

Social Housing TIMES

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A NEW LOOK!

BILL 140 STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT

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INTRODUCING

THE HOUSING SERVICES ACT

AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR SOCIAL HOUSING IN ONTARIO

The *Housing Services Act* (HSA), is on target to come into force on January 1, 2012. The Bill received Royal Assent on May 4, 2011. In August, HSA's regulations for the Act were released. The Province also released its Housing Policy Statement. Repealing the earlier Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA), the HSA, the Housing Policy Statement and the HSA regulations involve some key changes that affect the social housing business in Ontario.

Notable Changes

The Housing Policy Statement describes Ontario's vision for affordable housing. The new HSA Regulations are largely identical to those in the SHRA. Some of the key changes include:

- The time line for tenants to submit information on changes to income for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) has been extended to 30 days
- Housing providers are required to make training opportunities available for staff, volunteers and Board members for succession
- Service Managers will develop 10-year housing and homelessness plans which will be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

There are still gaps in the legislation which the Province will continue to work on in the future with sector stakeholders. These include possible future changes to utility scales, social assistance scales, performance measures and to how RGI is calculated.

Province as Steward

The Act also involves changes to how housing is framed in public policy. SHSC Director of Policy, Research and Networks, Margie Carlson, explains: "In a very broad sense, it introduces a new concept around the Province being a steward in housing issues."

The HSA, which replaced the SHRA, is a more inclusive Act. Rather than focusing solely on social housing, the

HSA takes into account the broader housing continuum and expands into the private markets and homelessness.

"It's a wide-ranging definition. 'Moderate- and low-income households' basically includes everyone," observes Margie, adding, "The SHRA was just about social housing, but the HSA includes homeless shelters, street homeless, private rental housing, affordable ownership, and so on."

SHSC to HSC

As of January 1, 2012, the Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) will become the Housing Services Corporation (HSC). It will continue to deliver its group programs as in the past, but will have more flexibility to offer new optional services and supports.

Margie explains, "In practical terms, HSC will be charged with improving the operation of housing providers, the management, maintenance, and long-term sustainability of physical assets, and the quality of life for residents in moderate- and low-income households."

For SHSC CEO Lindsey Reed, the changes are exciting. "The new legislation allows us to expand on the foundation we've been building by addressing resident quality of life issues with programs like Tenant Insurance and Community Champions [offered by SHSC subsidiaries SoHo and GLOBE] with newer projects like YourSay and the School For Social Entrepreneurs" Lindsey says. "GLOBE and Technical Services are also able to explore innovative housing technologies such as passive housing and to test drive them here in Ontario – and not just for their potential in social housing but for the all affordable housing," she adds.

You can access the regulations at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca in the "Source Law" section, under the category of "Regulations as Filed."

You can access the Province's Housing Policy Statement at www.shscorp.ca

PROVIDER PROFILE:

BETHANY

COOPERATIVE HOMES INC.



“I have been here since the beginning,” recalls Dayle Yardley, Bethany Homes Co-op Coordinator. In that 23 year span, the 68-unit townhouse and apartment co-op in Keswick, Ontario has housed hundreds of families. All of that activity encourages a vital community, but it can also wear down certain parts of longstanding infrastructure.

“At 23 years old, our access ramp was a liability and had to be shut down,” explains Dayle. Leading to laundry facilities and a designated fire exit, the ramp played an important role in Bethany’s day-to-day activities and, as such, revamping it was a top priority. To get the job done, Dayle turned to SHSC Technical Services.

“We were contacted to take a look at it,” says Steve Morikawa, Technical Services Project Manager. “We gave a report and they engaged us to take care of the project for them,” he adds. From there, Steve and his team sought out bids from contractors and helped Bethany in hiring the right one.

“Basically, using a lot of salt on the ramp had dulled the metal and rusted the joint supports,” Steve summarizes. Furthermore, since the 1980s building codes had changed, calling for a gentler slope to the walkway.

“At 23 years old, our access ramp was a liability.”

While the initial consultation occurred late last year, the weather prohibited completion for several months.

“We had to wait for the frost to come out of the ground to do it properly,” remembers Steve.

By early spring, work was underway. Technical Services monitored progress while the ramp was brought up to code and finishing touches were applied, playing an instrumental role in the final product. “The ramp is absolutely wonderful,” smiles Dayle, adding, “Everyone is commenting on it. They did a great job!”

SOCIAL MEDIA AND

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

Facebook. YouTube. Twitter. LinkedIn. Wikis. Blogs. If you've watched the news lately, you've undoubtedly heard of them. And given the massive number of people around the world who use these technologies, you may already count yourself a user. They are popular examples of web-based and mobile technologies called 'social media,' which turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Not simply a passing fad or idle pastime, social media has evolved into an important tool and its growing use is reshaping the way that residents and providers communicate with one another.

Kate Hughes, a UK social housing professional who blogs on sector communications, estimates that more than 50% of tenants in Britain now use some form of social media. With the growing popularity and availability of smartphones, one can only expect that number to grow, and the impact of social media use to deepen. Sector organizations in Canada are also beginning to ramp up their social media presence. Delivering news and promoting discussion, social media is a growing concern in Ontario's housing sector, most notably within communities like Victoria Park Community Homes.

Reaching Residents: The Victoria Park Community Homes Blog

Intended to create an ongoing dialogue and improve services, Hamilton's Victoria Park Community Homes (VPCH) has made great use of blogging to keep residents informed and involved.

Begun in 2010 by Executive Director and SHSC Board Member, Colin Gage, and his Executive Assistant, Jennifer Booth, VPCH's blog features regular updates on current happenings, events, and developments. "It really helps us keep in touch," notes Jennifer.

Recent posts have notified readers about renovations, announced contests, and celebrated beautification projects. Throughout, Colin and Jennifer have encouraged resident participation. "We're definitely open to input about content," Jennifer says.

RELATED RESOURCES

Blogs

Victoria Park Community Homes blog:
vpch.blogspot.com

Social Housing Today (SHSC blog):
blog.shscorp.ca

Canadian Social Housing Observer:
housingobserver.com

Wellesley Institute blog:
wellesleyinstitute.com/blog

Kate Hughes' blog:
socialhousingcomms.blogspot.com

CHF Canada, ONPHA and SHSC also have Facebook pages and YouTube channels that can be found using the search engine of your choice

While resident responses were initially slow, Jennifer has received many phone calls and in-person comments from readers. "I know that the website is getting a lot of use, because whenever I've made a mistake people call right away," she laughs.

Looking toward the future, VPCH plans to introduce Facebook and Twitter pages to widen its Internet presence. “It’s been nice that everyone’s gotten involved,” says Jennifer, “and I hope that that continues to expand.”

A Day In The Life of a Housing Provider and Other Examples

Other examples are also beginning to emerge. In the United Kingdom, Freebridge Community Housing took the innovative step of using Twitter to share their every interaction with tenants for a full 24 hours – every phone call, email, visit or letter that was received was tweeted about immediately. Their aim was to provide tenants, the sector and the general public with an insight into the diversity of what they do on a daily basis – “a day in the life” of a housing provider. By taking this leap into the world of social media, they were able to gain media coverage as well as strengthen their connection to the community, as well as sector organizations and colleagues.

Social housing commentators and research organizations also maintain blogs. The Wellesley Institute publishes a blog and its Director of Housing, Michael Shapcott, is a prolific Twitterer. Sally Turner, a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto and former Housing Internship and Scholar Program participant, publishes a blog called the Canadian Social Housing Observer. And sector organizations like SHSC, ONPHA and CHF all have Facebook and YouTube channels.

Whether offering insight into the day-to-day lives of residents or connecting providers with tenants in a meaningful way, social media has become a powerful educational tool and practical resource for social housing providers and residents throughout the world.

Do you have any experience with the social media side of social housing? If so, Social Housing Times would love to hear about it. Please send your stories, thoughts, and insights to feedback@shscorp.ca and we will share them with our readers in a future issue.



SHSC MOURNS LOSS OF BILL BOSWORTH

On Thursday August 18, Ontario’s housing sector lost a devoted and longtime advocate with the passing of Bill Bosworth.

Bill had his start in housing with a doctoral thesis on developing purpose-built housing for Toronto’s homeless at the University of Toronto in the early 1970s. He then moved on to work at the Fred Victor Mission, a men’s shelter in Toronto, as an outreach worker.

In 1984, Bill helped build the first government-supported transitional housing project in Canada for low-income single people as founding executive director of the Homes First Society. Prior to this, only housing for families and seniors received public money.

Bill then went on to work for Metro Toronto Housing Corporation and Toronto Community Housing, where he worked on the revitalization of Don Mount Court, the country’s first public housing complex to be rebuilt into a mixed-income neighbourhood. A tireless advocate of housing and homelessness issues, he also volunteered at several community agencies and served on the Board of Mothercraft.

Bill joined SHSC as Senior Manager of Research and Practice in Spring 2011. “Bill was a dear friend and a valued colleague to the people at SHSC. We will miss him tremendously,” says SHSC CEO Lindsey Reed. She adds, “he didn’t just work for housing and homelessness organizations. He made a difference to a huge number of people who in most cases wouldn’t be aware of his work – persistently advocating for housing for people with mental health issues and playing a significant role in the realization of the P3000 and P3600 non-profit housing programs in the 1980s. He was also instrumental in integrating community housing into ONPHA, which had previously focused on municipal non-profits. He was a sector leader that made a difference.”

SHT – REGIONAL AND DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

As always, Ontario's social housing sector has been abuzz with activity, from new appointments and hiring to exciting initiatives, studies, programs, and events. Here are the latest developments from across the province and at SHSC.

SOUTH/SOUTHWEST

Niagara Region Welcomes Katherine Chislett

- On September 6, Katherine Chislett assumed her role as the new Commissioner of Community Services in Niagara Region. Katherine comes to her role from the City of Toronto where she served as Director of Housing and Homelessness Supports and Initiatives for the past 7 years. She also brings to her new role a background in human services of more than 20 years.

The City of Brantford Welcomes Deborah Filice

- The City of Brantford appointed Deborah Filice as its new Housing Director, succeeding Rick Farrell. With almost 25 years with social services and housing, Deborah has worked in a vast array of positions, from Administrative Assistant and Property Manager to her most recent post as Housing Manager.

Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation YourSay Pilot

- Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation has concluded Phase 1 of its YourSay pilot project in partnership with SHSC's Social Innovation unit. Windsor Essex used the YourSay touch screens to enhance communications with residents by capturing comments and gathering qualitative and quantitative feedback. YourSay pilots are also currently underway with Bayshore Property management in Barrie and Victoria Park Community Homes in Hamilton.

EAST

SHSC Opens New Office

- In May, SHSC launched its Eastern Ontario office in Ottawa. The office is staffed by familiar faces to the sector: Pam Cripps is the region's new Manager of Client Services and Lynn Carson is its Manager of Stakeholder Relations

NORTH/NORTHWEST

Connecting with Stakeholders

- In the first half of 2011, SHSC participated in a variety of forums in Northern Ontario, performing outreach at the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association's (NOMA) Annual Meeting, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) Conference, and the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) Annual General Meeting.



CENTRAL/GTA

Housing York Inc.

- Housing York announced the appointment of Cristian Cupen, CGA, as the new Finance Program Manager.

SHSC Welcomes Sarah Baker

- In September, SHSC welcomed Sarah Baker as Strategic Outreach Advisor. Most recently, Sarah was the Director of Regional Operations at Free the Children. Prior to that, Sarah spent 8 years at the Province working at both the staff and political levels. At SHSC Sarah will manage outreach with all levels of government and stakeholders across the province.

PROVINCE-WIDE

SHSC Financial Inc.

- SHSC Financial Inc. met with a number of providers. It has delivered presentations on the Social Housing Investment Program in Hamilton at its regular Provider Meeting and in Toronto for the city's Social Housing Unit. Staff also engaged in valuable information exchanges at the Golden Horseshoe Co-Op Federation and at the Co-Operative Housing Federation of Canada annual general meeting in St. John's.

GLOBE

- GLOBE's Reducing Energy with Youth (REDY) initiative has wrapped up its 2011 program, which took place in Kingston, Toronto, and London. REDY is currently identifying locations for 2012. For more information on the REDY program visit www.globeservices.ca.
- GLOBE's Community Champions recently received international recognition, placing as a finalist in the 2011 World Habitat Awards. Selected from a field of 250 entries from 82 countries, the program was acknowledged for its innovative approach to reduce utility costs and energy consumption in social housing.

SHSC Research

- SHSC's Social Housing Electricity Use, Affordability, and Conservation Pilot Study is nearing completion. Set up to examine the potential implementation and ramifications of switching to electricity smart meters in social housing, the study conducted extensive surveys with landlords, administrators, housing providers, stakeholders, and tenants in five regions (Peel, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Windsor, and Toronto). Analysis is ongoing and a draft report will be completed in late Fall 2011.
- Last March, SHSC consulted over 100 stakeholders in the social housing sector across Ontario to gain information about Tenant Survey Activities. The spectrum of respondents ran a regional and geographic gamut aimed at accruing a cross-section of views. Findings pointed out that providers and service managers were indeed surveying tenants, but that province-wide comparisons and systematic collection of resident satisfaction information were not being carried out. That said, providers and stakeholders reacted very positively to the prospect of introducing standardized resident surveys. To that end, SHSC has proposed establishing a Pilot Survey Working Group to determine the plausibility of such surveys.

CUP PARTNERSHIP: ACADEMIA

AND HOUSING JOIN FORCES



Left to Right: Jim Steele, Chief Executive, Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation; Cathy Nantais, Tenant, Windsor Essex CHC; Larry Thibert, Tenant, Windsor Essex CHC; Liz Malone D'Agnolo, Program Coordinator, Grandview, Community University Partnership; Debbie Cercone, Executive Director, Housing and Children's Services, City of Windsor; Cheryl Taggart, Senior Project Manager, Community University Partnership; Mary Medcalf, Coordinator of Field Education Programs, School of Social Work, University of Windsor; Brent Angell, Director, School of Social Work, University of Windsor

If your tenants suffer from mental illness and are reluctant to show up for a meeting, what do you do? Play the cello, of course. That's one solution adopted in a Windsor-Essex building where a co-op student -- who happened to be a PhD cellist -- started playing in the hallway at meeting time. Residents gladly followed the music into the meeting area where they were greeted by coffee and donuts, and stayed.

KUDOS TO CUP

Congratulations to the Community-University Partnership for Community Development, Research and Training (CUP) on winning the Community-Campus Partnership for Health (CCPH) Annual Award in December, 2010. Standing out among more than 100 nominations, CUP impressed reviewers with its governance model. As one reviewer noted, "CUP clearly demonstrates how partnerships can be a powerful leverage point for change."

Such caring and creativity result from the Community-University Partnership for Community Development, Research and Training (CUP), a union between the University of Windsor and the Field Education Program and community stakeholders. CUP was launched in 2005 to increase access to available resources for low-income

housing neighbourhoods in the city of Windsor.

A key partner of CUP is the Windsor-Essex Community Housing Corporation, where the program was initially launched in one housing community and has since grown to six. Over 1,500 units currently participate.

University students gain hands-on skills while offering their own fresh brand of solutions to social issues. They might be 3rd or 4th year students studying social work, nursing, kinesiology or the arts. While they learn to work with tenants, housing staff and building programs, residents in turn benefit from the students' skills and services and learn to better their lives and neighbourhoods.

In one building, for example, students host meetings of the tenant association, lead discussions and organize social activities. In another, nursing students hold health fairs to educate kids on the importance of hand washing, or administer blood pressure or sugar tests to adults.

"A lot of us wouldn't think of that stuff. If you're in a low-income neighbourhood you've got other things on your mind," says Jim Steele, Chief Executive Officer at the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation.

"My favourite part," Jim says, "is once or twice a year students working in our buildings will give a presentation on what they have learned. We watch them transition from the theory they learned from their teachers to what happens in the real world."

PLANTING THE SEED FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GARDENS

Stella Burry Community Services, a housing organization in St. John's Newfoundland, is taking bold steps to help the residents of their community. Today they don't just offer a roof over residents' heads but also an innovative approach to the combined issues of poverty, food and employment.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY GARDENS:

- Provides a significant source of food for community members
- Deepens the understanding of food security issues
- Builds a sense of community and neighbourhood pride
- Studies show that graffiti, littering and crime rates are generally lower in areas with community gardens
- Is an effective youth engagement tool

It all started with a box...

It all started in the summer of 2010, when Stella Burry received funding to hire a youth 'green team' from within their community. Their mandate was to sell and install raised bed garden boxes to private individuals. The boxes were designed and built by their own carpentry team, with input from a local organization that specializes in backyard gardening.

While the sale of the garden boxes built upon Stella Burry's existing social enterprise activities, it also enabled its participants to appreciate the benefits of growing organic produce, local agriculture and the politics surrounding food justice – which spawned a series of workshops both within the Stella Burry community, as well as to outside organizations. Other program areas within Stella Burry then started to utilize garden boxes and offer the harvested produce into meals for residents and participants. "This didn't occur without its own humorous learning curve," remembers Alison Doyle, Employment Counselor for New Beginnings/Stella Burry Community Services, "such as when one participant harvested the entire lot of swiss chard by pulling not just a few leaves, but the entire heads out of the box. Interestingly enough, that same site has gone on this year to re-plant their box with fresh seedlings and new soil, and have also begun a new growing experience with hanging baskets of tomatoes."

Thinking outside the box

This has led to a new, broader goal: to achieve "full-circle sustainability" within the organization. To start, they began vermin-composting food scraps from their community cooking program. And in summer 2011, Stella Burry's Just-Us women's program started a new community garden with the boxes and teamed up with a local artist collective to transform 5 boxes into works of art that will be auctioned off as to raise funds and further promote the project. In addition, the City of St. John's recently approved Stella Burry's proposal to install a garden box on public land located behind one of its supportive housing buildings. The box will be maintained by residents of their housing program and its produce will be used in meals for their weekly Community Kitchen program. Stella Burry also hopes to expand its compost program to include all food scraps from the Hungry Heart café, a social enterprise they started in 2002 to provide affordable meals to members of the community and train community members for employment in the food industry. The hope is to generate a sustainable source of compost to include in the garden boxes that they sell and install.

Results and next steps

"In terms of the impact of this program on our community, it is hard to sum up in numbers or in facts," observes Alison. "I have witnessed a sense of pride in participants who have planted and watched seedlings grow into something they can eat. For others, it's been the amazement of what can grow here. Others yet, it has simply sparked the conversation of why healthy food is so expensive."

Stella Burry is already starting to plan and research the next phase of this program – building its own greenhouse. Currently, the seedlings used in the garden boxes are sourced from a local organic farm, but to make this program as sustainable as possible, both environmentally and financially, the organization hopes to soon be able to grow their own.

For more information on Stella Burry and their various programs, visit www.stellaburry.ca



THINKING

BEYOND INSURANCE:

A CHAT WITH SHSC CEO LINDSEY REED

SHSC has managed a group insurance program for social housing since 2003, as required by the Social Housing Reform Act and the upcoming Housing Services Act. Recent trends in insurance claims in the sector, however, have Lindsey calling for policy changes (see below) and asking for broader sector support to see them through.

Social Housing Times: So can you tell us a bit about what brought the issue to your attention and why you're making recommendations to the province?

Lindsey Reed: Sure, but before that I have to confess that before I started at SHSC, my eyes glazed over whenever people talked about insurance. It's a complicated industry and is resented by people because it's all based on disasters that might happen, their likelihood and how terrible they might be. My own father refused to buy any insurance and thought it was a con -- but unlike housing providers, my father had money saved in case of disaster. This in part speaks to why providers need to resist the temptation to fall asleep when the topic of insurance comes up -- their continued existence depends on it. But it isn't just about costs for disasters after they occur. It's about controlling premium increases, investment in our housing assets and the people who live in our housing. Up until about 2008 the insurers regarded social housing as a good risk. But our sector has become less appealing from a risk point of view. Since 2009 we've seen a consistent increase in claims. Many are directly related to the increase of vulnerable populations in buildings without additional financial or support services. But we're also seeing claims related to aging stock -- sewer backups, roof issues, mould, balcony fires. This has resulted in two big issues for our sector. First, more claims mean higher premiums since insurers look to recoup their losses. Second, insurers are noticing the increased claims and are being tougher about their coverages and program structure -- again, to minimize losses. We've had to adjust the SHSC insurance program over recent years to deal with this reality and to continue to offer guaranteed coverage for providers. But in the end that's only a temporary fix until we can deal with some of the underlying risk issues -- and that's what the recommendations seek to achieve.

SHTimes: Why is this something SHSC would get involved in?

LR: We're well positioned to see what's happening, connect the dots and get the Province's attention. Our governing

legislation expects us to manage an insurance program, tender for insurance, to do research, to support providers and municipalities in getting the best deals and to advise government. The recommendations are consistent with doing all of these activities well. Through the insurance program and research we also see first-hand how disasters like fires don't just cost money for providers and local governments -- in costs for repairs, lawsuits, temporary accommodation -- they make already vulnerable people even more vulnerable by potentially displacing them from their homes and stripping them of their possessions.

SHTimes: Have the increasing claims had a bearing on the program this year?

LR: Yes, going into negotiations we knew things would be tough. But to make it more difficult, the global insurance industry was looking to recoup the costs of earthquakes in Japan, Chile and New Zealand, flooding in Australia and the Americas. So this, along with the trend in program claims and a particularly large claim this year, put pressure in terms of meeting the program goals (affordable, guaranteed, comprehensive core coverage). The insurers demanded 'full program participation' -- a fixed number of units right across the Province. They also required us to set up a \$10 million trust for claims. We decided to be as transparent as we could about this and to proceed resolutely. This made us extremely unpopular over the summer. A few Service Managers wanted to do away with the program -- without some time and research, that would have had a devastating effect on providers with multiple or large claims since they likely wouldn't be able to find insurance with a private insurer and would have to cease operating. I don't think they understood what the program's all about. There's a misconception that SHSC's program is the same as that of any other private sector insurer. But we're not an insurer. We're a non-profit advocate for our clients -- striving to get them the best rates, coverage tailored for housing and (through the SoHo brokerage) a source for straightforward advice on coverage and complementary products, like tenant insurance, which the sector itself identified as a need. Advancing the recommendations is part and parcel of this.

SHTimes: What were the results of the negotiations?

LR: We had to do a lot of work behind the scenes but the end result was extremely positive. We negotiated the

program premium down significantly from the initial actuarial projection. And the SHSC board agreed to make a contribution from our insurance reserve to keep premiums down. . As a result of this, providers with good claims records will see minimal increases. Ones with large or multiple claims will see larger increases. But in all cases, it's a lot less than initially anticipated. We were also able to keep mould coverage in our policy and to continue to cover the costs of legal defense claims. I'm proud of my staff for the results they've delivered, especially given the increases that AMO has reported in the municipal sector and the challenges that the co-op sector has faced.

SHTimes: So now what happens?

LR: We've already set up a discussion with the fire chiefs to discuss the recommendations. We've also broadened the mandate of our peer group which provides advice on the insurance program – we'll be working with them on a survey for the people in our insurance program. In addition, we'll continue to press the Province on changes to legislation and embark on further research to look at the systemic risk issues and their impacts. Finally, we will continue to explore ways to adjust the insurance program's backend structure so that we are less vulnerable to insurance industry market cycles and to design a program which can meet everyone's needs.

SHSC Recommendations to the Province

- Amend the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) and applicable legislation to permit housing providers to move

special needs tenants within high-rise buildings to lower floors or to other buildings with special need supports

- Amend the RTA to include tenant insurance in the definition of rent
- Amend the Social Housing Reform Act and the Housing Services Act to allow the insurance benchmark to be set based on actual insurance costs annually and include an allowance to increase building values by a cost factor increase each year
- Amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act to require every board of health to superintend, provide or ensure the provision of health programs and services for tenants with mental illness
- Convene a committee that includes representatives from the Ontario Fire Marshal, the insurance industry, city fire departments, local housing corporations, SHSC and private landlords, to develop a protocol for fighting and investigating multi-residential high rise fires that meets the objectives of all stakeholders including tenants
- Consolidate current supportive service agencies to special needs tenant building clusters to ensure vulnerable tenants living in social housing buildings have ready access to needed support services

Develop protocols for municipal and volunteer fire departments to provide direction around when and what orders should be written to enforce fire safety requirements of the Ontario Fire Marshal in hoarding and other high-risk units



ASK SHSC CUSTOMER CARE

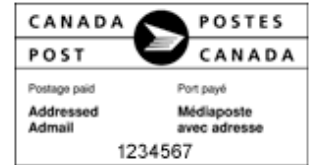
Q: How do I talk to my residents about topics such as hoarding and fire/flood prevention?

A: There are various ways you can share safety information with your residents: you can invite guest speakers to attend meetings to discuss and answer questions on important issues, and/or if you have a recurring newsletter, attach a safety brochure to it or include a safety-related article in each issue. Also, give residents a reason to come in to the office, for example, if they have to fill out an emergency form, when it is returned you can provide more details about responding to emergencies and fire safety.

Have a question?

Email us at customercare@shscorp.ca
or call us at 1.877.733.7472

For more tips, resources, best practices and our new Tenant Risk Awareness Kit (TRAK) visit shscorp.ca



Social Housing TIMES

SHSC is a non-profit corporation led by social housing representatives who are committed to providing Ontario's housing providers and municipal service managers with programs that add significant value to their operations. SHSC provides services that empower housing providers to develop safe and affordable homes and vibrant communities. We use our expertise to develop and deliver investment, insurance, natural gas purchasing, research and energy management programs.



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