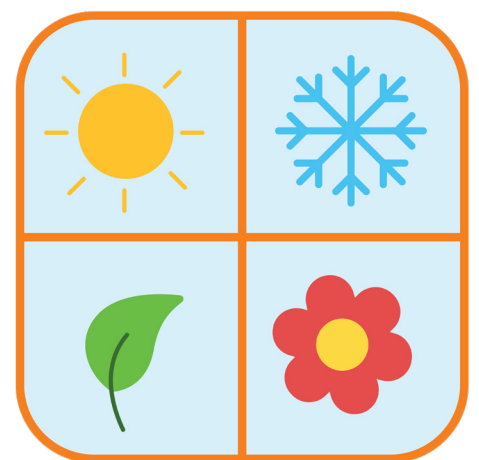
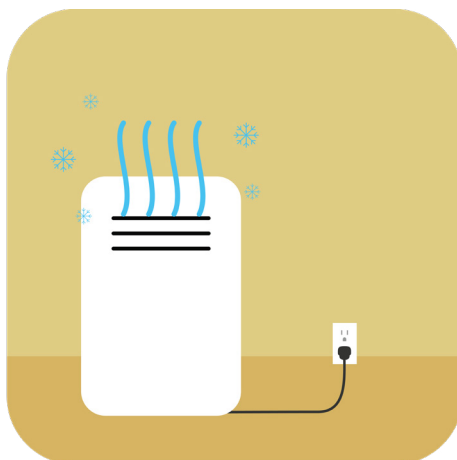
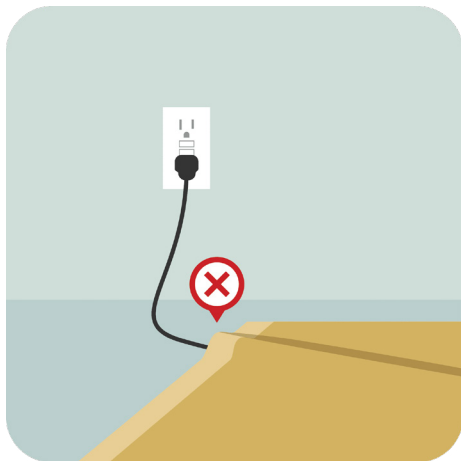


Safety Guide 2021



Toronto
Community
Housing



Learn more

You can find more information about the topics included in this guide, plus Toronto Community Housing news, meetings, policies, forms, and templates, at torontohousing.ca.

To get another copy of this guide, you can:

- Print it online at torontohousing.ca/safetyguide
- Visit your hub, regional or Property Management office
- Contact the Client Care Centre at [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500) or help@torontohousing.ca

This resource was accurate at the time of publishing.
Send corrections to help@torontohousing.ca.
© August 2021 Toronto Community Housing

Welcome

Owned by the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing provides homes to about 58,000 households in neighbourhoods across the city. We strive to deliver clean, safe, well-maintained and affordable housing, and connect tenants to services and supports. We work with many partners to foster opportunities that can improve well-being and quality of life in our communities, helping make Toronto a better place to live.

The safety of our tenants and communities is top priority. This is your guide to safety information for your Toronto Community Housing home and building. It has details about ways you can prepare for emergency situations, as well as what to do when an issue occurs. It also outlines what Toronto Community Housing’s various departments do to help maintain safe communities.

We thank the many staff and tenants, and the members of the Tenant Communications Workgroup and the Responsible Personal Accessibility in Toronto Housing (R-PATH) Committee, who contributed their ideas and feedback to make this guide yours. Keep this guide handy and contact us any time you need help.

Important:

The Safety Guide is intended to be a quick source of information for you. The information in this guide may change over time or become out of date. The information in this guide should not be taken as legal advice. If there is any conflict between what is written in this guide and any law of Canada (federal, provincial, or otherwise), or any Toronto Community Housing policy, procedure, or guideline, then the law, policy, procedure, or guideline prevails. Nothing in this guide should be seen as a promise that Toronto Community Housing will do something or will not do something, an offer or an agreement.

If my guide is lost, please return it to:

Name

Address



Table of contents

Section one: Services and supports	7
Important safety numbers	7
Section one: Safety in your community	8
The Community Safety Unit team	8
What happens when you call	9
What you can do	9
Security cameras	9
Anti-social behaviour	10
What can happen	11
What is eviction for cause?	11
What you can do	11
Unit takeovers	12
What you can do	12
Preventing crime in the neighbourhood	12
Environmental design	12
What you can do	13
Preventing crime in parking areas	14
What you can do	14
Window safety	14
Who to call for window repairs	14
Balcony safety	15
Power outages	15
Prepare for a power outage	15
What to do when a power outage happens	16
Evacuation	16
When the power comes back on	17
Water damage and flooding	17

What you can do	17
When a flood happens	18
Evacuation	18
After a flood	18
Preparing for emergencies	19
What you can do to be prepared	19
Fill out an “In case of emergency” form	19
Pack a “grab and go” bag	20
Preparing for an emergency if you have a disability	20
Take part in the Self-ID process	21
Insurance	22
Pet and animal safety	22
Pets in an emergency	23
Section two: Fire safety	24
Be prepared	24
Plan an escape route	24
If there is a fire	26
If you live in a high-rise (over six storeys)	26
What to do if you cannot safely leave	26
If clothing catches fire	27
If there is a fire while you are away	27
What Toronto Community Housing does during a fire	27
After a fire	27
Preventing fires	28
Common fire hazards in the home	28
Careless cooking	30
What to do if there is a kitchen fire	31
New “no smoking” policy	32
Careless smoking	32
Candles	34
Smoke alarms	36
Fire hazards in common areas	37

Section three: Seasonal safety 40

- Summer safety** 40
 - Outdoor burning 40
 - Staying cool in the heat 41
 - Heat warnings 42
 - Air conditioner safety 42
 - Swimming pool safety 42
- Winter safety** 44
 - Extreme cold weather alerts 44
 - Portable heaters 44
 - Radiators 45
 - Freezing rain, ice and snow 45
- Wind safety** 46
- Halloween safety** 47
- Need a translated copy?** 48
- Appendix 1: In case of emergency form** 49



Services and supports

You can call or reach the Toronto Community Housing Client Care Centre 24 hours a day, every day of the year at [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500) or at help@torontohousing.ca.

Toronto Community Housing's Community Safety Unit: [416-921-2323](tel:416-921-2323)

- Learn more about the Community Safety Unit on [page 8](#).

Important safety numbers

Here is a list of numbers you can call 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Important: keep these numbers handy so you can get the help you need when you need it. You can also go to torontohousing.ca/safetynumbers for an additional list of safety resources.

Emergency services: [9-1-1](tel:9-1-1) (text and Text Telephone, or TTY, is available). Always call this number in an emergency, and you will be connected to the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services and Toronto Paramedic Services.

- Non-emergency police calls: Call [416-808-2222](tel:416-808-2222) or [416-467-0493](tel:416-467-0493) (TTY) in non-emergency situations where you still need police assistance (fraud, reporting theft, and more). The Toronto Police Service works in divisions across the city. Visit torontopolice.on.ca/divisions to find out which division you live near, and their contact information.
- Crime Stoppers: Call [416-222-8477](tel:416-222-8477) or [1-800-222-8477](tel:1-800-222-8477) if you have information about a crime to share with the police. You do not have to give your name.
- Victim Services: Call [416-808-7066](tel:416-808-7066) for immediate support for victims of crime.
- Ministry of the Attorney General Victim Support Line: Call [1-888-579-2888](tel:1-888-579-2888) or [416-314-2447](tel:416-314-2447) 24/7 to talk to an information and referral counsellor. Services are available in many languages.
- Assaulted Women's Helpline: Call [416-863-0511](tel:416-863-0511) or [1-866-863-7868](tel:1-866-863-7868) (TTY) for help for assaulted women. Services are available in many languages.



Safety in your community

Always call **9-1-1** in an emergency such as a fire, a violent crime in progress or a life-threatening medical emergency.

Community Safety Unit — **416-921-2323**

All tenants have the right to be safe in their neighbourhoods. You can call the Community Safety Unit about issues like:

- illegal or criminal activity
- parking violations
- trespassing
- excessive noise

Staff are there to answer calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



The Community Safety Unit team

- Special Constables are not police officers but have the authority to investigate and make arrests on Toronto Community Housing property. They patrol on foot, by bicycle, or in cars. They may provide security at special events.
- Parking Enforcement Officers patrol parking areas and have the authority to issue tickets and tow illegally-parked vehicles.
- Community Safety Advisors help deliver safety programs for tenants and do community outreach.
- The Dispatch Centre answers your calls, keeps officers safe by monitoring radio frequencies and tracking officer statuses. They also work with emergency first responders to make sure officers are sent the help they need when they need it.

The Community Safety Unit works closely with other law enforcement agencies like the Toronto Police Service. They conduct joint patrols, partner on special projects, and assist with serious criminal investigations.

What happens when you call

A dispatcher will ask questions to find out what you need. These questions will include:

- Your name, address and contact number (you do not have to give this information, but if an incident needs follow-up in order to resolve it, this could be an issue if Community Safety Unit staff cannot contact you)
- Where you currently are and where help is needed
- Who is involved (if you are involved and have a disability, let the dispatcher know that special assistance may be needed)
- If anybody is hurt

If you call about an emergency where people or property are at risk, the dispatcher will ask you to contact Toronto Emergency Services right away so that you can give them your first-hand knowledge of what happened. Dispatchers will then follow up with Emergency Services and send Special Constables to the scene.

If the situation does not need a Special Constable to come right away, dispatchers will give them your information. Then Special Constables will work with site staff and the Toronto Police (if needed) to follow up on your concerns.

You can ask the dispatcher or attending Special Constable for an incident number. If you want to remain completely anonymous when reporting an incident, you should contact Crime Stoppers at [416-222-8477](tel:416-222-8477).

What you can do

Tenants in many of our communities have informal “buddy systems” or community meetings to check on each other. However if you are worried about a safety or security issue, tell someone at Toronto Community Housing. This could be site staff, hub staff or the Community Safety Unit.

Security cameras

Toronto Community Housing uses video surveillance cameras on all our properties. They help in investigations after a crime has been reported. Cameras also help deter criminal activity.

Tenants have a right to expect a reasonable amount of privacy. We have to balance that with safety needs. We place cameras in public areas of Toronto



Community Housing property. We do not place them where tenants, staff, and the public should reasonably expect privacy. For instance, we do not place cameras to look inside an open door of a unit or in washrooms or change rooms.

Only authorized staff can access video surveillance records. The Toronto Police Service must make an official request for video records if they need them to investigate a crime.

The system automatically deletes video records after the very short retention period set out in our policies. Recordings are only kept for longer periods if we are told that the recording is legally required for an investigation or other legal matter, but we must be notified before records are deleted.

What you can do

Our cameras are not monitored at all times. It is important that you report any crime or incident that has happened in and around your building as soon as possible so that staff can check the video recordings and see if it was captured.

Go to torontohousing.ca/CCTV-policy and learn more about how we use, keep, store, and dispose of video surveillance footage.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is against the *Residential Tenancies Act* and our policies. Here are some examples of anti-social behaviour:

- any illegal act, such as drug dealing
- vandalism—willfully damaging property
- being drunk or high in public
- trespassing or loitering
- smoking where it is not permitted
- unsafe acts like climbing on buildings, lighting fireworks, setting fires
- suspicious behaviour, such as lurking near a person’s home or looking in car windows
- setting off a fire alarm for no reason
- being too noisy
- dumping trash in the wrong place
- disruptive or abusive behaviour, such as harassing other tenants



What can happen

Toronto Community Housing staff will work with tenants to address anti-social behaviour and provide supports as necessary. However, depending on what they are doing, tenants who behave in an anti-social way could:

- get verbal or written warnings
- face “eviction for cause” at the Landlord and Tenant Board
- be arrested or charged and need to attend court

What is eviction for cause?

Under the law and our Eviction for Cause policy, anti-social behaviour can be the basis for an eviction. Examples of anti-social behaviour that lead to eviction can include when someone:

- substantially interferes with another tenant’s reasonable right to peacefully and quietly enjoy their home
- damages property on purpose
- commits illegal acts such as using weapons or dealing drugs
- does unsafe things or makes others unsafe

You are responsible for the behaviour of anyone who lives with you as well as your guests or visitors. If they do things that are cause for eviction, Toronto Community Housing could apply to evict your whole household.

What you can do

- To report anti-social behaviour, call the Community Safety Unit at [416-921-2323](tel:416-921-2323)
- Go to torontohousing.ca/evictions-for-cause-policy to learn more about the Evictions for Cause policy
- Go to torontohousing.ca/guest-policy to learn more about the Visitor and Guest policy

Unit takeovers

A unit takeover happens when people are staying in your home who make you feel unsafe. You might be afraid physically or mentally, or you might be afraid for your money.

Unwanted people gain access to a tenant's unit by befriending them, or using bullying tactics to frighten them. They can even be a family member.



What you can do

Toronto Community Housing can only remove an unwanted person if the situation is reported. We understand that being a victim of a unit takeover is scary, but it is important to report it so that you get help. A unit takeover can lead to bigger problems later. Depending on what is happening in the unit, tenants who do not report a takeover may face criminal charges, an eviction for cause, or both. Do not risk losing your home.

When you report that your unit has been taken over, we will provide wellness checks and other types of support while the situation is being resolved.

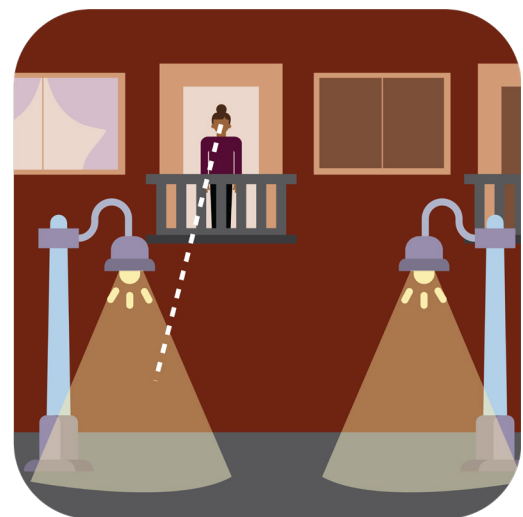
If you suspect a unit takeover is happening in your building, you should report it as well. Unit takeovers can be reported to:

- the Community Safety Unit at [416-921-2323](tel:416-921-2323)
- your local Toronto Police Service Division
- Crime Stoppers at [416-222-8477](tel:416-222-8477) (TIPS)

Preventing crime in the neighbourhood

Environmental design

When Toronto Community Housing does major repairs or redevelopment, we look for ways to design neighbourhoods and buildings so that it is harder to carry out criminal or anti-social activities.



For instance, we make sure that communities are street-connected, not closed off. They should be accessible from more than one point in their surrounding neighbourhoods. We make sure that walkways, roads and parking areas are well-lit. When we build, we make sure that windows and balconies overlook sidewalks and parking lots.

What you can do

Walk in well-lit areas on established paths and away from bushes. Report any broken or burnt-out light bulbs to your Superintendent or the Client Care Centre.

If you live in a townhome, keep your outdoor light on at night. This helps pedestrians to see and discourages anti-social behaviour. You can use energy-efficient light bulbs and it will not have a big impact on your hydro bill.

Preventing crime in your building or townhome

What you can do

- Keep all doors to your home closed and locked. If your unit or townhome is on the ground floor, make sure your windows and doors are locked and secure at all times.
- Never prop doors open or block hallways and stairwells. This is both a lease and a *Fire Code* violation.
- Look into elevators before getting on. If you feel uncomfortable, wait for the next one.
- Be sure you know the person calling on the intercom before you let them into the building.
- Make sure all vendors, such as repair people, show proper ID before letting them into your home. Unless it is for emergency maintenance, you will receive at least 24 hours notice of entry before a vendor comes to your unit.
- Do not give copies of your unit key or fob to anyone who does not live with you.
- If you lose your keys or fob, tell your superintendent right away or call the Client Care Centre if it is after hours.
- As a courtesy, tell your superintendent if you are going to be away for an extended period of time. If there is a building emergency, they may need to account for all tenants.



Preventing crime in parking areas

What you can do

- Be alert when walking to your car. Look and listen for what is happening around you.
- If you see a stranger follow you, play it safe. Report your concern to the Community Safety Unit or site staff. Go back to your unit and return later if possible.
- Always lock your car and do not leave valuables in it.
- We make sure that parking areas are well-lit. If you are concerned with lighting or want to report a broken or burnt-out bulb, contact the Client Care Centre.
- Register your bike with the police. If it does not have a serial number, etch a number on it. This is so you can identify your bike if it is stolen.
- Lock your bike to something that cannot be cut or broken. Many communities have bike racks. Use a good quality lock.



Window safety

In Toronto Community Housing apartment buildings, windows are designed for your safety.

Window screens keep insects out of your unit. But they are not strong enough to prevent children or pets from falling through.

Window locks allow windows to be opened four inches (10 centimetres) to let in fresh air, while keeping you safe.



Who to call for window repairs

Report any window locks or screens that need repair to your superintendent. You can also contact the Client Care Centre at help@torontohousing.ca or 416-981-5500.

Never tamper with locks or screens or try to fix them yourself. If you damage a lock or screen on purpose, you may be charged for repairs. It could also lead to your eviction.

Balcony safety

If your unit has a balcony, please enjoy it. But remember the rules. They are for your safety.

Do not use the balcony for storage or enclose it to make an extra room. This is a fire hazard and violates your lease.

Do not throw anything off your balcony. That includes cigarette butts. Use a sturdy ashtray and make sure all smoking material is out.

Do not put carpet on the balcony. Among other hazards, wet carpets can damage the concrete.

Do not cook or barbecue on the balcony. This is a fire hazard and violates your lease.

Who to call for balcony repairs

Call the Client Care Centre at [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500).

Power outages

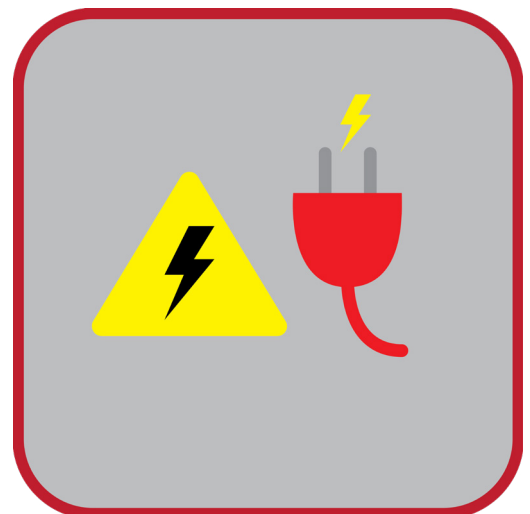
Who to call about a power outage

If the power is out on your street or if you see downed power lines, call Toronto Hydro at [416-542-8000](tel:416-542-8000).

If the outage is only in your home (the lights in your unit are out but the lights in the hallway work), call the Client Care Centre at [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500).

Prepare for a power outage

- Stock several flashlights and extra batteries.
- Try to keep cell phones and other devices fully charged.
- Stock canned and dry food. Check the expiry dates regularly.
- If you have a disability, take part in the Self-ID process and fill out the Emergency Contact and Special Assistance Information form.



This process allows tenants with accessibility barriers to confidentially identify themselves to Toronto Community Housing to make sure they are safe during an emergency through evacuation help or wellness checks.

- Learn more about the Self-ID process on [page 21](#).
- If you take any medication that has to be in the refrigerator, make a plan for keeping it cold.
- Report electrical issues as soon as they happen to site staff or the Client Care Centre.

What to do when a power outage happens

Emergency lights and emergency exit signs in buildings will turn on or glow automatically when the power goes out.

During regular business hours, staff will tell you what to do. If a power failure is going to last more than three hours, staff will post notices and visit units. They will keep you informed and check on your needs.

- If you have a disability and need immediate assistance, let the Client Care Centre or site staff know right away.
- If you are cooking, turn off the stove. Unplug appliances and electronics to avoid a power surge when the power comes back on. Leave one lamp plugged in so you can check if the power is back on.
- Keep your refrigerator door closed to keep food cold as long as you can.
- Use flashlights instead of candles. If you must use candles, do not leave them unattended. Keep them away from children or pets, and at least one foot (30 centimetres) away from anything that can catch fire.

Warning:

Never heat with propane heaters, barbecues, or gas-powered generators— indoors or on balconies. They give off deadly carbon monoxide gas, which you cannot see or smell.

Contact Toronto Hydro at torontohydro.com or [416-542-8000](tel:416-542-8000) to get updates on outages.

Evacuation

If there has been damage to the building's electrical system, staff may ask you to evacuate.

Bring any essential medications, important documents, money, and identification with you.

Staff will help you with relocation and re-entry. Do not enter your home until Toronto Community Housing tells you it is safe to return.

When the power comes back on

Inspect all food for possible spoilage. When in doubt, throw it out. Toronto Community Housing will not pay to replace food lost during a power outage.

Toronto Community Housing will assess if there is any electrical system damage and begin the repair process. They will keep you informed of progress.

Water damage and flooding

Heavy rainfall or plumbing issues can cause water damage to your building or unit. Flash floods may happen without warning. Heavy rain may cause sewers to back up.

What you can do

Report any plumbing issues or ceiling leaks to site staff or the Client Care Centre as soon as they happen so that the proper resources can be sent. If you have a disability and need immediate assistance, let the Client Care Centre or site staff know right away.

If possible, keep all valuables like electronics off the floor to protect them from flood damage.

It is recommended that you learn where the water shutoff valves are in your apartment, as you can use them to shut off the water supply to your sinks and toilets in the case of an emergency.

If you have a disability, take part in the Self-ID process and fill out the Emergency Contact and Special Assistance Information form. Learn more about the Self-ID process on [page 21](#).



When a flood happens

- Report flooding to the Client Care Centre at [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500).
- Avoid flooded areas. Water is dangerous if it comes in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords.
- Do not use electronic equipment near water.
- If the water supply is affected, use bottled, boiled, or treated water. Staff will tell you when it is safe to use water from the tap.

Evacuation

If the flooding is serious enough, staff may ask you to evacuate your unit or the building.

Bring any medications you must take, important documents, money, and identification with you.

Staff will help you with relocation and re-entry. Do not enter your home until Toronto Community Housing tells you that it is safe to return.

After a flood

Check all of your food supplies for signs of spoilage or water damage. When in doubt, throw it out, especially if it has come into contact with flood waters.

Floods create ideal conditions for mould and mildew to grow. Clean and disinfect all of the surfaces in your home using a water and bleach solution. Remember to never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners as this can create a toxic gas.

Do not use flooded appliances, electrical outlets, switch boxes, or fuse-breaker panels until they have been checked and cleared by a qualified electrician. Toronto Community Housing will arrange these checks.

Toronto Community Housing will schedule all needed repairs and keep you informed of progress. Depending on the severity of the flood, drying equipment like industrial fans may be set up in affected areas. If fans are set up in your unit, you will be given at least 24 hours notice before staff or vendors come in to check on them.

Toronto Community Housing will not pay to replace contents that have been damaged by a flood. Tenants are required to have content insurance to protect their belongings.

Preparing for emergencies

Toronto Community Housing has an Emergency Response Plan to make sure we are ready for things like extreme weather, fire, and flooding. To learn more about the plan, contact the Client Care Centre at [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500) or help@torontohousing.ca.



What you can do to be prepared

You should have your own plan so that you and your family know what to do in an emergency. Practise how you and your children will leave your home and building safely. Pick a place outside your building where everyone in your household will meet if you have to evacuate.

Name someone you do not live with as an emergency contact. Make sure your family knows who the contact is and how to get in touch with them.

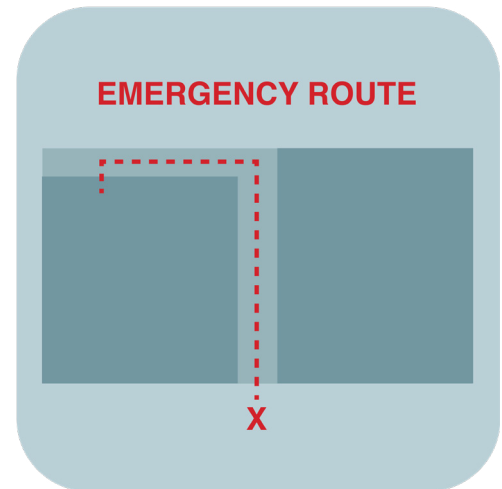
You should have insurance on the contents of your home to pay for belongings lost in an emergency like a fire or flood.

Fill out an “In Case of Emergency” form

Fill out an “In Case of Emergency” form and keep it somewhere visible in your apartment where paramedics are likely to see it during an emergency. Do not give it to Toronto Community Housing staff.

This form is a resource that makes it easier for healthcare providers to help you if they are unable to communicate with you because of illness, injury or language barriers.

There is a copy of the “In Case of Emergency” form at the back of this guide on [page 48](#). Tear it out and fill it in. It is easy to read. You can also download and print additional copies from torontohousing.ca/getprepared.



Pack a “grab and go” bag

A grab and go bag is an emergency kit packed with what you will need if you and your family have to leave quickly for at least 72 hours. Keep this bag near your front door.

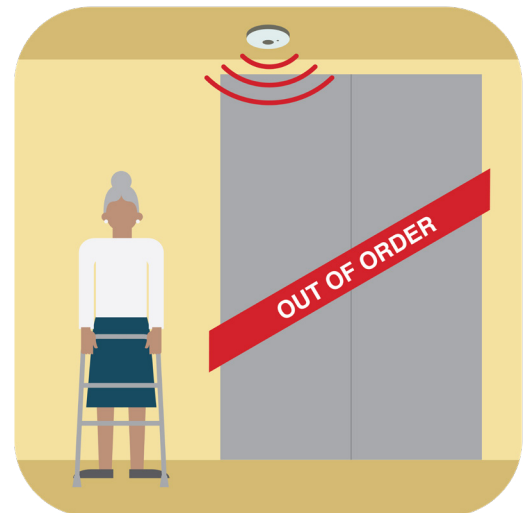
The bag should include things like bottled water, a change of clothing, non-perishable food, flashlights, and extra medication (if possible). To learn more, go to torontohousing.ca/getprepared or getprepared.gc.ca.



Preparing for an emergency if you have a disability

In emergencies, there can be issues with electricity, elevators, accessible transportation and more. Here are some steps you can take to be better prepared:

- Make a plan with your healthcare provider, your family, a friend, or all three.
- Arrange for someone to check on you in emergencies.
- Carry a medical alert device or personal alarm.
- If your life depends on medical equipment that runs on electric power, such as a ventilator or a kidney dialysis machine, make a back-up plan. Make sure your equipment will still work if the power goes out.
- Contact Toronto Hydro at [416-542-8000](tel:416-542-8000) to be placed on the Life Support Notification Registry. Toronto Hydro will do their best to notify you of planned outages so that you have time to prepare.
- Label your equipment. Attach instructions on how to use and transport it if you have to evacuate.
- Take part in the Self-ID process and fill out the Emergency Contact and Special Assistance Information form.



Take part in the Self-ID process

If you need extra help during an emergency, you should take part in the Self-ID process. You do this by filling out the Emergency Contact and Special Assistance Information form.

This process allows tenants with disabilities to confidentially identify themselves to Toronto Community Housing. First responders and site staff will use the information to make sure you get the help you need during an emergency or building evacuation.



This process is completely voluntary and confidential, and it is meant to keep you safe. The Emergency Contact and Special Assistance Information form comes in the Annual Review package for each unit. You can also get a copy online at torontohousing.ca/selfid. You can also contact the Client Care Centre for a copy.

Return the form to your superintendent or Tenant Services Coordinator or your Seniors Services Coordinator (if you live in the Seniors Housing Unit and the Integrated Service Model has been launched in your region). Your superintendent will add details from the form to your building's Fire Safety Plan so that staff or first responders know to assist you.

How is this form different from the “In Case of Emergency” form?

The Emergency Contact and Special Assistance form is given to Toronto Community Housing staff so they know to attend to you when an emergency happens. The “In case of emergency” form stays in your unit where paramedics can easily see it. It contains information healthcare providers need if they cannot communicate with you because of illness, injury or language barriers.

Insurance

You are required under your lease to get and keep renewing insurance for your belongings. This is called contents insurance or renters' insurance. If your unit is damaged in emergencies like a flood or fire, insurance helps you pay to replace your belongings, including furniture and electronics.



Insurance may also help to pay for legal costs—for example, if your own actions caused a fire.

Insurance may also cover the cost of a hotel stay or a replacement unit if you cannot return to your unit because of an emergency.

Affordable insurance

Some insurance companies have insurance that is easier to afford for tenants in social housing. One option is the Housing Services Corporation, which has a Tenant Insurance Program. You can get information about rates and coverage at tenant.hscorp.ca or by calling **1-866-940-5111**. You may also purchase insurance with any company of your choice.

Does some or all of your income come from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program? These programs may cover the cost of contents insurance. Speak with your case worker to get more information.

If you have questions about what kind of insurance is right for you, call the Insurance Bureau of Canada at **416-362-2031**.

Pet and animal safety

Tenants are responsible for their pet's behaviour, such as noise, biting, and cleaning up after them. You are also responsible for pets that your visitors bring on the property.

City of Toronto animal bylaws restrict the number and kind of animals you can have in your unit.



Your lease has rules about pets:

- Make sure each animal wears a collar and identification tag at all times.
- Keep your pet on a leash in common areas outside your unit or outdoors.
- Your pet must not damage property or the belongings of others.
- Your pet must not be a nuisance or disturb other people.
- Never leave your pet alone on your balcony.
- If workers are coming into your unit to do maintenance or repairs, you must safely secure all pets away from where they are working.

Pets in an emergency

If you have to leave your home in an emergency, do not leave your pets behind. They may get lost or injured. For options for dealing with pets during emergencies, contact Toronto Animal Services at **3-1-1**.

Toronto Community Housing will not pay veterinary costs. You are required to have pet insurance or otherwise pay to protect and care for your pets or service animals.



Fire safety

Fire safety is everyone’s responsibility. You can help yourself stay safe by following these directions.

Be prepared

Memorize the fire emergency procedures for your building. If you live in a building, information about what to do in case of a fire is set out in your building’s Fire Safety Plan and is called “Occupant Information”. You should have received a copy of this plan already, but you can get additional copies from the Client Care Centre.

Learn your unit, building or townhome layout, including all the ways you can exit.

Take part in the Self-ID process and fill out the Emergency Contact and Special Assistance Information form if you require assistance in an emergency. Your name will be added to your building’s Fire Safety Plan so that staff or first responders know to assist you.

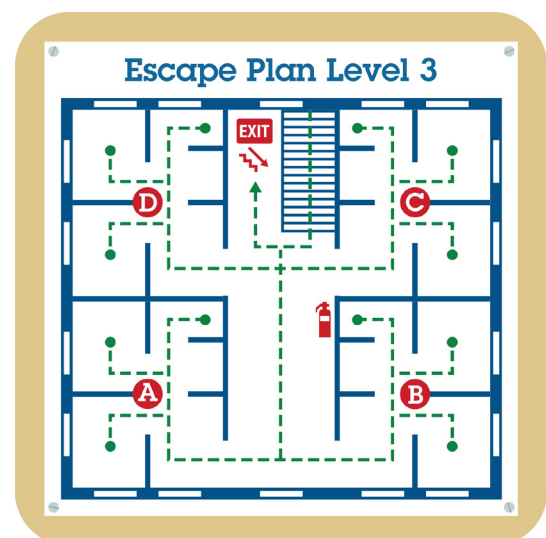


Keep your contact information up to date with Toronto Community Housing in case you have to leave because of a fire.

Plan an escape route

You can easily create your own escape route by drawing a floor plan of your home and clearly marking the exits.

Practise the escape routes with each member of your household, including any children. Determine who will be responsible for helping small children and pets leave the unit in case of an emergency.

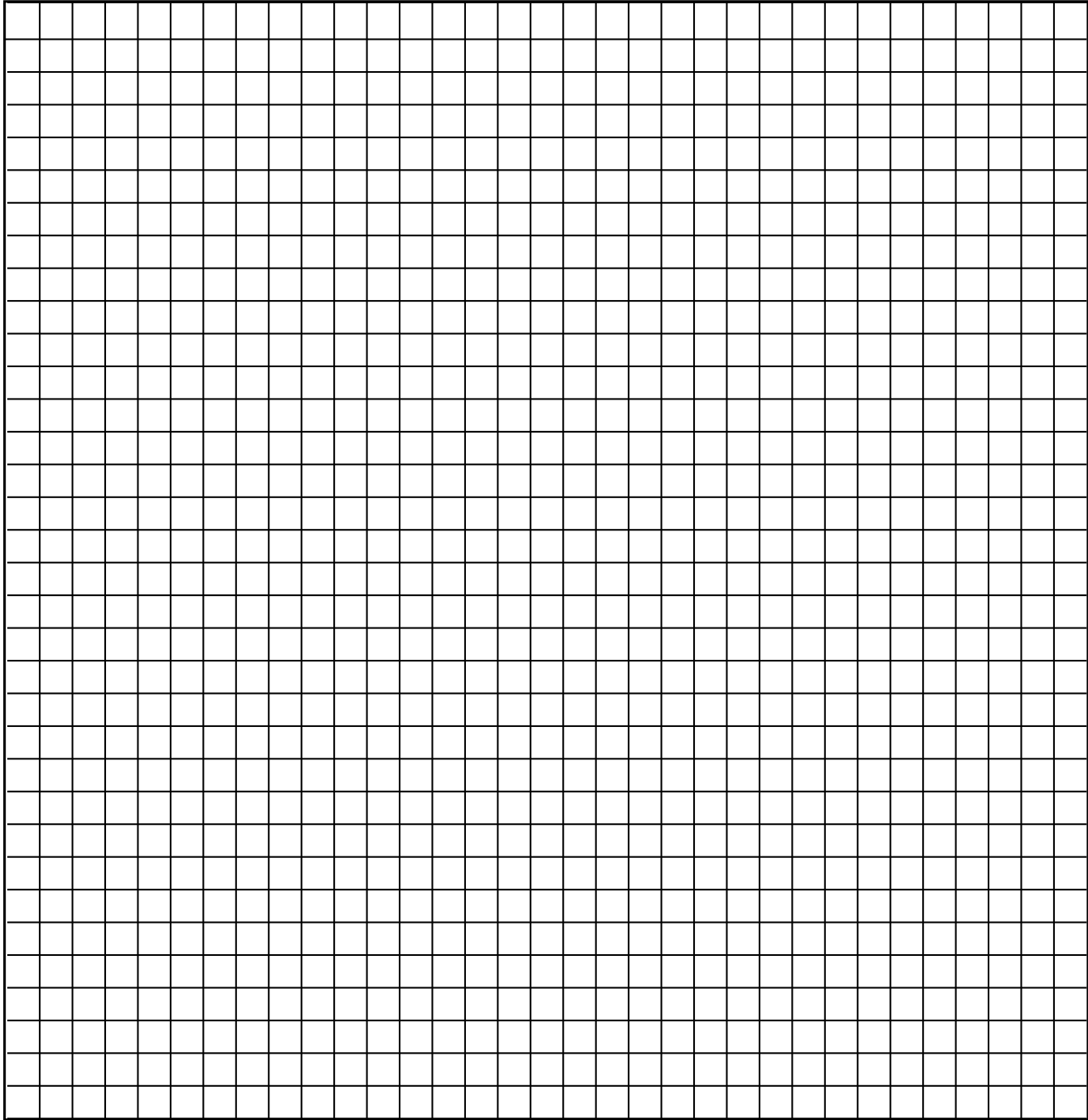


Escape route for:

Fill out your address

Draw a floor plan of your home and mark all the ways to get out of each room. If you live in an apartment, mark the fire escapes or stairwells.

Go to torontohousing.ca/home-escape to download and print more copies of this grid.



If there is a fire

If it is safe to do so, leave your unit and close the door behind you. Never use the elevator. Use the nearest exit. If you are able to safely exit, do not stop or go back in for any reason. Toronto Fire Services will tell you when it is safe to go back into your building.



If you live in a high-rise (over six storeys)

Although the safest place to be during a fire is outside the building, if smoke is NOT entering your unit, it is safe for you to stay put and wait for instructions from emergency services staff. They will go door to door or use the building's intercom system.



What to do if you cannot safely leave

If smoke or fire blocks all your exits, or if you cannot easily evacuate, stay in your unit. Keep your doors closed. Seal any cracks with wet towels or sheets to keep smoke out. Call **9-1-1** to tell the Fire Department you are in your unit. Wave or hang a light-coloured cloth from a balcony or open window to signal for help if possible.

If you cannot block the smoke at your unit door, put as many doors between you and the hallway as you can. For instance, go to your bedroom and shut the door so that there is a hallway and door between you and the smoke.



If clothing catches fire

Keep something handy to smother the flames, like a blanket or towel. You or someone nearby can use it to put the fire out.

If you are able to get to the ground, drop to the floor and roll in the blanket or towel.



If you learn there is a fire while you are away from home

Contact the Client Care Centre at [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500) as soon as you can. This will let site staff know that you are safe and accounted for.

What Toronto Community Housing does during a fire

- The Client Care Centre dispatches the Community Safety Unit to the site to support Toronto Fire Services.
- Toronto Fire Services opens the building's Fire Safety Plan box. It holds the list of people who need help with evacuation. They may go door to door or broadcast instructions on the building speaker system.
- The Community Safety Unit helps to set up a nearby waiting area for tenants who have been evacuated.
- The Client Care Centre keeps staff updated on the incident and response.

After a fire

- Contact your family and friends to let them know how and where you are.
- If you have to stay out of your home, Toronto Community Housing will give you updates about next steps. They will help you relocate if necessary or re-enter your unit when it is safe.
- Do not enter your home until Toronto Community Housing tells you it is safe.
- Contact your insurance provider. Let them know about the fire and find out how to start working on your claim.
- Toronto Community Housing will assess the building for damage. Repairs will begin when it is safe to do so. Toronto Community Housing will keep you informed.

Preventing fires

Common fire hazards in the home

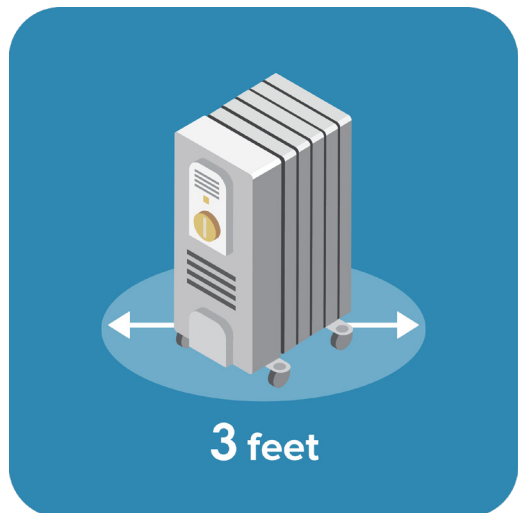
Too much clutter creates fire hazards. To stay safe, keep clutter to a minimum. Make sure you have a clear path to exit your unit.



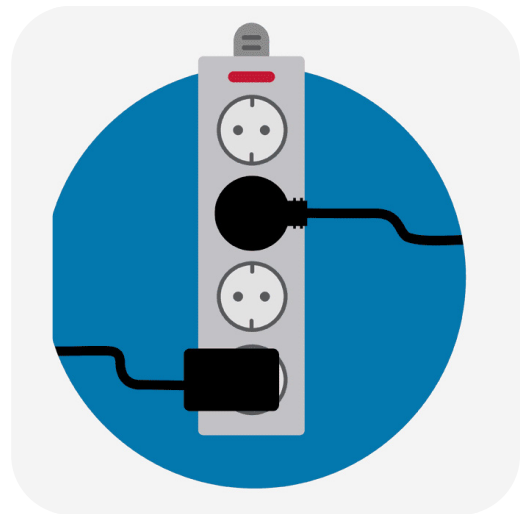
Do not use balconies for storage. Items on a balcony can block a means of escape and can easily catch fire. Balcony fires are very dangerous because they often go undetected until they spread and get out of control.



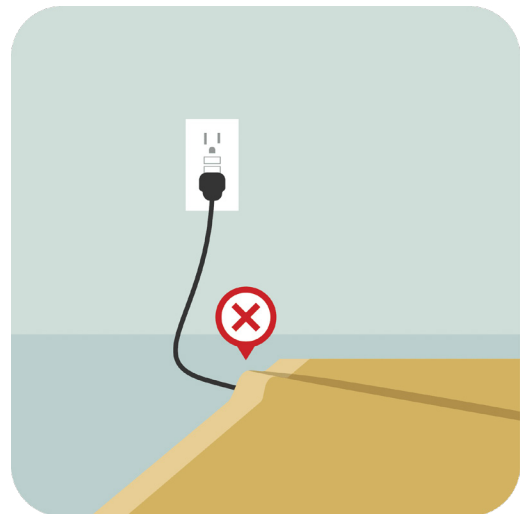
Under your lease, you are required to get written permission from Toronto Community Housing to use any additional heating unit in your home, including a space heater. If you use a space heater, keep it at least three feet (over one metre) away from anything that can burn. Always plug it directly into a wall outlet.



Use extension cords and power bars wisely. Unplug things you are not using to make room for what you need; do not overburden any outlets. Never force a three-prong cord into a two-slot outlet.



Run all electrical cords on top of your carpet, not underneath. Cords can get damaged underneath a carpet. This unseen damage can make the cord overheat and start a fire.



Too much clutter creates fire hazards. To stay safe, keep clutter to a minimum. Make sure you have a clear path to exit your unit.

Careless cooking

Cooking is the most common cause of fires and fire-related injuries in the home. Keep safe by following these tips.

Keep items that can catch fire away from cooking appliances, like the oven, stove, microwave and more. For instance, keep them clear of food packaging, towels, oven mitts, and wooden utensils when you are not using them. All new replacement stoves will now come equipped with an element safety switch, which will prevent the element from reaching a temperature that could cause a pot fire.



Keep your cooking appliances clean. This includes the oven, stove-top, microwaves, and toasters. Food and liquid can easily catch fire, especially grease.



Never leave your stove unattended while cooking. If you need to leave the kitchen, turn off the stove and move pots and pans off the hot elements.



Always plug cooking appliances directly into a wall outlet.

Do not use any appliance if the electrical cord is cracked or damaged— this is a fire hazard.



What to do if there is a kitchen fire

If a grease fire starts, never use water to put it out. Water can make grease fires worse.

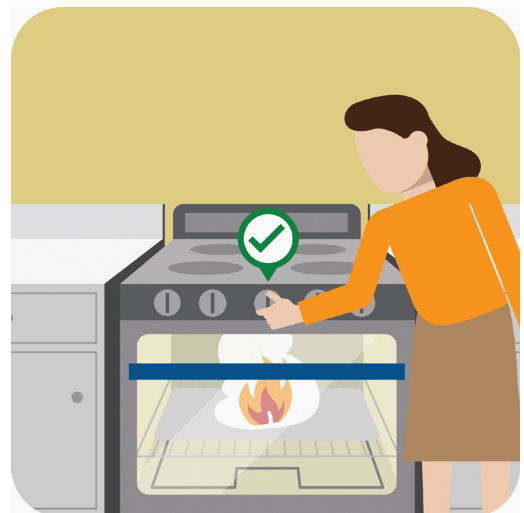
If you can do it safely, slide a pot lid or cookie sheet over the pan to put out the fire. Turn off the stove burner. Do not move the pan. Leave the lid on until the pan has cooled.

Consider purchasing an ABC (multi-purpose) fire extinguisher to keep in your kitchen.



If you have a fire in your oven, turn it off. Keep the oven door closed. Let the contents cool.

If flames come out of the oven or the fire is not easily put out right away, leave your home and shut the door firmly behind you. Pull the nearest fire alarm in your building. Call **9-1-1** right away from a safe area.



New “no smoking” policy

Toronto Community Housing is moving toward implementing a “no smoking” policy on our properties. Tenants who sign their lease after the policy comes into effect will need to follow the restrictions on smoking as set out in their lease.



Tenants who sign their lease before this policy comes into effect will still be able to smoke inside their unit and on their balcony as long as they do not:

- Disturb others at the building
- Create a danger for others at the building

In all cases, smoking is not allowed in any common area of the building (stairwells, hallways, garages and more) or within nine metres of building entrances.

Careless smoking

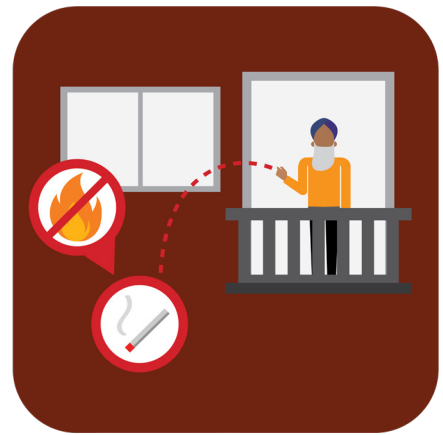
Careless smoking at home is the leading cause of fire deaths. A dropped cigarette can smoulder for hours before bursting into flames.

The safest place to smoke is outside.

When smoking outside, you must be at least nine metres (about 30 feet) from the building entrance or exit. You could face a fine under city bylaws if you smoke too close to the building.



Never throw cigarette butts off a balcony. Fires on balconies are the most dangerous. This is because they can burn and spread without being noticed.



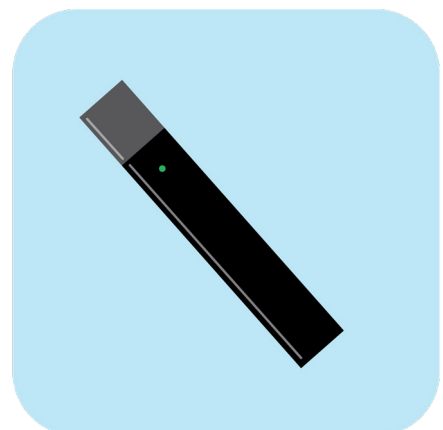
Use a deep, sturdy ashtray. Make sure cigarettes and other smoking materials are completely out—do not leave lit or smouldering cigarettes unattended. Place ashtrays away from anything that can burn. Empty them regularly.



Keep smoking materials out of reach. Teach children that matches and lighters are not toys, and that they should tell an adult right away if they find any smoking materials.



E-cigarettes can start fires. This can happen while you are using them or when you are charging the battery. It can even happen while you are just carrying them around. Never leave charging e-cigarettes unattended or plugged in overnight.



Do not smoke if you are drowsy or if you have been drinking alcohol. Never smoke in bed.



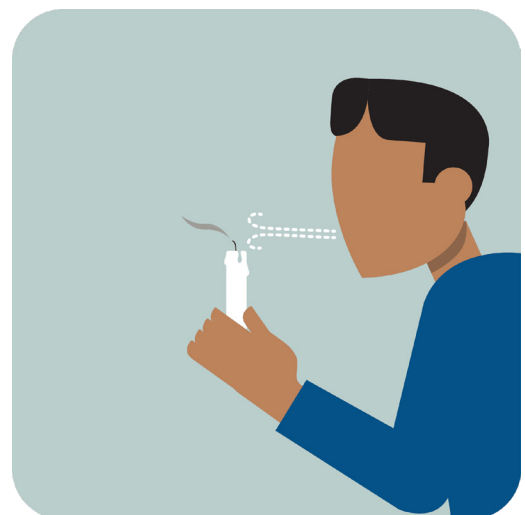
If you are using medical oxygen or any other compressed gas, do not allow anyone to smoke near you or near where you store it.



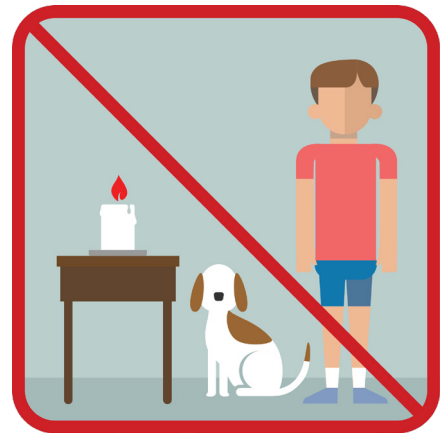
Candles

Candles can be a serious fire hazard if not used properly. There are a number of things you can do to reduce risks when you burn candles.

Use a sturdy, safe candle holder that will not burn or tip over. Do not burn candles in bedrooms, bathrooms, or sleeping areas. Blow them out as soon as you leave a room or go to bed.

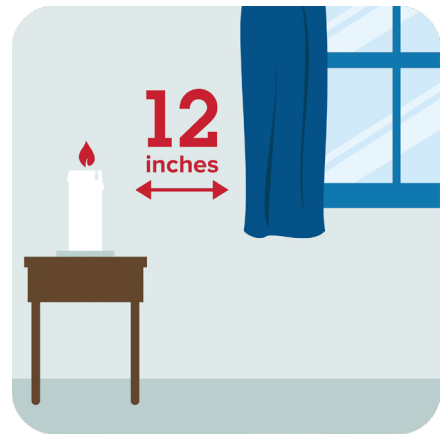


Keep candles, matches, and lighters away from pets and children.



Make some room

Keep lit candles at least 12 inches (30 cm) away from things that can catch fire, such as curtains and holiday decorations or displays.



Make sure it is out

A good way to make sure a candle is fully out is to wet the wick. You can do this after blowing out a match too.



Choose another option

Think about using battery operated candles instead.



Keep your smoke alarms in working order

A working smoke alarm can save your life. Smoke spreads fast. A smoke alarm gives you early warning, so that you can escape a fire safely.

You should already have received a copy of your smoke alarm manual. The manual tells you how your smoke alarm works and how to test it. If you need another copy of the smoke alarm manual, contact the Client Care Centre.

Regular testing

Our staff check that your smoke alarm is working when they visit your unit as part of the annual unit inspection process. You should also test your smoke alarms yourself each month. Press the test button and listen for the alarm. If your smoke alarm is not working, tell site staff right away, or contact the Client Care Centre.



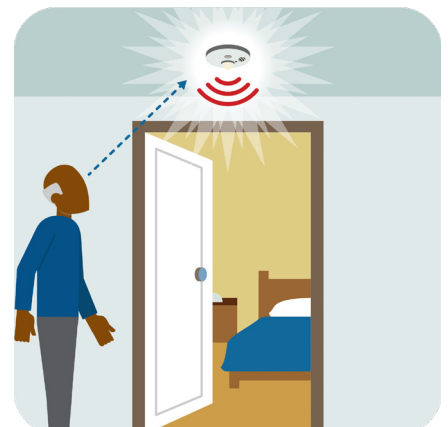
Prevent false alarms.

Smoke alarms should be installed away from your stove. If you have frequent false alarms from cooking, speak with your superintendent. Your smoke alarm may need to be moved. When you get a false alarm, there is a “hush” button you can press. This will stop it from making noise for a short period while the air clears.



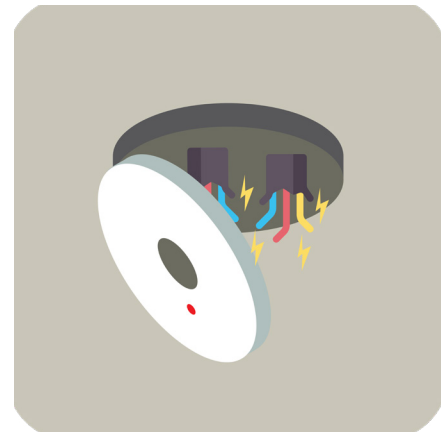
Deaf or hard of hearing?

There are special smoke alarms and alert devices designed for you. If you need one, tell your superintendent or your Tenant Services Coordinator or your Seniors Services Coordinator (if you live in the Seniors Housing Unit and the Integrated Service Model has been launched in your region).



Do not tamper with the smoke alarm.

You are putting yourself, your family and your neighbours at risk. It is against the law to tamper with, disable, or remove a smoke alarm. You could be charged for repairs, fined up to \$100,000, or face eviction.



Fire hazards in common areas

Your building's common areas, such as halls, exits, and stairwells, should be safe spaces for everyone. Keep them free from fire hazards.

Hallways are for people only

Keep hallways and emergency exits clear at all times. The *Ontario Fire Code* gives staff the authority to remove any items that could feed a fire or block your way out. You will not be reimbursed if your belongings are removed or discarded. Items prohibited on your door, in hallways, lobbies and exits include, but are not limited to:



- Door decorations or hangers, including holiday decorations
- Flowers (plastic or real)
- Door mats
- Holiday wreaths or trees
- Bicycles
- Strollers

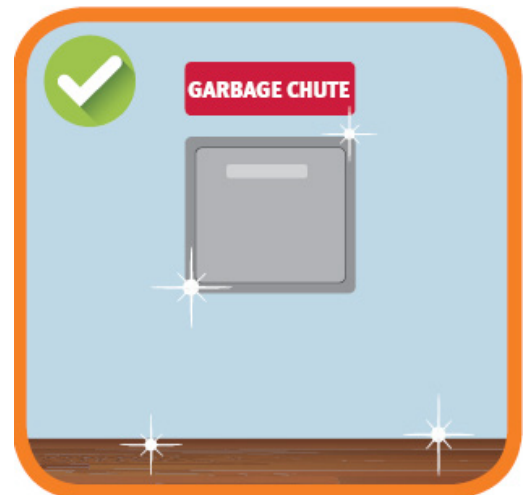
A closed door is a safe door

Doors help to prevent the spread of smoke and fire. The doors between the unit and the common hallway in our buildings are fire-rated, which means they can resist heat and flames for a certain length of time. Always keep your unit door and stairwell doors fully closed. Do not prop open a door at any time, as this is both dangerous and in violation of the fire code.



Garbage goes in the disposal

Keep garbage chutes clear, their doors closed, and the surrounding area tidy. Clean, working trash chutes and doors reduce the risk of fire. If your property does not have a garbage chute, please use the designated recycling and disposal area. Check with your superintendent if you are unsure where this is.

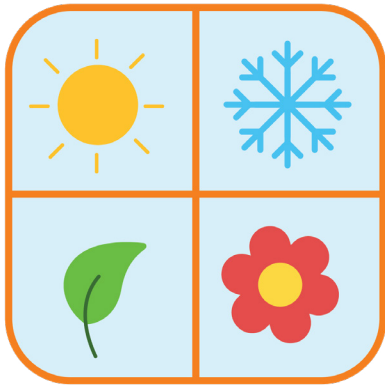


Keep stairwells clear

Never leave items in a stairwell or block a stairwell in any way. They must be safe and clear at all times to allow people to leave the building safely during an emergency.



Fire safety is everyone's responsibility. Go to torontohousing.ca/firesafety for more information about fire prevention and safety tips.



Seasonal safety

At some times of the year, the changing weather may present some safety concerns. Know what you can do to stay safe.

Outdoor burning

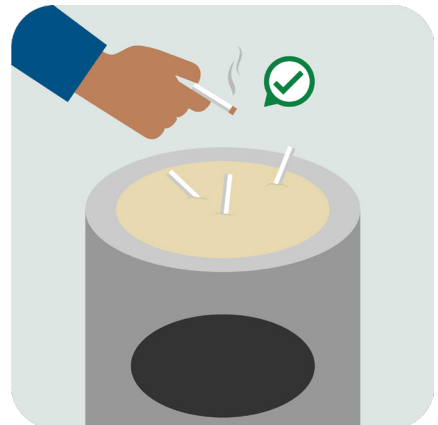
Call 3-1-1 to find public fireworks near you

Fireworks and campfires are not permitted on Toronto Community Housing properties at any time. They can cause injuries, fires, and damage to homes.



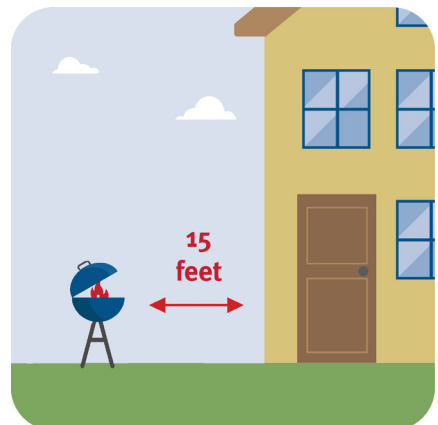
Butt out carefully

Always use an ashtray or deep, sturdy container with a lid to dispose of cigarettes. Do not throw them on the grass, into bushes, or off your balcony.



Be careful where you grill

Barbecues and grills are not allowed on balconies. Toronto Community Housing permits barbecues in outdoor common areas at some buildings. Check with your superintendent to see whether barbecues are allowed anywhere on your property. Keep barbecues at least 4.5 metres (about 15 feet) from the sides of buildings and any material that can burn. Disconnect propane tanks when they are not in use. Lock them up safely.



What to do if clothing catches fire outside

If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop and roll.

Do not run around. Stop what you are doing, drop to the ground and cover your face with your hands. Then roll back and forth until the fire is out.

If you cannot stop, drop and roll, you or someone nearby can use clothing or fabric (a jacket or blanket) to put the fire out.

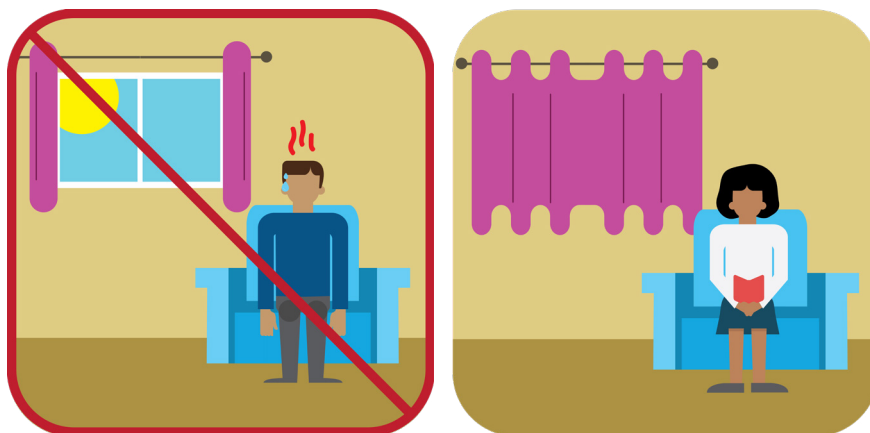


Staying cool in the heat

Toronto Community Housing switches each building from the heating system to the cooling system for the summer. If you are having issues with the temperature in your unit, contact the Client Care Centre.

Keep your blinds or drapes closed during the day to block the sun. Turn off lights and unplug appliances that you are not using. They give off heat even when they are not in use.

Fans do not cool the air—they just move it around. Blowing really warm air on yourself can actually cause heat illness faster. The key is to stay hydrated. Drink lots of water, even if you do not feel thirsty.



Heat warnings

Environment and Climate Change Canada issues heat warnings when the day's high will be 31C or warmer, with a nighttime low of 20C or warmer, for two or more days in a row.

There are also warnings when it is very humid, with humidex values of 40C or higher for two or more days in a row.

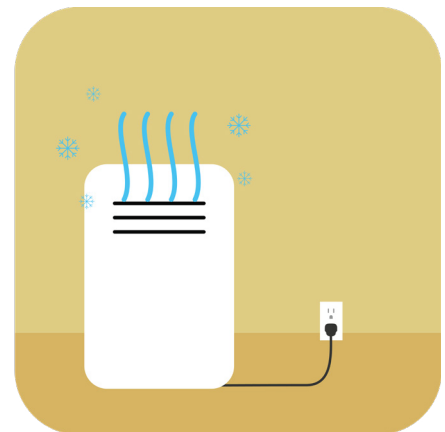
In some Toronto Community Housing buildings, staff set up a cooling room when there is a heat warning. Staff will post a notice about the cooling room.

If your building does not have a cooling room, the notice will tell you where the nearest air-conditioned public place is. You can also call **3-1-1** or go to toronto.ca/cool-space to find a cool space near you.

Air conditioner safety

Only floor-mounted air conditioners are allowed in your unit. Air conditioners in windows are not allowed.

If you have questions about your air conditioner, please ask your superintendent or call the Client Care Centre at **416-981-5500**.



Swimming pool safety

Some Toronto Community Housing buildings have indoor pools. These are open to tenants of the building throughout the year. There are also outdoor swimming pools on some Toronto Community Housing properties. These are open during the summer to all Toronto Community Housing tenants, not just tenants in that community.



Read the rules

All pools have health and safety rules posted. Please make sure you know the rules before you use the pool. For example, children under the age of 10 must be with an adult at all times in or around the pool.



Swimming lessons

We often offer swimming lessons for all tenants at our pools. Check with the site's lifeguard to see if free swimming lessons are available. You can sign up with the site's lifeguard on the pool's opening day.

Heat warnings – pools open longer

When there are heat warnings, Toronto Community Housing may extend pool hours. If you have questions about pool hours, talk to the lifeguard on duty.

Go to torontohousing.ca/becoolandsafe for more information on beating the summer heat and what to do during a heat warning.

Winter safety

Toronto Community Housing is responsible for making sure your unit can reach a minimum of 21 degrees during the winter months. If you are having issues with the temperature in your unit, contact the Client Care Centre.

Extreme cold weather alerts

These are issued when there is a forecast of minus 15^c or colder, or a wind chill of minus 20C or colder.

Follow these tips to stay warm and safe during extreme cold or winter storms:

- If possible, keep extra food and medications on hand in case you are unable to go outside.
- If you live in a home with electric heat, keep all taps on a slow drip. This helps to prevent pipes from freezing and getting damaged.
- If the heat goes out, report it to site staff or the Client Care Centre right away. If the heat goes out during an extreme cold alert, Toronto Community Housing will set up a warming area in a common space until heating is back on.



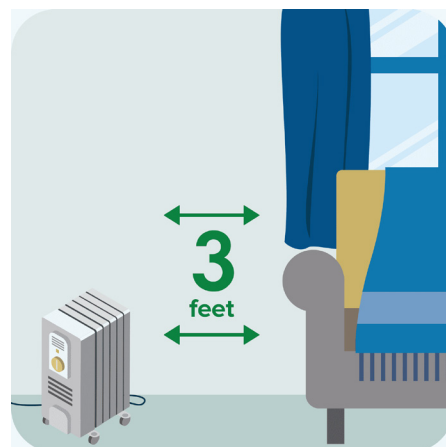
Warning: Do not use propane heaters, barbecues, or gas-powered generators to heat your unit. They give off deadly carbon monoxide gas, which you cannot see or smell. Do not use your stove to heat your unit, as this is a fire hazard.

Go to torontohousing.ca/safe_winter for more winter safety tips.

Portable heaters (space heaters)

If you have written permission from Toronto Community Housing to use a portable space heater, make sure it has a Canadian Standards Association (CSA) label.

Keep all heaters at least one metre (three feet) away from anything that can burn, such as paper, drapes, loose clothes, furniture, bedding, and wallpaper. Keep children and pets well away from heaters at all times.



Never place clothes or bedding on a heater to dry when it is in use, as these items can easily catch fire.

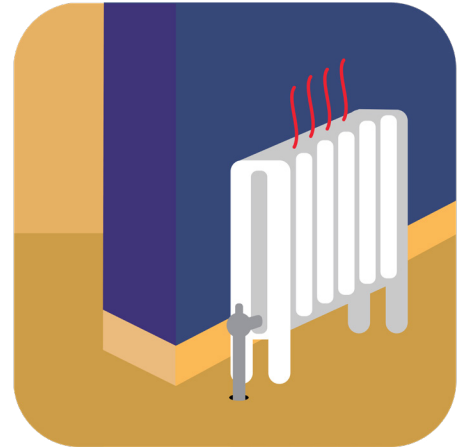
Do not leave heaters on when you go out of the house or go to bed.

Radiators

Extreme cold weather can make your radiators burst. This can cause flooding and damage for you and your neighbours. If your radiator bursts, call [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500) right away.

Tips to prevent burst radiators

- Keep your windows closed to prevent cold air getting inside. Cold air can freeze water inside a radiator, and that makes it burst.
- Make sure your radiator is not colder at the top than the bottom. This happens when there is trapped air. Talk to site staff or the Client Care Centre. They will arrange to have the trapped air released as soon as possible.
- Make sure your furniture is at least 15 cm (about six inches) away from the radiator. If your radiator is blocked by furniture or heavy curtains, warm air will not spread through your unit as it should.
- Never adjust the radiator by yourself unless it is a recently upgraded model. If your unit is too cold or too warm, talk to site staff or call the Client Care Centre at [416-981-5500](tel:416-981-5500).



Freezing rain, ice and snow

Freezing rain and powerful winds result in power outages when trees fall on power lines. See [page 15](#) for tips on what to do during a power outage.

Stay informed

Watch and listen to local media for weather reports, updates on road or transit closures, and other emergency messages. Toronto Community Housing staff will also be in touch with you if winter weather has affected your building. If you have noticed any damage in your building due to weather-related incidents, please contact TCHC staff.



Stay inside

Freezing rain and ice build-up can make walkways, sidewalks, and roads slippery in seconds. If you can, stay inside until sidewalks and roads have been salted and cleared.

Staff will remove snow and ice within 12 hours of a snowfall. We will also put down salt or sand on walkways, driveways, outdoor stairwells, and outdoor parking areas as needed. Contact the Client Care Centre to report any slippery or icy areas on your building property.

Wind safety

Extreme weather can bring high winds. Secure loose items on your balcony or in your yard. If your items are tossed around by the wind, they can injure you and your neighbours.



Halloween safety

Trick or treating can be fun, but it can also be dangerous. If you choose to participate in Halloween activities, a parent or another responsible adult should always be with young children.

Your children should carry a cell phone (if they have access to one). All tenants and family members are encouraged to report any suspicious or illegal activity to police.



Go to torontopolice.on.ca/safetyzone for more Halloween safety tips, such as safe costumes and stranger danger.

Fun alternatives to trick or treating

Instead of going door to door, look for a places like community centres that host special events for Halloween. Or host your own event for your kids and their friends.

Need a translated copy?

This document contains important information for Toronto Community Housing tenants. If you would like a copy of the guide, call **416-981-5500**.

የተተረጎሙ ቅጂዎችን በመጠየቅ ለማግኘት ይቻላል።
እባካቸው ደውሉልን 416-981-5500.

요청하시면 한국어로 번역된 사본을 구하실 수 있습니다.
416-981-5500 으로 전화 주십시오.

تتوفر النسخ المترجمة عند الطلب.
يرجى الاتصال على الرقم ٤١٦-٩٨١-٥٥٠٠

Przetłumaczone kopie dostępne są na prośbę.
Prosimy zadzwonić 416-981-5500.

ভাষান্তরিত প্রতিলিপিগুলি অনুরোধ করলে পাওয়া যাবে।
৪১৬-৯৮১-৫৫০০ নাম্বারে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Cópias traduzidas estão disponíveis mediante pedido. É favor telefonar para 416-981-5500.

要求索取翻译本可致电 416-981-5500.

Переведенные экземпляры предлагаются по запросам. Звоните, пожалуйста, 416-981-5500.

نسخه ترجمه شده در صورت درخواست در اختیار شما قرار می گیرد.
لطفاً به شماره 416-981-5500 تلفن بزنید.

Waxaa la heli karaa koobiyo turjuman haddii la codsado. Fadlan wac 416-981-5500.

Des copies traduites sont disponibles sur demande. Veuillez téléphoner au 416-981-5500.

Ejemplares traducidos se encuentran disponibles a solicitud. Favor de llamar al 416-981-5500.

Μεταφρασμένα αντίγραφα είναι διαθέσιμα κατόπιν αιτήσεως. Παρακαλώ καλέστε 416-981-5500.

மொழி பெயர்க்கப் பட்ட பிரதிகள் இருக்கின்றன. பெற விரும்புவோர் தயவுசெய்து 416-981-5500 ஐ அழையுங்கள்

વિનંતી કરવાથી અનુવાદિત કોપી મળી શકશે.
મહેરબાની કરીને ૪૧૬-૯૮૧-૫૫૦૦ પર ફોન કરો.


Wo sre a, wo nsa beka nea y'akyere aseε no bi.
Yeεre se fre 416-981-5500.

Traduzioni di copie sono disponibili su richiesta.
Siete pregati di telefonare al 416-981-5500.

Có sẵn bản dịch nếu quý vị cần.
Xin gọi số 416-981-5500

You can also get translated copies of the Safety Guide at
torontohousing.ca/safetyguide.



 **Call 416-981-5500 to request
this safety guide in an alternate
language or format.**

