



Handbook for Tenants of The County Of Dufferin



Dufferin Community Services

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
WELCOME!	4
HOUSING SERVICES OFFICE	4
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY	4
HISTORY	5
YOUR COMMUNITY	6
YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBOURS	6
DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT	6
GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY	6
COMMON ROOMS	7
BULLETIN BOARDS	7
YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME	8
MOVING IN	8
AFTER YOU MOVE-IN	8
KEYS AND LOCKS	8
INSURANCE	9
SMOKING	9
PARKING	9
PETS	10
DECORATING YOUR HOME	11
WALLPAPER	11
PAINTING	11
CARPET	12
APPLIANCES	12
FRIDGES AND STOVES	12
DISHWASHERS	12
LAUNDRY	12
WATER SOFTENERS	12
FREEZERS	12
GARBAGE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING	13
PEST CONTROL	13
UNIT INTERIORS AND BUILDING SYSTEMS	13
CEILING FANS/AIR CONDITIONERS	13
WINDOW SCREENS	13
WINDOWS	14
WINDOW COVERINGS	14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BALCONIES.....	14
CABINETS.....	14
WALL AND CEILING HANGINGS.....	15
HEATING	15
HOT WATER.....	15
PHONES.....	15
PHONE SERVICES FROM PROVIDERS OTHER THAN BELL CANADA	15
TELEVISION SERVICES	16
INTERNET SERVICES.....	16
ELEVATORS	16
ACCESSIBILITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS.....	17
UNIT EXTERIORS	17
PATIOS AND YARDS	17
FENCES	17
SIGNS.....	17
PROBLEMS IN COMMON AREAS OF THE BUILDING	17
MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS	18
GENERAL	18
MAINTENANCE EMERGENCIES.....	18
MINIMIZING DAMAGE	18
PROBLEMS WITH REPAIRS.....	19
NORMAL WEAR VERSUS DAMAGE	19
COMMON MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS.....	19
ENERGY CONSERVATION.....	20
WATER CONSERVATION	20
TENANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	22
YOUR RENT.....	22
YOUR LEASE	23
TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER UNIT.....	24
ABSENCE FROM YOUR UNIT.....	24
MAKING A COMPLAINT	24
VISITORS.....	24
EVICTION	25
MOVING OUT	27
MOVING OUT PROCEDURES.....	27
MOVE OUT PROCESS	27
SAFETY AND SECURITY.....	28

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CREATING A SAFE COMMUNITY	28
ELECTRICITY AND WATER	28
FIRE SAFETY	28
SMOKE ALARMS.....	29
IN CASE OF FIRE.....	30
QUESTIONS, COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS.....	30
COMMON PHONE NUMBERS.....	31



INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Welcome!

Welcome to your new home. We hope that this handbook will serve as a useful source of information for you.

Dufferin County Housing Services provides housing within the towns of Orangeville and Shelburne, and the village of Grand Valley. Residents of the County's buildings are neighbours; they often lend a hand to help one another out.

The staff of Dufferin County Housing Services plays a role in the community too. They know that good communication is one of the most important skills of all. Please do not hesitate to contact the staff about issues affecting your home and community.

Housing Services Office

The Dufferin County Housing Services Office is located with The County of Dufferin Community Services Office at 30 Centre St., Orangeville, L9W 2X1. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, except holidays. The telephone number is **519-941-6991**. This is not a long distance call from Orangeville, Shelburne or Grand Valley. The office is equipped with voice messaging. If your Community Services Worker is not available, please leave a message and they will return your call as soon as they can.

The Program Manager – Housing, Program Supervisor - Housing, Community Services Workers and Program Assistants comprise the staff of Dufferin County Housing Services. The County's Facilities Department manages the maintenance of the properties. The Community Services Workers often visit the buildings, and you are welcome to meet with them on site. It is also possible to meet with staff at the Community Services Office. If you wish to do this, please call ahead to make an appointment. Staff members are sometimes out of the office, so if you make an appointment, they will be sure to be there to meet with you.

In Case of Emergency

After hours, on weekends and holidays, the number for urgent maintenance calls is **519-941-8221**. An answering service will take calls for urgent maintenance requests. You should ensure that your phone number is recorded accurately by the answering service, so that Facilities staff can call you back to discuss the situation.

The number to call for all other emergencies at the building (including fires, medical problems, and suspicious persons) is 9-1-1.

INTRODUCTION

History

The Dufferin County Housing Authority was formed in late 1977. On January 1, 2001, the Authority became Dufferin County Housing Services, a division of Social Services of the County of Dufferin.

In May 2013, Dufferin County Housing Services moved with the Community Services Office to its present location at 30 Centre Street, Orangeville.

Dufferin County Housing Services manages, approximately 300 units for the County of Dufferin. There are affordable housing units, rent-gear-to-income units and market rent units in three communities of Dufferin County: Orangeville, Shelburne, and Grand Valley.

In addition, Dufferin County Housing Services administers rent supplements in the County and works with local housing providers.

Most of the Housing Services' units are located in small to medium-sized apartment buildings, plus eight semi-detached houses in Orangeville. Buildings range from 10 to 89 units in size, with the majority occupied by seniors.

YOUR COMMUNITY

Your Community

The following is some information that will help you settle into your new community. It is important that you read this booklet so that you will be familiar with the expectations and requirements for living here, as well as what to do if you have questions or if something goes wrong.

You and Your Neighbours

You have the right to enjoy your home. Establishing and keeping good relations with your neighbours can go a long way towards making the community one that all residents can enjoy. The following are some of the things that you can do to help establish good relations with your neighbours:

1. Be considerate when playing your television, stereo or radio.
2. Remember that you are responsible for your guests while they are visiting. Please let them know about parking and other regulations.
3. When outside of your home (including the hallways, lounge, patio and yard areas), please dress appropriately.
4. In general, treat others as you would like to be treated. If you do have problems with a neighbour, try to talk over the problem with the person. Try to see their side of the problem. See if you can find a solution that you both can live with. Solutions that you and the other person both agree on are often the ones that work the best. If talking with the person doesn't help, call your Community Services Worker. They'll do their best to help you and your neighbour come up with a workable solution.

Discrimination and Harassment

Discrimination or harassment hurts everyone. For information about what to do if you feel that you have been harassed or discriminated against, please contact your Community Services Worker.

Getting Involved In Your Community

There are many ways in which you may participate in your community. You can take part in social clubs or community events. You may wish to participate in discussions about preferences and needs about how your building is maintained, or about Housing Services' policies. Your contributions are welcome.

YOUR COMMUNITY

Tenant meetings are held at least annually in your building. Please come and participate and bring your suggestions.

Social committees have been organized in some buildings. These groups are made up of tenants who plan and organize programs and activities. A wide range of events is often planned, including card games, trips, and dinners.

Every tenant has the right to join and participate in the social committee in the building. The committees and clubs welcome new ideas and assistance. Please give some thought to taking part in one. If your building does not have a committee or club, consider starting one.

Common Rooms

Many buildings have common room space for the comfort and enjoyment of all the tenants. Usually, the tenants in the building make decisions about the common room (such as when it is open). In some buildings, the social club handles arrangements for activities to avoid conflicts. **As a tenant, you are most welcome to use the common spaces, even if you do not participate in a building's social club or committee.**

Tenant groups may also arrange for organized activities (such as card games or movies) to take place in a common room. Notices about these activities are usually posted on the bulletin board of the building. Celebrations are welcome when all residents are notified and permitted to attend. Private parties may not be held in common rooms.

Since common rooms are usually located near tenant apartments, please be considerate of others. Sounds travel and can be upsetting to others. **Pets, smoking and consumption of alcohol in common areas are not permitted.**

Bulletin Boards

Several bulletin boards have been installed around your building for tenant and County use. Your Community Services Worker will place notices of various events scheduled at your building, along with information regarding your tenancy and community and government services available for tenants. Tenants may also post notices on these boards regarding events planned for the building.

Advertising by outside sources is not permitted on these boards. Should you have any questions or concerns about the use of these boards, please contact your Community Services Worker.

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

You and Your New Home

Moving In

Your unit was inspected before you moved in to ensure all repairs have been completed. Any damage and repairs that were required have been recorded and all necessary work orders issued. However, it is possible that we may have overlooked something, so please complete the Tenant Move-In Inspection form given to you and return it to your Community Services Worker within 14 days after you move in.

After You Move-In

- Find all the shut off valves for the water lines (especially the shut-off valves in the bathroom and near the toilet). If you cannot find them, contact your Community Services Worker for help.
- Locate the main water shut-off for your unit.
- Learn how to operate your unit's climate control features.
- Locate the main electrical shut-off.
- Complete your move-in checklist and return it to your Community Services Worker within two weeks of move-in.

Keys and Locks

You have received two sets of keys when you signed your lease. As verification that you received these keys, you will be required to sign the Housing Key Control Form. If you wish to have someone outside your household keep a set of keys, please notify your Community Services Worker, who will document this person's name and telephone number on your Housing Key Control Form. For security reasons, please do not have additional keys made. All keys must be returned when you move out.

Lost or Additional Keys

Replacement/additional keys must be obtained through the Housing Services office because these keys can only be duplicated by Dufferin Housing Services. There is a cost for replacement/additional keys.

Lock Changes

If you wish, you may arrange with your Community Services Worker to have your lock changed. A fee may be charged when you request a lock change.

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

Insurance

The County of Dufferin, as the Landlord, strongly recommends that all tenants obtain and keep in force content and liability insurance. The contents coverage must pertain to all of a tenant's possessions, so if a tenant is keeping possessions outside of their apartment (e.g., scooter sheds, storage cages), they should ensure that their insurance extends to cover those items, as well as items in their apartment.

Smoking

The County of Dufferin is committed to promoting a healthy community with safe living and working environments. All County of Dufferin owned buildings are smoke free.

Tenants are not permitted to smoke in their units. Smoking is prohibited in common areas of the building, including common terraces and common lounges.

Smoking is only permitted outdoors at a distance of five (5) metres or more away from windows, entrances including the canopy, or exits to the building.

Parking

Following the guidelines outlined below will make parking easier for everyone.

1. A vehicle parked on site must be road worthy, currently licensed and owned by the resident.
 - All vehicles that are not licensed or are not road worthy will be towed at the owner's expense.
 - You will be required to provide vehicle information on the Parking Lot Space Assignment form.
2. Only one (1) vehicle per unit may be parked on the premises. If you require a second parking spot, please talk to your Community Services Worker.
3. A tenant requesting a designated accessible parking space must provide their Accessible Parking Permit number to their Community Services Worker, and may be assigned a designated accessible parking space if one is available at the building.
4. Visitors must park in the designated space (if provided) or on the street where permitted. **They must not use parking areas designated for residents.**
5. Vehicles shall never be parked in fire route areas.
6. Do not leave vehicles running, or lights or radios on.
7. The County of Dufferin shall clear the snow from the parking lot driveway only, and will not clear snow from between vehicles. Should a thorough clear-out of the entire lot be required due to snow accumulation, tenants will be notified of the clear-out time and requirements for removing vehicles from the lot.

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

Pets

Pets can be wonderful company, a great reason to get some exercise and an easy way for neighbours to connect. They can also become a source of conflict. Common concerns include unleashed dogs, barking, damage to buildings and owners not picking up after their pets. It is helpful to remember that people have different comfort levels with animals. Not everyone feels safe or comfortable around them.

Tenants with pets must complete a Pet Registration form and give it to their Community Services Worker. Information about pets is important when repair work or an inspection needs to be done in an apartment.

If you do not have a pet when you move in and wish to adopt one into your household, or if you wish to add an additional pet to your household, **before you bring it home**, you must notify your Community Services Worker and complete a Pet Registration form.

You will be required to provide the name and phone number of a contact person who will assume responsibility for the pet if you are unable to care for it due to an emergency. This person will sign the Pet Registration form, verifying that they will assume this responsibility when contacted by the Housing Services office.

Tenants are responsible for knowing and obeying the municipal by-laws about pets where they live. These by-laws may explain animals that cannot be kept in your home (for example, poisonous snakes or spiders), licensing requirements, caring for your pet, etc. People can be fined for not obeying a by-law. For more information about the by-laws or to report animal welfare concerns, call your local town office for more information.

Important reminders:

- Keep your pet on a leash at all times when outside of your unit.
- Clean up after your pet immediately. **Do not** flush kitty litter down the toilet.
- Be considerate of others regarding noise.
- Do not take your pet into your building laundry room or lounge. Other residents may be allergic to animals or frightened by them.
- Do not wash pet blankets/pillows/toys in the building's laundry.

Pet by-laws and rules are intended to help people and animals live safely and comfortably together. If a conflict has arisen, please ask your neighbour if they will problem-solve with you.

Please remind visitors to keep their pets at home (service dogs are permitted).

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

Decorating Your Home

You are encouraged to make your apartment your home. However, your home must be returned to County standards when you move out and you may be responsible for any costs associated with this. The guidelines and suggestions on the following pages will help you to avoid problems and repair charges.

Wallpaper

Use dry-strippable wallpaper and wallpaper borders, and only apply these to walls that have been pre-treated for wallpaper application. **Do not** use adhesive vinyl (Mactac, Contact Paper, etc.) as it damages the walls when it is removed. Before you move out, you must remove all wallpaper and borders and remove any wallpaper glue left behind. The easiest way is to wash the walls. Wallpaper that is left on the walls will be removed by our contractors and the full cost of this may be charged back to you.

Painting

You may repaint or wallpaper your unit at your own expense, under the following conditions (Note: exterior surfaces cannot be painted, stained or altered in any way):

- **Paint Colours to Use**

Only use white or pale colours that can be painted over with only one coat of the original neutral colour. If darker colours are used, be prepared to pay the extra costs for the additional paint and labour charged by our contractors after you move-out.

Ceilings should be white with no tint.

- **Type of Paint to Use**

- Acrylic Latex paint for the walls and ceilings.
- Latex Semi-gloss paint for ceilings, walls, doors and trim in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Ceilings in all other rooms must be painted with a flat latex paint.
- Latex Semi-gloss paint is recommended for walls in all other rooms but a washable flat paint is also acceptable.

After You Paint

Avoid the following for at least one month after painting:

- Using any cleaning solvents on any painted areas. (Even mild cleaners such as hand or dish soap can cause paint to peel or streak).
- Rubbing anything up against the walls as the paint may mark or peel.
- Putting up wallpaper or borders on painted walls.

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

Carpet

The installation of wall-to-wall carpeting in apartments is prohibited. Tenants may install area rugs only in such a way as not to cause damage to the original flooring. Doors have been installed to suit the original flooring, and in accordance with building and fire codes, and may not clear some carpet installations. **DO NOT CUT THE DOORS.**

Appliances

Fridges and Stoves

The Tenant may not replace the appliances provided with their own appliances.

If an appliance does not work:

- Make sure it is plugged in.
- Make sure the circuit breaker has not tripped.
- If the problem persists, please contact your Community Services Worker.

Dishwashers

Dishwashers are not permitted.

Laundry

Washers and dryers **may not** be installed in apartment units, as they could cause flooding and other plumbing problems.

Coin Laundry equipment is available. The equipment is for tenant's use only. Please leave the washer and dryer clean after your laundry is finished and collect your laundry as soon as the cycle is complete. If you have difficulties with the equipment, please contact the laundry service provider directly, as posted in your laundry room.

Water Softeners

Residents are not permitted to install water softeners in their units. A water softener has been installed for all water entering the building.

Freezers

Small chest freezers may be used by tenants, provided that they are installed in a location outside of closets/storage rooms, where they can be plugged in without the use of extension cords. The Ontario Electrical Safety Code states that appliances are not permitted in an enclosed space (e.g., closet or storage area).

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

Garbage Disposal and Recycling

Please refer to the handout regarding waste management at your building for procedures specific to your building.

Pest Control

Tenants are responsible for preventing infestations in their units. Good housekeeping can help, and ensuring that window screens are properly maintained is also important. Please contact the Housing Services office if you are experiencing problems with pests so that the problem can be discussed. Staff can advise tenants on the appropriate action before it escalates.

Rodents will try to find a warm place in the fall. Do not leave doors open unless there is a screen in place. If rodents should get into your unit, traps or glue boards are available at the local hardware store (we do not recommend using poison). Please notify the Housing Services office of any pest in your unit.

Unit Interiors and Building Systems

Ceiling Fans/Air Conditioners

Tenants are not permitted to install ceiling fans. Apartment air conditioners are permitted, and it is recommended that floor units be used instead of window units. For further details, please contact your Community Services Worker.

Window Screens

All windows that can be opened are provided with insect screens. While the Facilities department will replace screen material worn by age, tenants are responsible for replacing any screening material that is torn or damaged by themselves, their guests, or their pets.

Window screens allow air in and keep bugs out. However, they do not have any strength and will not prevent people from falling out of a window. Please do not use the screens as a security device.

Please **do not throw out screen frames, even if the screen is ripped.** It is easy to replace the screen material. The frames, however, are made to fit the window and cannot be easily replaced. The cost for repairing damaged or replacing missing frames may be charged to the tenant.

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

Windows

Tenants are not permitted to remove any part of their window, except to clean as required, and parts must be put back immediately. If you find a problem with your window/patio door, please request repair through the Maintenance Request system.

We often receive complaints about condensation on windows. Most of the time condensation on windows is caused by high humidity within the home, often caused by plants, pets, standing water (sink or bathtub left full of water), showers, cooking, and even breathing. Humidity in the air will cause water droplets (condensation) to form on the window surface. Excessive condensation on the windows can cause serious problems such as wall damage or mould growth. Please wipe up any water that appears on your windows to prevent mould and mildew.

To avoid condensation, do the following:

- Open drapes and blinds during the day, especially in winter months.
- Use exhaust fans in the bathroom when showering or bathing and leave on for about 20 minutes afterwards.
- Use kitchen fans when cooking and leave on for about 20 minutes afterwards.
- Do not leave your sink or tub full of water.
- Do not use a room humidifier.

Window Coverings

If you want to use drapery rods or window covering devices, please install them properly. When you move out, you must repair any damage caused by your window covering installation. If you do not complete the repair, our contractors will repair the damage and the full cost of this may be charged back to you.

Balconies

Feel free to put out patio furniture, as long as items do not extend over the railing of the balcony. Do not put up a clothesline or hang out laundry. Balconies may not be used for storage – you will be asked to remove items being stored on your balcony. Barbecuing is prohibited by fire regulations. The installation of Satellite Dishes or antennae of any kind on County property is also prohibited.

Cabinets

You are **not** permitted to paint the kitchen or bathroom cabinets, and under **no** circumstances may you put nails, hooks or screws on either the outside or inside of the cabinets.

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

You may hang things from the inside of the cabinets, providing you do not use screws or glue that would leave permanent marks. There are products available which allow you to hang things without marking the cabinets.

Wall and Ceiling Hangings

Please hang pictures with hooks that do not cause damage (there are many different types available). Any damage done to walls and ceilings as a result of hanging items improperly is the responsibility of the resident. Contact your Community Services Worker if you have any questions.

Heating

Familiarize yourself with your unit's thermostat and adjust the temperature of your unit to your comfort level. If you have any questions or concerns about your unit's system, please contact your Community Services Worker.

Hot Water

Should you experience a problem with the hot water in your unit, please contact your Community Services Worker.

Residents should be aware that while being without water is an emergency situation, **being without hot water is not considered an emergency.** Requests for hot water repairs will be responded to during normal business hours.

Phones

Apartments have phone jacks in the main room and bedrooms.

You must get written permission from your Community Services Worker to add additional phone jacks in the unit. Tenants who fail to obtain permission or follow the rules for installation may be charged for damages.

If the existing phone jacks are not working, please **contact your Community Services Worker and not Bell Canada.** The wiring in the units is the responsibility of the Landlord and not Bell Canada. Residents who contact Bell directly are responsible for any charges incurred and will not be reimbursed by the County of Dufferin. If your problem is determined to be something other than the phone jack, you will be advised of the situation and a recommendation on how to proceed will be given to you.

Phone Services from providers other than Bell Canada

Residents who choose to receive their phone service through a carrier other than Bell shall ensure that the service provider does not interfere with the function of their intercom system. Should the provider interfere with operation of the enterphone system, the resident would be expected to have the provider return to fix the problem or make

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

arrangements in their unit for additional phones/different types of phones to use for access to the intercom system, depending on the problem resulting from the provider's work. If the County of Dufferin is required to repair the phone system in the building as a result of an outside contractor permitted on site by a resident, the resident will be required to reimburse the County for the costs of the repairs.

Television Services

You are required to arrange for your own cable service. Satellite television service is not permitted.

All apartments have cable hook-ups in the main room and bedrooms. You must get written permission from your Community Services Worker before having additional cable outlets installed in the unit. You are responsible for all costs related to providing additional cable outlets. Residents who install their own wiring without permission could be held responsible for any damages due to the installation.

Internet Services

If you are interested in the internet, you can choose from several connection options. However, some residents have had problems when using **high-speed** telephone access in buildings with an enterphone system. If you are considering a high-speed telephone access connection make sure it is compatible with the telephone entry system in your building before you buy. This problem only exists with **high-speed** connections. Please talk to your Internet Service Provider before signing any connection agreements.

Rogers Connected for Success program is an option that may be available to you. Connected for Success provides low cost high-speed internet access to people living in rent-geared-to-income units. Please ask your Community Service Worker for details.

Elevators

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

- Don't hold doors open for long periods of time.
- If the elevator is damaged or not working, please call the Housing Services office immediately. If this happens after office hours, call the after-hours emergency number at (519) 941-8221.
- If the elevator stalls between floors, there is an intercom in the elevator. Press the intercom button, and wait for someone on the other end of the line to communicate with you. Stay calm. **Do not** try to exit the elevator before it returns to the floor level.
- If the elevator door is not closing, check for and remove any debris on the tracks.
- If you discover someone stuck in an elevator, wherever possible, try to maintain

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

verbal contact and provide assurance that help is on the way. **If you think medical attention is required, call 9-1-1.**

Accessibility and Special Needs

If you have basic accessibility requirements or special needs for equipment such as grab bars beyond those provided in your unit, please contact your Community Services Worker to discuss the situation.

Unit Exteriors

Most areas exterior to your unit are common areas. The exception is where your unit has a ground-floor patio (see below). It is your responsibility to help maintain a beautiful and safe community for all to enjoy.

Patios and Yards

If your unit has a ground-floor patio, you are welcome to plant flowers or vegetable gardens. If you have other landscaping ideas, please contact your Community Services Worker to discuss. Clotheslines are not permitted on patios. Patios and yards may not be used for storage – you will be asked to remove items being stored on your patio/yard.

Fences

You are not permitted to install a fence under any circumstance.

Signs

In accordance with your lease, you may not display any sign, advertisement or notice, in or about the Leased Premises. Should a bulletin board be provided by the County in the common areas of the Residential Complex, it shall be used by Tenants as prescribed by the Landlord.

Problems in Common Areas of the Building

If you notice a maintenance problem in any area of the building, please notify your Community Services Worker so that the problem can be addressed.

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

Maintenance and Repairs

General

If you have a maintenance request, contact the Maintenance Line at (519) 941-6991 ext. 2199. Leave a detailed message regarding your maintenance concern and if staff have permission to enter your unit if you are not home. The Community Services Worker will submit a work order on your behalf, and notify the Facilities Department of your requirements for access to your unit. The Facilities Department will respond as quickly as possible. Please keep in mind that some things are beyond our control, particularly if a contractor must be hired, or if the request is reported at a particularly busy time. Once you have made a request for repair, please allow 2-3 days before calling again about a non-emergency repair.

If lives are threatened or when there is potential for substantial damage to the building or unit, staff are allowed to enter your unit without notice.

Contractors and staff are not able to set up appointments outside of normal work hours. Please make sure you make arrangements to have someone let the contractor in to complete the work.

If a contractor makes arrangements with you to complete the work and no one is home at the time of the appointment, the cost of that service call may be charged back to you.

Maintenance staff assigned to complete the repair will depend on the type of repair required. All staff and contractors who are assigned work in units are fully qualified to carry out such repairs. If you have questions about this, contact your Community Services Worker for clarification.

Maintenance Emergencies

An emergency is defined as a situation that, if left unattended, will cause more damage. Burst pipes, flooding, no heat in winter, are examples of emergencies. A dripping tap is **not** considered an emergency. If you need an Emergency Repair after office hours, call **519-941-8221**. If the emergency develops during normal office hours, please call the office and press "0" and advise the attendant that you have a maintenance emergency and have them transfer you to another Housing Services staff member.

For life safety emergencies, dial **9-1-1**. In case of fire, leave the area and pull the fire alarm on your way out of the building. Follow the procedures stated in the information sheet provided in your move in package.

Minimizing Damage

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

There are several simple precautions you can take to reduce or prevent damage and avoid unpleasant clean-up. For example, to minimize damage from an overflowing toilet, close the shut-off valve to the toilet tank. Clogged sinks can often be prevented by using a sink strainer (available in hardware stores) to keep hair and food from blocking the drain.

Problems With Repairs

Sometimes, the repair does not solve the problem. In this case, please contact the Maintenance Line as soon as you notice the problem.

Normal Wear versus Damage

When used, things eventually wear out. When used improperly, they wear out faster or break more often. The Facilities Department has a set of guidelines which estimate the average life of an item. These guidelines are used to plan for replacements, as well as, to indicate whether an item is wearing out much faster than it should. If wear or breakdown is found to be related to misuse, the tenant may be charged with the cost of repair or replacement.

In general, tenants are responsible for the cost of broken screens, windows and light fixtures as well as willful damage to walls, floors and doors. Charges will be based on actual repair costs. Adjustments will be made to reflect normal wear and tear.

Common Maintenance Problems

Some common maintenance problems can be addressed without Facilities staff involvement. Please consider the following information when faced with a problem in your unit:

- Electrical Problem – please contact the Maintenance Line during business hours if the problem is not an emergency. Follow emergency reporting procedures only if the situation is placing yourself or someone in danger, or will cause further damage if not addressed quickly.
- Drain Blocked – attempt to clear the blockage with household drain cleaner or a plunger. Tenants are required to use their own plunger and drain opening supplies. If the problem persists, please request assistance by contacting the Maintenance Line.
 - Note: to decrease the chance of a clog occurring, do not pour fats or oils down the drain.
- Heat problems – check the status of your thermostat and adjust if needed. Check the electrical breaker to ensure that the breakers are in the “ON” position. If the problem persists, contact the Maintenance Line.

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

- Lights not working – if the light is out in a light fixture installed by the County, please call the Maintenance Line. Replacement of the light bulb may be your responsibility.
- Dripping Taps – call the Maintenance Line.
- Stove/Refrigerator not working – call the Maintenance Line and provide as much detail about the problem as possible.

If you are unsure how to address a problem, contact your Community Services Worker.

Energy Conservation

A few tips to reduce energy demand:

- Vacuum your heating ducts
- Clean the dryer lint trap after each load (this also reduces the risk of fire)
- Use cold water instead of hot when possible
- Clean refrigerator coils regularly
- Use energy efficient light bulbs
- Use window shades and blinds to block heat, particularly if you have windows that receive direct sunlight. Close windows during the day. When it cools down outside, open the windows and let the hot air out and the cool air in
- Turn off lights when not in use
- Keep your heat at a comfortable level by adjusting the thermostat in your unit
- Turn off non-essential appliances in your unit (e.g., TV, stereo) when not in use
- Notify your Community Services Worker of repairs that are needed in a timely manner

Water Conservation

A few tips to reduce your water consumption:

- **Report all leaks so they can be repaired**
 - Find any leaky pipes or faucets. In addition to being annoying, they waste significant amounts of water and energy
 - Make sure you don't have running or leaky toilets – they can waste as much as 200 litres of water every day
 - toilet leaks can be detected by adding a few drops of food colouring to the water in the toilet tank – if the coloured water appears in the bowl, the toilet is leaking and should be repaired

YOU AND YOUR NEW HOME

- **In the kitchen**

- don't thaw frozen foods under running water – defrost them in a microwave or refrigerator
- don't rinse dishes under the tap – use some water in a bowl or in the sink
- don't run the tap for cold drinking water – use ice cubes or keep a jug of water in the refrigerator

- **In the bathroom**

- don't let the water run while brushing your teeth
- shower for five minutes instead of 10 – it will save about 40 litres of water

- **Around the house/building**

- wash only full loads of laundry
- save clothes that need hand washing to do all at once
- report water leaks observed in public areas (e.g., in common room, exterior faucets)

TENANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Tenant Rights and Responsibilities

Your Rent

The Amount You Pay

Geared-to-income rent is calculated as a percentage of your income. It is not based on the size of your unit or the number of bedrooms you have. An adjustment is made for certain services (e.g. electricity, gas) to determine your final rent charge. Your income is reviewed each year, or whenever it changes. Your Community Services Worker will be pleased to discuss with you how your rent is calculated.

The rest of your rent is paid for by the County of Dufferin through a “subsidy.” To stay eligible for this subsidy, you are required to continue to report income changes, notify your Community Services Worker if the number of people in your unit changes, and complete all forms required by your Community Services Worker.

Affordable rent is set at a below average market rent level and does not fluctuate with changes to household income. It is based on the size of unit you have. You are still required to notify your Community Services Worker if the number of people in your unit changes, and updates are required to show ongoing tenant insurance.

If Your Income Changes

If your monthly income changes, your rent may also change. Therefore, you are required to contact your Community Services Worker with details (e.g., pay stubs, bank statements, government letters, etc.) on any change in income within 30 days of the change.

Annual Review

Each year, before your lease anniversary, you will receive a Household Composition, Income and Asset Review package to fill out (just as you completed when you were offered your unit). You must complete this package and send it, along with the required documentation, to your Community Services Worker.

The types of documents that you are required to submit include your complete Income Tax Return papers (including T4s, T5s, the filed return, and the Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency), pay stubs for employment earnings, drug card and benefits stub from social assistance payments, etc. Your Community Services Worker can explain what is required.

Your rent is calculated using the information that you provide. A letter, called a “Notice of Rent Review,” is then sent out to you stating your new rent. If you have questions about the letter, please call your Community Services Worker.

TENANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Many tenants ask a trusted family member or friend to help them complete their income package. If you have difficulty completing the income package, and do not have a family member or friend upon whom you can call, please contact your Community Services Worker. Please do not delay completing the forms.

Paying Your Rent

Rent is due on the first day of each month.

Please consider paying your rent by automatic bank withdrawal. Over 90% of our tenants pay this way. Contact your Community Services Worker to be set up on our Pre-authorized Payment Plan. Your Community Services Worker can also answer any questions or concerns that you may have about this method of rent payment. For your convenience, we also accept cash or cheque at the Community Services Office.

The County Of Dufferin has a policy regarding payments returned due to insufficient funds. If the bank returns your rent payment, regardless of the type of payment made, you will be required to pay an administrative fee (currently \$20.00 per returned item) along with your late rent payment.

If You Can't Pay, Let Us Know

If you are having difficulty paying your rent, please contact your Community Services Worker to make payment arrangements. We want to help, but we can't if you don't let us know you have a problem.

Your Lease

Your lease is a legal document. It covers your rights and responsibilities. Please read it carefully and keep it handy. This handbook is not intended to replace your lease.

As a tenant, you have the right to:

- A safe place in which to live.
- Enjoy your home without undue interference from others.
- Take part in the activities of your community.

As a tenant, you have the responsibility to:

- Arrange for insurance coverage for your possessions.
- Follow the guidelines in your lease.
- Be a good neighbour - treat others as you would like to be treated.

TENANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Transferring To Another Unit

As a tenant of the County of Dufferin, we hope that you are able to live in your unit comfortably for as long as you wish. However, if you wish to move to another County-owned property, please contact your Community Services Worker to discuss the current Internal Transfer Request process.

If you want to transfer to another housing provider or to a provider outside of the County of Dufferin, this is called an external transfer. In this case, you must apply through the Centralized Waiting List of the applicable service area.

The only criteria for an external transfer is that you must meet all of the criteria for Rent-Geared-To-Income Subsidy Assistance as set out in the *Housing Services Act*, or the criteria for Affordable Housing of that area.

Contact your Community Services Worker for more information.

Absence From Your Unit

Tenants receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance may not be absent from their unit longer than 60 consecutive days, except in cases of medical need. If a tenant is absent for more than 90 days in a year, their eligibility for assistance may also be reviewed.

If you are away from your unit, you will need to arrange for someone to care for your home, take your pet, manage your mail, and move your car if needed. It is your responsibility to ensure that undue damage does not happen as a result of your being away. Please check your insurance policy coverage.

Making a Complaint

A Tenant Complaint Form is to be completed when you feel that there has been interference to your reasonable enjoyment of your home. If your safety is threatened, call your local Police Service, or 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency.

If you have an issue to report, please obtain a form from your Community Services Worker, and submit the signed, completed form to your Community Services Worker.

Visitors

You are welcome to have visitors. You must advise the Housing Services Office if your visitor will be staying two weeks or more. If a tenant has a guest staying without prior notification and approval for longer than two weeks, they may be subject to cancellation

TENANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

of their rent-gear-to-income subsidy and/or eviction proceedings for violation of their lease. Please be advised, however, of the following:

- Visitors may only park in spaces designated for visitors, if such spaces are provided at your building. Visitors may not park in tenant spaces at any time. Parking on the street, where permitted, may be another option. Check your local municipality's by-law for overnight street parking, as this may vary from season to season.
- You must advise your Community Services Worker if your overnight guest will require a visitor parking space (where available), **prior to their arrival.**
- Visitors may not bring pets (service dogs are permitted).

As well, please be aware that:

- You are responsible for your guests while they are visiting. You may also be responsible for any injury your guest might experience, or damage they may cause.
- Visitors may not stay in your unit when you are out of town.
- You may not sublet your unit.

Eviction

Eviction is always a last resort. Our goal is to help you stay in your home. If you have a problem paying rent, contact your Community Services Worker right away and we will work with you to find a solution.

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

You may be evicted if you:

- Do not pay your rent.
- Often pay your rent late.
- Have more people living in the unit than health, safety or housing standards allow.

You may be evicted if you or your guests:

- Cause serious damage to your unit or the building.
- Make noise or act in a way that seriously bothers other residents or the landlord.
- Threaten the safety of another resident.
- Are charged with breaking the law while on the Landlord's property.

TENANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Your move-in package contains the Landlord and Tenant Board's (LTB) "Information for New Tenants." If you would like more information on your rights and responsibilities, you can refer to the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) website at: www.ltb.gov.on.ca

The Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) is one of the eight tribunals that make up Social Justice Tribunals Ontario (SJTO).

MOVING OUT

Moving Out

Moving Out Procedures

When you decide to move out, you must give us **two lease months' written notice**. The Notice must be effective on the last day of a month. For example, if you want to move on June 30th, you must provide written notice no later than May 1st. If you do not give proper notice, you may be responsible for additional rent. When giving notice, you must complete Form N9 – “Tenant’s Notice to Terminate the Tenancy” – which you may obtain from your Community Services Worker or online from the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) website, www.ltb.gov.on.ca .

Please note that an exception will be granted by the County of Dufferin should you move out of your unit to live in a Long-Term Care facility. If you are moving into a facility that meets the definition of a Long-Term Care facility, you will be required to provide only one lease month’s notice before the end of the month in which you are moving. Proof of admission to long-term care will be required.

When a vacancy occurs as a result of the death of the sole tenant, the tenancy is terminated 30 days after the death of the tenant. The executor of the tenant’s estate is required to contact the Housing Services office to make arrangements for the removal of the tenant’s property and turnover of the unit for the next tenant.

Move Out Process

The Housing Services office will complete a “pre-move-out” inspection with you after you have given written notice. This inspection covers the same items as the “move in checklist”. Preparations for the next tenant will be based on this inspection, as well as the determination of any tenant charges resulting from damages to the unit.

The Housing Services office will be offering your unit to a new tenant before you have vacated your unit. They will require access to your unit for showings and will make arrangements with you for these showings, in accordance with your lease and the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

In general, you are required to return your home to a move-in condition. This means removing all wallpaper, carpet and window coverings, and repairing any damage that occurred while you rented your unit. You are responsible for the cost of any repairs to the unit beyond the “wear and tear” that occurs with normal use. As well, you are responsible for properly disposing of unwanted items and garbage when you move. Make sure to return all keys to your Community Services Worker, or designate, as soon as you move out of your unit, and sign off on your Key Control form to indicate that you have returned all keys provided to you during your tenancy.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and Security

Creating a Safe Community

It doesn't take a great deal of effort to make your community a safer place to live. As with most things, a few precautions can go a long way.

1. If you are planning to be away for a few days please notify a friend. In the event of an emergency (fire, evacuation, etc.), knowing that you're not there can save precious minutes. It's also a good idea to ask that person to take in any flyers or packages that may be delivered while you're away.
2. Do not automatically open the main controlled entry door when your intercom buzzes. Ask the caller to identify themselves. If it is not your visitor, do not allow them into the building.
3. Do not leave your unit unlocked, even if you are at home.
4. Do not prop open your apartment door into the main corridor. Do not prop open the main fire exit doors either.
5. Do not remove door closures.
6. Get to know your neighbours and work together to make your building a safe and secure community.

Electricity and Water

Electric appliances and water can be a deadly combination. If an appliance falls into a sink or tub of water, or if you touch an appliance with wet hands or while standing in water, you risk severe electric shock and possibly death.

- Never use any electric appliances— radios, TV's, hair dryers – near sinks, toilets or bathtubs.
- Always dry your hands before touching electric appliances.

Fire Safety

Practice Fire Prevention

You can reduce your risk of fire by taking the following basic precautions:

1. Ensure that all electrical devices are Canadian Standards Association (CSA) approved.
2. Attend fire safety sessions held each year with your local fire department. Please watch your bulletin board or contact your Community Services Worker for more information.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

3. Turn off appliances when you've finished cooking.
4. Check appliance cords for broken or frayed spots and contact a repair shop if they need repair. If the appliance came with your apartment, call your Community Services Worker to discuss.
5. **Do not** leave pots of grease, etc. on the stove unattended. They can quickly overheat and cause a fire. If a grease fire does start, **do not try to put it out with water or flour - these will cause the fire to spread.** To put the fire out, you can slide a cookie sheet or put the lid over the pot and turn the burner off.
6. **Do not** smoke in bed.
7. **Do not** prop fire doors open in apartment complexes.
8. If a circuit breaker trips repeatedly, or for no apparent reason, call your Community Services Worker to have the problem addressed.

Smoke Alarms

All units have an internal smoke alarm or multiple smoke alarms in the case of multi-floor units. The smoke alarms are hard wired to the building's electrical system and have no battery to change.

Each year, many Canadians are killed by fires. Many more are killed by the smoke, long before the fire reaches them. Please keep yourself safe by following the tips below:

1. Make sure that your smoke alarm is working.
 - a. Check it monthly to make sure that the light is on, indicating that it is working. You should be able to see the light easily.
 - b. Test each smoke alarm by pressing the test button.
2. If the smoke alarm is not working, contact your Community Services Worker.
3. NEVER disconnect or tamper with a smoke alarm.
 - a. It is against the law to tamper with or disconnect a smoke alarm, as per Ontario Fire Code Division B 6.3.3.4.
 - b. Smoke alarms provide early warning of potential problems. Do not ignore the warning from a smoke alarm. If a smoke alarm is sounding for no apparent reason, contact the Housing Services Office or the after-hours service.
4. Cooperate with contractors when you are notified of an inspection date.
 - a. Smoke alarms are inspected and tested on an annual basis by qualified contractors and you are expected to cooperate with the contractors.
5. Clear the smoke caused by cigarettes or burning food by opening the window and fan fresh air away from the alarm.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- a. The alarm may sound if someone smokes directly under it, or if food is burning. Do not clear your apartment of smoke by opening your apartment door to the hallway, as the smoke may activate the building's alarm system.

In Case of Fire

Your apartment complex has an established fire safety plan. All tenants are given copies of the fire procedures for their building. Please review these instructions and ensure you understand what you are to do. Discuss any concerns you have about fire safety or evacuation with your Community Services Worker.

IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY!!

Questions, Complaints, Concerns

If you have any questions, complaints or concerns about something going on in your community, a Housing Services business practice, or your rent, please contact your Community Services Worker. They can advise you on any steps to take to have your concern addressed.

Should you have a complaint that you would like addressed by the Community Services Office, please advise your Community Services Worker.

Remember, if you don't let your Community Services Worker know that there is a problem, nothing can be done to fix it. You are encouraged to ask questions and attend tenant meetings so that you are aware of all rules and programs affecting your tenancy, as we want to keep the lines of communication open with our tenants.

QUESTIONS, COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS

Common Phone Numbers

Emergencies

911

County of Dufferin Community Services	(519) 941-6991 Toll Free: 1 (877) 941-6991 Fax: (519) 941-0271
Dufferin Housing After-Hours Maintenance Line	(519) 941-8221
County Road Closures and Weather Conditions	(519) 941-6991 x 5
Provincial Road Conditions/Closures	1-800-268-4686
Town of Orangeville	(519) 941-0440
Town of Shelburne	(519) 925-2600
Twp. of East Luther Grand Valley	(519) 928-5652
Rogers	1-888-ROGERS-1 (1-888-764-3771)
Bell Canada	310-BELL (310-2355)
Landlord and Tenant Board	1-888-332-3234