



Notice

No: 08-05

Niagara Regional Housing

APPLICABLE TO:

DATE: April 16, 2008

<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 type="checkbox"/>	Rent Supplement

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mandatory
<input type="checkbox"/>	For Information

SUBJECT: Risk Management - Smoke Detectors & Automatic Door Closures

Background

The Ontario Fire Code requires that every place of residence has smoke detectors installed and kept in working order. All apartment doors are also required to be equipped with automatic door closures to help prevent the spread of smoke and fire.

Housing providers are responsible for:

Smoke Detectors: installing detectors and ensuring they are in working condition, including testing, repair and replacement; and,
Automatic Door Closures (Apartment Units): maintaining, inspecting, repair and replacement.

There have been cases where tenants/members have intentionally disabled or damaged the smoke detectors in their units and/or damaged or wedged open their apartment doors. There are potential liability issues for housing providers if a fire occurs in a unit that has an inoperable smoke detector or an inoperable door closure.

In an effort to better manage the associated risks and acknowledge the responsibilities of tenant/members, NRH requires all housing providers to ensure that the following policies and procedures regarding smoke detectors and automatic door closures are in place.

Smoke Detector/Automatic Door Closure Procedures

1. Housing providers should revise their lease/occupancy agreement to include a clause that states that tampering with smoke detectors and other fire safety devices are grounds for eviction (has been upheld at the Landlord/Tenant Board).
2. With every new move-in, the tenant/member(s) must have their smoke detectors checked and must sign the Smoke Detector Acknowledgement Form and Automatic Door Closure Acknowledgement Form (if applicable).
3. The smoke detector/automatic door closure acknowledgement forms must be kept on file and readily available to fire emergency personnel in case of a fire.

4. On an annual basis, the housing provider must complete an inspection of the smoke detector(s)/automatic door closure in all units. Testing procedures can be found at the Office of the Fire Marshal website (www.ofm.gov.on.ca). The annual inspection form is required to be signed by either the tenant/member or by staff (if tenant/member is not present), and filed together with the smoke detector/automatic door closure acknowledgement forms. Receipts and other documentation on new installations should be retained on file (typical life expectancy of a smoke detector is 5 to 10 years).
5. For units that have hard-wired smoke detectors only, housing providers are required to install battery smoke detectors on all levels of the unit as back-up. The installation of battery back-up units can be phased in and should be installed during the annual inspection or on move-out. The battery back-up detector will provide the unit with a working smoke detector in cases of power failure or scheduled utility shut off. The smoke detector acknowledgement form should be signed by the tenant/member when a battery back up unit is installed in their unit.

Attached are the following sample forms for use by housing providers:

Appendix A: Smoke Detector Acknowledgement Form

Appendix B: Automatic Door Closure Acknowledgement Form

Appendix C: Smoke Detector & Automatic Door Closure Inspection Form

Appendix D: Smoke Alarm Maintenance Checklist (available from www.ofm.gov.on.ca)

Housing providers are not required to use the sample forms noted above. However, the intent and purpose of the policy is mandatory. Housing providers can use other forms as long as it meets the same objectives.

For more information and tips on smoke alarm installation and maintenance, please visit the Office of the Fire Marshal's website at www.ofm.gov.on.ca.

Service Manager's Role

NRH will review the housing provider's policies/bylaws and procedures regarding smoke detectors/automatic door closures during the operational review process to ensure compliance.

Housing Provider's Role

Housing provider staff are required to forward this Notice to their Board of Directors.

Housing providers are required to review their existing policies and procedures and make the necessary changes to ensure compliance with this policy.

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

(Original signed by Lora Beckwith)

Lora Beckwith, General Manager

Enclosures:

Appendix “A” – Smoke Detector Acknowledgement Form

Appendix “B” – Automatic Door Closure Acknowledgement Form

Appendix “C” – Smoke Detector & Automatic Door Closure Inspection Form

Appendix “D” – Smoke Alarm Maintenance Checklist