



# Tenant Handbook



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# YOU AND YOUR HOME



## Moving In

Welcome to your new home!

Your unit was inspected before you moved in to ensure all repairs have been completed. If, however, you need any repairs after you move in or at any time, please fill in a Maintenance Request Form and deposit it in the on-site drop box. Your Building Superintendent can show you where forms can be picked up and deposited.

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## Keys

The keys that you were given when you moved in give you access to your unit, your mailbox and the building or garage, depending on the community in which you live. All unit locks are changed each time a vacancy occurs to ensure your security. Tenants are not permitted to change the locks.

If you lose or forget your keys during business hours, ask your building staff for help.

If you lose or forget your keys after business hours call 1-866-308-2226. You may be charged a service fee to have staff open your door. You may also be charged a fee to have new keys issued.

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## Tenant Insurance

All tenants moving into Housing York buildings are required to have a valid tenant insurance policy.

Tenant insurance offers you protection in the event of fire, flood or incident by covering the cost to repair or replace personal belongings. It can also provide living expenses, temporary accommodation, or legal defense costs in the event of a law suit.

Housing York maintains records for insurance and asks all tenants to submit proof of tenant insurance each year.



## Parking

You were assigned a parking space at lease-signing. We record your license plate number and vehicle information for monitoring purposes to help ensure your parking space is reserved for you each time you return home.

Prior to the implementation of our parking policy in November 2014, parking practices varied at Housing York buildings. Older buildings still have a limited number of unreserved spaces. These spaces are for tenants who are grandfathered under the policy and who wish to continue parking their vehicle on a first-come, first-served basis.

There is a limited supply of parking at all buildings – do not park your car in an unreserved space or a visitor space.

If your vehicle information changes or you need an additional parking space, please contact the tenant services coordinator for your building.

In the winter season tenants are responsible for clearing the snow around their vehicle. Housing York clears parking lots and common areas. You may be asked to move your vehicle when curb to curb snow-removal is scheduled.



## Pets

Pets can be important members of any household. If you have a pet, you are responsible for your pet's behaviour and its effect on the building and other tenants. Please ensure your pet is licensed by the Municipal Bylaw. Keep dogs on a leash at all times while out of the home. We strictly enforce a stoop and scoop policy in all our communities. Failing to stoop and scoop can result in fines, according to the Municipal Bylaw, and may jeopardize your tenancy.



## Decorating

If you would like to decorate or make alterations to your unit, you must get written permission from your Property Manager. These changes include:

- paint
- wallpaper
- carpet
- installation of ceiling fans or air conditioners

### **When you decorate, please remember:**

- Do not make any permanent changes. For example, do not replace floors or remove doors.
- When you move out, you may have to change the unit back to the way it was when you moved in, or pay to have it brought back to standard. For example, you may be charged a service fee if staff have to remove fixtures or shelving.

### **When decorating, please:**

- Use picture hooks to hang pictures.
- Use double-sided tape to put down carpet. Do not use nails, staples or glue.
- Use “dry strippable” wallpaper which will not damage the walls when you remove it.
- Check with our office if you have any questions.



## Energy and the Environment

Energy use is a growing concern for everyone because the cost of energy is quickly increasing and most forms of energy involve burning fuels, which creates pollution. Housing York has a long-term plan to update our equipment to reduce the energy we use.

We are also asking tenants to help with the effort because you control a large part of the energy used in the buildings. We share information on how you can help improve the environment and help reduce costs. If you pay for your own electricity, gas, or water, reducing energy consumption helps you save money. If we pay for these utilities, saving money is still helpful because it allows us to spend more on maintaining the property. Many tenants are already very good at saving energy and we thank you.



## Accessibility

All entrances to buildings are wheelchair accessible. Within some buildings there are a number of designated modified units.

Information can be provided in an accessible format and communication supports are available upon request by contacting 1-877-464-9675.

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## Appliances

Your unit has a refrigerator and a stove. These appliances will work best, and have a longer life span, if you clean them regularly. Keep your burner pans and oven clean and grease-free to reduce the possibility of fire.

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## Laundry

Townhouse tenants will find hook-ups for tenant-purchased washers and dryers in the basement and in accessible units on the main floor. Apartment tenants, however, must not install washers or dryers in their units because they could cause flooding and other plumbing problems.

There are common laundry rooms in all of our communities. Machines operate on a swipe card system. Please leave washer and dryers clean after your laundry is finished and don't leave your laundry unattended once the cycle is complete.

If you have difficulties with the equipment, call the telephone number posted on the laundry-room wall.



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## Garbage

### Apartment buildings:

- Put all garbage in small, securely tied plastic bags before you drop it down the garbage chute. Bags must be small enough to fit into the chute.
- Do not put glass, items under pressure (e.g., aerosol cans) or pizza boxes down the chute. Take them directly to the designated area.
- Put double bags on kitty litter and diapers.
- Do not leave garbage bags in hallways, garbage chute rooms, or on balconies.
- Consult with your building staff if you need to dispose of oversized items such as furniture. You may be charged a service fee if you deposit these items in the outside bins, or at the curb.

### Townhouses:

- Put all garbage in securely tied plastic bags and put them out the night before pick-up.
- After pickup, remove garbage containers and blue boxes promptly.
- Do not use your yard as a garbage storage area.
- Large items in certain municipalities may require a “pick-up sticker”. It is your responsibility to purchase these stickers.

Tri-Sorter systems are installed in some apartment buildings. Waste and recyclables are disposed of using a single chute on each floor. Residents simply push the button for recyclables, garbage or organics. The light will indicate the chute is ready and the materials can be deposited.



## Hazardous Waste

It is your responsibility to arrange for the disposal of hazardous waste such as needles, paint, paint thinner and batteries. Remember that items such as needles must be disposed of properly. Please contact your doctor or pharmacist for safe disposal instructions or visit York Region’s website [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)



## Recycling

We encourage you to participate in the recycling and green bin programs where available. All townhouse sites use the blue box program. Check with your local municipality for details. If you live in an apartment building, check with the Building Superintendent to find out where blue boxes are located.

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## Pest Control

Staff and tenants need to work together to help control cockroaches and other pests. Make sure that food is stored in airtight containers and garbage is sealed and put out on a regular basis.

Do not feed birds, squirrels, stray animals, or wildlife. This could attract mice, rats or other pests. Contact the office if you need pest control services.

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## Unit Exteriors

If you are interested in putting up items such as satellite dishes, antennas, clotheslines, basketball nets, etc. to the exterior of your unit, you must contact your Property Manager.

If you have a balcony:

- Enjoy the fresh air!
- Do not use it for storage because this is not safe. For example, materials may blow off the balcony and children may climb objects and fall.
- Do not put carpet on the balcony. The carpet will result in rapid deterioration of the concrete.
- Do not hang planters or anything else over the railings.
- Do not feed the birds or squirrels.
- Please note that barbecues are not allowed on the balcony.



## Lawns and Walkways

We are proud that our tenants take pride in keeping their yards well maintained.

Townhouse tenants are responsible for raking, watering and weeding their yard and garden, as well as keeping this area neat and orderly. Townhouse tenants that have enclosed backyards are responsible for cutting the grass.

During the winter months, townhouse tenants are responsible for removing the snow and ice from their walkway and driveway. Housing York will clear snow and ice from all common walkways and roadways.

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## Common Areas

### Recreation rooms:

Each Housing York community has a recreation room that is available to all tenants for community related events. If you wish to rent this room for a private function, please contact the Building Superintendent.

### Elevators:

Elevators are essential to apartment living. Unfortunately, they are easy to break and expensive to fix. Here are a few ways to reduce elevator problems:

- Don't hold doors open for long periods of time.
  - If the elevator is damaged or is not working, please call the office immediately. If this happens after office hours, call the 24-hour emergency maintenance number, 1-866-308-2226.
  - If the elevator stalls between floors, there is a telephone or intercom in each elevator. Lift the phone off the cradle, or press the intercom button. Stay calm. Do not try to exit the elevator before it returns to the floor level.
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## Moving Out

When moving out of your unit, you must provide notice in writing of at least two full months to the Property Manager. Your final day to move out will be the last day of the second month.

Upon receipt of your notice, we will send you an acknowledgement letter describing your responsibilities and arrange a pre-move-out inspection.

**If you are paying utilities directly, remember to contact your utility companies to let them know your move-out date so they can prepare your final bill.**

# MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS



## Regular Maintenance

During business hours (daytime):

Fill out a *Maintenance Request Form*, located in the lobby, laundry room or Building Superintendent's office.

Examples of regular maintenance:

- Plaster repair
- Minor electrical repair
- Tap repair



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## Maintenance Emergencies

During business hours (daytime):

Contact your Building Superintendent or call 1-877-464-9675.

After business hours (evenings and weekends):

Please call 1-866-308-2226.

Examples of a maintenance emergency:

- There is no heat, electricity or water in your unit
- There is a water leak or a flood in your unit
- Your only toilet will not unplug

Housing York's *Maintenance and Repairs Service Standards* outline the three levels of service and response times:

- Emergency Repairs (Within 24 hours)
- Priority Repairs (Within seven days)
- Routine Maintenance and Repairs (Within 28 days)

Consult the service standards brochure any time a repair is needed in your home to find out how quickly it will be done or visit [www.york.ca/hyi](http://www.york.ca/hyi).



## Entry to your Home by Staff

Under normal circumstances staff will not enter your home without a 24-hour advance notice in writing.

### In an Emergency

In the event of any emergency, if lives are threatened, or when substantial damage could be done to the building, building staff are not required to provide any notice before entering.

### Not an Emergency

If you need repairs to your unit, and it is not an emergency, please fill out a Maintenance Request Form. This form gives our staff written permission to enter your unit. Maintenance Request Forms are located in the lobby, laundry room or Building Superintendent's office.

When access to your unit is required, 24-hour written notice will be provided unless you are home and willing to accommodate the staff.



## Contacting the Superintendent

- Your Building Superintendent will respond to your written maintenance request as soon as possible.
- In the case of an emergency during business hours call 1-877-464-9675. After hours call 1-866-308-2226.



## Annual Unit Inspections

Building staff will inspect your unit once a year. This inspection helps us check on the operating condition of appliances, heating, plumbing, safety devices and the general condition of your unit.

# YOUR RENT

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## Paying Your Rent

Your rent is due on the first day of the month.

To ensure that your rent is always paid on time, we strongly suggest that you set up a pre-authorized payment plan or provide post-dated cheques once a year. Not paying your rent or paying your rent late on a regular basis could jeopardize your tenancy.

For more information about the pre-authorized payment plan, please speak to your Tenant Service Coordinator.

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## Types of Rent

There are two kinds of leases available within the communities of Housing York:

1. Market Rent is the full rental amount charged to tenants, similar to the rents charged in the private sector.

If you pay market rent, you can apply to be placed on the waiting list for rent geared-to-income assistance. The waiting list is in order of application date and the waiting period is usually several years long.

2. Rent Geared-To-Income (RGI) is the rent charged to households based on approximately 30 per cent of the gross household income.

RGI assistance is reviewed annually. However, if your household income changes at any time throughout the year you are required under legislation to report the changes within 10 days to Housing York.

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## Changes in Your Rent and Income

*Market rents* are reviewed annually and may be increased according to the local rental market demand.

If your rent is being increased, you will be contacted in writing by Housing York 90 days prior.

If you have subsidized rent, it may change more than once a year if your income changes. You must report any changes in the amount of your gross household income. This includes an increase/decrease in wages, employment status or pension adjustment. Contact your Tenant Services Coordinator within 10 business days of the change.

Note:

- Do not wait for your annual review to report changes in your income. If you do have to pay an increased rent, it will be backdated to the date your rent should have increased.
- Failure to report changes to your income may or will jeopardize your rent subsidy.

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## Transferring to a Different Unit

There are instances when tenants will need to transfer to larger or smaller units or to other locations. This is likely due to health reasons or changes in family size. After one year of living in a unit with no rent arrears in the last six months, you may be eligible for a transfer. This does not apply to tenants receiving subsidized rent living in overhoused households.

Your written request for a transfer will be submitted to the Internal Transfer Committee for evaluation. If your transfer application is approved, it will be placed chronologically on our internal transfer waiting list. If your transfer request is denied, you may fill out an Appeal Request form, which is available from your Property Manager. Housing York must receive your written request for an appeal within 10 business days after you received the notice of decision regarding your transfer request.

Questions regarding possible transfers should be directed to your Property Manager.

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## Boarders and Lodgers

You are welcome to have friends or relatives stay overnight or for short periods of time.

However, your home is meant to accommodate only those who are listed on your lease. Tenants are not permitted to have boarders or lodgers under any circumstances.

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## Eviction

Eviction is always a last resort. Your apartment or townhouse is your home. Our goal is to help you keep your home. If you have a problem paying your rent on time, please let us know right away and the staff will try to assist you.

The *Residential Tenancies Act* provides the following grounds for eviction:

### **You may be evicted if you:**

- Do not pay your rent
- Frequently pay your rent late
- Have more people living in the unit than health, safety or housing standards allow
- Give false information about your income or the income of other family members living in a rent-geared-to-income unit

### **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 any other tenant or the landlord
- Threaten the safety of another tenant
- Break the law on York Region property

### **You may be evicted if you keep a pet that:**

- Injures someone
- Causes damage and you fail to pay the cost of repair when asked to do so
- Makes an unreasonable amount of noise or is an unreasonable nuisance
- Disturbs the reasonable enjoyment of the other tenants (i.e. not picking up after your pet)

# YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



## Your Lease

Please read your lease carefully. It sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It protects you as a tenant, and Housing York as the landlord. If you have any questions about your lease, please contact your Property Manager.

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## Your Visitors

Please keep in mind that you are responsible for your visitors. If you have visitors, it is important that you are respectful of the rules, regulations and other members of your housing community.

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## Smoking

When you signed a lease with Housing York you agreed to a smoke-free policy. This means that you and your guests cannot smoke inside your home, in the yard or on the balcony.

For all tenants and visitors, smoking is not permitted in any indoor common areas of the buildings, including hallways, stairwells, lounges and elevators. Smoking in outdoor common areas is restricted to five metres away from any windows, doors and vents.

A survey of Housing York tenants showed that most households are non-smoking and there is strong support for smoke-free buildings. However, Housing York buildings will not be completely smoke-free for several years. This is because leases signed before the smoke-free policy was implemented in 2014 did not contain a no-smoking clause. Some households (including balconies and yards) will remain as smoking households until tenants who have signed a new lease move in.

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## Complaints and Feedback

Feedback is valued as a way to improve our service to tenants. We want to hear from you if you have a complaint or concern, and we aim to resolve your concern in a timely and fair manner.

### **Step 1: Contact the person where the request started.**

Generally, complaints are best resolved the quickest at the point where the request for service began. For example, if the repair person or superintendent didn't arrive when booked, go back to the superintendent for resolution. If you have a complaint about a document that you received from the office, we encourage you to contact the staff person who sent it to you.

### **Step 2: Contact your Property Manager.**

When it isn't possible to resolve a complaint with your initial contact, it is best to contact your Property Manager. Your Property Manager is most familiar with your building, the residents and the community. A well-managed property and tenant safety is their focus. If there is a concern, let your Property Manager know.

### **Step 3: Contact your Manager of Operations.**

If your complaint is not resolved after contacting the Property Manager, you can elevate your complaint to management starting with the Manager of Operations. If it is still not resolved, please contact the Director.

For staff telephone numbers or email addresses, consult the Housing York notice board in the common area of your building or call 1-877-464-9675.

# SAFETY AND SECURITY



## Emergency Contact

For all medical and fire emergencies, call 9-1-1.

For building or unit-related emergencies, contact the business office during business hours. For after-hours emergencies, use the After Hours Emergency Maintenance Service Number 1-866-308-2226.

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## Building Attendant

The Building Attendant is a tenant who lives in the building and is responsible for building security and reporting maintenance emergencies to Housing York when the Superintendent is off duty. They are contacted through the After Hours Emergency Maintenance Service line 1-866-308-2226.

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## Smoke Detectors

Every unit has a smoke detector and it will be tested and cleaned once a year. The law does not allow anyone to tamper with a smoke detector.

It is recommended that tenants replace batteries twice a year. If you suspect that your detector is not working properly, please contact your Building Superintendent. Never disconnect your smoke detector.

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## Carbon Monoxide Detectors

All townhouses have a carbon monoxide detector in them to alert the tenants should there be a serious malfunction of the gas-fired furnace or water heater.

Only some apartments have carbon monoxide detectors. Generally, these are apartments located above, below or adjacent to a service room with a gas-fired appliance.

Should your home have a carbon monoxide detector, please ensure it remains properly plugged in.



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## Building Safety and Security

Protecting your safety and security is very important. The security of your building depends largely on the precautions you take to ensure your own safety and the safety of your fellow tenants.

Below are some precautions you can take to ensure the safety of your building:

1. Always keep hallways clear of items such as scooters, wheelchairs, walkers, boot trays and door mats. This will help emergency workers and cleaning staff, and prevent tripping hazards.
2. Close and lock your apartment and building doors at all times. When using the intercom system, be sure to ask the caller to identify himself or herself so that “uninvited” persons cannot gain access to the building or your apartment.
3. Do not let salespersons or solicitors into your building. Housing York does not permit soliciting in its buildings. Always ask for identification of anyone you do not know. All York Region Staff carry identification and will be pleased to show it to you.
4. Do not give out copies of your keys. They could easily be duplicated and end up in the wrong hands.
5. If someone you do not know is trying to enter the building, do not let them in. Ask them to use the intercom to contact the person they wish to see, and that person can let them in.
6. If you plan to be away from your home for an extended period of time, please notify the office and the Building Superintendent. You should also contact the post office, newspaper office and all other routine delivery people. Be sure to close and lock all your doors and windows before you leave.



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## Fire Safety

### If you discover a fire:

- Leave fire area immediately
- Do not use elevators
- Close door in fire area; do not lock it
- Pull the nearest fire alarm station
- Confirm the alarm by phoning 9-1-1 from a safe location

### For apartment buildings:

#### *When the Fire Alarm Sounds:*

- Stop what you are doing
- Feel door for heat
- To check corridor for smoke, stand behind door and open very slowly
- If corridor is clear, close apartment door, exit via stairway
- Do not use elevators
- If you encounter smoke in stairway, use alternate stairway

#### **Note:**

- If smoke is heavy in corridor, it may be safer to remain in your apartment
- Keep apartment door closed
- Place wet towel at base of door
- Wait on balcony
- Signal your position by waving
- Remain calm

### For townhouse communities:

- Plan your escape route in advance
- Exit the townhouse
- Meet family in predetermined area
- Remain calm
- Call 9-1-1



**17150 Yonge Street, 5th Floor  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 8V3**

**Local Phone: 905-898-1007  
Toll Free: 1-877-464-9675**

**After Hours Emergency Maintenance Service:  
1-866-308-2226**

**Email: [housingyorkfeedback@york.ca](mailto:housingyorkfeedback@york.ca)**

**[york.ca/hyi](http://york.ca/hyi)**