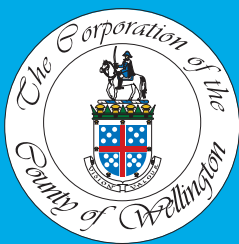


Handbook for your **HOME**



THE COUNTY OF WELLINGTON **HOUSING SERVICES**

Important Contacts

Call 9-1-1 for emergency help if you need an ambulance, fire department or police.

County of Wellington Housing Services **519.824.7822**
1.800.663.0750
519.837.6349

Regular office hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday and closed on holidays.

Summer office hours: 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday to Friday and closed on holidays.

To reach Property Services or Maintenance staff by phone, please call the main line and follow the prompts to be connected to a member of our team.

To meet with a staff member at our office, please call ahead and make an appointment. Staff are often out of the office. By making an appointment you can be sure they will be there when you arrive.

After hours emergency maintenance repairs **519.824.7822**

When the office is closed, the after-hours service is available to provide maintenance service for emergencies only. Please ensure that all other maintenance issues are reported during working hours.

Staff will not address non-emergency issues until the next business day.

Examples of what is considered an emergency:

- Fire/fire safety
- Water leak or flood
- No heat
- Health and safety related
- Blocked toilet

A list of all staff with telephone extension numbers is listed on our website at
www.wellington.ca/housing

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Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to your new home! This Tenant Handbook gives you important information and helps answer some of your questions as you settle into your new community. It also gives you information about what is expected and required of you as a tenant living in our housing community. Further information is provided to tenants through the tenant newsletter, postings on bulletin boards in your buildings and online at www.wellington.ca.

We hope you will find this Handbook helpful and encourage you to contact us if you have any questions.

Please note that this handbook does not apply to the following addresses:

**182 George Street, Arthur | 165 Gordon Street, Fergus
250 Daly Street, Palmerston | 169 Gordon Street, Fergus**

History

In 1922, the Guelph Housing Authority was established by the City of Guelph. In 1965, all municipally established housing authorities were transferred to Provincial control under the new Crown Corporation called the Ontario Housing Corporation. In 1976, the Guelph Housing Authority joined with the Palmerston Housing Authority and the Harriston Housing Authority to form the Wellington and Guelph Housing Authority. In 2001, under the Social Housing Reform Act, the Authority's units were transferred to the County of Wellington and the Authority was dissolved.

Today, the County of Wellington Housing Services (CWHS) is a division of the County of Wellington's Social Services Department and manages a portfolio of 1,254 units located across Wellington County.

Your community

Every tenant has something to contribute to the life and success of their home, building and community. We encourage you to get involved in your community and participate in the many recreational programs and events that take place regularly. This is also a great way to meet your neighbours and have some fun.

City of Guelph Neighbourhood Groups:

- Brant Avenue 519.821.9243
- Grange Hill East 519.836.9427
- Onward Willow Centre 519.824.6892
- Shelldale Family Support Centre, Better Beginnings, Better Futures 519.824.8498

County of Wellington:

- Community Resource Centre of North and Centre Wellington 519.843.7000
- East Wellington Community Services 519.833.9696

At some of our apartment building complexes, we have partnered with Guelph Independent Living (GIL) and the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) who provide Senior Support Workers to help promote wellness and improve quality of life for our tenants.

They also provide some recreational activities at the buildings. For more information, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Your Rent

Please read this section very carefully. If you have any questions at all, please contact your Property Services Officer.

How to pay

Rent is due on or before the first day of each month.

To ensure your rent is paid on time, we recommend that you set up a pre-authorized payment plan. Please contact your Property Services Officer to be set up or if you have any questions or concerns regarding this method of payment.

We also accept, cheque, money order, bank draft, Interac Debit, Ontario Works (OW) pay direct system and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) pay direct system.

We do not accept cash.

To obtain a copy of the Account Payments Policy, please contact your Property Services Officer.

If you can't pay, call us!

We want you to keep your home. If you are having difficulty paying your rent, please contact your Property Services Officer to make payment arrangements.

About your rent

Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance is the financial subsidy given to a household to reduce the amount the household must pay to occupy a unit with the CWHS.

- RGI rent is set at an amount that is based on approximately 30 per cent of your household's gross monthly income.
- RGI eligibility and assistance level are reviewed each year, or whenever your income changes or the people living in your household changes. (See page 5 "Changes in household income or membership").
- Each year, approximately three months before your lease comes up for renewal, you will be asked to complete forms and supply documents. These must be completed and returned by the due date given.
- Everyone living in your home who is 16 years and older must declare their income. However, some income such as full time student income is not included in the RGI calculation. If in doubt, contact your Property Services Clerk.
- Many tenants ask a family member or friend to help them complete these forms. You can also ask Housing Services staff for help.
- If you pay maximum rent, you are not required to complete the forms.

Rent subsidy information package

You must take the time to complete and return the forms by the due date identified in our correspondence. Only one reminder letter will be sent providing you with one last due date to return all the required documentation.

If your documentation is not returned by this date, we will send you a 90-day removal of subsidy notice and your rent will be set at the maximum market rent. You will then be referred to the County of Wellington's Eligibility Review Officer (ERO) who you will be required to meet with to determine if you can regain your eligibility for a rent-geared-to-income subsidy.

We encourage all tenants to work with us so that no one's eligibility for rent subsidy is compromised. If you have any questions about the forms and/or need assistance to complete them, please contact your Property Services Clerk.

To obtain a copy of the Failure to Provide Information Policy, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Changes in household income or membership

In order to remain eligible for RGI assistance, you are required to report any changes in household members or total household income within 30 days of the date you experience the change. You may also be required to provide supporting documents such as a letter from your employer or pay stubs outlining the changes.

Do not wait for your annual review to report changes in your income and/or household membership. If you have to pay an increased rent, it will be backdated to the date your rent should have increased.

Failure to report changes in household income or household members may result in loss of eligibility for geared-to-income subsidy.



To obtain a copy of the Notification of Changes Policy, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Tenant Rights and Responsibilities

Your lease

Your lease is a legal document. It covers your rights and responsibilities. Please read it carefully and keep it handy.

As a tenant, you have the right to:

- A safe place in which to live.
- Enjoy your home without undue interference from others.
- Take part in the activities of your community.

As a tenant, you have the responsibility to:

- Arrange for insurance coverage (see page 11).
- Follow the guidelines in your lease.
- Be a good neighbour - treat others as you'd like to be treated.

If you have any questions about your lease or your rights and responsibilities, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Tenant Code of Conduct

Procedure to follow

- All illegal acts must be reported to the Police and the County of Wellington Housing Services.
- As a tenant, if you witness an illegal act such as robbery, violent act, assault, or other illegal action, **please call 9-1-1 immediately.**
- If a fight breaks out on the property of the County of Wellington Housing Services, do not try to intervene, **please call 9-1-1 immediately.**
- When you feel safe, call CWHS at 519.824.7822 and talk to your Property Services Officer.
- If the incident occurs after normal business hours, please contact your Property Services Officer on the next business day.

Boarders and lodgers

Your home is meant to accommodate only those listed on your lease. Tenants are not permitted to have boarders or lodgers under any circumstances. You are welcome to have friends or relatives stay overnight or for short periods of time. For more information, please see the "Guest Policy" below.

Guest policy

You are welcome to have friends or relatives stay overnight or for short periods of time. It is your responsibility to make sure that your visitors and guests comply with the rules and regulations of your housing community. For information on guest parking please refer to the Parking section on page 11. Tenants who want to have guests stay in the leased premises for more than 14 consecutive days within a 30-day period, must obtain written approval in advance from your Property Services Officer. In the event that guests live in the unit longer than 14 consecutive days without prior written approval from Housing Services, they will be deemed illegal occupants and you may no longer qualify for geared-to-income rent assistance or occupancy of the unit. The guest policy is attached to your Lease as Schedule C.

Transferring to another unit

It is possible to transfer from one home to another or even to another community within the County if you meet the criteria below.

To be eligible for an internal transfer you must have:

- A genuine need (such as a health condition which is made worse by climbing stairs to your apartment, or to be closer to your job or school).
- Paid your rent in full and on time for at least six months in a row prior to your transfer.
- Lived in your present home for at least one year (this does not apply to overhoused households).
- A pre-move-out inspection completed.

If you are interested in a voluntary internal transfer, and feel that you have a genuine need, contact Applicant Services for a transfer application.

If you want to transfer to another housing provider, this is called an external transfer and you must apply through the Centralized Waiting List. To be eligible for an external transfer, you are required to meet all of the criteria for Rent-Geared-To-Income Subsidy Assistance as set out in the Housing Services Act, 2011.

Addition to Household

There are rules around adding a household member to your unit. If you would like to change your household composition please contact the Property Services Officer for more information.

Absence from your unit

You are welcome to travel and leave your unit vacant for short periods of time without notifying Housing Services. However, a household may lose its eligibility for rent-geared-to-income assistance if all members of the household are away from their unit for more than 60 consecutive days or 90 days over a 12-month period. There are some exceptions to this rule. For example, if the member of a one-person household is absent for medical reasons.

If you are going to be away from your unit for more than time allowed, please contact your Property Services Officer to discuss this.

If you are away from your unit, you will need to:

- Arrange for someone to check your home every three days and move your car if needed. It is your responsibility to ensure that undue damage does not happen as a result of your being away. If you have insurance, please check your policy coverage.
- Give staff permission to enter your unit during your absence for necessary repairs.

To obtain a copy of the Absence from Unit Policy, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Eviction

Eviction is always a last resort. Our goal is to help you stay in your home. If you have a problem paying rent, contact your Property Services Officer right away and we will work with you to try to find a solution.

The Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) provides the following grounds for eviction.

You may be evicted if you:

- Do not pay your rent.
- Frequently pay your rent late.
- Give false information about your income or the income of other family members living in your rent-g geared-to-income unit.
- Have others living in your unit who are not listed on your lease.
- Have more people living in the unit than health, safety or housing standards allow.

You may be evicted if you or your guests:

- Cause serious damage to your unit or the building.
- Make noise or act in a way that seriously bothers other tenants or the landlord.
- Threaten the safety of other tenants.
- Are charged with breaking the law on the Landlord's property.

Giving false information about your income or the income of other family members living with you may be considered fraud under the Criminal Code or misrepresentation under the RTA. If you are found guilty of fraud or misrepresentation, you cannot re-apply to the centralized waiting list for two years after the conviction.

If you would like more information on your rights and responsibilities, you can refer to The Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) website at www.ltb.gov.on.ca.

Making a complaint

A Tenant Issue Report is to be completed when you or your guests feel that the reasonable enjoyment of your home has been interfered with. If your safety is threatened, call the Police.

If you have an issue to report, please complete and sign the report and submit the top copy to Housing Services. Keep the bottom copy for your files.

Tenant Issue Reports are available at all of our apartment buildings, Guelph family properties at Onward Willow, Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Group and the CWHS office.

You and your neighbours

You have a right to enjoy your home. Establishing and keeping good relations with your neighbours can go a long way towards making the community one that all residents can enjoy. The following are some of the things that can help establish good relations with your neighbours:

- Be considerate when playing your stereo or radio.
- Your patio, balcony or yard is always visible to everyone. Please keep it neat and attractive looking for all to enjoy. Do not store items or garbage on your patio or balcony.
- Remember that you are responsible for your guests while they are visiting. Please let them know about parking and other regulations.
- When outside of your home (including the hallways, lounge, balcony, patio and yard areas), please dress appropriately.
- In general, treat others as you would like to be treated. If you do have problems with a neighbour, try to talk over the problem with the person. See if you can find a solution that you both can live with. If talking with the person doesn't help, call your Property Services Officer.



You and Your New Home

Moving in. Congratulations on your new home!

Your unit was inspected before you moved in to ensure all repairs have been completed. Any damage and repairs that were required have been recorded and all necessary work completed. However, it is possible that we may have overlooked something, so please complete the Tenant Move-In Inspection form given to you and return the top copy to the Maintenance Department within 14 days after you move in.

If you are moving into a family unit, a post move-in inspection will be arranged at the lease signing. Please call the Maintenance Department if you would like to reschedule.

After you move in

- Find all the shut off valves for the water lines to all sinks and toilets. If you cannot find them, contact your Maintenance Coordinator for help.
- Locate the main water shut-off.
- Check out the furnace if you have one and find the on/off switch. Find the filter and practice taking it out and putting it back in.
- Find your electrical panel if you have one.
- Locate the main electrical shut-off.
- Complete your Tenant Move-In Inspection form and return one copy to CWHS.

Keys/fobs

The keys/fobs that you were given when you signed your lease give you access to your unit, building and mailbox (for apartment complexes only). Please make arrangements with someone to keep a spare in the event that you misplace yours. For security reasons, please do not have additional keys made.

All keys/fobs must be returned when you move out.

Lost keys/fobs

Houses (row or town-houses, semi-detached and single family dwellings)

As there is no one on site who has keys for each unit, please make arrangements with someone to keep your spare key. If you lose one of your keys, you can have another copy made at your own expense. If you lose both keys, contact CWHS during regular business hours to arrange to get new keys. After hours or on weekends, losing your keys is not considered an emergency.

We are not able to come out after hours to open up doors.

Apartment buildings

Apartment buildings have special security locks and the keys cannot be duplicated. Replacement keys/fobs must be obtained through CWHS during regular business hours. There is a cost for replacement keys/fobs.

Lock changes

If you wish, you may arrange with CWHS to change your lock. A fee will be charged when you request a lock change, and this fee must be paid in full before the lock change can take place.

Insurance

The County of Wellington requires tenants to obtain and maintain insurance coverage to protect the tenant's property. The tenant will be required to provide proof of insurance prior to the commencement of a lease agreement and annually thereafter or as may be required.

Tenant insurance protects you from:

1. loss of your belongings due to theft, fire or other disasters.
2. being responsible if your home is the source of damage to other units.

To obtain a copy of the Insurance Policy, please contact your Property Services Officer.

The CWHS insurance policy does not pay for a claim that could have been covered by the tenant's insurance or where the tenant is negligent. If you are in receipt of Ontario Works or ODSP, talk to your caseworker to see if the cost of tenant insurance can be covered.

Parking

Parking is one of the most common concerns in our housing communities.

Following the guidelines outlined below will make parking easier for everyone.

1. A vehicle must be road worthy, currently licensed and owned or leased by the tenant.
2. All vehicles that are not licensed or are not road worthy will be towed at the owner's expense.
3. Only one (1) vehicle per unit may be parked on the premises if you live in apartment complexes.
4. Some communities have space for visitor parking, others do not. Visitors must park in the designated area or on the street where permitted. They must not use parking areas designated for tenants. Visitors are allowed to park overnight only if space is available.
5. Vehicles should never be parked in fire route areas.

Some of our building complexes have a parking policy. To obtain a copy of the Parking Policy, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Pets

Pets can be wonderful company, a great reason to get some exercise and an easy way for neighbours to connect. They can also become a point of conflict. If you have a pet, please remember that you are responsible for your pet's behaviour and its effect on other people. You are responsible for knowing and obeying the municipal by-laws about pets where you live.

Important reminders

- Dogs must have a valid municipal dog license.
- Clean up after your pet immediately.
- Keep your dog on a leash at all times when outside of your unit.
- Be considerate of others regarding noise.
- Do not take your pet into your building laundry room or lounge. Other tenants may be allergic to animals or frightened by them.

Basements

Tenants are not permitted to use the basement for sleeping purposes as an additional bedroom or a living area. In addition, CWHS will not be responsible or liable for damages to personal items stored in the basement.

Decorating your home

You are encouraged to make your home your own. However, you must restore it back to the CWHS standard when you move out or you may be responsible for any costs associated with this.

The guidelines and suggestions on the following pages will help you to avoid problems and repair charges. Please check with your Property Services Officer before you decorate or install anything if you are unsure about what you can and can't do.

Wallpaper

Use easy to remove wallpaper and wallpaper borders and only apply these to walls that have been pre-treated for wallpaper application. Do not use adhesive vinyl such as Mactac or Contact Paper as it damages the walls when it is removed. Before you move out, you must remove all wallpaper and borders and remove any wallpaper glue left behind. Wallpaper that is left on the walls after you move out will be removed by our contractors and the full cost of this may be charged back to you.

Smoking

Effective, January 1, 2018, all new leases signed with the County of Wellington, will provide that all buildings and properties be smoke-free. Units and buildings owned by the County of Wellington are transitioning to be 100% smoke-free and new tenants must follow the Smoke-Free Policy as outlined in the lease agreement they have signed. To obtain a copy of the Smoking-Free Policy, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Painting

You may repaint your unit at your own expense. However, interior cabinets, fixtures and exterior surfaces cannot be painted, stained or altered in any way.

If you decide to paint your interior walls, please follow these rules:

- Only use Acrylic Latex paint.
- Do not paint ceilings.
- Use white or pale colours - you may be charged for the cost of additional paint and labour to paint over dark colours.
- Avoid using any cleaning solvents or putting up wallpaper and borders for at least one month after painting.



Carpet and laminate flooring

Tenants are not permitted to install carpet or laminate flooring inside the unit or on balconies. You may use area rugs provided they are not glued, taped or tacked to the floor.

Appliances - fridges and stoves (apartment complexes)

If appliances are provided in the unit, you may not replace these with your own without written permission from CWHS. The original appliances must be stored in your unit. You may not alter any cupboards or doorways to install your own appliances.

Gas fired appliances

- Are not permitted without the prior written approval from CWHS.
- Must only be installed by a licensed installer.
- Tenants must have the gas-line re-capped at their own expense when they move out.
- Required routine maintenance servicing is the responsibility of the tenant.

Contact your Property Services Officer before making any arrangements to install gas-fired appliances. Tenants who fail to obtain permission or follow the rules may be charged for damages.

Dishwashers

Dishwashers are not allowed in apartment complexes. Portable dishwashers only are allowed in detached, semi-detached and townhouse units.

Laundry

Townhouses, semi-detached and detached houses:

- You will find hook-ups for tenant-owned washers and dryers.
- You are required to provide proper venting material for the dryers and to maintain the venting in a good and safe working order.

Apartment complexes:

- Washers and dryers must not be installed in apartment units as they could cause flooding and other plumbing problems.
- Laundry machines are available at every building for tenants use.
- Please leave the washer and dryer clean after your laundry is finished and collect your laundry as soon as the cycle is complete.
- In buildings with scheduled laundry times, please make sure you follow the schedule.
- If you have difficulties with the equipment, please contact the Maintenance Department.

Garbage disposal and recycling

Garbage disposal and recycling varies according to the location and type of unit you live in. Information specific to each location was given to you at your leasing interview.

No matter which garbage and recycling system is used in your community, the tips below will help to ensure you do your part to keep garbage in its place:

- Recycling is important to our environment. Please recycle whenever you can.
- Put garbage inside the dumpster, not outside it. Make sure that the person taking the garbage out can put it in the dumpster. Most small children can't lift the bag high enough to get it into the dumpster.
- The dumpster is for tenants use only.
- Do not let children play in the dumpster. This is a safety hazard.
- Tenants in apartment complexes should take their sorted garbage to the garbage room.
- Appliances, furniture or other large items must not be put in or around the dumpster. Please take these items to your local landfill site.

Hazardous waste

Hazardous waste is a real problem that can harm you and contaminate the water and soil if it is not disposed of properly. Examples of some hazardous waste include: latex and oil based paint, glues, paint thinners and strippers, cleaners, disinfectants, gasoline, automobile batteries, household batteries, aerosol cans, nail polish and remover, hair dyes, needles and medication.

In Guelph, the Household Hazardous Waste Depot is located at 110 Dunlop Drive. Call 519.767.0598 for hours of operation or for further information.

In the County of Wellington, consult the Solid Waste Services website at www.wellington.ca/sws and click on Resident Services at the top of the page, or call 519.837.2601 or 1.800.663.0750 x 2602 for more information.

Pest control

The County of Wellington is committed to working in partnership with our tenants to ensure units are maintained and free of pest infestations. Please contact the Maintenance Department if you are experiencing problems with any pest.

Please do not feed birds, squirrels or stray animals because this may attract unwanted pests to your building.

To obtain a copy of the Pest Management Policy, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Unit interiors

Ceiling fans

Do not remove existing light fixtures to install a ceiling fan. Please use a standalone or a properly installed window fan instead.

Window coverings

If you want to use different drapery rods or window covering devices, please install them properly and store the original drapery tracks in your unit. When you move out, you must reinstall the original drapery tracks and repair any damage.

Cabinets

Please do not install Mactac or paint the kitchen cabinets, and under no circumstances may you put nails, hooks or screws on either the outside or inside of the cabinets.

You may hang things from the inside of the cabinets providing you do not use screws or glue that would leave permanent marks. There are products available which allow you to hang things without marking the cabinets.

When installing safety locks for young children, please do the following:

- If there are cabinet handles, use the type of safety locks that do not damage the cabinets.
- If the cabinets don't have handles, make sure you use the right size screws for the safety locks and only install the screws where they cannot be seen.

Wall and ceiling hangings

Please hang pictures with hooks that do not damage the walls. There are many different types available. Any damage done to walls and ceilings as a result of hanging items improperly is the responsibility of the tenant. Contact the Maintenance Department if you have any questions.

Heating - there are two different heating methods.

1. Forced air furnace:

Townhouse, detached and semi-detached units have a gas fired, forced-air furnace which is very reliable and seldom breaks down. CWSH completes annual inspections of the furnaces during the non-heating season.

During the heating season, the furnace dust filters should be changed monthly. This keeps the furnace working properly. Filters slide into a holder located between the return air duct and furnace. New filters are inexpensive and available at most hardware stores and are the responsibility of the tenant to purchase.

It is also very important to remember that the heating system cannot work properly if the vents are blocked by furniture or other items. Please ensure that all vents, both heat vents and return air vents, are open and have nothing blocking them during the heating season.

If you have no heat, refer to the No Heat Checklist on page 25 before calling the Maintenance Department.

2. Electrical/Hot Water Baseboard Heat:

Many apartments have baseboard heating systems which are very reliable and seldom break down. Do not place things in front of, or on top of baseboard heaters and vents. This could be a fire hazard and stops the heating system from working properly.

If you have no heat, check the thermostat setting. Remember that you will not feel an increase in temperature as soon as you turn on the thermostat. If necessary, call the Maintenance Department for service. Baseboard heaters require little maintenance except for regular vacuuming around the heaters. Please be careful not to damage the metal slats inside the baseboard that distribute the heat.

Air conditioners

You may install room size air conditioners in windows or air conditioning sleeves with the written permission from your Property Services Officer. However, you must follow these rules:

- Units must be installed by a qualified person and must not interfere with the building or other tenants.
- Units must not allow condensation water or rainwater to enter the building (in your unit or someone else's).
- Air conditioning units must be properly serviced and maintained.
- Noisy units must be repaired or replaced.
- Units must be removed during the winter season.

Tenants who fail to obtain permission and do not follow the rules may be responsible for any damages caused.

At present there is no additional charge for the use of air conditioning units. However, this policy is subject to review and may change.

If you have any questions, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Phones

You must get written permission from your Property Services Officer to add additional phone jacks in the unit. Tenants who fail to obtain permission or do not follow the rules for installation may be charged for damages.

If the existing phone jacks are not working, please contact the Maintenance Department and not Bell Canada. The wiring in the units is the responsibility of the landlord and not Bell Canada. Tenants who contact Bell directly are responsible for any charges incurred and will not be reimbursed by CWHS.

Phones from providers other than Bell Canada

Many tenants are switching to phone services provided by Rogers, Execulink, Whiteman and others. If you live in, or are moving into a CWHS apartment building, there is some information you should be aware of:

- All apartment buildings have controlled entry systems that use the phone wires in the building to operate.
- Make your provider aware of this information when ordering the phone.
- Should the provider interfere with the operation of the entry system, you are expected to get the provider back to fix the problem or the costs to do so may be charged back to you.

Cable TV

You must get written permission from your Property Services Officer before having additional cable outlets installed in the unit. You are responsible for all costs related to providing additional cable outlets. Tenants who install their own wiring without permission could be held responsible for any damages due to the installation.



Internet

If you are interested in the internet, you can choose from several connection options. However, some tenants have had problems when using high-speed internet access in buildings with a telephone entry system. If you are considering a high-speed telephone access connection, make sure it is compatible with the telephone entry system in your building before you buy. This problem only exists with high-speed connections. Please talk to your Internet Service Provider before signing any connection agreements.

Accessibility and special needs

If you have basic accessibility requirements or special needs such as grab bars, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Common rooms (apartment complexes)

Some buildings have common room space for the comfort and enjoyment of all of the building's tenants. As a tenant, you are welcome to use the common room for organized activities such as card games or a movie night. Notices about these activities are usually posted on the bulletin board in your building.

If you would like to reserve the common room for an event, please contact your Key Tenant to obtain a Common Room Reservation Request Form.

Common rooms are usually located near tenant apartments, so please be considerate of others, especially in the evening. Sound can travel and be upsetting to others. Rules for the use of the common room are posted on the main bulletin board.

Unit Exteriors

Unit exteriors are common areas. It is your responsibility to help create a beautiful and safe community for all to enjoy by keeping it free of clutter and by following the rules about balcony, patio and yard use.

Balconies (apartment complexes)

Safe items that can be on your balcony or patio year round in reasonable numbers:

- seasonal furniture
- potted plants
- bicycles (maximum of two)

Here are some examples of items that represent a safety hazard or could risk the integrity of the building and are therefore not permitted on balconies or patios:

- temporary or permanent screening
- floor coverings
- garbage
- food for birds/animals
- flammable/combustible liquids and materials
- indoor furniture
- barbeques that meet all local by-laws may be permitted on a case by case basis on patios (but not on balconies)

Items are not permitted to be hung from or attached to the balcony/patio walls, windows, balcony railings and ceiling.

Pets are not allowed to defecate on the balcony or patio.

You will be responsible for any plant, water or general debris that falls onto another balcony or patio, whether negligently or otherwise.

Balcony and patio surfaces will only be painted by the landlord.

To obtain a copy of the Tenant Guideline on Balcony and Patio Use, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Patios and yards

Many units have a patio and/or a yard. You are responsible for maintaining your property and keeping it neat and tidy. If you are responsible for your grass, please cut it regularly. If flower beds currently exist on your property, you are responsible for maintaining these flower beds.

You are welcome to use flower boxes and container gardens, but **you may not dig up any section of the lawn to create a flower bed, garden, or for any other reason.** You are not permitted to enlarge a patio beyond the original building patio footprint.

Sheds are not permitted in townhouse and apartment complexes. Sheds may be permitted in detached and semi-detached properties with written approval from your Property Services Officer.

To obtain a copy of the Tenant Guideline on Balcony and Patio Use, please contact your Property Services Officer.

Window screens

All windows that can be opened are provided with insect screens. While the maintenance department will replace screen material worn by age, tenants are responsible for replacing any screening material that is torn or damaged by themselves, their guests, or their pets.

Window screens allow air in and keep bugs out. However, they do not have any strength and will not prevent children from falling out of a window. Please do not use the screens as a security device.

Please do not throw out screen frames, even if the screen is ripped. It is easy to replace the screen material.



Windows

We often receive complaints about condensation on windows. Most of the time condensation on windows is caused by high humidity within the home.

Humidity in the home can be caused by plants, pets, standing water (sink or bathtub left full of water), showers, cooking, and even breathing. Humidity in the air will cause water droplets (condensation) to form on the window surface.

Excessive condensation on the windows can cause serious problems such as wall damage or mould growth. Please wipe up any water that appears on your windows to prevent mould and mildew.

To avoid condensation, do the following:

- Do not block vents or baseboard heaters with furniture or other items.
- Open drapes and blinds during the day especially in winter months.
- Use exhaust fans in the bathroom when showering or bathing and leave on for about 20 minutes afterwards.
- Use kitchen fans when cooking and leave on for about 20 minutes afterwards.
- If you do not have a fan in the bathroom or kitchen, open a window slightly when cooking or bathing and keep it open for about 20 minutes afterwards.
- Do not leave your sink or tub full of water.

Satellite dishes

Apartment complexes:

At present we do not allow individual satellite dishes to be installed in any of our apartment buildings. Where installation was possible, we have installed a central satellite dish at some of our buildings. Please contact the Maintenance Department for more information.

Townhouse, detached, and semi-detached units:

Satellite dishes may be installed **only with written permission of the Property Services Officer**. When requesting permission you must include where the dish will be installed and how the wire will be run into the building.

Tenants who fail to obtain permission and/or do not follow the rules for installation may be charged for damages.

Rules for installation:

1. Under no circumstances may the dish be installed on the roof of the building.
2. The dish should be installed on an existing fence where possible.
3. The dish may be installed on a separate post placed in the backyard if installation on a fence is not possible.

4. If installation in the front yard is necessary, it may be possible to install the dish on a tripod made for this purpose.
5. If the dish cannot be installed by the above methods and the dish must be attached to the building, you will need special permission for this.
6. A dish can never be installed on any wall covered with aluminum or vinyl siding.
7. Wiring should enter the building through a soffit into the attic space or another acceptable alternative. Never drill through a window frame to run wire into the building.

Only one dish per unit is allowed.

Fences

You are not permitted to install a fence under any circumstance.

Snow removal

During the winter months, CWHS is responsible for clearing snow and salting all common walkways, parking lots and roadways. But, getting rid of snow and ice from city sidewalks, your walkway, driveway and around your car is your responsibility.

If someone is hurt because they have fallen on your walkway or driveway, you can be held responsible. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you get tenant insurance to reduce your liability.



Moving Out

When moving out, you must give us 60 days written notice. The Notice must be effective on the last day of a month. For example, if you want to move on June 30, you must provide 60 days written notice no later than May 1. If you do not give proper notice you may be responsible for additional rent. When giving notice, you may write a letter or use the "Tenant's Notice to Vacate Form." Tenants who are being transferred because they are over-housed do not have to give 60 days notice.

Move out check-list:

- Remove all personal belongings from the unit and dispose of garbage.
- Return your home to a "move in" condition.
- Remove all wallpaper or carpet that you installed.
- Repair any damage that occurred while you rented the unit.
- Return the keys/fobs and parking permit (if one has been assigned to you) to the Building Custodian/Key Tenant or to the CWHS Office as soon as you move from the unit.
- If the office is closed, tag your keys/fobs with your name and address and put them in the night deposit box.



Maintenance and Repairs

General

If you have a maintenance request, the Custodian and/or Maintenance Department will respond as quickly as possible. Please keep in mind that some things are beyond our control, particularly if a contractor must be hired, or if the request is reported at a particularly busy time. Please allow 2-3 days before calling again about a non-emergency repair.

Contractors and staff are not able to set up appointments outside of normal work hours. Please make sure you make arrangements to have someone let the contractor in to complete the work. If a contractor makes arrangements with you to complete the work and no one is home at the time of the appointment, the cost of that service call may be charged back to you.

If lives are threatened or when there is potential for substantial damage to the building or unit, staff are permitted to enter your unit without notice.

Requesting repairs

Apartment complexes

Tenants living in apartment units should complete a Maintenance Request Form located in the main lobby area or on the maintenance room door. Please include information about pets in the unit. The custodian responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the building will either repair the problem themselves or, if necessary, have an outside contractor assigned. The forms are checked every day that maintenance staff or contractors are in the building. Please indicate on the form if staff have permission to enter your unit when you are not there.

Townhouses, detached or semi-detached units

Tenants in family units should call the Maintenance Department directly to request maintenance service. A contractor will be sent to make the repairs or someone from the Maintenance Department will look at the problem first to determine the best course of action.

Problems with repairs

Sometimes, the repair does not solve the problem. Possibly, the repair was not done well or was incomplete. In this case, please contact the Maintenance Department as soon as you notice the problem.

Maintenance emergencies

An emergency is defined as a situation that, if left unattended, will cause more damage. Burst pipes, flooding, no heat in winter and damaged or malfunctioning smoke detectors are all considered emergencies. A dripping tap is not considered an emergency. For fire emergencies, dial 9-1-1.

If you need an emergency repair, call **519.824.7822**
or toll free in Harriston and Palmerston at **1.877.668.9442**

Maintenance personnel

Most apartment complexes have a Building Custodian or Service Contractor. There are some important differences between the two.

Service Contractors:

- Don't have set hours.
- Are responsible for the interior and exterior of the building, as well as completing minor repairs.

Custodians:

- Have set hours which are posted in your building.
- Are responsible for the interior of the building only, as well as for minor repairs.

Key tenants

A Key Tenant is a tenant who lives in the apartment building and is responsible for showing units to new tenants, report emergency maintenance requests and perform general security measures, such as checking doors and fire systems. They are on duty after normal weekday office hours and on weekends and holidays but not 24 hours a day.

Annual unit inspections

CWHS staff conduct annual or bi-annual inspections of every unit. We check on the current condition of your unit and make sure your appliances, heating, plumbing and safety devices are working.

Instead of waiting for your inspection, we ask that you report any maintenance problems to the Maintenance Department as soon as possible. Your help in early detection of maintenance problems is greatly appreciated.

Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) inspections

It is a requirement under the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC) that all electrical work performed within our housing units and buildings be recorded and inspected by the ESA. Because of the large quantity of electrical repairs throughout our portfolio each year, we have signed on to participate in the Electrical Safety Authority Continuous Safety Services Programme to meet these requirements. As part of this programme, ESA will conduct an electrical safety review of a random sample of housing units each agreement year.

If your unit has been selected for a review, you will receive a notice of entry in advance of the inspection.

Basic Maintenance for Your Home

No Heat? Check this list first before you call.

- Have you checked to make sure that the furnace power switch is in the ON position? You will find the furnace power switch near the furnace, either high on the wall or on the basement ceiling. It is similar to a light switch.
- Check that the furnace filter is clean. As a tenant, you are responsible for changing the furnace filter once a month. On most furnaces, the filter slides out where the cold air duct work returns to the bottom of the furnace.
- Ensure the motor compartment door of the furnace is properly closed. For safety reasons, the motor will not work if the door is open.
- Check the circuit breaker. It can be found in the main electrical panel of your home. A tripped breaker will be in a center or neutral position. To reset it, turn the breaker all the way off and back on again.
- Turn your thermostat down all the way, wait a minute, and then turn it up to a temperature that is warmer than the room temperature.
- Make sure that your warm air registers and cold air returns are free of any items that could restrict air circulation.

Safety hint: Always ensure that there is a 4 foot clearance around furnaces and water heaters.

Appliances

If an appliance does not work, check first to be sure that it is plugged in. Also, check the circuit breaker that serves the appliance to make sure that it hasn't tripped. If you own the appliance that is not working, you are responsible for repairing it. If the appliance is owned by CWHS, please contact the Maintenance Department. CWHS is not responsible for spoiled food as a result of an appliance failure.

Electric baseboard heaters

Putting things in front of, or on top of baseboard heaters and vents, can be a fire hazard and can also stop the heating system from working properly. We therefore ask that you keep all flammable materials away from heating sources. For example:

- Do not hang clothes to dry on or near your heater or heating vents.
- Do not put furniture, curtains and blankets close to heaters.

Water shutoff - Step-by-step instructions:

Individual shutoff valves are found on most sinks and toilets. They are generally located under the sink at the supply tubes feeding the taps.

1. Turn the valve clockwise to stop water flow.
2. Open a faucet or flush the toilet to let out water standing in the lines. Do not flush the toilet if your toilet is already overflowing.
3. If you live in a townhouse or single/semi-detached home, the main shutoff valve is usually found in the basement near the water meter and can be closed to shut off all water in your home. Open faucets at the highest and lowest points in your home to drain water lines.

Water shutoff - Tips and techniques

When you are turning off the water at the sink, tub, toilet, or at the main shutoff, please be careful not to turn the handles too hard. You can break the valve stem inside the shutoff valve.

Before you turn off the water, or if you get a notice telling you that the water will be off for maintenance work, try to plan ahead. If the water will be off for several hours, you may want to fill a sink, bathtub or a few buckets so you will have water available.

Outdoor tap - Winter shutoff

If you live in a townhouse or single/semi-detached home, you will need to shut off the outside tap when the weather starts getting colder late in the fall. The valve to do this is usually found in the basement ceiling area close to where your tap is. When shutting this valve off, it is best to open the outside tap, so just a little water is flowing, and then shut off the inside valve. This will allow any water that is left in the line between the outside faucet and the shutoff valve to drain completely, preventing a burst pipe because of frozen water in the line.

Clogged toilets - Step-by-step instructions:

1. Get a plunger and place the cup over the outlet opening at the bottom of the toilet bowl (hint: a flanged plunger works best on toilets).
2. Pour enough water into the bowl to cover the rubber cup.
3. Plunge down and up rapidly but be careful because some water will splash.
4. Pour a bucket of water into the bowl. If the water passes through, flush toilet a few times to help wash debris through the drain.
5. If a plunger does not seem to help, you may choose to use a hand-operated "drain snake" instead. A "drain snake" is an inexpensive tool that can usually be found at any hardware store.
6. Some blockages are not easily cleared. If this happens, you can call the Maintenance Department. A reminder that only waste and toilet paper should be flushed down a toilet. If we find that the blockage is from something other than waste or toilet paper that you, or someone in your home, flushed down the toilet, you may have to pay for the cost of the plumbing call.

Toilets - Water conservation

- Sometimes the water in a toilet will start to run all the time. This can be because of a float arm that does not rise high enough, a float ball that has become waterlogged, a tank stopper (flapper) that does not sit in the outlet valve properly, or an inlet valve that does not shut off.
- Sometimes, by just reaching into the bottom area of the tank and resetting the tank flapper valve (the water in the tank is clean tap water), the running water will stop. You can also try to adjust the float arm or tighten the plastic screw found on top of the inlet valve.
- If you try these tips, but the toilet or any other tap in your home is still running water constantly, please call the Maintenance Department to report the problem.

Electricity tips

Know where the main electric switch is in your home so you can turn off the electric supply to your entire home quickly in case of an emergency.

Cords

For safety reasons:

- Do not put electric cords under rugs where they can be walked on, or in a place where you cannot see if they are damaged.
- Check for cords that are broken, frayed, damaged, tied in knots, or that have melted insulation. Unplug and get rid of them immediately.
- Extension cords can only be used as a temporary measure.
- Insert and remove plugs by grabbing onto the plug itself, but be careful not to let your fingers touch the metal prongs. Removing a plug from a receptacle by pulling on the cord will damage it.
- Use power bars and avoid overloading circuits.

Circuit Breakers

- Know where your circuit breaker box is.
- If a circuit breaker trips, disconnect or turn off the appliance(s) that may have caused the problem.
- Reset the circuit breaker after disconnecting the item/appliance that may have caused the problem by pushing it all the way to the "off" position, then to the "on" position. If the overload is cleared, the electricity will come back on.
- If your circuit breakers trip again, there could be a problem with some of the other appliances or devices on that circuit. Make sure all appliances, lamps or devices are unplugged and try again.
- If the circuit break still trips off, please contact the Maintenance Department.

Creating a Safe Community

It doesn't take a great deal of effort to make your community a safer place to live. As with most things, a few precautions can go a long way.

1. If you are planning to be away for a few days, please notify the Key Tenant. In the event of an emergency (fire, etc.), knowing that you're not there can save precious minutes. If your building does not have a Key Tenant, please leave this information with a neighbour. It's also a good idea to ask that person to take in any flyers or packages that may be delivered while you're away.
2. If your building has a controlled entrance, don't automatically open the main door when your intercom buzzes. Ask the caller to identify themselves. If it is not your visitor, don't allow them into the building.
3. Don't leave your unit unlocked, even if you are at home.
4. In apartment complexes, do not prop open your apartment door into the main corridor. Also, do not prop open the main fire exit doors.
5. Do not remove or disconnect door closures.
6. Always keep hallways clear of items like scooters, bicycles, wheelchairs, walkers, boot trays, plants and doormats. This will help emergency workers and cleaning staff and prevent tripping hazards. The storage of combustible materials or obstructions in corridors is also a violation of the Ontario Fire Code.
7. Do not take out window screens because this makes unwanted entry easier.

Please talk to your Property Services Officer for more information.

Electricity and water

Electric appliances and water can be a deadly combination. If an appliance falls into a sink or tub of water, or if you touch an appliance with wet hands or while standing in water, you risk severe electric shock and possibly death.

- Never use any electric appliances such as radios, TV's, hair dryers near sinks, toilets or bathtubs.
- Always dry your hands before touching electric appliances.

Fire safety

If you discover a fire:

- Remain calm!
- Leave fire area immediately while shouting to alert people in your area.
- Close all doors behind you to confine the fire.
- Do not use Elevators.

Fire safety (continued)

If you discover a fire:

- Leave via nearest exit and activate the nearest fire alarm pull station.
- Call the Fire Department by dialing 9-1-1 from a safe location.
- Meet at the designated meeting location (if applicable).
- Do not return to the building until declared safe to do so by the Fire Department.

When the fire alarm sounds:

- Remain calm.
- Before opening doors, feel doors for heat.
- If door is hot stay in room, seal cracks around door and any vents, call 9-1-1 and proceed to a window to be seen.
- If door is not hot, open slowly, and if safe to do so leave building via nearest exit.
- If smoke is encountered upon exiting, stay low, use alternate exit, and if escape is not possible seek refuge in smoke free room, close the door, seal cracks around doors and vents and proceed to window to be seen.
- Call the Fire Department by dialing 9-1-1 from a safe location.
- Proceed to designated meeting area.

***Do not return to the building until declared safe to by the Fire Department**

For apartment buildings:

If smoke is heavy in the hallway outside your apartment door, it may be safer to stay in your apartment. If so:

- Stay calm.
- Keep your apartment door closed but not locked.
- Put a wet towel at the bottom of door - tape around the door if you can.
- Call 9-1-1.
- Wait on your balcony or by large living room window. If smoke, heat or fire appear in the area of the balcony, return to the interior and close windows and doors.
- Wave to emergency workers to let them know where you are.

For townhouse communities and single/semi-detached homes:

- Plan an escape route with your family in advance and decide on a meeting place outside your home.
- Stay calm.
- Get out of your home as quickly as possible while alerting others in your home.
- Meet family in predetermined area.
- Call 9-1-1.

Practice fire prevention

You can reduce your risk of fire by taking the following basic precautions:

1. Attend fire drills and safety sessions held each year in apartment building complexes. Please watch your bulletin board or contact your Property Services Officer for more information.
2. Turn off appliances when you've finished cooking.
3. Check appliance cords for broken or frayed spots and contact a repair shop if they need repair. If the appliance comes with the unit, contact the Maintenance Department for any necessary repairs.
4. Do not leave pots of grease, etc. on the stove unattended. They can quickly overheat and cause a fire. If a grease fire does start, do not try to put it out with water or flour - these will cause the fire to spread. To put the fire out, you can slide a cookie sheet or put the lid over the pot and turn the burner off. Do not try and move or carry a pot that has caught fire.
5. Don't smoke in bed while feeling drowsy or intoxicated.
6. Do not prop fire doors open in apartment complexes.
7. If a circuit breaker trips for no apparent reason, contact the Maintenance Department.
8. Do not store items within one meter of electrical panels.

Smoke alarm/carbon monoxide (CO) detector

All residential units have an internal smoke alarm or multiple smoke alarms in the case of multi-floor units. The smoke alarms are hard wired to the building's electrical system and have no battery to change.

Every family unit will have at least one smoke alarm combined with a CO detector located outside the bedroom area of the unit. Apartment units that share a wall or floor/ceiling with a service room with a gas-fired appliance or an attached garage will also have a smoke alarm combined with a CO detector.

Each year, many Canadians are killed by fires. Many more are killed by the smoke, long before the fire reaches them.

Please keep yourself and your family safe by following these tips:

1. Make sure that your smoke alarm is working.

- Check it monthly to make sure that the light is on, indicating that it is working. You should be able to see the light easily.
- Monthly, test each smoke/CO alarm by pressing the test button.
- If the smoke/CO alarm is not working, contact your Building Custodian or the Maintenance Department immediately.

2. NEVER disconnect or tamper with a smoke/CO alarm.

- It is against the law and is a chargeable offence to tamper with, or disconnect a smoke/CO alarm, as per the Ontario Fire Code Division B 6.3.3.4.
- A smoke/CO alarm provides early warning of potential problems. Do not ignore the warning from the alarm.
- If a smoke alarm is sounding for no apparent reason, and upon investigation fire or smoke is not evident, contact the Maintenance Department.
- If a CO alarm is sounding for no apparent reason, leave your unit and call the fire dept at 9-1-1. They will come and investigate the cause of the alarm.

3. Cooperate with contractors when you are notified of an inspection date.

- Smoke/CO alarms are inspected and tested on an annual basis by qualified contractors and you are expected to cooperate with the contractors.

4. Clear the smoke caused by cigarettes or burning food by opening the window and fan fresh air away from the alarm.

(The alarm may sound if someone smokes directly under it or if food is burning).

If you have any questions about the smoke/CO alarm, please contact the Maintenance Department.



Outdoor open fires

Each year acres of fields and wooded areas are burned due to bonfires. Such fires occur as a result of flaming embers that land on dry grass patches and spread quickly to the point where acres of land are affected by the fire not to mention the environmental hazards and the dangers imposed in residential neighbourhoods.

You are reminded that the Ontario Fire Code prohibits all forms of outdoor burning unless the burning is approved by the Fire Chief or the burning consists of a small fire that is contained and used to cook food on a grill or a barbecue. The reason for such a prohibition is to limit fires from occurring throughout municipalities that places people in danger and leads to the destruction of our environment.

There is however, a new Ontario Fire Code provision that allows open air burning if the burning is in an appliance that is in conformance with the Technical Standards and Safety Act (2000). These appliances deal with either natural gas or propane. Should you possess such an appliance or wish to purchase one, open fires are permitted. These appliances are designed to limit the spread of embers and flames to other combustibles. The Technical Standards and Safety Act (2000) should be consulted to determine what appliances are allowed for open air burning. Safety precautions should be followed when using these appliances. A clearance of 1.3 meters (approximately 48 inches) should be maintained between the appliance and any combustibles.

Should you have questions concerning this topic or other areas of fire safety, feel free to contact your local Fire Department and an officer will assist you.

Medical Oxygen

The use of medical oxygen in residential dwelling units is regulated by the Ontario Fire Code and shall be stored, handled, and used in conformance with CSA-Z305.12 "Safe Storage, Handling and Use of Portable Oxygen Systems in Residential and Health Care Facilities".

- Neither the operator nor the user shall be allowed to smoke during set up and operation of oxygen equipment. Lighted cigarettes or other burning tobacco products shall be kept 1.5m away from the area where the equipment is being operated.
- Oxygen equipment shall be kept 1.5m away from any electrical equipment that produces sparks.
- Oxygen equipment shall be kept 1.5m away from open flames and heating sources like furnaces and stoves.
- Areas where oxygen is stored, filled or routinely used and all entrances into these areas shall have signs to indicate that oxygen is in the area .



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ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST