



County of Wellington Social Services Department – Housing Services DIRECTIVE

Directive Number: 2013-08

Effective Date: November 14, 2013

This directive has been developed by the County of Wellington in its role as Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) and applies to housing providers funded under the following social housing programs:

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| √ | Provincially Reformed Non-Profit Housing Programmes (MNP, PNP & OCHAP) |
| √ | Provincially Reformed Co-operative Housing Programmes (Co-ops) |
| √ | Municipal Non-Profit Housing Programme (Section 56.1 Pre-1986) |
| | Local Housing Corporation (LHC) |
| | Federal Non-Profit Housing Programme (Section 95 Pre-1986) |

Subject: Absence from Unit

Legislative Reference: Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA) O.Reg. 367/11 S.37

Directive Reference: This Directive replaces and repeals Directive 2006-01 Absence from a Unit

Background

HSA O.Reg. 367/11 S.37 permits the CMSM to establish a local rule setting the maximum number of days a household is allowed to be absent from the unit for which the household receives rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance.

Direction

1. Permitted Absences

All members of a household in receipt of RGI assistance are allowed to be absent from the unit for a maximum of sixty (60) consecutive days.

All members of a household in receipt of RGI assistance are allowed to be absent from the unit for a maximum of ninety (90) days over a twelve (12) month period.

2. Exception

A household in receipt of RGI assistance shall be deemed to be not absent from the unit for the purposes of these local rules if such a person is absent from the unit for medical reasons.

3. Extenuating Circumstances

Any request for a waiver of this policy based on extenuating circumstances will be considered by the housing provider. All extenuating circumstance requests must be submitted to the housing provider in writing prior to or as soon as the circumstances are known to the household. All decisions with regards to extenuating circumstances are at the discretion of the housing provider.

Definition

“Extenuating Circumstances” means a situation which hinders a household’s ability to follow the local rule.

“Medical Reasons” may include but are not limited to the following medical situations:

- A patient in hospital;
- A person in a residential treatment centre or substance abuse recovery programme;
- A person in a care facility; or
- A person recuperating from a serious medical intervention at the home of family or friends.

Application

1. The housing provider must develop and adopt an Absence from Unit policy that is provided to current and new residents that meets the requirements of this directive.
2. The housing provider’s policy should specify valid medical reasons that would be considered for an exception to its policy and what supporting documents it will accept. This policy must be applied consistently to all households.
3. If a household exceeds the Absence from Unit limits without receiving a waiver through extenuating circumstances, the housing provider will inform the household that it is no longer eligible for RGI assistance.
4. If a household is no longer eligible for RGI assistance, then the housing provider must serve the household ninety (90) days notice of their loss of RGI eligibility and their increase to market rent. The household must be advised of its right to a review of the decision.
5. A household that is absent from the unit is expected to pay the monthly rent on time.
6. Housing providers are expected to use discretion and fairness in the application of this policy and to make exceptions where extenuating circumstances exist. All exceptions and extenuating circumstances must be documented.

The Absence from Unit local rule is effective immediately.

If you require additional information, please contact the Housing Advisor.



Harry Blinkhorn
Acting Director of Housing