



# Notice No: 20-03

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**APPLICABLE TO:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Municipal &amp; Private Non Profit</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Co-operative</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Federal Non Profit</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>OCHAP/CSHP</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rent Supplement</b>

**DATE:**

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

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**SUBJECT: COVID-19 Market Vacancy Loss/Marketing Units**

The situation with COVID-19 continues to evolve in a rapidly changing pace. Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) recognizes this is a challenging time for Housing Providers and your tenants/members. The work that you do to keep your communities safe is very much appreciated.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many unusual situations that NRH is attempting to address as quickly as possible. It is apparent that it will take some time to move through these challenging times, and the impact it will have on Housing Providers.

**Marketing Units**

In an attempt to reduce backlog in the shelter system and provide necessary housing units should still be marketed ensuring you are limiting contact with the public, including tenants/members, applicants and service personnel.

The requirement of the self-assessment tool should be used for any staff, contractor or applicant and tenant/member throughout the marketing process.

**Offers and Refusals**

During this period, an Applicant may refuse the offer due self-isolation requirements and physical distancing concerns. This will **not** count as a refusal and the Housing Provider will simply note the refusal as COVID-19 concern.

## Policy Change – COVID-19

**Effective: April 1, 2020**

In an effort to address some of the concerns from Housing Providers with regards to extended market vacancy loss NRH has put the following in place:

- for housing providers that have a **vacant market unit that is being filled with an RGI household**, in order to remain at target, or get back to target, NRH will fund that vacancy loss for a maximum period of **two** months.

This market vacancy loss will be covered up to the benchmark market rent amount as a result of COVID-19 related issues on preparing the unit and with the unit being filled with an RGI household.

### Strategies on Marketing a Unit:

1. Offer units sight unseen.
2. Provide a virtual tour of the unit, by video or even by photographs.
3. If showing the unit, have the applicant, and if applicable, existing tenant/member complete and provide the self-assessment tool prior to showing/viewing the unit.
4. If anyone has flu like symptoms, cancel the showing (this is for both the potential new tenant/member and current tenant/member)
5. Wipe all surfaces with disinfectant, leave all doors, closets and cupboards open, open the shower curtain
6. Turn all lights on
7. The person viewing the unit should be the individual who will have their name on the lease/occupancy agreement and no one else.
8. Anyone visiting the unit should follow the “keep your hands in your pockets” rule. Do not touch anything.
9. Disinfect at the end of the showing, specifically the doorknob and any other surface that was touched inadvertently.

### Strategies for Move-in and Move-out:

Each move-in and move-out should:

- Have staff walk through the unit prior to move-in and leave the lease/occupancy agreement for their signature to return in a self-addressed stamped envelope or leave in the unit.
- Have a designated start and stop time.
- Be completed within the timeframe and should be strictly adhered to.
- Be restricted to only low traffic areas of the common areas that need to be accessed in order to move items.
- During the move, other residents should be directed not to access these common areas.
- After the move is completed the common areas that were accessed during the move and the unit should be thoroughly cleaned before other residents are allowed to access the area and prior to any other move occurring.

- Prior to any scheduled move-in/move-out, the tenant/member and any individual assisting with the move should be required to complete the self-assessment tool.

NRH continues to monitor situations as they arise. Thank you for your commitment and hard work during these uncertain and rapidly changing times.

### **Housing Provider Role**

A vacancy loss report is required to be completed on a monthly basis and included with your year-end financials. The report must indicate the length of time the Market unit remained vacant and the date the unit was rented to an RGI household.

Housing Providers will be required to fund any market vacancy loss that extends more than two months.

### **Service Manager's Role**

NRH will monitor compliance with this Notice through the Annual Information Return and Operational Reviews.

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

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Donna Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer