



## Annual Pest Control Report

Item 6D

July 5, 2021

Tenant Services Committee

**Report:** TSC:2021-50

**To:** Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

**From:** Acting Chief Operating Officer

**Date:** June 23, 2021

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an annual update on the provision of pest control services at Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”).

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that TSC receive this report for information.

### BACKGROUND

The provision of pest control services are governed by both municipal by-laws and federal regulations, and are a key responsibility of the landlord as set out in the *Residential Tenancies Act* (“RTA”). The provision of pest control services is an essential component of a broader clean buildings and maintenance strategy, which is intended to establish achievable service standards, sustainable service models, and enable consistent and cost effective delivery of service geared to enhancing tenant satisfaction.

## PEST MANAGEMENT DATA & TRENDS

In 2020, TCHC staff fielded 50,654 work orders (“WO”) requests related to pest management issues (see Table 1). Of those issues, the top pest management treatments were for bed bugs and cockroaches.

In Q2 2020, the pest management program continued to be available, although there was a reduction in services. While staff were able to maintain service levels as it relates to preventative maintenance treatments of common spaces and building exteriors, there was a notable reduction of in-suite demand services. Where services have been required, staff worked with both the vendors and tenants to complete the services while maintaining social distancing and limiting the need for tenants to vacate their home for any periods of time.

In Q3 2020, the pest management program experienced a peak in service requests, which was primarily related to:

- The transition of 3,832 units from contract managed to direct managed;
- Seasonal fluctuation;
- Temporary easing of COVID-19 restrictions; and
- Commencement of the Annual Unit Inspection process.

*Table 1: Pest Treatment (Demand & Preventative) by Categories*

Quarter	Bed Bugs	Cockroaches	Mice	Other	Total
Q1 2020	5,105	3,668	1,716	1,006	11,495
Q2 2020	3,837	2,424	1,561	794	8,616
Q3 2020	7,924	5,467	2,107	1,798	17,296
Q4 2020	5,472	4,673	1,944	1,134	13,223

*Table 2: Quarterly Average Number of Treatments in 2019 vs. 2020*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>2019 Average</b>	<b>2020 Average</b>
Bed Bugs	5,859	5,585
Cockroaches	3,322	4,058
Mice	3,535	1,832
Other	1,799	1,183

In Q4 2020, the TCHC portfolio included 52,070 rent-geared-to-income (“RGI”) and 6,595 market units; RGI units accounted for the majority of pest treatments completed.

*Table 3: Pest Treatments by Unit Types*

<b>Quarter</b>	<b>RGI</b>	<b>Market</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Total</b>
Q1 2020	9,965	923	610	11,498
Q2 2020	7,471	784	362	8,617
Q3 2020	15,838	1,021	437	17,296
Q4 2020	11,701	980	542	13,223

### **Requirement for Multiple Pest Treatments**

In 2020, approximately 19.2% of all units receiving treatment required multiple applications in order to be resolved, which is an increase from the previous year (18.5%). The primary factors contributing to this trend are:

- Limitations to Health Canada approved product application methods;
- Adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols;
- Modifications to treatment plans to accommodate tenants in-place; and
- Onboarding and reset activities with former contract managed sites.

Most pest incidents require more than one pest management treatment to be fully addressed per Health Canada Guidelines; the timing between each treatment being equally vital to achieving an optimal outcome. At TCHC, contracts with pest vendors highlight clear expectations for follow-up treatments, including the provision of a mandatory inspection as part of the warranty program in cases of bed bugs.

## **PEST MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges in safely and effectively addressing pest control concerns. Where standard chemical application measures require tenants to vacate their units for a period of 4 to 6 hours, TCHC has worked with our vendors to establish interim measures to complete treatments while limiting the need for tenants to leave their units for extended periods of time. Enhanced use of mechanical treatments such as steaming, vacuuming, heat treatment, and limited use of pesticide has allowed for infestation level control. As well, achieving total resolution to pest incidents have been exceptionally difficult due to multiple return visits and increased costs per unit.

## **RESTRUCTURING**

As part of restructuring in 2020, TCHC realigned internal resources to the local Regional teams to better support daily program delivery. This realignment allowed each regional team a dedicated team, comprised of one Supervisor and three Technicians, while the Tenancy Resolutions Office (“TRO”) provides administrative, strategic and contractual oversight functions. This restructuring has allowed TCHC to realize the benefits of having resources aligned with the Regional teams to better support our tenants who are impacted by pest infestation.

## **SUPPORTING TENANTS**

In 2020, 15% of all the units visited by the Environmental Health team demonstrated the need for additional supports, including access to resources for support, de-cluttering, and preparation assistance for treatment or extreme cleaning services. Our partnerships with agencies such as Toronto Public Health and Ontario Works through Toronto Employment and Social Services, have assisted tenants in accessing approximately \$305K of additional supportive funding and/or services. The TRO and the Regional teams continue to develop and implement resources, partnerships and tools in order to continue to provide support and monitoring of units.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

An important lever to pest reduction is ensuring that staff and communities engage in dialogue with tenants and communities; it provides staff with a better understanding of our tenants and it provides tenants with the

information and resources they require to support a proactive approach to pest management in their units and communities. Although in-person tenant education have been paused due to COVID-19 safety restrictions, TCHC staff continue to work with our communications team to update education and preparation materials, including the translation of information into 24 languages.

### **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

Pest problems within TCHC buildings can significantly disrupt the comfort of our residents and limit the enjoyment of their homes. Without a strong and sustainable pest management program, the organization potentially faces orders and/or costs related to any perceived mismanagement, including potential awards of rent abatement at the Landlord and Tenant board, MLS orders for failure to maintain the premises “pest free”, and Health Protection orders from Toronto Public Health.

### **SIGNATURE:**

*“John P. Angkaw”*

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Acting Chief Operating Officer

### **STAFF CONTACT**

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