**How long have you been a resident of Toronto Community Housing?**

- Less than 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years
- More than 10 years

**What do you like best about this Tenant Guide?**

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**What information would you like to see added in future versions of the Tenant Guide?**

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*Thank you for completing the survey!*

# Your Tenancy

## Your Rent

Your rent is due on the first day of the month, every month.

## Types of Rent

There are three kinds of rent available at Toronto Community Housing.

### 1. **Rent-geared-to-income (RGI)**

This is rent paid for subsidized housing. It is usually 30 per cent of gross monthly household income (income before deductions). Under the rules for social housing in Ontario, the amount paid is reviewed every year. However, if you pay rent-geared-to-income and your income changes at any time during the year, you must report the change to Toronto Community Housing within 30 days.

If some or all of your income is from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program and you pay rent-geared-to-income, your rent is calculated according to a scale. You are still responsible for reporting changes to your income to Toronto Community Housing, within 30 days.

### 2. **Affordable rent**

This type of rent is set at or below average market rent. To qualify, an applicant's household annual gross income cannot be more than four times the annual rent of the unit for which you are applying.

### 3. **Market rent**

It is the same or slightly lower than rents charged by private landlords in the area.

If you pay market rent and would like to apply for rent-geared-to-income, you must apply at Housing Connections. You can do one of the following:

- You can visit them at 176 Elm Street.
  - You can call **416-981-6111**.
  - You can find information online at **[www.housingconnections.ca](http://www.housingconnections.ca)**.
- 

**Please note:** There is a waiting list, and it could be several years before you are offered a rent-geared-to-income subsidy.

Your total rent may also include charges for things such as parking or utilities.

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## Your Payment Options

Residents can pay their rent in one of three ways:



### 1. **Pre-authorized payment (PAP)**

This is the easiest way to make sure your rent is always paid on time. For pre-authorized rent payment, your bank sends your rent payment from your bank account directly to Toronto Community Housing every month. You will get a form to set up this type of payment when you sign your lease. If you need another form, please visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office, or call the Client Care Centre.

Both your bank and Toronto Community Housing will charge you a fee if there are not enough funds in your account on the first of each month.

## 2. Local bank, credit union, trust or cheque cashing company payment

You can also pay rent through your local bank, credit union, trust company or cheque cashing company.

If you would like to pay your rent this way, ask your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator for payment slips. We will mail them to you once a year. Take a payment slip to your bank, credit union, trust company or cheque cashing company and pay your rent with cash, cheque or money order, or through a bank machine.

## 3. Phone or online banking payment

You may be able to pay your rent by phone or online banking. Speak to someone at your bank, credit union or trust company to find out how.

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**Important:** If you think you might miss or be late with a rent payment, call us.

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We want to help you keep your home. If you miss rent payments, you will be in arrears. If your rent is geared-to-income, this puts you at risk of losing your subsidy. We can make special arrangements to help you if you are in hospital or have a personal emergency.

Call the **Client Care Centre** so your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator knows. We can work with you to create a repayment plan.

## Your Lease

### **1. Reporting changes to your income**

The City of Toronto and Province of Ontario set the rules for rent-geared-to-income subsidies. If your income changes, you must report the change in writing or in person to your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator within 30 days. If you do not report income changes, you could be charged for back rent and/or lose your rent-geared-to-income subsidy. Your rent will then be raised to market rent and you could face eviction. If you have questions about reporting income changes, speak with your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator.

### **Are you or someone in your household turning 65 this year?**

When you or a member of your household turn 65, this may affect the annual income for your household and this may affect the rent you pay each month.

If you receive a pension from another country, you need to report this income to Toronto Community Housing.

If you have questions about the Canada Pension Plan or Old Age Security, contact information is available on page 71.

### **2. Annual rent review**

If you pay rent-geared-to-income, we will send you a rent review package once a year. The package includes forms that you must fill out to report the income of everyone in your household. You must complete and return these forms within 30 days. If you do not, you could lose your rent-geared-to-income subsidy.

Visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office or call the **Client Care Centre** to set up an appointment if you need help completing these forms.

### **3. How to add someone or remove someone from your rent-geared-to-income household**

If someone moves in or moves out of your unit, you must let Toronto Community Housing know, within 30 days.

To add someone to your household:

1. Complete the Addition to Household Composition Request form. You can get a copy at **[www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca)**, by visiting your Operating Unit or Property Management office, or by calling the **Client Care Centre**.
2. Attach all supporting documents.
3. Send or bring the information to your Operating Unit or Property Management office.

If your request is approved:

- You may need to sign a new lease.
- Your rent will be recalculated based on your new household income.
- If a person was added to your household and was on the central wait list, he or she will be removed from the list.

Some conditions that must be met before another person can be added to your household include:

- He or she must be eligible for a rent-geared-to-income subsidy.
- Adding the person must meet the city's occupancy standards (under the Toronto Municipal Code Property Standards section).
- Your account must be in good standing.

You must contact your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator within 30 days of someone moving out of your home. If the person was on your lease, they will need to declare in writing that they are giving up on any and all interest in the unit. You may need to sign a new lease.

#### **4. Downsizing (over-housed) procedures**

If you are living in a unit that is too large for your household, you will be added to Toronto Community Housing's internal transfer list. Staff will work with you to find a unit that is the right size for your household. If this takes longer than one year, your household will be added to the central wait list at Housing Connections. You will then be asked to choose at least five housing options with other housing providers.

#### **5. Expanding (under-housed) procedures**

If you are living in a unit that is too small for your household, you can ask to be added to Toronto Community Housing's internal transfer list. If you are under-housed by two or more bedrooms, you will receive priority.

#### **6. How to request a transfer to another unit**

You can learn how to apply for a transfer to another Toronto Community Housing unit by reading the Tenant Transfer Policy and Transfer Guideline. To get a copy of the policy and guideline:

- Go to **[www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca)**, or
- Visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office, or
- Call the **Client Care Centre**.

You will need to speak with your Tenant Services Coordinator or Property Administrator, or visit your Operating Unit or Property

Management office to have your name added to the waiting list for the property you choose. Many buildings have long waiting lists. In some cases you may have to wait as long as five to 10 years.

## **7. Visitor and Guest Policy**

Guests may stay with you for a maximum of 30 days in one year. This can be 30 days in a row or 30 days over the year, but no more. This policy applies to any person staying in your unit who is not an approved member of your household. In special cases, when short-term medical care or services are needed, guests may live in your unit more than 30 days, with approval from the Operating Unit or Property Manager.

Should the Toronto Community Housing be advised that you have guests living with you for longer than 30 days, without approval, they will investigate the situation. If your guest is not a special case, you may lose your rent-geared-to-income subsidy.

To learn more about special cases or to get a copy of the Visitor and Guest Policy:

- Call the **Client Care Centre**, or
- Visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office, or
- Go online at **[www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca)**.

## **8. Absences of 90 days or more from your unit while paying rent-geared-to-income**

For a household paying rent-geared-to-income, the City of Toronto's guideline for social housing sets 90 days as the maximum number of days that all members of the household can be "absent" or not living in their unit while continuing to receive a rent-geared-to-income subsidy. However, there are some exceptions to this rule.



- This rule only applies if all members of your household are away at the same time.
- Short absences of up to seven days in a row or less are not counted toward the 90-day limit within a 12-month period. Please tell us if you are in hospital, in rehabilitation, awaiting trial or have documentation to support another valid reason for being away from your unit longer than 90 days. Read more about this guideline at: [www.toronto.ca/housing/absence+from+RGI+unit](http://www.toronto.ca/housing/absence+from+RGI+unit).

To learn more, call the **Client Care Centre** or visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office.

## 9. Disclosure of personal information

There are laws that protect your right to privacy. Landlords must follow strict rules when they collect, use, and share your personal information.

### **If you pay rent-geared-to-income:**

Toronto Community Housing is required to collect personal information about your household members to determine if you are eligible for rent-geared-to-income subsidy and to calculate your rent.

Toronto Community Housing also has the authority to collect and keep information about your tenancy and housing subsidy under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

If you want someone to speak on your behalf about your lease, you must fill out a Consent to Disclose Information form to give us permission to share information about your tenancy. You can do this online, in person at your Operating Unit or Property Management office, or by calling **416-981-5500**.

## Eviction

Under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, these are some of the reasons you can be evicted:

- Do not pay your rent.
- Have more people living in your unit than is allowed by safety standards.
- Have people not listed on your lease living in your unit.
- Willfully cause serious damage to your unit or to the building.
- Do not report your income or the income of anyone else living with you while you pay rent-geared-to-income.
- Act in a way that interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of other residents.
- Threaten the safety of another resident.
- Break the law on Toronto Community Housing property.
- Violate the terms of your lease.

Toronto Community Housing works with tenants who fall behind in their rent payments to help them meet their responsibilities and, when possible, to keep their housing.

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### **Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity**

This office works to ensure that protections exist for seniors (age 59 and older) and vulnerable tenants who have lost their subsidy or face possible eviction for not paying rent. The office is independent of Toronto Community Housing (the Commissioner reports to the Board of Directors). It is guided by the principles of integrity, impartiality, and independence. Contact information: Telephone **416-632-7999**, or email: [info@oche.ca](mailto:info@oche.ca).

Eviction is always a last resort. Your unit is your home and we want to help you keep it by working together. If you are having trouble paying your rent, please let us know right away.

Learn more about our eviction-related policies:

- Eviction Prevention Policy for Non-payment of Rent (Arrears)
- Policy on Evictions for Cause

You can:

- Download a copy from **[www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca)**, or
- Visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office, or
- Call the **Client Care Centre** at **416-981-5500**.

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**Important:** Nothing in this guide should be taken as legal advice. If there is any conflict between what is written in the guide and any law of Canada (federal, provincial, or otherwise), then the law prevails.

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## Move-out Procedures

### 1. Giving notice

When you are ready to move out, you must give notice in writing 60 days (two full calendar months) before you plan to move. Please give your move-out notice to your Operating Unit or Property Management office.

### 2. Returning keys and fobs

You must return all unit keys, including mailbox keys and key fobs, parking garage keys and parking stickers, before you leave. Give them to your Superintendent. You will be charged for replacements if you do not return these items.

### **3. Rent and other charges**

You are charged rent up to the end of the month that your tenancy ends. For example:

- If you gave written notice on March 1<sup>st</sup>, you will pay rent for March and April and will move out before May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- If you gave written notice on February 15<sup>th</sup>, you will pay rent until April 30th and move out before May 1<sup>st</sup>.

You are responsible for the cost of repairing any damage you caused to the unit or for cleaning your unit if it is dirty when you leave.

### **4. Inspection**

Toronto Community Housing staff will inspect your unit shortly after you give written notice. They will inspect it again after you move out. Your unit should be in its original condition. You will be charged for any damage to your unit, beyond normal wear and tear.

For example, if you put up wallpaper, you will have to remove it.

# Your Safety

**Toronto Community Housing cares about your safety.**



In an emergency, always call **911**

## **What we do:**

Toronto Community Housing's Community Safety Unit is a team that includes special constables, community patrol officers, and a dispatch centre. Our team is mobile, patrolling in communities on foot, by bicycle, or in cars.

## **What you can do:**

Toronto Community Housing residents look out for their neighbours. In some buildings, residents have a “buddy system” to check on each other. If you are worried, tell someone—e.g., another neighbour, a friend, or the Community Safety Unit.

You can call the Community Safety Unit about security issues or to report a parking violation on Toronto Community Housing property.

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**Call 416-921-2323, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

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## **What happens when you call 416-921-2323?**

The dispatcher will ask you questions to find out what you need.

These questions may include:

- Where are you?
- Where is help needed?
- Who is involved?

The dispatcher will also ask questions to make sure the right resources are sent as quickly as possible, to keep everyone safe. We take all calls seriously and work with the proper authorities to respond.

Each situation is different.

- If it is a life-threatening situation, the dispatcher will contact Toronto Emergency Services at **911**, immediately.
- If it is not a life-threatening situation and not a situation that needs a community patrol officer, dispatchers can take your information. Community patrol officers will work with the Toronto Police Service and property management staff to follow up on your concerns.

Callers may remain anonymous. But, if you want to speak with an officer, the dispatcher will need your first name and phone number.

For more information about community safety and crime prevention, visit the Toronto Police Service website at [www.torontopolice.on.ca](http://www.torontopolice.on.ca).

## Safety in your Community



To create a healthy and safe community, residents should be mindful of the following standards:

1. We (staff and residents) treat each other with respect and courtesy and value the diversity in our communities.
2. We promote peaceful, healthy and safe communities.
3. We are responsible for our actions and the actions of our children, family members, guests, visitors and pets.

4. We respect all property in our communities, including rental units, personal property, common spaces and offices.
5. We respect and uphold Toronto Community Housing policies, lease agreements, and all laws.

If you see or are a victim of anti-social behaviour, please call the Community Safety Unit at **416-921-2323**.

Common examples of anti-social behaviour include:

- Excessive noise
- Opening lobby doors for strangers
- Loitering
- Littering/dumping trash/smells from trash
- Disrespecting people with disruptive or verbally abusive behaviour
- Acting aggressively to people
- Not leashing your dog
- Unsafe housekeeping/excessive clutter

The Community Safety Unit and Operating Unit or Property Manager follow up on anti-social behaviour complaints.

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**Important:** Residents who commit anti-social behaviours will get formal warnings. In the most severe cases, they could face eviction through the Landlord and Tenant Board. We will also involve the police or other agencies as needed.

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## **Safety in your development**

To keep you and your building safe:

- Do not prop entrances and doors open. When you do, you put everyone in the building at risk.

- Keep all hallways clear. It is a fire hazard if you don't. Keeping hallways clear helps prevent trips and falls. It makes it easier to keep floors and carpets clean. It also allows emergency workers to get to you quickly.
- Look into elevators before getting on. If there is someone already in the elevator who makes you uncomfortable, wait for the next one.
- Always close and lock your unit doors.
- When using the entry system, be sure you know the person calling before you let them into the building.
- Do not let salespeople or others you don't know into the building.
- Do not give copies of your unit key or fob to anyone who doesn't live with you.
- If you lose your keys or fob, let your Superintendent know right away.
- If you are going to be away for a long time, let your Superintendent know. Tenants who pay rent-geared-to-income who leave their units vacant for more than 90 days risk losing their subsidy.
- Do not leave young children home alone.
- Let your Superintendent know:
  - If you see light bulbs that are burnt out in and around your building
  - If there are areas that require snow and ice removal
  - If you see trees, shrubs and hedges that need pruning.



## **Safety in parking areas and in your car**

- Do not let anyone follow you into the underground garage or surface parking lot. If you see someone or something that makes you nervous, stay in your car and honk or drive away. Report your concern to the Community Safety Unit. You could return at a different time.
- Avoid listening to music while walking to your car or on the street so that you can hear what is happening around you.
- If you have a bicycle, register it with the police. Use a good quality lock. Lock your bike to some object that cannot be cut or broken.
- If your bicycle doesn't have a serial number, engrave a number on the frame and wheels so you can identify it if it is stolen.
- Always keep your car locked, when using it and when it's parked.
- Do not leave valuables in your car.
- Look inside and under your car before getting in.
- If you have car trouble, open the hood, lock yourself in the car and wait for the police or tow truck. Do not open the door to anyone you don't know.

## **Townhome safety**

- Walk in well-lighted areas on established paths. Avoid short cuts.
- Make sure your ground-floor windows and doors are locked and secure, especially in warm weather.
- Report any burnt-out lights or overgrown to your Superintendent.
- Keep your backyard light on at night. This provides extra visibility for pedestrians. It also discourages anti-social behaviour. Using energy-efficient light bulbs will not have a big impact on your hydro bill.

## Fireworks safety

Fireworks cannot be used on Toronto Community Housing property, at any time. Although beautiful to watch, fireworks are dangerous to children, adults and pets. They can cause fires and damage homes. They can also cause serious injuries such as burns, cuts, and blindness.

To find public fireworks displays that are held across the city:

- Call the city at **311**
- Visit [www.toronto.ca/special\\_events](http://www.toronto.ca/special_events)

For questions or concerns, please contact:

- Your building Superintendent
- The Community Safety Unit at **416-921-2323**
- In case of emergency, call **911**

## Fire Safety

If you discover a fire, always call 911. 

Never assume that someone else has already called **911**. Make sure you give:

- Your name
- Your building's address
- The location of the fire

## Life safety equipment

Smoke alarms will warn you of a fire by sounding an alarm. Every Toronto Community Housing unit has a smoke alarm. Never remove the smoke alarm.

## **Use smoke alarms properly**

If your smoke alarm goes off when there is smoke from the oven or kitchen but no fire, fan the smoke away from the alarm or push the “hush” button. If your smoke alarm is not working or the alarm sounds when there is no smoke, press the “hush” button then call the **Client Care Centre**.

Our staff check to make sure your smoke alarm is working every time they visit your unit, and during the annual unit inspection. If the smoke alarm is not working, it will be repaired or replaced. If you disable or remove the smoke alarm, you are putting yourself, your family, and your neighbors at risk. We will notify Toronto Fire Services who will send you a warning letter. You may be charged for repairs and could be fined up to \$50,000. If this happens more than two times, you will face eviction.

## **Carbon monoxide alarms**

Carbon monoxide alarms will warn you if the level of carbon monoxide, an odourless gas, is too high. Carbon monoxide alarms are in units where there is an appliance that burns a fossil fuel, e.g., a gas hot water heater or furnace.

In an apartment building, carbon monoxide alarms are in units two floors above, two floors below and the same floor as fossil fuel-burning appliances and above underground parking garages.

## **Be emergency ready**

- Have a plan so that you and your family know what to do in an emergency. Practice how you will leave your home safely, especially if you have children. Pick a place outside your home where everyone in your household will meet in an emergency.

- Create an emergency kit (including a list of important contacts) and know where it is.
- Have insurance to help protect your family and your belongings.
- Make sure your family members know your emergency contact's name and number.

If there is a fire in your unit that you cannot put out, leave immediately, pull the nearest fire alarm and call **911**.

- If there is a fire in your building, consult the instructions on the back of your main door.
- Before opening any door, touch the door handle and the door itself, starting from the bottom, moving to the top. If the door is not hot, open it slightly. If the hallway is clear, take your keys and grab-and-go bag (if you have one) and leave using the nearest stairway.
- Close, but do not lock, all doors behind you.
- Fire doors in hallways will close automatically. Do not prop them open.

### **If you cannot leave:**

- Seal all cracks where smoke can enter by using wet towels or sheets. Use tape to cover mail slots and ventilation outlets.
- Move to the balcony or the room farthest away from the smoke. Smoke rises, so stay low to the floor, if you can.
- Hang a towel or sheet in your window or from your balcony to show firefighters where you are.
- Try to stay calm.

Toronto Fire Services recommends creating a kit with the following items to use in case of fire:

- A few towels or washcloths you can wet and place at the base of a door, as well as over your mouth and your nose, to help you breathe in smoke-filled areas.
- Some duct tape and foil wrap to cover mail slots and vents.
- A whistle to signal for help.
- A flashlight to use if there is a power failure, if hallways are smoky, or to signal for help.
- A marker to write messages on cloth, doors or windows.
- A cotton bed sheet. If smoke is heavy in your room, soak the bed sheet with water and make a tent near an open window.
- A plastic pail with a lid for storing everything on this list. During a fire, fill the pail with water.

For more information on fire safety and prevention, visit the Toronto Fire Services website at [www.toronto.ca/fire](http://www.toronto.ca/fire).

## Power Failures

Each Toronto Community Housing property is different. Some buildings have emergency generators and some do not. To report a power failure in your building:

- Call Toronto Hydro at **416-542-8000**.
- Call the **Client Care Centre**.

If a power failure is expected to last more than three hours, staff will post notices and visit units to share information and make sure resident needs are met. More information about being prepared for emergencies is on pages 46 and 47.

To learn more about preparing for power failures, visit [www.torontohydro.com](http://www.torontohydro.com).

# Getting Involved

Come to a meeting, host a meeting, or join a committee!

## How to Get Involved in Your Community

All residents have opportunities to get involved. Is there an issue that is important to you? Come to a meeting, host a meeting, or join a committee.

Resident and Community Services is an entire department dedicated to providing support, programs, opportunities and events for residents. Staff from this department also support resident involvement in all Toronto Community Housing communities.

## Meetings

### **Board and Board committee meetings**

There are two spots for tenants on Toronto Community Housing's Board of Directors. Interested residents can apply and be elected by residents to fill these positions every four years. Board and Board committee meetings are open to the public.

The schedule is posted on our website at [www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca). To make a written or oral statement about a public meeting agenda item, call **416-981-4232** (for Board meetings) or **416-981-4194** (for Board committee meetings).

### **Community meetings**

Meetings held in your community can be organized by staff to talk about Toronto Community Housing business. They can also be organized by residents for residents, to talk about local issues.

## Bulletin Boards

Most Toronto Community Housing buildings have one or more bulletin boards with news and information for residents. Check the bulletin board in your building often to learn about activities in your community.

## Our Website

Toronto Community Housing's website [www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca) has news and information for residents. You can also find policies, forms and updates about local activities.

## Who to Contact

### **Want to get involved?**

If you want to get involved in your community, connect with your local Community Services Coordinator. Visit your Operating Unit or Property Management office or call the **Client Care Centre** to be connected with staff who can support your involvement.

## Services and **Supports**

You can call or reach Toronto Community Housing services 24 hours a day, every day of the year at **416-981-5500TTY** or at **help@torontohousing.ca**.

### **Call or send an email to the Client Care Centre for:**

- Routine maintenance requests
- Questions about rent or your lease
- Requests to transfer to a different unit
- Information about how to add or remove someone on your lease, or anything else about your tenancy
- If you need help with an emergency repair, always call; do not send an email. Interpretation into 170 languages is available.

A **TTY (Text Telephone)** device helps people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired to use the telephone. In this guide, TTY numbers are listed wherever they are available.

### **Toronto Community Housing's Community Safety Unit:**

#### **Call 416-921-2323**

- About security issues
- To report a parking violation on Toronto Community Housing property.

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**Important:** Learn more about the Community Safety Unit on page 54.

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## Useful Numbers

### **Social services: 211 or 1-888-340-1001 TTY**

Call for information about social services and community agencies in your area. Operators speak many languages.

### **City services: 311 or 416-338-0889 TTY**

Call for information about services provided by the City of Toronto. Operators speak many languages.

### **Toronto Public Health: 311 or 416-392-0658 TTY**

Your call can be forwarded to a public health professional for free, confidential health information and advice, or to register for public health programs like food handler training and prenatal classes.

### **Telehealth Ontario:**

#### **1-866-797-0000 or 1-866-797-0007 TTY**

Call to get confidential health advice or information from a registered nurse.

### **Municipal Licensing and Standards:**

#### **311 or 416-338-0889 TTY**

Call for information about property standards (such as timeliness or failure to make necessary repairs) or to make a complaint about bylaw violations in common areas and individual units.

### **Toronto Ombudsman's Office:**

#### **416-392-7062 or 416-392-7100 TTY**

Call to make complaints about city government (this includes its agencies, boards, commissions, and Toronto Community Housing) after you have tried all other options.

### **Landlord and Tenant Board:**

**416-645-8080 or 1-800-268-9242 TTY**

Call for information about the *Residential Tenancies Act*. This law explains the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants who rent residential properties in Ontario.

### **Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO):**

**416-408-4420**

Call for free legal information. CLEO does not give legal advice, but Legal Aid does.

### **Legal Aid Ontario:**

**416-979-1446 or 416-598-8867 TTY**

Call for free or low-cost legal services.

### **Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations:**

**416-921-9494**

This non-profit organization works to improve tenants' rights. Call for information about your rights as a tenant.

## Safety Numbers

These are numbers you can call 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

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**Important:** Keep these numbers handy so you can get the help you need when you need it.

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### **Emergency services: 911**

**(TTY and text available).**

Press spacebar announcer key until there is a response. Always call

this number in an emergency. Call this number to be connected to the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services and Toronto Paramedic Services.

**Toronto Police Service Central Dispatch:**

**416-808-2222 or 416-467-0493 TTY**

Call this number in non-emergency situations. The Toronto Police Service works in divisions across the city. To find out which division you live near, and their contact information, visit

**[www.torontopolice.on.ca/divisions](http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/divisions).**

**Crime Stoppers:**

**416-808-8477 or 1-800-222-8477**

Call this number if you have information about a crime to share with the police.

You do not have to give your name.

**Victim Services: 416-808-7066**

Call this number for immediate support for victims of crime.

**Ministry of the Attorney General**

**Victim Support Line: 416-314-2447**

(8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week)

Call for immediate on-site service for victims of crime. Services are available in many languages.

**Assaulted Women's Help Line:**

**416-863-0511 or 1-866-863-7868 TTY**

Call this number for help for assaulted women. Help is available in English and French.

## Crisis Supports

These are numbers you can call if you, or someone you know, needs help dealing with a mental health issue or an addiction. Call 211 to find more services in your area.

### **Toronto Distress Centres: 416-408-4357 TTY**

Provides emotional support, crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

### **Gerstein Centre: 416-929-5200**

Provides crisis intervention to adults experiencing mental health problems who live in the City of Toronto.

### **St. Elizabeth Health Care: 416-498-8600**

(Central office for Toronto) **416-498-0043**

(24 hours a day, seven days a week, for North York and Etobicoke)  
Provides mobile crisis intervention support and supports for family members, significant others, and caregivers.

### **Community Care Access Centres (CCACs):**

**416-314-5518 or 1-888-470-2222 TTY**

Hours of operation: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CCACs are your first point of contact for information about seniors' care, and can provide information about the kinds of care that are available in your area.

### **Telecare Distress Centres of Canada: 416-920-0497**

Provides mental health distress support in Mandarin and Cantonese.

### **Progress Place Warm Line: 416-960-9276**

(8 p.m. to midnight)

Provides peer support for people living with mental illness.

## **Scarborough Hospital Regional**

### **Mobile Crisis Team: 416-495-2891**

Provides mental health crisis response to individuals over 16 years of age. Serves East York and Scarborough.

### **Youthdale Treatment Centres: 416-368-4896**

Provides mental health services for children and youth (up to 16 years old) and for their families in Toronto.

### **Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868**

Provides counselling for people aged 20 and younger.

### **Children's Aid Society of Toronto: 416-924-4646**

#### **TTY: dial 711, then 416-924-4646**

Provides assessments, crisis intervention, counselling, and services to prevent child abuse and neglect.

### **Toronto Withdrawal Management System: 1-866-366-9513**

Provides help for anyone 16 years of age or older looking for non-medical withdrawal management services in the City of Toronto.

## Information for Youth

About four of ten residents living in Toronto Community Housing are under 25 years old. We work with partners to connect youth in our communities to economic and social opportunities in several areas, such as sports, the arts and academics.

Learn more online at [www.torontohousing.ca](http://www.torontohousing.ca) *or* by speaking with local engagement staff.

**Here are some quick links for youth:**

**[www.toronto.ca/youth](http://www.toronto.ca/youth) or call 211**

*Youth Development Unit:*

City hiring programs, volunteer opportunities and more.

**[www.211toronto.ca/topic/youth](http://www.211toronto.ca/topic/youth) or call 211**

Lists community services for people who are 12 to 29 years of age.

**[www.torontopaye.ca](http://www.torontopaye.ca) or call 416-397-5627**

*Partnership to Advance Youth Employment:* for youth living in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods.

**[www.woodgreen.org](http://www.woodgreen.org) or call 416-645-6000**

*Woodgreen Community Services:*

Free youth programs offer fun social outings, homework help, and assistance to youth who are new to Canada and are looking for work.

## Information for Seniors

About one in four residents living in Toronto Community Housing are 59 years of age and older. We work to provide safe, healthy environments for seniors in every community. Learn more by speaking with your local access and support staff.

**Here are some quick links for seniors:**

**[www.toronto.ca/seniors](http://www.toronto.ca/seniors) or call 211**

*Toronto Seniors Portal:* accommodations, financial resources, health services and more.

**[www.rev.gov.on.ca/en/credit/gains](http://www.rev.gov.on.ca/en/credit/gains) or call Service Ontario at 1-800-267-8097**

*Guaranteed Annual Income System:* ensures a guaranteed minimum income for eligible Ontario seniors by providing monthly benefits.

**[www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/social/odsp](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/social/odsp) or call Service Ontario at 1-800-267-8097**

*Ontario Disability Support Program:* people who are 65 years or older who are not eligible for Old Age Security and are in financial need may qualify for the Ontario Disability Support Program.

**[www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca) or call Service Canada at 1-800-622-6232**

*Guaranteed Income Supplement:* additional monthly benefits for eligible low-income seniors who are receiving

### **Old Age Security.**

*Old Age Security:* monthly benefits for eligible seniors 65 years of age or over who have lived in Canada for at least 10 years.





# Glossary & Appendices

## Glossary of Terms

### **Eviction**

When a tenant and their household is put out of their unit by legal means because they did not fulfill the obligations under their lease or the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

### **Fob**

Also called a “key fob.” Fobs are used to open the main doors of many Toronto Community Housing buildings. It is a small object, usually made of plastic or metal, that you wave against a pad near the door which then unlocks the door.

### **Household**

All the people who live in your unit. You must tell your landlord about every person who is living in your unit. The landlord has rules about adding and removing people from your household.

### ***Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA)***

The law that governs rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing in Ontario. It replaced the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*.

### **Fraud**

Deception (e.g., lying or trickery) intended to manipulate someone into giving financial or other benefit to the person who is doing the deceiving.

### **Landlord**

In this guide, the landlord is Toronto Community Housing.

## **Lease**

A contract between the landlord and one or more tenants. It tells you what unit you are renting from the landlord, the original rent for the unit, and sets out the landlord's and the tenant's rights and responsibilities. If you are a tenant, you should have met with Toronto Community Housing staff and signed the lease. You should also have been given a copy of the lease when you started your tenancy.

## ***Residential Tenancies Act (RTA)***

The law that sets out the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants who rent residential properties.

## **Sublet**

A sublet is when a tenant moves out and lets someone else live in their unit. Your lease does not allow you to sublet your unit.

## **Tenant**

A person who has signed a lease for a unit and continues to live in the unit. (This may also be a group of people.) You may have people living in your unit who are part of your household but who are not tenants. For example, children under 16 years old are not tenants as they are not allowed by law to sign the lease.

## **Tenancy**

An ongoing relationship between a landlord and a tenant (or tenants if more than one person has signed the lease). A tenancy is governed by the lease, the *Residential Tenancies Act* and, if your tenancy is subsidized, the *Housing Services Act*.

## Unit

In this guide, a unit is the home you are renting from Toronto Community Housing (whether that is an apartment, townhouse, house, etc.)

## Appendix 1

### Fire Safety Tips

#### Keep your kitchen safe.

- Keep your stove clean and don't leave the room while cooking.
- Turn pot handles inward so you do not bump them and children cannot reach them.
- Open a window to clear cooking smells. Do not open your apartment door. It will let smoke into the hall and set off the building's fire alarm system.
- Do not open a window or prop open a door if there is a fire. If you cannot put out the fire quickly, leave your home immediately, pull the nearest fire alarm, and call **911**.
- If your smoke alarm goes off while you are cooking, push the "hush" button.

This will quiet the alarm while the smoke clears.

- Never disconnect a smoke alarm.

#### Be careful with flammable materials.

- Keep lighters and matches in a safe place.
- Do not leave candles burning when you leave the room.
- Do not throw flammable materials like paint, ammonia, or oil down the garbage chute.
- Ask your Superintendent how you can throw away flammable materials safely.

## **Be careful when smoking.**

- Always use ashtrays.
- Do not leave cigarettes burning when you leave the room.
- Do not smoke in bed.
- Do not throw cigarette butts off a balcony (Read more on page 27).

## **Do not overload electric outlets.**

- Plugging too many electronics or appliances into one outlet using extension cords or power bars is a fire hazard. Unplug things you are not using to make room for what you need.
- Use CSA-approved electrical devices.

## **Excessive clutter creates fire hazards.**

- Keep your home clean and free of clutter. If you or someone you know needs help managing clutter, call the **Client Care Centre** at **416-981-5500**. We will get you the help you need.

## **Items left in hallways are a hazard.**

- If you have a piece of furniture or other items to throw away, never leave them in the hallway. Call **416-981-5500** to find out how and where you can throw away large items.

## **Build a grab-and-go bag.**

- A grab-and-go bag should have the important information you might need in an emergency.
- Use any bag. Keep this bag near your front door. Grab it in an emergency, when you need to leave your home quickly.

## **What you need to build a grab-and-go bag**

A list of important contact numbers, including:

- Your guardian or emergency contact(s)
- Family and friends
- Special care provider or support worker
- Doctor's office
- Pharmacist/pharmacy
- Insurance company information

Other important items:

- An extra set of keys
- A copy of bank books and some cash
- Extra glasses, contact lenses, and/or hearing aid batteries
- A change of underwear
- Toiletries
- A bottle of water
- A blanket
- Pet food and medicine (if needed regularly) and a photocopy of your pet's shots/vaccinations

Your grab-and-go bag should also include:

- A copy of your photo identification
- One week's worth of prescription drugs, medical supplies and special equipment.
- An information sheet about your special needs or disability.
- Foods that meet your dietary needs.
- Information about your allergies.
- Copies of your hospital cards.

If you have special needs, need a support person, or use life-sustaining equipment:

- Tell Toronto Community Housing and arrange in advance for someone to check on you if there is an emergency.
- Wear a MedicAlert bracelet or carry an identification card.
- Carry a personal alarm that makes a loud noise so you can signal for help if you need it.
- Label your equipment and attach instructions on how to use and move it.

Be prepared:

- Who else should be on your emergency contact list?
- What else might you need in an emergency?

**For more information about how to prepare for an emergency, visit:**

The City of Toronto's Office of Emergency Management website at [www.toronto.ca/oem](http://www.toronto.ca/oem) or Emergency Management Ontario at [www.emergencymanagementontario.ca](http://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca).

## Appendix 2

### **You Can Help Keep Toronto Community Housing Green**

**Use less energy and water, and reduce waste.**

We are making changes to our properties to help save energy and water.

Less money spent on utilities means more money for building maintenance.

You can do your part:

- Turn lights off when you leave.
- Take shorter showers.
- Do not leave the water running while brushing your teeth.
- Use cold water when doing your laundry.
- Use a drying rack (not a clothesline) to dry clothes on your balcony instead of using the dryer.
- Keep windows closed in winter. If it is too warm in winter, if possible, turn the thermostat down or talk to your Superintendent.
- Do not use your oven to warm up in winter if it is too cold. It is unsafe. Talk to your Superintendent so we can find the problem and fix it.
- Do not leave the fridge door open, and do not keep it colder than it should be.
- Tell us about leaky taps and windows that do not close properly.
- When buying electronics look for Energy Star labels. Electronics with this label use less energy.
- Turn off or unplug TVs, stereos, and computers when they are not being used, or use a power bar so you can turn them off with one switch.
- Reduce, recycle, and reuse, as much as you can.

If you have questions about recycling or anything else in your building, speak to your Superintendent or call the **Client Care Centre**.