



Welcome to Your New Home



**NIAGARA
REGIONAL
HOUSING**



WELCOME

Welcome to Niagara Regional Housing. This resident guide provides you with information about your new home and answers the most commonly asked questions.

If you have further questions...and many people do...please call the office and we will be glad to assist you.

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Housing Operations

3340 Schmon Parkway	Phone	905-682-9201
P.O. Box 344	Grimsby <i>only</i>	1-800-232-3292
Thorold, ON L2V 3Z3	Fax	905-687-4844
	Maintenance	905-682-1755

Housing Access & Community Programs

479D Carlton Street	Phone	905-935-7645
St. Catharines, ON L2M 4Y6	Grimsby <i>only</i>	1-800-391-4644
	Fax	905-935-0476

AFTER HOURS EMERGENCY SERVICES

*NO HEAT *NO POWER
*SMOKE DETECTOR MALFUNCTION *FLOOD

Dial: 905-682-9201

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Moving In...

Welcome to your new home!

Your unit is inspected before you move in. However, if you need any repairs after you move in or at any time during your tenancy, please contact our Maintenance Department at 905-682-1755.

Keys for Your New Home

Once you have signed your lease you must set up an appointment with your Property Manager to receive your keys.



Bring to this appointment:

- Your first months rent or
- if you have paid rent to another landlord for the same time period please bring a rent receipt from your previous landlord for the overlapping time period. The receipt must include the landlord's name, address and telephone number, confirming payment for the same time period.

All units are equipped with deadbolt locks that are changed before your move in to ensure your security. Please remember, you are not permitted to change the existing locking system on your unit without approval.

If you lose your keys, or require a lock change, please contact the Maintenance Department.

Move In Day

- **Do** get your mailbox key from your Property Manager and contact the post office to inform them of your name and address.
- **Do** arrange for your phone, if you wish to have one and advise Niagara Regional Housing of your new phone number.
- **Do** arrange for cable, if you want it (Cogeco Cable 905-374-5570).
- **Do** ASK, if you are unsure please feel free to ask.
- **Don't** prop the entrance doors open while you are moving. You are jeopardizing the safety of your new neighbours.
- **Don't** tie up the elevator unnecessarily.
- **Don't** put boxes down the garbage chute. Boxes need to be broken down, bundled and placed in the recycling room or taken off site.

Niagara Regional Housing Drop Boxes



Niagara Regional Housing drop boxes are available for your convenience in your building. Use the box as a quick and simple way to pay rent (no cash please), request maintenance, send in Income Verification Forms, and any other correspondence for Niagara Regional Housing.

Move In Inspection Form

Please complete the Move In Inspection Form, given to you at the time of the lease signing. Note any deficiencies and return it to Niagara Regional Housing, within 5 days of your move in. If you find the unit in good repair we would like to hear that too!!!



Parking

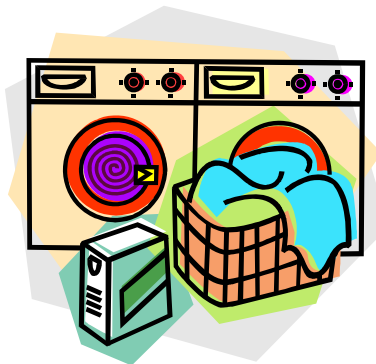
Parking is generally available at each site and is for use by tenants who have a car. Parking is on a first-come-first-serve basis but tenants, out of habit and courtesy, often park in the same spot. Some buildings with larger parking areas allow visitor parking in the rear of the lot. Please ask your Property Manager for more information about your particular parking area.



For the safety of all tenants, abandoned, unlicensed or derelict vehicles will be removed at the owner's expense. *Vehicle maintenance or repairs are not permitted in parking lots and driveways.*

Laundry

Coin operated laundry facilities are available. Please be sure to abide by the rules posted in the laundry room concerning hours and use of machines. Machines are for your laundry only. You are not permitted to install a washer or dryer in your unit.



Cable TV/Satellite Dishes/Antennas

Niagara Regional Housing has strict guidelines concerning the installation of satellite dishes, antennae, CB equipment, etc. Please call your Property Manager for information and approval before installing any equipment.



Do not attach: satellite dishes, antennae, to the exterior of the unit. If the dish or other equipment is installed without approval or not according to the guidelines, it will be removed. Removal and damage to Niagara Regional Housing property will be at your expense.

Insurance

You are responsible for purchasing a ***Tenant Package Insurance Policy***. In the event of damage, the landlord and/or other tenants may seek to recover costs from you or you may have reason to make a claim.

Pets

Well behaved and cared for pets add to the quality of life for their owner and the community as a whole. Please remember that not everyone will love your pet as you do.



- If you have a pet, you are responsible for your pet's behaviour and the effect he/she has on other tenants. Dogs, cats and other pets must be under your control at all times in public areas. For example, using a leash.
- Dog owners are responsible to ensure that licenses and vaccinations are current.
- If Pest Control Services are needed to deal with flea infestations you will be responsible for the cost.
- Please remember that pets are not permitted in the common room, or other public areas where they may be a nuisance to other tenants.

Appliances

If your refrigerator or stove is not working:

- Check that it is plugged in.
- Check the electrical panel to make sure that the breaker is in the 'on' position.
- If the problem persists please contact the Maintenance Department at 905-682-1755.



MAINTENANCE

Regular Maintenance

When requesting maintenance:

- Call 905-682-1755 (*from Grimsby only 1-800-232-3292*) or complete a maintenance request card. Please date your request and be sure to provide your name, address and phone number, along with a brief description of your maintenance problem.
- We will contact a contractor, who will call you to make arrangements. Please make sure that you are home or have made arrangements to allow the contractor access to your unit for the scheduled service call. You will be charged if the contractor cannot get into your apartment.



The regular response time for a maintenance request is within one week. If your maintenance concern has not been resolved after this time period has passed please contact the office.

Emergency Maintenance

The response time for an emergency maintenance request is within 24 hours. Niagara Regional Housing provides an after-hours emergency answering service by calling 905-682-1755. The following are examples of emergencies:

- no heat, electricity, or water in your unit
- water leak or flood in your unit
- plugged toilet and you only have one washroom
- malfunctioning smoke detector

**For all medical and fire emergencies
call 911 first**

Decorating Your Home



If you wish to decorate your unit you are responsible to return the unit to its original condition upon move-out or ***you will be charged*** for the cost to make the repairs. No permanent changes can be made. Contact your Maintenance Program Supervisor or Property Manager if you have any questions.

Tenant Charges

If you, your family or a guest causes damage to NIAGARA REGIONAL HOUSING property you will be charged for the cost of the repairs. Prompt payment is necessary to maintain your satisfactory rental payment record.

Examples of maintenance charges:

- broken windows and screens
- damage to drywall, woodwork and doors
- unauthorized paint, removal of wallpaper & rugs
- missing or broken fixtures
- missing or broken hardware for doors
- garbage/debris/furniture left in or around the unit upon move-out
- damage done by pets, including flea control
- toilets plugged by hair brushes, toys, etc.
- requested lock change – lost keys, unauthorized lock changes
- missed appointments made with contractors

Balconies & Patios

Balconies and patios have been provided for your enjoyment. They must be clean and tidy at all times and not used for storage. Do not install carpet or make any other alteration without the written approval of your Property Manager.

Do not throw food or any other objects off the balcony. Birds or squirrels, although lovely to watch, can quickly become a nuisance and must not be fed from the balcony.

Barbeques are not allowed on balconies or within 10 feet of the building.

Pest Control

Cockroaches and other pests can be a problem. Pest Control is a shared responsibility. Make sure that food is stored in airtight containers and garbage is sealed and deposited in the garbage room.



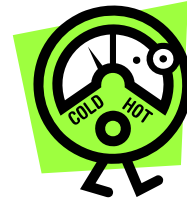
Pests easily spread from unit to unit, which makes reporting pest problems important. Please let us know immediately if you see any signs of pests in your unit.



Do not feed birds and wild animals as this will attract unwanted rodents and other pests.

Heating

Your unit has individual controls for heat. You can adjust the heat in most rooms by turning the small knob on the heat register (usually bathrooms) or the thermostat on the wall (usually living rooms and bedrooms). In order to assist in the efficient heating of your unit, please ensure that your doors and windows are closed when the heat is on. Most people find 22 degrees Celsius/74 degrees Fahrenheit to be a comfortable temperature. If you are unsure, please call 905-682-1755.



Garbage Disposal & Recycling

We encourage all tenants to participate in helping to keep your environment healthy and safe. Please do your part.

Please be sure that all garbage is double bagged and tightly sealed before sending it down the garbage chute. Bags of kitty litter and glass should not be placed down the garbage chute – double bag and take them directly to the garbage room or the dumpster.



Your building has recycling totes in the garbage room – we encourage you to participate and recycle glass bottles/jars, steel and aluminium cans, plastic bottles/jars, newspaper, telephone books, etc. Please rinse all jars and cans to help control odours and pests.

Large items are the responsibility of the tenant and arrangements must be made to remove them from the property.

You can:

- take them directly to the landfill
- call Just Junk at 905-646-5865 (please note there is a fee)
- post the item on a website called Freecycle Niagara
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FreecycleNiagara/>

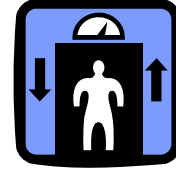
Take Pride in Your Community – Help Keep It Clean!

Air Conditioners

There is an air-conditioning charge of \$60 per air conditioner that is payable with your rent at a rate of \$5 per month. For energy conservation and overall safety please ensure that your air conditioner is properly installed. Your Property Manager can give you more information about installation and removal.

Elevator Safety

- If the elevator stalls between floors use the emergency equipment provided inside the elevator – you will be connected with the answering service and they will send help.
- Stay calm, do not try to leave the elevator and do not force open the doors.
- If at any time, the elevator is damaged or some defect is noted please report it to the Building Attendant or the office at once.



Storage

You are not permitted to store items such as derelict or unlicensed vehicles, boats, old bikes, appliances, tires, batteries, etc. on Niagara Regional Housing property.

Snow Removal



We do our best to keep entryways, walkways and parking lots free of snow and ice but we require your assistance. Please co-operate with the snow plow contractor when he is clearing snow from the parking lot by removing your vehicle and staying away from the area being cleaned. Always use caution when going outside during winter weather and wear proper boots to keep you warm and provide good traction.

FIRE SAFETY – IT'S UP TO YOU

- Know your building, learn the locations of all exits, stairways, pull stations and fire extinguishers.
- Have your escape route planned so that you know what to do even in the dark.
- Have an alternate route in mind and rehearsed, so that you are prepared for any situation.
- Participate in fire drills – valuable information is shared.
- Stay or go? It's up to you but if you decide to stay in your unit follow procedures to protect yourself. If you decide to go, exit the building by the nearest safe route and meet at the designated area.
- Have questions or concerns? Speak with your Property Manager.



Smoke Detector & Door Closers

Your home has been equipped with a hard wired electric smoke detector. It may save your life. A light should be visible, indicating that the detector has power. **Please check your smoke detector often to verify that it is working.** Niagara Regional Housing services the smoke detector once a year. If the alarm sounds frequently, it may be faulty. Contact the Maintenance Department immediately.

Sometimes burning something on the stove may trigger your smoke alarm. To clear minor smoke, open a window or your balcony door rather than opening your apartment/hallway door, which may trigger the building fire alarm.



IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO DISABLE SMOKE DETECTORS OR DOOR CLOSERS AND COULD RESULT IN A FINE BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Security

Everyone must do their part to ensure the building is as safe and secure as possible:

- Do not prop open entrance doors to the building.
- Entrance systems have been installed for your safety – be sure you know who you are “buzzing in”.
- Do not open the door to strangers, or anyone who is not your guest.
- Apartment doors should be locked at all times – this is your main security.
- Use your peephole – do not open the door if you feel unsafe.
- If you invite a salesperson into your unit escort them out of the building when you are finished to be sure they don’t visit your neighbours.
- Someone loitering, suspicious, trying doors? – tell the Building Attendant.
- Property or person being threatened – call the police 911.



Building Attendants

The duties of a building attendant are not the same as a superintendent. The building attendant is on site to assist Niagara Regional Housing by:

- helping in the event of an emergency
- providing access to the building for contractors
- reporting to Niagara Regional Housing common area maintenance concerns
- reporting to Niagara Regional Housing vandalism to public areas

YOU AND YOUR LEASE

Paying Your Rent

Rent is due on the first of the month. If your rent is not paid on time, a notice of termination will be served and you may face eviction. Niagara Regional Housing has a policy in place to deal with persistently late rent payers. In compliance with the Tenant Protection Act, landlords can evict tenants who continue to make late rent payments.

For your convenience you can pay by:

- **Pre-authorized monthly payments** – is the preferred method of payment - just submit a void cheque and an authorization form and we'll do the rest.
- **Cheque or money order** - made payable to **NIAGARA REGIONAL HOUSING**. Include your name, address and **your tenant account number** – drop in a NIAGARA REGIONAL HOUSING site box or mail to Niagara Regional Housing, 3340 Schmon Parkway, P.O. Box 344, Thorold, ON L2V 3Z3.
- **Cash payments** – will only be accepted at Niagara Regional Housing's administrative office at 3340 Schmon Parkway, Thorold, ON. Do not put CASH in the drop box.

Annual Income Verification

Once a year you will be sent a package of forms. You are required to complete the forms, provide verification of your income and return the information by the due date stated on the form. If you do not respond your rent will be raised to the market rent for your unit.

*If you do not understand the forms or need assistance
please call, we will be glad to help.*

Reporting Changes



You must report, **any change in your income and/or people living in your household** within **30 days** of the change. Failure to report these changes may result in the household no longer being eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance. Do not wait for your annual income verification, report changes to your Property Management Clerk when they happen.

Adding Someone to your Lease

Prior to having another person reside in your unit, you must obtain approval from your Property Manager. This person must complete an application and must meet the eligibility criteria. If the application is approved, a new lease with the new rent amount will be issued and must be signed by all members of the household 16 years of age and older.

Transfers

If you would like to transfer from your current unit to another Niagara Regional Housing unit in a different community, you may complete a transfer request form. There are a number of eligibility requirements that you must meet prior to being placed on the internal transfer waiting list. For information concerning the eligibility requirements, please contact Housing Access at 905-935-7645.

Please note that you may have to pay a \$250 non-refundable administration fee, which is due with the application. You may also be subject to a unit inspection. Should any maintenance charges result from the inspection, you will be required to pay the charges in full prior to being offered a transfer.

Tenants requesting a move to a co-op or non-profit in Niagara must complete a new application form.

Notice to Vacate

Your Property Manager requires 60 days **written** notice, from the first of the next month, if you wish to vacate your unit. For example, if you give notice on April 23, you are responsible for the rent until June 30. A shorter notice period may apply in the event of a death or move to a long term care facility. Please contact your Property Manager for more information.

Guest Policy

Tenants are welcome to have guests in their unit for up to two weeks without approval from the Property Manager. Longer stays require Property Manager approval to ensure that your rent-geared-to-income subsidy continues.



Absence from the unit

If you or the members of your household are absent from the unit for more than 60 days, for reasons other than medical, your rent-gear-to-income subsidy may be discontinued. Please contact your Property Manager if you are planning to be out of your unit for more than 60 days.

Tenant Appeal

You have the right to request an appeal if you believe:

- your rent was based on incorrect information
- we have not calculated your rent correctly
- your subsidy has been terminated
- your request for a transfer has been unfairly refused

You must put your request in writing to The Appeals Committee, Niagara Regional Housing, 479D Carlton Street, St. Catharines, Ontario L2M 4Y6 (within ten business days from the date you receive the decision letter).

Privacy Rights

Niagara Regional Housing staff can only enter your unit in the event of an emergency, if you are provided written notice 24 hours in advance, or if you allow access.

Tenant Participation

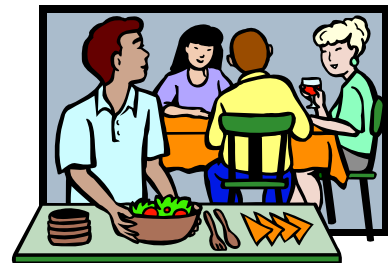
No Smoking By-Law



The Niagara Region has a no-smoking by-law that strictly prohibits smoking in common areas of your apartment building. Please be considerate of your neighbours and smoke in your unit or outside, away from the building.

Common Areas

Common areas are often the place where “things are happening” in the building. Many tenant groups organize activities for the enjoyment of all tenants. Check the bulletin board and common room calendar for more information.



Common rooms are an extension of your living room and may be booked for private functions such as birthday parties, anniversaries, and family gatherings. To book the room check the common room calendar, if the room is available, write your name or unit number and the time you will be using the room. Complete the Common Area Use form that you will find in the common room and send it to Niagara Regional Housing through the drop box. It's that simple.

Get Involved!

Tenants have the opportunity to participate in their community in many different ways. You can:



- Participate in social activities such as: bingo, cards, dinners, sports activities, etc.
- Be an active participant in your Tenant Association, the group that plans and organizes activities in your housing community.
- Join the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG). This is a group of tenants from all areas of Niagara. TAG provides Niagara Regional Housing with comments concerning policies and procedures that affect tenants.
- Be the tenant representative on the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors.

To obtain further information about any of these activities contact your Community Programs Coordinator at 905-682-9201. Your tenant group and the bulletin board in your building will give you information concerning local activities.

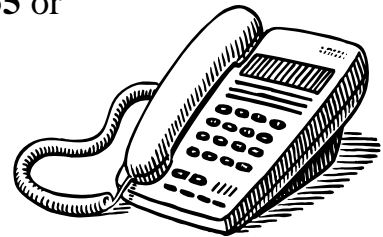
Who to Call

Building maintenance & safety

- report to maintenance by phone at **905-682-1755** or through the drop box

Rent payments and property management

- rent calculation – Property Management Clerk at **905-682-9201**
- all other concerns, rent payments or property management – Property Manager at **905-682-9201**



Support services, eviction prevention & dispute resolution

- contact your Community Programs Co-ordinator at **905-682-9201**

Transfers

- contact Housing Access at **905-935-7645**

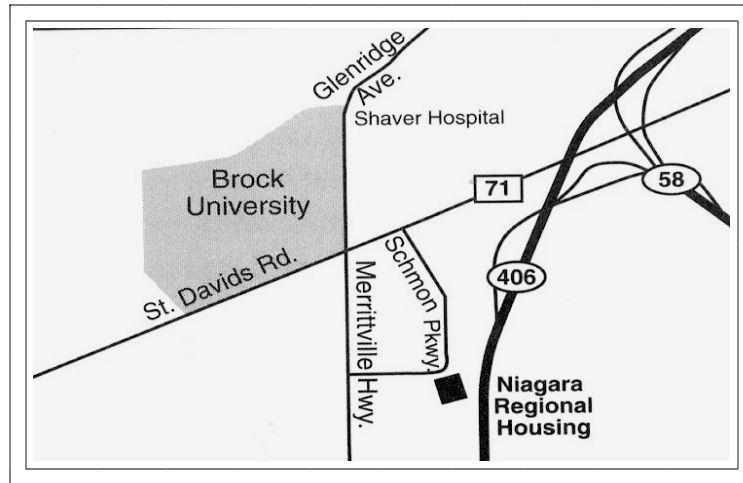
We do our best to respond to requests in a timely manner. Due to the volume, it's important that you are clear about whether your problem requires immediate attention or can wait. If you have a question, concern or have requested service and are not satisfied with the answer or service you received you have the right to contact a Niagara Regional Housing supervisor.

**PLEASE VISIT
NIAGARA REGIONAL HOUSING'S WEBSITE AT
www.nrh.ca**

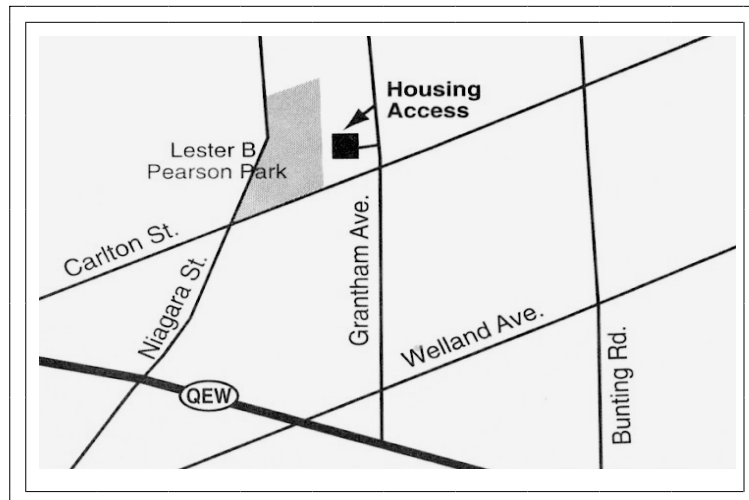
Help Numbers

Fire, Police, Ambulance	911
Niagara Regional Housing	905-682-9201..... 905-935-7645
www.nrh.ca	
Information Niagara	905-682-6611..... 905-356-4636..... 1-800-263-3695
www.informationniagara.com	
Distress Line	905-688-3711..... 905-734-1212..... 1-800-263-4944
Community Legal Services	
Niagara North (St. Catharines).....	905-682-6635
Niagara South (Welland).....	905-735-1559
Niagara East (Niagara Falls)	905-682-6635
Fort Erie	905-382-2536
Telehealth Ontario	1-866-797-0000
Public Health Services	1-800-263-7248
Financial Assistance	
Health and Welfare Canada- Income Security	1-800-263-8391
Community Support Services	
Meals on Wheels/ Transportation	
Niagara Falls	905-356-7548 or 905-356-9194
Thorold/St. Catharines	905-682-0333
Port Colborne	905-835-1581
Fort Erie	905-871-9366
Fonthill	905-892-7779
Beamsville.....	905-563-9501
Welland/Pelham	905-788-3181
Community Care Access Centre	
In Home Community Services	905-684-9441
Assistance (Food etc.)	
Community Care (St. Catharines)	905-685-1349
Welland Community Resource and Action Centre	905-788-0744
West Niagara Community Care	905-563-5822
Port Colborne Information (Port Cares).....	905-834-3629
Project SHARE (Niagara Falls)	905-357-5121
COPE (Fort Erie).....	905-871-2526
Human Rights	1-800-668-3946
Multi-Cultural Centres	
St. Catharines and Niagara Falls	905-685-6589
Welland Heritage Council.....	905-732-5337
Ombudsman	1-800-263-1830

Main Office
3340 Schmon Parkway
Thorold, ON L2V 3Z3
905-682-9201 • Fax 905-687-4844



Housing Access (to apply)
479D Carlton Street
St. Catharines, ON L2M 4Y6
905-935-7645 • Fax 905-935-0476



www.nrh.ca