



Annual Unit Inspections Report

Item 6E

July 5, 2021

Tenant Services Committee

Report: TSC:2021-51

To: Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

From: Acting Chief Operating Officer

Date: June 24, 2021

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an annual update on the annual unit inspections (“AUI”) process conducted across the Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”) portfolio.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the TSC receive the report for information.

BACKGROUND

On an annual basis, TCHC conducts AUIs, which have been typically conducted in the final quarter of the calendar year. As part of the AUIs, Superintendents provide notice of the inspections, take receipt of the inspection log books, conduct unit inspections, and enter the results into an electronic tracking system.

The completion of AUIs supports TCHC in its efforts to identify any fire life safety and compliance risks. As well, it provides TCHC the opportunity to assess the potential vulnerability of a tenant and provide supports as required to maintain successful tenancies and prevent the negative personal and community impacts of unsupported vulnerability and tenancies.

2020 AUI PROCESS

The 2020 AUI was deployed in Q4 2020 and it focused on minimizing COVID-19 health and safety risks to staff and tenants, while continuing to meet service manager requirements and fire life safety compliance obligations. The following are highlights of the 2020 AUIs:

- Inspection form was modified with a focus on fire life safety and unit condition inspection points;
- Building staff received on-line training on:
 - COVID-19 personal protective equipment (“PPE”) requirements;
 - Changes to unit entry procedures; and
 - Health and safety processes to protect tenants and staff;
- Staff procured adequate supply to facilitate essential PPE for both tenants and staff members;
- Processes were established and communicated to safely complete the inspections with tenants in place;
- Tenant communications included posters, flyers and frequently asked questions (“FAQ”) to inform tenants of changes to the inspection process and maintaining social distancing during the inspection; and
- Regular AUI reports were provided to the Regional teams that allowed for increased oversight and follow-up, which resulted in earlier resolution of work orders.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 AUIs were completed on time, with a 98.4% inspection completion rate. To date, Regional teams continue to follow-up and conduct outstanding inspections.

2020 AUI RESULTS

Inspection Categories	2020 Total	2019 Total	Change
Completion Rate			
Total Units	57,556	57,399	157
Completion Rate	98.40%	98.97%	- 0.57%
Fire Life Safety			
Number of Smoke Alarms Repaired or Replaced	1,160	8,015	- 6855
Number of Window Locks and Screen Repaired or Replaced	1,164	766	398
Visible Mould, Mildew "Major" and "Minor"	758	1,261	- 503
Fire Safety			
Units with any Fire Safety Issue Identified	980	1375	- 395
Unit Condition			
Number of Units rated at between 7-9 on Clutter Scale (Major)	474	459	15
Number of Units rated with "Poor" Housekeeping/Unit Cleanliness	1590	1898	- 308
Number of Units rated with "Major" Level of Balcony Clutter	448	595	- 147
Water Penetration			
Number of Units with any Water Penetration Issue (Foundation, Roofing, Cladding, Window/Seal)	3,696	4,329	- 633

UNIT CONDITION & EXCESSIVE CLUTTER

"Hoarding" is defined as an excessive accumulation of personal and acquired belonging/items which are being stored within a dwelling in such quantities that make the areas unsafe and/or unusable for its intended purpose. The most recent publication of the Diagnostic and Statistical

Manual of Mental Disorders identifies hoarding as a separate and distinct mental health disorder.

Staff are provided tools (e.g. clutter image rating) to identify units with excessive clutter, mitigate further damage or deterioration to the unit, and offer social supports to maintain successful tenancies. In 2020, there were 474 units deemed to have excessive clutter. These at-risk units are automatically flagged for follow-up through the AUI system.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

The goal of the program is to keep tenants housed in a clean and safe unit; early intervention is essential and enables better outcomes for tenants.

The Operations Division uses an integrated approach to provide follow-up activities that address the range of services that may be required to remediate unit condition or unit clutter issues:

- Regular in-home visits with tenants;
- Interdisciplinary staff teams coordinating service connections;
- Engaging external partners to access funding and resources;
- Pest control treatments where applicable;
- Referrals to the Tenancy Resolutions Office; and
- In a limited number of critical cases where staff are not able to secure consent or compliance, an application can be brought to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

EXTERNAL PARTNER SUPPORT

A critical feature of effective excessive clutter management is leveraging the support of sector partners and resources, as up to 85% of unit condition cases require coordination and collaboration with external resources to establish a sustainable resolution. Currently, TCHC actively collaborates with many external resources, which include the following:

- SPIDER Program;
- Extreme Clean Programs;
- Municipal Licencing and Standards;
- Toronto Fire Services;
- Toronto Public Health;

- Toronto Hoarding Support Network; and
- Broader health and social services networks.

NEXT STEPS

The 2021 AUIs commenced in May 2021 and will continue to focus on fire life safety and compliance risks. In addition, the regional teams are ensuring that air conditioning units that are installed outside balcony enclosures. The 2021 AUIs are expected to be completed by September 2021, ahead of the migration to the HoMES Track 2B in October 2021.

The 2022 AUIs will be fully integrated into the HoMES system and will be re-established as a year-round cyclical program. The workload related to inspections and follow-up will be distributed throughout the year, with service level standards associated to follow-up interventions. This cyclical approach will result in better quality inspections and, where issues are identified, allow for more focused interventions and monitoring by integrated teams. It may also improve access to resources available at the community level and through TCHC's partners (e.g. Extreme Clean and the Housing Stabilization Fund), as requests for assistance will be spread over the year.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The effective follow-up and management of excessive clutter mitigates safety and compliance risks. Failure to adequately manage these risks could result in fines from regulators and/or, in worst case scenarios, injury or death of a tenant or staff.

Timely and appropriate resources are required to maintain safe unit conditions and support successful tenancies. Delayed follow-up on deficiencies or failed service levels can impact tenants in neighbouring units, overall building conditions, and can inflate costs to remediate and maintain unit condition at acceptable levels.

SIGNATURE:

"John P. Angkaw"

John P. Angkaw
Acting Chief Operating Officer

STAFF CONTACT:

Richard Grotsch, Tenancy Resolutions Officer
416-981-4054
Richard.Grotsch@torontohousing.ca