

HAMILTON EAST KIWANIS NON-PROFIT HOMES INC.
FAQ
(frequently asked questions)

I've had an income change. Who do I call?

Any increases or decreases in your household monthly income must be reported in writing to your Resident Coordinator within 30 days. Acceptable forms of income verification include, but are not limited to:



- a) A copy of current Ontario Works stub and drug card
- b) A series of most recent consecutive pay stubs (8 weeks)
- c) A letter from an employer verifying gross wages

Once your income is reviewed, you will be notified as soon as possible in writing of any adjustment to your rental charge.

I had a pay increase that I forgot to report.

I am on social assistance and had another baby five months ago.

Often, retroactive calculations are required, and if the calculation specifies a rent increase (after the appropriate notice period) your account may show a balance owing and be in arrears. You are required to pay this balance owing, either immediately or by monthly installments in accordance with a signed arrears repayment agreement made with your Resident Coordinator.



I was working but lost my job and went on EI benefits and social assistance. I didn't tell you because my total income was about the same as before I lost my job.



Rental charges are calculated differently depending on the *source* of the income. So even if a household's total income remains about the same after change, it may necessitate a change in the rental charge. Kiwanis must be notified of ALL changes in income. You will be advised in writing whether or not there is a change in your rent based on your new income.

I had a rent adjustment and my monthly charge went down, but I had already paid my rent. What happens now?

If you have a credit on your account as a result of an account adjustment or rent overpayment, simply subtract the credit from next month's rent charge and pay the difference. If the credit is large and covers several months and you are unsure when to pay again and how much, or you pay by preauthorized debit, contact your Resident Coordinator.

I pay by cheque and need a rent receipt for my income taxes. How do I get one?

Many tenants pay by cheque, and a cancelled cheque is considered your receipt. If you do not get your cheques back from the bank each month, you may request an annual rent receipt for income tax purposes by telephoning the Kiwanis office and requesting one from the receptionist. These receipts are prepared in February each year (and will not be completed before the end of the current calendar year). You may also obtain an annual receipt for other forms of payment.



***I need a letter to verify my tenancy. How do I get one?
Social assistance has given me a form that has to be filled out by the Landlord.
How long will it take?***

Often, tenants need verification of their residency or forms completed for other organizations. If you require such a letter or completion of a form, please contact your Resident Coordinator. There is a 24-hour turnaround time on all requests for documents.

Why do I need to declare my income every year if it doesn't change?



Our files are audited by both the City of Hamilton and Housing and by an independent auditor. In order to continue to receive rent-geared-to-income subsidy, tenants are required to provide current verification of income. In addition, tenants are required to complete a Household Income and Assets Review form to ensure they still qualify for their rental unit and to provide up-to-date information for our files. Although market tenants are not required to declare income, we still request completion of the forms (without declaring income) to ensure our information is correct so we can serve you to the best of our ability.

I'm a market rent tenant and I just lost my job. Can my rent be adjusted?

Market rent tenants may not qualify for rental subsidy. If a family is originally rent-geared-to-income and through an income change increases to the market rent charge, there is a "probation" period from the commencement of the income change during which the family may return to a rent-geared-to-income status. Once this period ends, however, the family is considered to be a market rent family and if an income decrease is experienced, the City of Hamilton must approve reinstatement of rental subsidy for most families.

I have friends who want to apply for housing. What do they need to do?

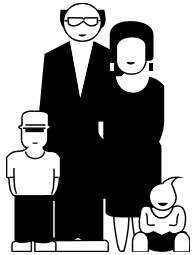
All applications for subsidized units are handled by ATH (Access to Housing), located at 350 King St E, Suite 110. Applicants must fill in the application and provide any documents requested by ATH. If information changes after the application is completed, applicants must call Access To Housing at (905) 546-2424 ext. 3708 to update their application. We do not rent our own subsidized units. Whenever there is a vacancy, Access to Housing is notified and that vacancy is filled from the ATH chronological wait list.



I live in a three-bedroom unit and one of my children just moved out. Our family just had a baby and we're cramped. How do we get a bigger unit?

Our tenants frequently experience changes in their tenancy for different reasons. If the change is temporary, you simply need to let your Resident Coordinator know the circumstances. If the change is permanent, several options are available.

- a) You may fill out a transfer request (available at the Kiwanis Homes office) to move to a more suitable unit. In order to qualify for a transfer, you must:
 - i) complete one full year of residency in your current unit
 - ii) have no arrears
 - iii) have timely rental payments for the past six months
 - iv) provide medical documentation as required
 - v) provide social documentation as required
- b) You may locate alternate accommodations on your own and give proper notice to move out.
- c) If you have too many bedrooms for your family, you may have a landlord-approved person move in with you to occupy the empty bedroom(s).
- d) If you have too many bedrooms for your family, you may choose to pay the market rent charge for your unit and continue your tenancy.



If you require a unit with more or less bedrooms, Kiwanis will attempt to relocate you to a more suitable unit on receipt of your transfer request. Persons requesting a transfer are also encouraged to complete an application for alternate housing with Access to Housing.

Rent-geared-to-income tenants who are overhoused (ie. do not fill all the bedrooms in the unit) who are not transferred to a suitably-sized unit within one year must be active on the Access To Housing wait list in order to continue to receive subsidy in their current unit. Failure to maintain an active application will result in the removal of rent-geared-to-income assistance and the implementation of market rent charges.

I live in an apartment or and my next door neighbour plays music really loud. What can I do?



Often people do things that they don't see as harmful or upsetting, but when told that their act is bothersome, immediately cease the practice. Try talking to your neighbour first – they may not realize they are upsetting you. If this fails to solve the problem, talk to your Resident Coordinator. You will be asked to put your complaint in writing detailing the problem (ie. loud music, unruly children, etc.) so that the Resident Coordinator can take the appropriate action to solve the problem.

When I moved in, the walls were painted a cream colour, which does not go with my new furniture. Can I paint?

Tenants are welcome to personalize their units with paint or wallpaper. Your *written* request should be sent to your Resident Coordinator prior to decorating, who will respond in writing with our painting and wallpaper policy. This policy details that the unit must be returned to the move-in condition upon vacating (ie. removing wallpaper, repainting dark colours, etc.) or costs may be incurred on your account.



Paint, painting supplies and labour are the responsibility of the tenant.

My taps are dripping. Who do I call?

You should contact Property Support & Quality Control who will arrange for a contractor to fix the problem. A maintenance request may be submitted through the website www.kiwanishomes.ca

Repairs of a non-emergency nature should be put in writing.



Water is coming up my basement drain! Help!

Emergency maintenance calls should be directed first to a superintendent (if you have one) or to Property Support and Quality Control via cell phone or on the website. Arrangements will be made for a contractor to come for the emergency repair. After hours, please call the Kiwanis office to contact our answering service for assistance or use the maintenance request form on the website.

I sometimes have difficulty contacting staff for maintenance. What should I do?



Some of our staff are part-time employees and some of our full time superintendents may be off duty. For non-emergency repairs, please put your request in writing and deliver it to the office or use the maintenance request form on the website. Your repairs will be scheduled at a time convenient for you. If you phone maintenance staff, leave a message. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. If you require emergency assistance, please contact Property Support and Quality Control or the after-hours answering service for assistance, or use the maintenance request form on the website.

What information should I provide in my voice mail or email message to my superintendent or Property Support and Quality Control?

Make sure you leave your full name, address and telephone number(s) where you can be reached (ie. home, business, cell, pager) and the reason for your call. If you are not home, need to go out, or would like a call at a specific time, please mention this also, and your superintendent or Property Support and Quality Control staff person will do his/her best to return your call when you are home.

I've left a couple of messages for Property Support and Quality Control or my Resident Coordinator today and he/she hasn't called me back. Why not?

Staff members serve well over 300 units, which often requires they be out of the office for extended periods, attend meetings, complete paperwork and meet with tenants in the office. If you have telephoned and left a message, please wait for a return telephone call, usually within one business day. If you have an emergency (ie. fire, flood, no heat, fridge not working, etc.) during the day or your emergency is on a weekday evening, weekend or holiday, call the main office telephone number, use the maintenance request form on the website, or call our after-hours emergency service. They will assist by calling a contractor or alerting the on-call staff person. You can also contact the person you need to reach by email.



It's the weekend – how do I get in touch with my Resident Coordinator or maintenance staff for an emergency?



Our office has contracted with an answering service to take weekend and statutory holiday calls. If it is not an emergency, you have the option of just leaving a message, which will be retrieved by Kiwanis staff the next working day. If you have an emergency, our emergency service will call a contractor for you, or alternatively page the on-call staff person.

Please do not call Property Support and Quality Control on his/her cell phone on the weekend or on a statutory holiday. Call the Kiwanis office at (905) 545-4654 and your call will be responded to in a manner appropriate to the situation.

Who looks after my unit when my Resident Coordinator or Property Support and Quality Control is on vacation?

During vacation periods, email or voice mail instructions will be available to direct you to vacation coverage staff who will arrange maintenance work for your unit if needed or review your tenancy file for discussion.

I have to leave town for a couple of months. What happens to my unit?

If you are required to leave your unit for a period of time (ie. a month or more), please notify your Resident Coordinator. There is no rent adjustment for the period you are not living in your unit, and your rent will still need to be paid each month. You can either use our preauthorized debit service, or you can have a friend or relative pay your rent on your behalf. The utilities must remain on in your unit, especially in the winter months (to prevent freezing pipes). It is your responsibility to arrange for someone to check on your unit periodically (ie. water plants and get your mail).



English is not my first language, and I sometimes don't understand letters from Kiwanis that I receive in the mail.



When you sign a lease agreement and accept tenancy with Kiwanis Homes, you agree to abide by the Residential Tenancies Act and the Social Housing Reform Act (as does Kiwanis). If you get letters and forms in the mail that you don't understand, it is your responsibility to get an interpreter to help you understand the paperwork. By ignoring forms that you get, you may not provide information to Kiwanis that is needed to continue rental subsidy, which could lead to market rent charges being implemented on your account or court action being commenced against you. There are many agencies in Hamilton where you can obtain the services of translators and interpreters.

- Tenant Help Line- 905-526-9119
- St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre- 905-529-5209
- Hamilton Cultural Interpreting Services- 905-528-9515
- Francophone Community Health Centre- 905-528-0163
- All Languages Ltd.- 416-975-5000

I've just received a Form N4 in the mail. What is it and why did I get it?

A Form N4 *Notice of Early Termination for Non-Payment of Rent* is a form served under the Residential Tenancies Act. When you signed your lease, you agreed to pay your rent on the first working day of each and every month. If you didn't pay your rent on the first, you will likely be served this notice, which gives you a specified date on which payment must be received or court action will commence, and further fees (court application \$186.00, sheriff \$319.00+ as of 2021) will be applied to your account.

If you pay your rent within that time frame, disregard the notice. However, if you are repeatedly served with this notice throughout the year (even if you pay before the due date) you may not be allowed to renew your tenancy when your term expires.

If you do not pay your rent within that time frame noted on the form, your Resident Coordinator will apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to commence the eviction process.

Our organization has a mortgage on the unit in which you reside. The bank withdraws our mortgage payment on the first of the month, which is why we need tenants to make their rental payments on the first of the month!

I've bought a house. How do I terminate my tenancy?

We need 60 days notice in writing to terminate your tenancy. All persons who signed the lease agreement need to sign the notice to vacate. Families are responsible for rent and utilities up to and including the day that they move. Before you vacate, check with your Resident Coordinator to ensure your account is paid in full and your unit is restored to the move-in condition to avoid move-out charges. It is expected that you remove all belongings from your unit, including garbage, and return the unit to its move-in condition (normal wear and tear excepted) – this means priming over dark colours and removing wallpaper. The keys should be returned to your superintendent or Resident Coordinator.

