



# Applying for Special Priority Status

## FACT SHEET



### Purpose

Special Priority status is intended to assist the applicant and other household members to separate permanently from their abuser.

### Description

Special Priority status allows applicants to move ahead of other applicants on the affordable housing waiting list. Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) must ensure that this status is used for those who truly need it.

Special Priority does not apply to applicants who want to separate from someone because of family breakdown or because their relationship is not working.

### Eligibility for Special Priority Status

To be eligible under this policy, the applicant must have experienced an incident or series of incidents where **their safety is/has been at risk**.

### What is Abuse?

Abuse is an incident of physical or sexual violence, controlling behaviour or intentional destruction or intentional injury to a person's property or words, actions, or gestures that threaten a person or lead a person to fear for their safety.

### Documents Required

Documentation is required to verify that the abused and the abuser are now, or were living together. The following are examples of information sources to prove joint residence:

- Recent lease
- Recent rental agreement
- Notice of rent increase
- Real estate listing
- Joint assets/RRSP's
- Child Tax Credit
- Employee benefits/insurance
- Joint Loans
- Utility Bills
- Ontario Works/ODSP reference
- OSAP
- Other Relevant Documents
- Joint Bank Account
- School Registration
- Mortgage documents
- Property ownership/taxes
- Income Tax
- Apartment/house/car insurance
- Subsidized daycare documents
- Landed Immigrant papers

**NRH cannot make a decision if a request for Special Priority status is not complete.**

**A request for Special Priority status is considered complete if all of the following criteria are met:**

- **The request has been signed by the applicant**
- **There is a letter from an eligible professional attached to the request**
- **There is proof of cohabitation attached to the request**
- **All areas of the request form have been completed**

**If the abused member and the abusing individual used to live together but no longer do, the request for Special Priority status must be submitted within three months after they stopped living together**

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### Indicators of Abuse

The following list are considered to be “indicators of abuse” for the purpose of assessing eligibility for Special Priority status.

1. A record of intervention by the police.
2. A record of physical injury caused to the member by the abusing individual.
3. A record of force by the abusing individual against the member to force the member to engage in sexual activity against his or her will.
4. A record of one or more attempts to kill the member or another member of the household.
5. A record of the use of a weapon against the member or another member of the household.
6. A record of one or more incidents of abuse, including the following:
  - **Threatening to kill, physically harm or use a weapon against the member or another member of the household**
  - **Threatening to harm, remove, or prevent access to the member’s children**
  - **Forcing the member to perform degrading or humiliating acts**
  - **Terrorizing the member**
  - **Enforcing social isolation upon the member**
  - **Failing to provide or withholding the necessities of life**
  - **Threatening to withdraw from sponsoring the member as an immigrant or taking any action that might lead to the member being deported**
  - **Other words, actions or gestures that threaten the member or lead the member to fear for his or her safety**
7. A record of undue control by the abusing individual over the member’s personal or financial activities.
8. A record of one or more incidents of stalking or harassing behaviour against the member or another member of the household.

## contact

**Applicants housed under Special Priority status who deliberately provide false or inaccurate information for the purpose of receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance may have their rent-geared-to-income assistance terminated.**

If the applicant believes that they will be at risk if they attempt to obtain the information or documents to support their request for Special Priority status, they should contact our office.

For further information regarding Special Priority status, contact 905-682-9201, ext. 3928 or visit our website at [www.nrh.ca](http://www.nrh.ca).

Any other inquiries, contact us at 905-682-9201 or 1-800-232-3292.  
Fax: 905-935-0476