



Notice

Number: 09-03

APPLICABLE TO:

DATE: January 20, 2009

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Municipal & Private Non Profit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Co-operatives
<input 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: Annual Information Return – Recording of Vacant Units

Background

The proper reporting of vacant units was established by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing prior to transfer and is described in the Annual Information Return (AIR) Guidelines, as follows:

*Vacant units are deemed rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) or Market depending on the status of the tenant who **vacated** (i.e., the unit keeps the same status until re-occupied). For the purposes of page D2 (Unit Activity Data Report) of the AIR, vacant units must be included in either RGI or Market depending on the status of the tenant who **vacated**.*

Our operational reviews and year end reconciliations have identified improper recording and reporting of RGI units, market units and especially vacancy losses in housing providers' year end Unit Activity Data Reports.

Proper Recording of Units and Vacancies

Housing Providers are required to record units and vacancies as follows:

- a) Vacancies: Vacant units are deemed RGI or market depending on the status of the tenant who vacated, as per AIR Guidelines above.
- b) RGI Households Increased to Market: RGI households that are increased to market (resulting from an increase in income) are to be recorded as "market" as soon as the household is required to pay the market rent/housing charge. For example, a household who provides income verification in July is recorded as a market unit effective September 1 (first of the second month). If within 12 months, the household's income is reduced and they receive subsidy, the unit is to be recorded as RGI as of the first month following receipt of the income verification.

Proper Notice Period

Households are required to give proper notice when vacating, as follows:

Non-profit:

- 60 days from the 1st day of the month
- If a sole tenant dies, the tenancy shall be deemed to be terminated 30 days after the date of death.

Co-operative:

- Coop by-laws typically allow 65-70 days notice and the notice must be received 5 days before the end of the month.

When a notice of vacancy is received, the housing provider must immediately begin the placement process. If proper notice is not given and the housing provider is unable to fill the unit within the notice period that was given, the unpaid rent/housing charges are considered to be arrears and must be reported to NRH as former tenant/member arrears. The unit is not considered vacant until the proper notice period has expired.

Vacancy Loss

Other than exceptional damages, Housing Providers should be able to fill vacancies within 1 month. Housing Providers who experience high vacancy losses will be required to submit monthly vacancy loss reports to NRH with appropriate explanations, for monitoring purposes.



To streamline the placement process, Housing Providers should complete all “pre-offer actions” according to their existing policies, by-laws and the SHRA, before a vacancy becomes available (i.e. orientation meeting, interviews, obtain updated income verification).

This will ensure that households on the waiting list are aware of policies specific to the non-profit or coop and whether the building and surrounding amenities suit their needs. Housing Providers should advise all applicants that their information is being updated to ensure that current and accurate information is on file.

Filling Vacant RGI Units

Housing Providers are required to fill vacancies in accordance with their established target plan (O. Reg. 33/01, s. 14(2)). If an RGI unit is required, the housing provider must first refer to households on the Internal Transfer List, in chronological order. Households on the Internal Transfer list must match occupancy standards and other criteria for the vacant unit (*in accordance with the housing provider’s Internal Transfer Policy, NRH Service Agreement and O Reg. 339/01, s.11*).

If there are no households on the Internal Transfer List, the unit should be offered to the first household on the waiting list. To allow external applicants to give their landlord 60 days’ notice, it is essential that the placement process begin immediately. All applicant responses must be noted on a copy of the waiting list and reported to NRH through the “hot button”.

The housing provider cannot refuse to offer a unit to an applicant, if the applicant cannot accept the unit on the date it is available because of their requirement to provide 60 days' notice to their current landlord. The applicant should sign the lease/occupancy agreement for the date the unit is available, assume responsibility for any utilities, insurance, etc., and provide the housing provider with a receipt from their current landlord indicating that the rent/occupancy charges for the month in question was paid. The unit is recorded as an RGI unit with no revenue for the month.



Annual unit inspections, a well-planned preventative maintenance program and a unit turnover policy will help ensure that units are made ready for occupancy as quickly as possible. A unit turnover policy should include the requirement for pre-move out inspections and contain a list of pre-approved contractors for quick response.

Housing Provider's Role

The housing provider is required to record market units, RGI units and vacancy losses consistent with this Notice. Housing Provider staff are required to:

- Forward a copy of this Notice to their auditors for their information; and,
- Forward a copy of this Notice to their Board of Directors for their information and review.

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.

Lora Beckwith, General Manager