



NIAGARA
REGIONAL
HOUSING



NRH Notice

NUMBER: 03-02

DATE: February 3, 2003

Mandatory
 For Information

Applicable to:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Municipal & Private Non Profit |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Co-operatives |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Federal Non Profits |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | OCHAP/CSHP |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Rent Supplement |

Subject: Occupancy Standards

Act/Regulation Reference: *Social Housing Reform Act*, Section 76 and O. Reg. 298/01, Part V.

Policy:

Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) has adopted the provincial occupancy standards with one exception. Larger-sized households can exceed the occupancy standards as long as the resulting occupancy is in accordance with existing municipal by-laws.

Background:

O.Reg. 298/01, Part V Sections 27 & 28 sets the provincial occupancy standards for rent-geared-to-income assistance. The regulation sets a range (largest unit and smallest unit) which combines the former provincial standard and the federal standard. Note: Market rent households and special needs households (including modified units) are not subject to these standards. The *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000* provides flexibility to Service Managers to establish local occupancy standards based on various criteria such as number of household members, age, gender, relationship, space for support equipment and other factors.

NRH has adopted the provincial occupancy standards for all transferred housing programs, with the following objectives:

- ♦ match household size with the appropriate sized unit and potentially reduce waiting periods for applicants;
- ♦ provide optimum choice to applicants and tenants/members while making use of limited rent-geared-to-income assistance; and
- ♦ allow housing providers to maintain their current standards, thus not adversely affecting tenants/members who are already housed.

An exception to the provincial occupancy standards has been adopted with the objective of accommodating larger-sized households and ensuring ongoing eligibility.

These larger-sized households are eligible for the largest sized unit available in the municipality/municipalities of their choice as long as the resulting occupancy is in accordance with existing municipal by-laws.

Adopting these standards allows housing providers to maintain their current standards, thus not adversely affecting tenants/members who are already housed, while providing greater flexibility and increased choice to applicants. Applicants will have greater choice over the size of unit they will accept, within the range they are eligible for, which may reduce overall waiting periods.

Implementation:

This policy is effective immediately.

♦ **Service Manager’s Role**

NRH will be reviewing Housing Provider’s policies/bylaws and practices regarding occupancy standards during the operational review process to ensure compliance. NRH will also use these occupancy standards in placing applicant households on the appropriate subsidiary waiting lists.

♦ **Housing Provider’s Role**

Allowing for the policy exception as noted, Housing Providers should review their own occupancy standards bylaws/policies to ensure compliance. Housing Providers must fill all future vacancies in accordance with this policy and review all current households to ensure compliance with this policy. Appropriate action should be taken for those households who are not in compliance with the occupancy standards.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact your Housing Administrator at (905) 682-9201.

If you have any questions regarding the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 go to www.e-laws.gov.on.ca or contact your Housing Administrator.

(Original signed by Lora Beckwith)

Lora Beckwith
General Manager