

Policy Name: Visitor and Guest Policy

Policy Category: Legislated

Purpose

The Visitor and Guest Policy outlines the responsibilities tenants have when they invite visitors or guests to their units. This policy is required by the provincial *Housing Services Act*.

This policy:

- Explains the difference between a visitor and a guest
- Sets out the rules for how long an overnight guest may stay in a tenant's home
- Outlines how tenants must report guests to Halton Community Housing Corporation (HCHC)
- Explains how a tenant can request an exception to this policy

Scope

This policy applies to all HCHC households, including tenants and occupants as appropriate under their lease or occupancy agreement.

Standards and Values

HCHC is responsible for investigating reports of an overnight guest staying in a tenant's home for more than the maximum time allowed. The maximum is 30 nights in a 12-month period (see "Policy Details," below).

Tenants are responsible for:

- Notifying the Tenant Services Advisor that they want to add a person to their household within 30 days of the change occurring
- Ensuring guests do not stay more than the time allowed as outlined in this policy and in the residential tenancy agreement
- Ensuring their guests are aware of this policy, and that their guests may be asked to provide proof that they have a different home address
- The actions and behaviours of their visitors and guests while on HCHC property

Definitions

Guest: Any person, other than the tenant or occupant, who stays overnight with an HCHC tenant for a limited time (compare to "Visitor," below). Guests maintain a separate home address than the HCHC tenant they are visiting.

Market Rent: The full and maximum charge for a unit as determined by HCHC; non-subsidized rent.

Occupant: Any person listed as a declared occupant under a lease signed with HCHC.

Rent-geared-to-income (RGI): Rent that has been reduced through a housing subsidy; RGI is calculated using guidelines in governing provincial legislation.

Reduced Rent Program: Rent offered at reduced rates, based on eligibility criteria such as income level or household need.

Staff: Employees of Halton Region.

Tenant: A person who has a signed lease with HCHC.

Visitor: Any person who visits a tenant but does not stay overnight at the unit (compare to “Guest,” above). Visitors maintain a home address different than the HCHC tenant.

Policy Details

HCHC recognizes that tenants are allowed to have guests and visitors to their home:

1. Tenants may have **visitors** as often as they wish.
2. Tenants may have overnight **guests** up to 30 days and nights in a 12-month period. An overnight guest who stays longer than this maximum may be considered an unauthorized occupant. The 30 overnight stays:
 - May be consecutive or non-consecutive
 - May be within any 12-month period, not necessarily within a single calendar year
 - Apply to each individual who stays as an overnight guest in the unit.

If the behaviour of a guest or visitor interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of other tenants, HCHC may issue a notice to end the tenancy.

These rules ensure that the RGI calculation is based on the actual household income. A guest's income is not included in this calculation. The rules also ensure that HCHC knows who lives in a unit in case of a safety issue or an emergency.

Stays longer than the maximum allowed

If HCHC staff believes a tenant has an overnight guest who has stayed longer than the maximum allowed, they will investigate. The purpose of the investigation is to find out if the housing income has changed (because of having a long-term guest).

If the investigation determines that this policy has been violated, HCHC may:

- Withdraw the RGI subsidy
- Require the tenant to pay the full market rent

Exceptions to the policy

A tenant may request an exception to this Visitor and Guest Policy. The tenant must make the request in writing and deliver it to the Tenant Services Advisor for their building. The Tenant Services Advisor or their designate will respond in writing within five business days to approve the request, deny the request, or ask for more information before making a decision.

A tenant may dispute a decision to deny a request for an exception to the guest policy. They must submit their direct in writing to the Manager, HCHC, which will make a final decision.

The limitations on the length of stay for guests in this policy are based on requirements in *Housing Services Act* and in tenancy agreements.

Related Policies and Resources	HCHC Residential Tenancy Agreement HCHC Tenant Handbook Safe Communities Policy
Related Legislation	<i>Housing Services Act</i> , 2011 <i>Residential Tenancies Act</i> , 2006

HCHC policies can be found online at halton.ca/hchc