



Social Services Department Housing Services

Policy Name: Account Payments **Policy Catalogue #** HS 2014-PA16.0

Department: Administration **Approved by:** Committee and Council

Approval Date: June 26, 2014 **Signature:** *Harry Blinkhorn*

1.0 PURPOSE

To establish an Account Payments Policy that will inform tenants, increase County of Wellington, Housing Services (CWHS) and Guelph Non-Profit Housing Corporation (GNPHC) staff safety and help to encourage account payment system efficiency. This policy will clarify the methods of account payments accepted by CWHS and GNPHC, as well as, where and when tenant account payments will be accepted.

2.0 REVISION HISTORY

N/A

3.0 POLICY

The County of Wellington, Housing Services department and Guelph Non-Profit Housing Corporation seek to create a transparent and convenient account payment system for our tenants, while increasing staff safety and encouraging system efficiency.

3.1 Tenant Account Charge Types

The current and former tenant account charge types handled by CWHS and GNPHC include the following:

- Rent, rent deposits, overpayment of subsidy charges, tenant maintenance charges, miscellaneous charges, legal fee charges, Municipality filed property standards fines, insufficient funds (NSF) charges & unit lock changes.

The Account Payments policy applies to all tenant account charges whether or not they are identified above.

3.2 Accepted Methods of Account Payment

The following methods of tenant account payments are accepted by CWHS and GNPHC, unless otherwise stated:

- Cheques;
- Post-dated cheques; (only accepted for rent payments after the first month's rent)
- Money Orders;
- Bank Drafts;

- Interac Debit;
- Pre-Authorized Payments;
- Ontario Works (OW) pay direct system;
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) pay direct system;

CWHS and GNPHC reserve the right to add or remove account payment methods. Any addition or removal of account payment methods will be formally communicated to tenants through written notices.

3.3 Account Payment Methods Not Accepted

The following methods of tenant account payments are not accepted by CWHS and GNPHC, unless otherwise stated:

- Credit Cards;
- Cash (as of January 1, 2015).

CWHS and GNPHC do not accept any form of credit cards as a method of payment for any tenant account charges.

Effective **January 1, 2015**, CWHS and GNPHC will no longer accept cash as a method of tenant account payment. Cash payments represent a safety concern for CWHS and GNPHC staff, and therefore will no longer be accepted after the effective date. Some exceptions may be made in extraordinary circumstances.

CWHS and GNPHC do not accept cheques as payment for the first month's rent or rent deposits, unless the cheques are certified.

CWHS and GNPHC do not accept post-dated cheques for all tenant account charge types listed in section 3.1 of this document, except for rent payments subsequent to the first month's rent.

3.4 Who, Where and When: How to Make Account Payments

Account payment methods (as established in section 3.2 of this document) may be made to staff who have been authorized by the Housing Director (or assigned alternate) to accept tenant account payments. The following are examples of staff that have been authorized to accept account payments from tenants:

- Reception Staff;
- Management Staff.

Account payment methods (as established in section 3.2 of this document) may be made only at the following payment sites:

- The County of Wellington, Housing Services and Guelph Non-Profit Housing Corporation main office at:

138 Wyndham St. N.
Guelph, Ontario
N1H 4E8

- Any other site, as formally directed by the County of Wellington, Housing Services or Guelph Non-Profit Housing Corporation, through written notice provided to the tenant.

Account payment methods (as established in section 3.2 of this document) may be made during the following timeframes:

- Monday to Friday (excluding statutory holidays) between:
 - 8:30AM - 4:30PM (between September-Labour day weekend & May -Victoria Day weekend)
 - 8:30AM - 4:00PM (between May-Victoria Day weekend & September-Labour Day weekend)

Payment site access restrictions may unexpectedly or expectedly occur throughout the year, due to unforeseen complications and/or scheduled closures. A notice will be posted on the payment site(s) doors, with an expected closure timeframe.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

N/A

5.0 APPLICATION

This Account Payments Policy comes into effect on the policy approval date. These rules will apply to all current and future tenants of the County of Wellington, Housing Services department and Guelph Non-Profit Housing Corporation.

5.1 “No Cash Payments” Implementation Time Frame

The implementation of the Cashless Payments policy is subject to the “phase out” dates as stated below for current and future tenants.

Current Tenants:

Cash account payments phase out for current tenants: As of **August 1, 2014**, the cash payment phase out period will begin. During this time, all CWHS and GNPHC staff will inform/notice current tenants as prescribed in the tenant notification process of the Account Payments procedure HS 2014 PRA2.0. The cash payments phase out period will end on **December 31, 2014**. Full implementation of the no cash policy will take place on **January 1, 2015**.

Future Tenants:

Cash account payments phase out for future tenants: As of **August 1, 2014**, the cash payment phase out period will begin. During this time, all CWHS and GNPHC staff will inform/notice future tenants as prescribed in the notification process in the Account Payments procedure HS 2014 PRA2.0. All leases signed after June 30, 2014, will contain a clause prohibiting the use of cash for payment of any account charge type (as established in section 3.1 of this document) and requiring payment only at any CWHS and GNPHC payment sites (as established in section 3.4 of this document). The cash account payments phase out period will end on **December 31, 2014**. Full implementation of the no cash policy will take place on **January 1, 2015**.

6.0 PROCEDURES

(See Account Payments procedure HS 2014 PRA2.0)

7.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION & POLICY

N/A



Alternative Formats Available Upon Request