



Durham Region Non-Profit
Housing Corporation

Tenant Handbook

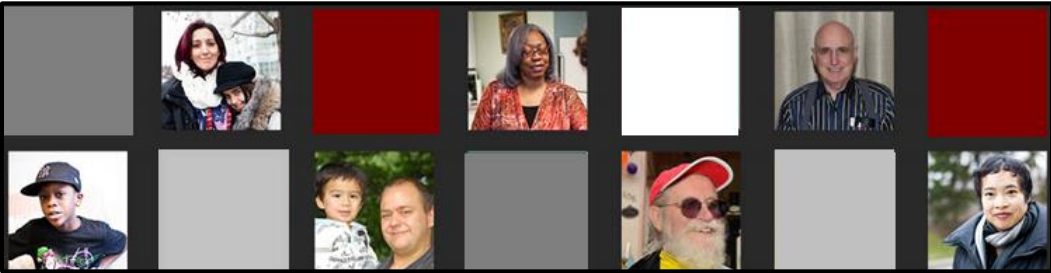


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Welcome to your new home! This Tenant Handbook contains important information about your new community. We hope you find it helpful and encourage you to contact us should you have any questions.

About Us

The mission of Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation (DRNPHC) is to help meet the housing needs of the Region's diverse population through the provision of a practical, well-maintained and affordable housing portfolio integrated within the community.

The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association defines the demographic of non-profit housing as "Every type of person lives in non-profit housing. Many earn low or moderate income, some earn more. Some live alone, others live with their parents, children or extended family. Some identify as members of particular cultural communities or communities of interest, others don't. There's a wide range, like in any other community".

Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation is governed by a Board of Directors and has been in operation since 1985.

The Corporation currently owns and manages 18 sites throughout Durham Region. Our sites range from townhouses to apartment buildings with 1-4 bedroom units.

A description of our sites and their locations can be found on our website at <http://durham-housing.com>. There is a mix of market rent and subsidized units for individuals requiring rent geared to their income. Sites are managed by Property Managers with the assistance of on-site Superintendents at the majority of locations.



We Want to Hear from You

Office: 28A Albert Street, Oshawa Ontario L1H 8S5

Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30am-4:30pm

Phone: 905.436.6610

Ajax Line: 905.686.1278

Fax: 905.436.5361

Customer Service Officers: ext. 0 and ext. 228

Rent Assessment Officer: ext. 217

Manager of Building and Asset Management: ext. 230

Manager of Tenant and Housing Services: ext. 215

Email: drnphc@durham-housing.com

Website: www.durham-housing.com

Your Superintendent's Name

Phone

Your Property Manager's Name

Phone

Moving In

You've made it to your moving in day, congratulations!

Your keys will be with the Superintendent once they have received a confirmation that your rent has been paid. You must bring your rent receipt with you to show to the superintendent on moving day.

A member of our staff will do an initial walk through the unit with you and complete an inspection report. Each room and appliance will be inspected by you and the site staff so that any damage, defective or missing items are documented and you won't be held responsible.

Here are some tips for your move to go as smoothly as possible:

- If there is an elevator at your new site, book it as soon as you know your move in date. Your Superintendent will gladly book it for you
- Ask your Superintendent where the best place is to unload your belongings and furniture
- Label boxes and bags with the proper room location so your helpers will know where to put them
- Break down moving boxes before taking them to the recycling bins

Your Lease Agreement

Prior to moving in you will be required to sign a lease agreement, which is a legally binding document. A staff member will review the terms of the agreement with you and answer any of your questions. Keep a copy of your lease for your own records.

Tenant Insurance

It is a lease requirement to obtain a Tenant Insurance Policy to protect your belongings. In the unfortunate circumstance of fire, theft, flood and damage, DRNPHC would not cover these costs. Please contact a local insurance company to obtain a quote which should include Personal Contents, Liability and Property Damage.

*If you are receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program benefits, inquire with your worker to determine if Insurance and Utility costs can be covered by your benefits.

Local providers of tenant insurance include (but are not limited to):

HSC (Housing Services Corporation) <http://tenant.hscorp.ca>

State Farm Insurance <https://www.statefarm.ca/insurance/home-and-property/renters>

RBC Insurance <http://www.rbcinsurance.com/homeinsurance/index-tenant-insurance.html>

TD Insurance <http://www.tdinsurance.com/products-services/home-insurance/shop-and-buy/about.jsp#tenant>

The Co-operators <http://localagent.cooperators.ca/Renters-Insurance-in-Ontario>

Parking and Vehicles

Most sites have designated parking spots for tenants and visitors. Tenants can park in designated areas only as directed by the landlord and not in visitor parking or designated fire routes (interior roadways) at any time.

All vehicles parked on DRNPHC property must be in working order with an up-to-date license plate or it may be tagged and towed at your expense.

If someone else parks in your spot, please contact the Superintendent.

Utilities

In some buildings, utilities are included in your rent while at other sites you will need to set up an account with the utility companies.

Let's work together to save energy by:

- Closing windows and doors in the winter
- Keeping the thermostat at a comfortable temperature
- Turning lights off when not in use
- Closing your fridge door when you are not using it
- Putting in a maintenance request for leaking taps or toilets that run continuously
- Unplugging appliances and electronics while not in use

Equal Billing

If your income is fixed or you have a tight budget each month, you should ask your utility company about their Equal Payment Plan. The Equal Payment Plan has several advantages:

- you know what your bill will be each month so there are no surprises;
- you can budget for this amount each month;
- if you use less power than you did last year, you will have a lower payment in the twelfth month.

Mail and Postal Services

Your mail will come to your mailbox on site. Your Superintendent will provide you with a mail key when you move in.



If you would like to forward mail addressed to your last home or apartment, Canada Post can arrange this for you, for a fee. We cannot forward your mail.

Keys

You will receive keys when you meet with your Superintendent on your move in day. Speak with your Superintendent about how many keys you will need for the members of your household. Your keys are your responsibility and if you need to replace them, a charge may be issued.

Laundry

Most sites have coin operated laundry services. The hours will be posted in the laundry room. If you notice that a machine is not working properly, please fill out a maintenance request as soon as possible. If you do not have laundry facilities in your building, please ask about the most convenient location to do your laundry.



Garbage and Recycling

We want your home and its surroundings to be clean and safe. Please ensure that garbage and recycling is disposed in appropriate containers. Speak with your Superintendent about proper garbage disposal in your neighborhood.

Decorating

DRNPHC wants you to make your home your own! There are many ways to decorate your space but remember to:

- Seek out written permission from your Property Manager to make alterations to your unit including painting, wallpaper, flooring etc.
- Use adhesives and sticky hooks to hang pictures, as nails can damage the walls
- Be prepared to return your unit to its original move in condition per the corporate standards or charges may apply.

Pets

In many households, pets are important members of the family. Enjoy your pet while being mindful of the following:



- Pets must be on leash when outside of the unit
- Please clean up after your pets
- Tenants will be held responsible for damages caused by pets, including sod damage
- In apartment buildings, please do not allow your pet to relieve itself on balconies or on the grass outside the building
- Be aware of local pet by-laws. This link will help you locate the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw for your municipality
<http://www.durham.ca/default.asp?nr=/div/localservices.htm>
- Pets should not interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of others

Requests for Repairs

If there is a maintenance item in your unit that needs repair, you must complete a Request for Repair form, which is available at your site or can be downloaded from our website. If it is an emergency situation, please advise us immediately and fill out a form after. Completed forms are to be submitted to the Superintendent. Please be respectful of the Superintendents time off. If you require assistance, call the site number or after hours numbers if the site staff is off duty.

Repairs may be completed by the Superintendent, one of our maintenance staff or by an external specialist. 24 hour Notice of Entry will be issued to you, unless the situation warrants emergency service, and we ask that you have the work area cleared and cleaned or the repair may be delayed.

Annual Inspections

We inspect all our units each year. From the inspection reports, we work out our maintenance plans and prepare our annual maintenance budget for the next year. We will send out notices of the inspection schedule before we come into your unit. An average inspection takes 15 minutes.

24 Hour Notice of Entry

Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation staff members can enter a rental unit, if written notice of entry is given at least 24 hours before entering, for one of the following reasons:

- work, repairs or replacements in the unit
- to inspect, if the inspection is reasonable and for the purpose of determining the state of repair and compliance with maintenance standards
- for any other reason specified in the tenancy agreement

If there is an emergency, staff can enter a unit without providing 24 hour notice of entry. Some examples of an emergency are floods and fire.

Smoking

In keeping with *Smoke Free Ontario Act*, smoking is not allowed in indoor common areas of the building. In 2015, DRNPHC implemented a non-smoking policy at all of its properties. This new policy is due to the known health risks of exposure to second hand smoke, increased risk of fire and increased maintenance, cleaning and re-decorating costs.



This policy means that new tenants are not permitted to smoke cigarettes or other tobacco products in their units; tenants prior to the 2015 implementation will continue to be permitted to do so.

Pests

Unfortunately, pests can sometimes get into our homes. We want to work with you to control any problems that may arise by:

- Letting your Property Manager know immediately if you see or suspect cockroaches, mice, bed bugs and other pests, or if you are moving from a location that has had these concerns
- Keeping your unit clean and tidy
- If treatment is needed, to follow the preparation guidelines provided
- Do not feed animals that are not part of your household
- Avoid bringing used furniture and mattresses into your home from curbs, dumpsters and second hand stores

Snow Removal

- If your home has a balcony, please clear the snow off regularly to prevent water from leaking in under the door. If you are living in a townhouse, please clear the sidewalk in front of your house and entrance steps.
- If you are unable to clear snow from your balcony or sidewalk, contact your Superintendent or Property Manager to make alternate arrangements.



Staying Safe

Fire Safety

Fire safety is a top priority for Durham Region Non-Profit Housing. If you suspect a fire, call 911 immediately and pull fire alarms. Your smoke detector is checked and the batteries are replaced yearly by staff, and should be checked monthly by tenants. Call us right away if your smoke detector is not

working. A fire safety brochure is in your welcome package and should be reviewed with all members of the household. Here are some fire prevention strategies:

- Never disconnect your smoke detector. If you are having issues with it being sensitive to cooking or shower steam, talk with your Superintendent
- Do not throw water on a grease fire
- Do not smoke in bed. Have proper cigarette disposals inside and outside of your unit
- Avoid clutter and keep your unit clean
- Use power bars to plug in electronics
- Never leave cooking unattended or leave the stove or oven on when not in use
- Have a household exit plan

If the fire alarm goes off, take the following steps:

- Leave your building or house as soon as you hear the alarm. If you live in an apartment building, do not take the elevator and descend using the stairwells
- If there is smoke present, stay low to the ground

If You Need Assistance to Leave

DRNPHC provides information to fire fighters about who in the building needs assistance to exit because of mobility problems and who might have a medical condition which could increase their need for assistance, for example the use of oxygen. If you think you fall into this category, please make sure you let the property manager know.

If You Can't Leave Your Unit

If you are in your apartment and there is smoke in the corridor or your door is hot, **Do Not Open Your Door**. Leave your door unlocked and signal for help by waving a towel out the window.

You can slow down the infiltration of smoke into your unit by doing the following:

- Soak towels and a bed sheet in the bathtub;
- Cover the whole door and the doorframe with the wet sheet. The sheet will adhere to the door;
- Place the wet towel across the bottom of the door or use duct tape to seal the space around the door to your unit

Smoke Alarm and Carbon Monoxide Detector

It is against the law to disable a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide detector. If you disable your alarm or detector, you could face the following penalties;

- You can be charged and fines under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act,
- You could face eviction proceedings

Community Safety

You are an important member of the community and we want you to be as safe as possible. Here are some tips for safety:

- Keep your unit doors and windows locked
- Do not let people into your home or building that you do not know
- Get to know your neighbours to build a safer community
- Check in with a friend, neighbour or community organization if you are returning to your unit late at night
- If you are concerned about someone around your unit that you don't know, contact the Superintendent or Police
- Do not take out window screens or disengage window restriction
- Know your surroundings and be aware of safety hazards at all times
- If you or your neighbours' safety is in immediate danger, call 911 for assistance

Complaint Process

You are encouraged to speak directly with the person you are having concerns about, if it is safe to do so. If it is not safe due to violence, threats of violence, racism or oppression, go directly to the steps outlined below.

1. Submit your complaint in writing to 28A Albert Street, Oshawa or e-mail DRNPHC@durham-Housing.com outlining the facts. All complaints are reviewed and dealt with accordingly. Be aware due to confidentiality, DRNPHC may not be able to share specific complaint results with you, however, this doesn't mean that your complaint was not addressed. It is in everyone's best interests to have complaints resolved as quickly as possible.
2. We will respond to all written complaints received. We cannot respond to anonymous complaints.
3. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint, you have the option to appeal the decision made. Appeals are to be put in writing and submitted as noted in step 1.

Tips for Effective Conflict Resolution

1. Do not react in the moment; attempt to stay calm and grounded. Some people can achieve this by taking deep breaths and being aware of their body language.
2. Check to see if it's a good time for the other person to discuss the issue. Are they angry, agitated or busy? Choosing a different time to address your concerns may make the process more effective.
3. Use assertive language by using "I" statements. Example: "I am upset that you don't clean up after your dog. I am worried that my children will step in it".
4. Apologize for your faults in the situation to take responsibility for your behavior.
5. Thank the person for speaking with you.

Confidentiality

Privacy Policy

In accordance with its obligations under the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA), the *Housing Services Act* (HSA) Regulation 367/11, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation will protect the privacy and confidentiality of the applicants, tenants, employees, board members, and other stakeholders by ensuring the appropriate treatment of their personal information.

Personal information will be collected only for the following purposes:

- to approve tenancy and determine appropriate unit type and size
- to determine income and assets for rent calculation
- to demonstrate compliance with funding requirements
- to protect the health and safety of the tenant
- to ascertain service levels required in special needs housing

All staff, board members, and any other individuals who may have access to applicant, tenant or employee files will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Durham Region Non-Profit Housing will never disclose your personal information to other individuals or public bodies except as authorized by legislation or through your consent. Access to records containing personal information will be granted only if access is required in order to fulfil a staff member's duties.

Household Size

If there is an increase or decrease in the number of residents in your household, even temporarily, you must contact the office right away.

The Residential Tenancies Act

The *Residential Tenancies Act* is the law that governs rental housing and establishes responsibilities between landlords and tenants. The Landlord and Tenant Board is the judicial body that hears complaints and makes rulings.

Under the act, Durham Region Non-Profit Housing is required to:

- provide all new tenants with written information on their rights and obligations upon entering into a tenancy agreement
- take reasonable steps to ensure quiet enjoyment
- maintain the unit and complex in a state of good repair in compliance with municipal standards
- respect the tenant's privacy with limited entry into the rental unit

Tenant responsibilities are:

- pay rent on time
- keep the unit clean
- not damage property
- respect health, safety, fire and noise regulations
- report maintenance or repair concerns



Getting Involved

Common Areas

Common areas are an extension of your living space and allows tenants to get together to engage with each other.

Booking a Common Room

Common rooms can be used for parties, special events, tenant associations and community partnerships. If you are interested in booking a common room for an event, please call the Customer Service Officer at 905-436-6610 for details. An application will need to be completed and you are encouraged to book rooms as far in advance as possible.

Tenant Involvement

Stay tuned for upcoming events in your neighbourhood! We want you to be become involved in activities in your area. Please feel free to contact the Manager of Tenant and Housing Services if you have ideas and suggestions to make your community a better place to live. We circulate regular newsletters and other material that may be interesting.



Paying Your Rent

Rent is due on the first day of every month. There are multiple ways to pay your rent that are reliable, secure and convenient.

Rent payments cannot be accepted by Superintendents or Property Managers.

Direct Withdrawal – By completing a short information form to give us permission and a void cheque, your rent payment can be set up to come directly out of your bank account.

Interac Direct Payment – Tenants can pay their rent at our head office by using debit. Payments are processed through your bank account immediately.

Telephone and Internet Banking – DRNPHC tenants have the option to pay rent through internet and phone banking at some banks. Payments cannot be made this way through Scotiabank or CIBC and their affiliates. Banks take up to 2 days to process these payments, so please ensure that we receive your rent by the 1st of the month.

If you are interested in setting up telephone or Internet banking, you must use the following account number:

Site Initials

Unit number

Up to 6 Letters of Last Name/First Name

A minimum of 9 alpha & numeric characters are required to set up your electronic banking account number. Your site code may be represented by 2 or 3 letters. Site codes are provided in the list on the following page. Your unit number may be represented by 1, 2 or 3 characters. Your name must consist of 6 characters. If your last name is less than 6 letters, please use the first letters of your first name as it appears on your lease.

Example: The account number for John Smith at Conant Place unit 10 is CP10SMITHJ

Please call our Head Office if you need assistance.

Post Dated Cheques – You can provide Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation with postdated cheques for up to 1

year in advance. Your cheques are cashed on the first business day of the month.

Payments made in person at 28A Albert Street, Oshawa – You can pay your rent at head office during regular office hours by interac, cash, money order or cheque. Cheque payments are accepted for the first 5 business days of the month. A drop box is also available by the front entrance. Never leave cash in the drop box as the Corporation is not responsible for any missing items.

Please note that a \$15.00 fee will be charged to your tenant account for cheque and direct withdrawal payments not honoured by your bank.

Rent Options

There are three types of rent in Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation sites. Some tenants pay “rent-geared-to-income”, also called RGI. Some tenants pay “market rent” and other tenants pay market rent and receive rent supplements.

Rent Geared-to-Income

Rent-geared-to-income (RGI) is subsidized rent. A tenant paying rent-geared-to-income will normally pay rent equal to about 30% of the combined gross income of everyone living in the home. There are special set amounts for people who receive benefits from Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program. The provincial government sets the rules for how RGI is calculated.

How Your Tenant Rent Contribution/Rent Is Calculated

If you are an RGI tenant, your rent will change when your income changes. This may be more frequently than once a year and you will need to report all changes in income. Even if your income does not change, we will do a review of your income and household size each year.

Annual Review Process

Once a year, you will be asked to submit proof of your income (T4 slips, cheque stubs, etc.) as well as a list of everyone who is living in your unit. This information will be used to confirm or reassess your rent contribution for the next year. If you have any questions about how your rent is calculated, please check with the Rent Assessment Officer.

Changes in Income and Household Size – What to Report

You must report any change in your income or household members as a result of birth, death, marriage (including common-law), separation or divorce, or when your children move out. These changes can affect your rent as well as the size of unit your household is eligible for.

New government rules, under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, require all RGI tenants to report any change in household income or household size to Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation immediately. If an RGI household fails to report within the designated time period, they may lose their eligibility for rent-geared-to-income. This means that they will have to begin paying the full market rent.

Market Rent

Market rent is about the same amount of rent you would pay if you were renting from a private landlord.

Rent Changes

Market rent increases once a year. Since DRNPHC is a nonprofit corporation and the amount of government money we receive is fixed, cost increases are often covered by increased rents. You will get 90 days' notice before the market rents go up.

To help control costs and keep market rents affordable, tenants should reduce energy consumption and report maintenance requests and damage to the property promptly.

Community Resources

Food Banks

Ajax: **Salvation Army “House of Hope”**
37 Kings Crescent, Ajax
905-427-7123

Helping Hands
75 Bayly Street W, Ajax
905-426-2433

Beaverton: **Brock Community Food Bank**
523 Simcoe St, Beaverton
1-877-406-8723

Bowmanville: **Salvation Army**
75 Liberty St. S, Bowmanville
905-623-2185

Oshawa: **Simcoe Hall Settlement House**
387 Simcoe St. S, Oshawa
905-728-3769

Seventh Day Adventists
1170 King St. E. Oshawa
905-433-8800

Pickering: **St. Paul’s On The-Hill Community Food Bank**
1537 Pickering Parkway
905-839-9537

Uxbridge: **Loaves and Fishes**
40B Toronto St. S., Uxbridge
905-852-6262

Whitby: **Salvation Army**
607 Palace St., unit #1, #2
905-430-3454

Women Shelters and Crisis Lines serving Durham Region

The Denise House: 905-728-7311

<http://www.thedenisehouse.com/home.php>

Horizon House: 1-866-437-4966

<http://www.herizonhouse.com/>

Y's Wish: 905-576-2997 <http://ywcadurham.org/>

Bethesda House: 905-623-6050

<http://www.bethesdahouse.ca>

Muslim Welfare House: 905-665-0424

[http://www.muslimwelfarecentre.com`](http://www.muslimwelfarecentre.com)

Men's Shelters

Cornerstone; 905-433-0254

<http://communityoutreach.ca>

Mental Health Resources

Durham Mental Health Services Crisis Support: 905-

666-0483 [http:// www.dmhs.ca](http://www.dmhs.ca)

Canadian Mental Health Association: 905-436-8760

<http://www.durham.cmha.ca>

Lakeridge Health Oshawa: 905-576-8711

<http://www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca>

The Oshawa Clinic: 905-723-8551

<http://www.oshawaclinic.com>

Pinewood Centre for Addictions

Ajax: 905-683-5950

Bowmanville: 905-697-2746

Oshawa: 905-571-3344

Port Perry: 905-985-4721

Scarborough: 416-431-8200 ext. 6321 or 6516

Utilities

Oshawa PUC: 905-723-4623 <http://www.opuc.on.ca>

Veridian Connections: 905-427-9807

<http://www.veridian.on.ca>

Whitby Hydro: 905-668-5878

<http://www.whitbyhydro.on.ca>

Enbridge: 1-877-362-7434

<https://www.enbridgegas.com/homes/>

Financial

Ontario Works: 905-428-8982

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/social/ow/>

Ontario Disability Support Program: 905-440-1030

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/social/odsp/>

Employment Insurance: 1-800-206-7218

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/ei>

Legal

Durham Community Legal Clinic: 905 728-7321

<http://www.durhamcommunitylegalclinic.ca/>

Legal Aid Ontario: 416 979-1446

<http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/>

Family Court Clinic: 905-436-6754 <http://www.dfcc.org/>

Luke's Place: 905-728-0978 <http://www.lukesplace.ca>

More Resources

CDCD Housing Help Durham: 905-686-2661

<http://www.cdcd.org>

AIDS Committee of Durham: 905-576-1455

<http://www.aidsdurham.com>

LGBTQ Support - Distress Centre Durham: 905-430-3511
Toll Free. 1-800-452-0688
<http://www.distresscentredurham.com>

PFLAG Durham: 905-231-0533
<http://pflagdurhamregion.com>

Family Services Durham: 905-666-6217
<http://www.familyserviceontario.org/agency/family-services-durham>

Catholic Services of Durham: 905-725-3513
<http://www.cfsdurham.com>

Durham Children's Aid Society: 905-433-1551
<http://www.durhamcas.ca>

John Howard Society: 905-579-8482
<http://www.jhsdurham.on.ca>

Youth Services Network of Durham Region: 905-839-3845 ext. 345

Oshawa Community Health Centre: 905-723-0036
<http://www.ochc.ca>

Brock Community Health Centre: 705-432-3388
<http://www.brockchc.ca/>

The Youth Centre (Pickering): 905-428-1212
<http://www.theyouthcentre.ca>



Moving Out

60-day Notice Period

When you decide to move out, you must give at least sixty days' written notice with your last day falling on the last day of the month.

To give notice, please provide notice in writing, including your name, address and include your signature.

Exit Survey

When we receive your notice to vacate, you will be asked to complete an exit survey. The survey is also available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GZ79ZNW> and gives us feedback on how we are doing as a landlord. Please take a few minutes to fill it out.



Your Fire Escape Plan

How will you and your family (including any pets) escape in the event of a fire? Use this space to draw a map of your unit and indicate available exits. Each room should have two exits.

Where will you meet your family members after leaving your unit? Write down your meeting place below and review it with your household members.