



HCHC Tenant Handbook:

Your Guide to Living in Halton Community
Housing Corporation Communities



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Welcome to your new home!

Greetings from Halton Community Housing Corporation (HCHC), and welcome to your new home!

HCHC is the largest non-profit housing provider in Halton Region, operating close to 2,300 units in 39 communities across Burlington, Oakville, Milton, and Halton Hills (Georgetown and Acton).

HCHC is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all its tenants. We work collaboratively with tenants to support successful tenancies and to ensure all HCHC communities are safe, healthy, and enjoyable places to live.

HCHC staff are here to help you, and we look forward to getting to know you. Please call 311 to contact HCHC whenever you require assistance.

Sincerely,



Alex Sarchuk
General Manager
Halton Community
Housing Corporation



Daryl Kaytor
Chief Operating Officer
Halton Community
Housing Corporation



Zeeshan Majid
Treasurer
Halton Community
Housing Corporation



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Halton Community
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Chief Building Officer -
Maintenance
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How to use this handbook

The *HCHC Tenant Handbook* is your guide to living in an HCHC community. It provides answers to common questions about moving in, living well and safely in your unit, and maintaining your tenancy. It also includes content and links to key HCHC policies that govern your tenancy with HCHC. It is important that you comply with these requirements. If you can't find the answer to your question in this Tenant Handbook, please refer to the Who to Contact - Quick Access section on the next page for links to other resources.

The rules and guidelines outlined in this Tenant Handbook are based on HCHC operating policies for all units, properties, and tenancies. Be sure you have the most recent version of this handbook as rules and guidelines are updated from time to time.

We hope that you find this handbook to be a useful tool that you can refer to throughout your tenancy with HCHC.

Use this chart to record your HCHC contact information:		
Staff Title	Staff Name	Staff Extension and Email
My Tenant Services Advisor is:		
My Tenant Services Coordinator is:		
My Integrated Housing Worker is:		

Who to Contact – Quick Access Information

Contact Access Halton for information on:

- Housing services, waste collection, Halton government services, social services programs for parents, youth, or seniors, and much more:
 - Please call 311 from within Halton or visit Halton.ca

Maintenance requests:

- Visit halton.ca/HCHC to submit a maintenance request.
- If you do not have internet access, call 311 or 905-825-6000 (toll-free 1-866-442-5866) to connect with HCHC's tenant maintenance team.

Questions about your annual renewal package or rent calculation:

- Contact your Integrated Housing Worker directly or call 311 from within Halton.

All other inquiries can be directed to the Tenant Services Team:

- Contact your Tenant Services Advisor or Tenant Services Coordinator directly or call 311 from within Halton.

Local Utility Providers – please refer to your lease or check with your Tenant Services Advisor to see if you need to set up utilities in your name.

Location	Hydro company (electricity and water)	Other utilities
Burlington	Burlington Hydro 905-332-1851 burlingtonhydro.com	Enbridge Gas enbridgegas.com 1-877-362-7434 Reliance (hot water tank rental) reliancehomecomfort.com 1-888-837-1451
Halton Hills	Halton Hills Hydro 519-853-3701 haltonhillshydro.com	
Milton	Milton Hydro 905-876-4611 miltonhydro.com	
Oakville	Oakville Hydro 905-825-9400 oakvillehydro.com	
	Carma 1-888-298-3336 carmacorp.com	

Moving in

The information in this section will guide you through the basic tasks you need to complete when moving into your new home.

Your Lease

Please read your lease carefully. It sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It protects you as a tenant and HCHC as the landlord.

If you have any questions about your lease, please contact your Tenant Services Advisor.

Move-In Inspection Form

Your home was inspected before your move-in date to make sure that all necessary repairs were done. If you notice that a repair was not completed, you can report it to HCHC within 10 days of moving in.

To report a required repair, complete the Move-In Inspection Form you received when you moved in and:

- Mail it to 1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, ON L6K 3X9. Attention: Maintenance Services.
- Scan or photograph the completed form and email it to: HCHCmaintenanceservices@halton.ca

OR

- Place it in the site drop box at your building.

If you do not complete the Move-In-Inspection Form, HCHC will assume that the unit is in good condition and no repairs are required.

Accessibility

Most apartment buildings in HCHC are wheelchair accessible. There are also some modified units in both family and seniors' communities that are designed for wheelchair access.

Please contact your Tenant Services Advisor if you require any modifications to your unit for accessibility.

Keys

The keys and key fobs you were given when you moved in give you access to your unit, your mailbox, and the building and garage, depending on the community you live in. All unit and

mailbox locks are changed each time a new tenant moves in to make sure your unit is safe and secure.

Note: In some cases, you may have to contact Canada Post directly to receive your mailbox key. Your Tenant Services Advisor will give you this information if this applies to you.

If you lose your keys: Contact HCHC Maintenance Services for replacement keys. You will be invoiced for the cost of replacing your keys and for changing your locks (if that is needed). If you call after regular business hours and staff or a locksmith have to come to your unit, you may also be invoiced for these costs.

Decorating your home

Your unit is your home, and you may decorate it to reflect your personal style. You may want to hang pictures on the walls, install window coverings, or add house plants, for example. Decorations like these are allowed and encouraged but check the list below before you begin.

Rules for decorating or making alterations to your unit:

- You may not make any changes to your unit, including painting walls without written approval from your Tenant Services Advisor.
- You may not make any permanent changes. If you do, you may have to change the unit back to the way it was when you moved in, or pay for any work HCHC must do to bring your unit back to its original condition.
- You cannot alter basements by adding partitions or installing additional lighting.
- You cannot put hooks or nails into woodwork or trim; please use picture hooks to hang pictures.
- You may not place seasonal décor in common areas without approval from your Tenant Services Advisor.
- You cannot make any changes to the wiring in your unit.
- You cannot make any changes or additions to the plumbing system without HCHC's written permission (for example, installing a dishwasher).
- You may use a travel sized bidet that holds no more than four (4) liters of water. Bidets that attach to a waterline are not permitted in HCHC units due to risk of flooding.
- You may install battery-operated smart doorbells or video surveillance cameras on townhomes, semi-detached, or detached homes, provided the devices are positioned to capture exclusively your rental property. Surveillance of public areas or neighboring properties is strictly prohibited. Hardwired devices are not permitted.
- You cannot use the electrical, plumbing, or gas equipment for any purpose other than those for which they were constructed.

Tenant insurance

You are required to maintain insurance on your tenancy if required by your lease agreement.

Why should you get tenant insurance?

HCHC's insurance does not pay for replacing your unit contents or for you needing to relocate if there is a fire, flood, or any other incident at your home. If your unit or personal property is damaged or destroyed, you must contact your insurance provider to make a claim.

Tenant insurance can help you:

- Replace your belongings and pay for your temporary relocation costs if your unit cannot be lived in after a loss.
- Protect you if you are responsible for a loss due to an accident or your own negligence.

If your lease does not require tenant insurance, HCHC strongly encourages you to obtain tenant insurance so that you are protected.

If you sign any new agreement because your household composition changes or if you transfer within HCHC to another unit, you will be required to obtain insurance under the new lease agreement.

Paying for your rent

Your rent payment is due in HCHC's offices on or before the first day of each month.

How to pay your rent

You may pay your rent by any of the methods listed below. HCHC prefers tenants to pay by pre-authorized debit (PAD), as this option is simple and ensures that the rent is paid on time.

Acceptable forms of payment include:

- Pre-authorized debit (PAD).
- Online bill payment (through select institutions).
- Post-dated cheques made out to HCHC.
- Money orders made out to HCHC.
- Direct payment from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program.

HCHC charges \$20 for any non-sufficient fund (NSF) payments made by personal cheque or PAD. This charge is in addition to any potential charges from your financial institution.

Non-payment of rent and other charges

At the beginning of each month, HCHC staff reviews tenant accounts to check for any cases of non-payment of rent. If you have not paid your rent, staff will take steps to collect the amount owing. These steps may include any or all of the following:

- Sending you a reminder letter by mail.
- Contacting you by phone or email.
- Knocking on your door to try to reach you in person.
- Pursuing collection through the Landlord and Tenant Board.
- Issuing a Notice to End a Tenancy for Non-payment of Rent.

If you are having trouble paying your rent, please contact your Tenant Services Advisor. HCHC offers a number of supports to tenants who are having trouble with payments.

Paying for utilities

Some HCHC properties include the cost of utilities in the rent, while others require tenants pay some or all of the costs of utilities separately. This information is given to you at the time of your housing offer, and again when you sign your lease.

If utilities are not included in your rent, you must arrange to have the utilities accounts placed in your name as of your date of occupancy. As this can take a few days to arrange, please contact the utility suppliers before you move in. HCHC will contact you to remind you to do this if necessary.

HCHC will pay for any utility charges until you put the account in your name and will invoice you for the costs.

If you are not sure if you are responsible for paying utility services directly, please review your signed lease agreement or contact your Tenant Services Advisor (see Who to Contact - Quick Access on page 6).

Reducing the cost of utilities

HCHC tries to reduce energy consumption and lower greenhouse gases by installing energy-efficient mechanical systems and appliances. You can help with this effort by being careful about how much water and energy you use. If you pay for your own utilities, reducing your consumption will save you money. If HCHC pays for these utilities, reducing consumption is still helpful, as it allows us to use the resources in other ways to benefit all tenants.

Here are some ways that you can reduce consumption:

- Report running toilets or slow leaks promptly.
- Use natural light or task lighting instead of overhead light fixtures.
- Turn off lights and electronics when not in use and turn off outside lights during the day.
- Don't open windows when the heat or air conditioning is running.
- Turn water off when brushing teeth.

Visit [Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca) for more information on how to use less electricity at home and [halton.ca](https://www.halton.ca) for information on water efficiency and [conservation](#).



Parking

Tenant parking

You will be assigned a tenant parking space once you register your vehicle with HCHC (see below). You may be placed on a waiting list for a space if one is not available at the time of your request.

Parking spaces are assigned based on availability in the community you live in:

- Additional spaces may be considered for other licensed drivers in your household (one space per licensed driver; fees apply).
- Additional spaces will not be issued if you owe arrears.

You must park **only** in your assigned parking space (or in your driveway or garage if you have one). Tenants must not park in visitor spaces or in spaces designated for HCHC staff and contractors. Your vehicle may be ticketed or towed if this parking requirement is not followed.

Registering your vehicle with HCHC

You must register your vehicle before parking it on HCHC property. HCHC will only register roadworthy vehicles in suitable operating condition and meeting accepted standards for safe driving on the road. Vehicles must have current licence plates and insurance and be validated by the Ministry of Transportation. HCHC does not permit tractor-trailers, boats, buses, cube vans, trailers, recreational vehicles, camper trailers, or vehicles that weigh more than 3,000 kilos to be parked on-site.

To register your vehicle, you need to complete the form you were given in your tenancy application package. Please submit the registration form to your Tenant Services Coordinator with a copy or photo of the following:

- Front and back of the vehicle ownership papers.
- Vehicle insurance documents.
- Valid driver's licence.
- Proof that the above documents have been updated to your HCHC address within 30 days of your move in (submit new copies or pictures as proof).

Ticketing and Towing

Any vehicles in violation of the parking rules may be ticketed or towed at any time.

If you or your guest receive a parking ticket and wish to dispute it, follow the dispute process found on the ticket.

If someone parks in your assigned space, please call 311 to report the date, time and provide the vehicle information (plate number, make/model and colour).

You must also advise your Tenant Services Coordinator of any change to your vehicle or license plate to avoid being ticketed (including rental or loaner vehicles).

Fees for parking

All parking fees are added to your standard monthly fees. HCHC may increase parking fees annually. You will be given a minimum of 30 days' notice if fees are increased.

- Assigned parking fees range depending on availability, location and amenities.
- There is no fee for townhouse driveway or garage parking.
- Additional parking spaces may be considered but will incur a higher cost than the first parking space.

E-bikes and mobility scooters

HCHC does not issue parking spaces for e-bikes, mobility scooters, or similar devices. These vehicles may be stored only in your own rental space, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by HCHC.

You are not permitted to park any mobility vehicle in common areas or stairwells. Some buildings have designated charging and storage stations for mobility scooters. Please speak to your Tenant Services Advisor if you have questions.

Accessible parking

Accessible parking spots for tenants are assigned only to modified accessible vehicles that require additional space. These parking spots are monitored by local municipal parking enforcement. A vehicle will be ticketed and/or towed at the owner's expense if no valid permit and windshield sticker are displayed.

Accessible visitor spaces will not be assigned to tenants.

Visitor and guest parking

Visitors may park only in spaces designated as visitor parking. If you have overnight guests, you must register their vehicles using the registration information on the next page (patrols are on duty between 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. daily). Each household is allowed up to seven overnight parking registrations per month. Guest parking is not guaranteed and is dependent on availability.

You can register your overnight guest's vehicle online at mobilesupport.ca or by phone at 1-877-820-7744, using your visitor parking PIN, which was provided to you when you signed your lease. If you have forgotten your PIN, contact your Tenant Services Coordinator during

business hours. The graphic below shows how to register a vehicle over the phone using your PIN.

Note: Sharing PINs between households is not permitted.

Visitor Parking Phone Registration

Use the chart to the right for number and letter codes.

Call 1-877-820-7744

1. Enter your PIN.
2. Enter your unit number and press # at the end.
3. Enter the guest plate number and press # at the end.
4. Enter 1 for 24 hours or 2 for 48 hours.

Example

Enter license plate BLT 457 as *11 *21 *29 *4 *5 *7

Enter unit #100 as *1 *0 *0 #

Number Codes

0 = *0

1 = *1

2 = *2

3 = *3

4 = *4

5 = *5

6 = *6

7 = *7

8 = *8

9 = *9

Letter Codes

A = *10

B = *11

C = *12

D = *13

E = *14

F = *15

G = *16

H = *17

I = *18

J = *19

K = *20

L = *21

M = *22

N = *23

O = *24

P = *25

Q = *26

R = *27

S = *28

T = *29

U = *30

V = *31

W = *32

X = *33

Y = *34

Z = *35

Living in your home: Rules and guidelines

The rules and guidelines in this section (arranged alphabetically by topic) apply to all units, properties, and tenancies of HCHC. For more information, contact your Tenant Services Advisor.

Antennas and satellite dishes

You are not permitted to install or use any radio antenna, television antenna, or satellite dish outside your unit without written approval from HCHC. Contact your Tenant Services Advisor if you have questions.

Air conditioners

You must notify us before installing any type of air conditioner in your unit. Call 311 to have a request form mailed to you, or download it at halton.ca/hchc. The air conditioner must be safely installed and not damage the building. You may not install central air conditioning systems in HCHC buildings.

If you install an air conditioner without notifying HCHC in advance and the installation is not compliant, you may be required to remove it, whether or not the air conditioner is being used. If you do not remove it in the time stated, HCHC will arrange to have it removed at your expense.

Refrigerators and stoves

HCHC supplies both a refrigerator and a stove in your home. Keep your burner pans and oven clean and grease-free to reduce the possibility of fire.

All appliances work better and have a longer life span if you clean them regularly and have them maintained when needed. If you have any problems with appliances supplied by HCHC, call 311 or fill out the online maintenance request form at halton.ca/hchc.

Electric baseboard heaters

Keep all materials that can burn away from heating sources, at least a three-foot clearance.

- Do not hang clothing or other items to dry on or near your heater or heating vents.
- Avoid placing furniture and blankets close to heaters.
- Keep curtains away from heaters.

Laundry appliances

If you live in a townhouse, semi-detached, or detached unit, your home is equipped with hook-ups to install your own washer and dryer. These hook-ups are in the basement for non-accessible units or on the main floor of most accessible units.

All apartment communities (and some townhouses) have shared laundry rooms. Tenants in apartments are not permitted to install washing machines in their own unit as they can cause flooding or other plumbing issues.

Laundry pay system

- Common area washers and dryers operate on a card system. Cards can be purchased from the laundry card machine located in your building.
- You can load money on laundry cards using Interac (debit), Visa, or MasterCard. Contact the vendor (information on the machine) if the machines are empty.

- Treat your card as if it were cash; keep it in a safe place.
- HCHC cannot issue a refund if you lose your card.

Using the machines

- Laundry room facilities are for cleaning tenant laundry only.
- Leave washers and dryers clean after your laundry is finished and please do not leave your laundry unattended once the cycle is complete.
- Tenants are not permitted to wash carpets, rugs, or pet bedding in laundry machines. Please be respectful of others and use only one washing machine and one dryer at a time.
- Call the service number posted on the laundry room wall in your building to report damaged or faulty equipment.

Hot water tanks

In most townhouse, semi-detached, and detached home communities, your hot water tank is rented, not owned. You are responsible for maintaining the rental and if repairs are needed, must call Reliance Home Comfort directly at 1-888-837-1451.

Home-based businesses

You are permitted to operate a home-based business or work from your home under the following conditions:

- The business must comply with all appropriate federal, provincial, and municipal by-laws and legislation.
- You have appropriate and adequate liability insurance for the business.
- If you are operating a childcare business, you are part of a childcare registry or enrolled with a licensed home childcare provider.
- The business does not violate any part of your tenancy agreement or any of the rules and regulations of the tenancy.

Note: HCHC will not be responsible in any case if legal action is taken against the business.

Pest control

HCHC uses an integrated pest management approach to prevent, monitor, and treat pest issues. To be effective, tenants must also be active participants in this approach. HCHC has a “no shame, no blame” approach to pest control.

Some of your responsibilities as a tenant are:

- Reporting suspected pest infestations as soon as you become aware of them.
- Keeping your home clean.
- Cooperating with treatment instructions when an infestation is confirmed.
- Storing waste items in enclosed containers and disposing of waste regularly.
- Not feeding wildlife.

Please refer to the Pest Education Toolkit that was provided to you before you moved in. It is also available online at halton.ca/hchc along with HCHC's Integrated Pest Management Policy.

Pets

HCHC recognizes that pets are an important part of many families. You are responsible for any pet you own and must follow local by-laws concerning the type and number of pets kept in your unit.

You are responsible for:

- Repairing any damages caused by your pet.
- Ensuring your pet is always on a leash or in an enclosed carrier in common areas (hallways, elevators, outdoor space, including unfenced backyards).
- Ensuring your pet is not left unattended outdoors, even when on a leash.
- Scooping your pet's waste immediately, even in your own yard.
- Licensing your pet according to municipal by-laws.
- Disposing cat litter properly (Do not put cat litter in apartment garbage chutes or in toilets; please take the bag down to the main floor garbage room in multi-storey properties).

Tenants are encouraged to try to resolve complaints about pets directly with the pet's owner. If the issue is not resolved, please contact your Tenant Services Advisor.

In extreme cases, the landlord can apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to evict a tenant who has a pet and is not compliant with the expectations above. For example, if:

- The pet makes too much noise or damages the unit.
- The pet is dangerous.

Recycling and waste disposal

HCHC encourages all residents to participate in recycling and green bin programs in Halton Region. Visit halton.ca/For-Residents/Recycling-Waste to find:

- Where to get your free green and blue boxes.
- What day to place your waste at the curb.

- How to properly dispose of items by searching the “Put Waste in its Place” sorting tool on [Halton.ca](https://www.halton.ca).
- How to report a missed collection to Halton Region Waste Management.
- When to put out bulk waste and how to book an appointment for metal pickup.

Apartment buildings

Garbage and recycling is available in all apartment buildings. Some buildings also have green cart collection. Recycling and green carts are located in designated areas of the building.

Please follow all direction provided to you by your Tenant Services Advisor and Tenant Services Coordinator at key release.



TIPS

- Put garbage in small, securely tied plastic bags and drop them down the garbage chute. Please do not leave garbage on chute room floors, and do not use chutes for kitty litter or diapers. Please double-bag kitty litter and diapers and take them to the main floor garbage room.
- Take all recycling and green cart materials directly to the bins.
- For bulk items, use the bulk collection bins that are placed on site twice a year. (You will receive advance notice of the dates.) Please do not leave bulk items anywhere on the property unless you have arranged timely pick up of the items by a waste management contractor.

Townhouses and single-family homes

- Curbside pickup is available for garbage and recycling.
- Put out waste at the curb between 5 p.m. the evening before collection day and 7 a.m. on collection day.
- Do not leave any personal items near the curb that could be mistaken for waste (e.g., bikes or toys).
- Bag and tie all garbage and organic material. Loose items will not be collected.
- After pick-up, remove empty recycling and garbage bins from the curb the same day, and store them appropriately (in the garage or on back patio).
- For townhouse communities with totes and/or dumpsters, do not overfill these bins. Lids should be able to fully close to discourage animals.
- For bulk items, use the bulk collection bins that are placed on site twice a year. (You will receive advance notice of the dates.) Do not leave bulk items anywhere on the property

unless you have arranged timely pick up of the items by a waste management contractor.

You are responsible for storing and placing your waste and recycling materials correctly. If you leave ineligible items at the curb, HCHC could remove them and invoice you for the removal service.

Call 311 if you have questions or concerns.

Hazardous waste

It is your responsibility to arrange for the disposal of hazardous waste such as needles, paint, paint thinner, and batteries. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist about the safe disposal of needles and medications.

Call 311 or visit halton.ca for more information.

Smoking in a tenant's private residence

Some HCHC properties are smoke free. Occupants are not allowed to smoke in their unit unless they live in a building that is not designated smoke free and have not signed an agreement for their unit to be smoke free.

All HCHC staff and contractors have the right to ask a person not to smoke in their presence while they are performing their duties. If anyone refuses the request to stop smoking in their presence, HCHC staff or contractors may leave the unit.

See the section "Living in Your Community" on page 21 for smoking rules in common areas.

Windows, screens, and balconies

The following requirements are in place to ensure the safety of tenants and to prevent damage to HCHC buildings.

Windows

- You cannot hang clothing or other items at any time from your windows.
- You cannot remove window safety stops.
- You cannot place items on the exterior windowsills.
- You cannot throw any item from a window or balcony.
- You cannot remove any window screen or pane, except for approved window air conditioner unit installation or for cleaning and repair, after which case the screen or pane must be immediately replaced.

Balconies

- You cannot use your balcony for storage. Doing so can create an unsafe environment:
 - materials may blow off the balcony, and children may climb on objects increasing the chance of serious injury.
- Please do not put any type of carpet on the balcony. It is a trip hazard, and it can speed up the deterioration of the concrete.
- You cannot hang clothing, planters, lights or anything else over the railings. They must be hung on the inside of the balcony.
- Please do not put a feeder (for birds, squirrels, or other wildlife) on the balcony.
- Barbecues and propane or gasoline tanks are not allowed, even on a first-floor balcony. Many communities have common barbecues you may use at no charge.
- Never leave children or pets unattended on a balcony.

Your unit exterior

Before making any alterations to the exterior of your home, please speak to your Tenant Services Advisor to see if it is permitted.

- You cannot attach items such as satellite dishes, antennas, clotheslines, and basketball nets to the exterior of your unit.
- Please do not install fences or gates.
- Please do not place any structures, store equipment, plant gardens, or landscape in any outdoor areas that are not assigned to your unit.
- Please do not display any sign, advertisement, or notice, except for campaign posters during a federal, provincial, or municipal election. (See HCHC's Elections Policy at Halton.ca/hchc).

Welcoming visitors and guests in your home

You are welcome to have visitors and overnight guests at your unit. You are responsible for ensuring your visitors and guests follow the rules of your housing community.

Length of stay

You may have **visitors** to your home as often as you wish.

Overnight guests are limited to staying no more than 30 days in any 12-month period. These 30 days:

- May be consecutive or non-consecutive days.
- May be within any 12-month period and not necessarily within a single year (for example, October to October).
- Apply to any one individual who stays as an overnight guest in the unit.

An overnight guest who stays more than the maximum allowable time may be considered an unauthorized occupant. This may affect your reduced rent or rent-geared-to-income (RGI) amount for tenants receiving subsidized rent.

While income verification is not required for market rent tenants, HCHC still needs to know who lives in a unit for safety and emergency purposes.

Rules for visitors and overnight guests

All visitors and guests must follow the rules of the community at all times when on HCHC property.

HCHC will take prompt action if a visitor or guest (or anyone in your household):

- Causes serious damage to your unit, the building, or the residential complex.
- Makes noise or acts in a way that seriously bothers any other tenant or the landlord.
- Threatens the safety of another tenant or anyone employed by the landlord.
- Does not comply with your tenancy agreement or related policies.
- Breaks the law on HCHC's property.

Please speak to your Tenant Services Advisor if you have questions. The Visitor and Guest Policy is available at [Halton.ca/hchc](https://halton.ca/hchc).

Living in your community: Rules and guidelines

Living in an HCHC community requires cooperation and consideration for everyone within the community. The rules and guidelines below (arranged alphabetically by topic) apply to common areas of concern for all units, properties, and tenancies of HCHC. For more information, contact your Tenant Services Advisor.

Common spaces

Common spaces, both indoors and outdoors, are for the enjoyment of all tenants. Please use these spaces cooperatively and respectfully with other tenants.

- For safety, please keep all common spaces clear. Sidewalks, passages, public halls, stairways, fire escapes, and vestibules must not be obstructed or used for any purpose other than gaining access to and from the space.
- Do not leave personal items in any common space. They could be removed and disposed of without notice.

Using indoor common spaces

Some buildings have indoor common rooms available for tenants to use for community-related events. If you wish to book the room for a private function, contact your Tenant Services Coordinator with as much notice as possible. They will confirm room availability and share rules for use with you.

- As a courtesy, if a private function is booked in a common room, the room is closed to other tenants for use during the function.
- There is no fee to use the common rooms, but a damage or cleaning deposit may be required. If you do not clean up after your event, or if you or your guests cause damages, you will not receive your deposit back. You may also be required to pay for additional costs related to the damage made.

Lawn care

HCHC will mow grass in common areas and open backyards, but tenants must ensure their lawns are clear of their possessions (patio sets, toys, bicycles, etc.). If HCHC cannot access your backyard, you will be responsible for mowing your own grass.

You are encouraged to rake, water, and weed your own yard and garden, and keep the area neat and orderly.

Outdoor structures

Sheds, decks, and other permanent outdoor structures are not permitted unless you have received written permission from your Tenant Services Advisor.

Outdoor toys and play structures (for example, plastic slides, playhouses, bikes, trampolines) must be stored in your own rented space. Items left in common spaces may be removed and disposed of without notice.

Playgrounds

Many HCHC communities have recreational playgrounds. It is mandatory that an adult be present to supervise children while they are in the playground. Please report any safety issues to HCHC right away.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in common areas or enclosed public spaces. Tenants are responsible to ensure that they and anyone who resides in or visits their home do not smoke in prohibited areas.

Halton Region's [Smoking and Vaping in Public Places By-Law No. 40-20](#) prohibits smoking tobacco or cannabis, or using an electronic cigarette, at public parks within nine metres of any entrance or exit to a municipally owned or leased building and within nine metres of any entrance or exit to a child care centre.

Snow removal

If you live in a townhouse or semi-detached or detached home, HCHC will clear snow and ice from all common walkways and roadways. Salting will be done in common areas as required. Tenants are responsible for the clearing of their own driveways and walkways.

In apartment buildings, HCHC will clear snow and ice from all common walkways, roadways, and parking lots, including tenant parking spaces.

Standing water

Avoid anything that allows standing water to collect. Standing water is an ideal breeding area for mosquitos, which are known to transmit West Nile Virus.

Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out any items that may hold water, such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpot saucers, or trash containers.

Swimming pools

Permanent or semi-permanent pools or ponds that use filtration systems are not permitted. If you use a temporary swimming pool, you must follow these safety rules:

- Pools must be above ground and less than 11 inches / 28 centimetres deep.
- Pools must be set up outdoors in your own rented space. They are not allowed in common space.
- Adult supervision is mandatory when the pool is being used.
- Pools must be emptied after each use and turned upside down.
- You must have accident insurance that covers the pool.

Any pool or water feature found to be in violation of these rules may be removed at your cost.

Safety and security

HCHC tenants are entitled to live in well-managed communities that are safe and secure. That's why HCHC partners with tenants and other organizations (including the police) to keep communities well maintained and safe from hazards and any activities that may contribute to unsafe or unreasonable conditions. This includes working to reduce and address any illegal activities and unacceptable behaviours.

Tenants are also responsible for helping to keep communities safe and secure. This includes

ensuring that they, members of their household, and their visitors or guests do not become involved in illegal or anti-social behaviour toward other tenants, visitors, contractors, or employees on HCHC property. HCHC will provide support or referral to supports for tenants who have been victimized.

HCHC will always work to preserve tenancies wherever possible but will strongly respond to any act that is illegal, causes significant damage to HCHC property, impairs the safety of any person or substantially interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of the HCHC community. All reasonable steps will be taken before terminating a tenancy and to ensure that eviction proceedings, when taken, are legal, fair and consistent in all cases.

IN AN EMERGENCY, call 911 (police, fire, ambulance).

Some emergency examples include:

- Fire and medical emergencies.
- Natural gas leak or carbon monoxide detector going off.
- Domestic disturbances with violence.
- Assault or crimes in progress.

Call the [Halton Regional Police](#) non-emergency number **905-825-4777**:

- When a crime has occurred that requires police but the crime is not currently in progress, there is no immediate threat to public safety or property, and there are no bodily injuries.
- To make a non-urgent report (for example, suspicious behaviour).
- For police information or advice.
- To reach any member of the Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS).

To report urgent building or unit related issues, call 311, 905-825-6000 or 1-866-442-5866 twenty-four hours per day to report.

Apartment building safety and security

Help to protect yourself and your neighbours by keeping your building as safe as possible:

- Please keep your apartment door locked at all times.
- Please do not prop open entrance doors or allow anyone to enter the building who is not your guest.
- Please do not prop your apartment door open. Doing so is a fire hazard and makes it easy for unwanted guests or intruders to enter your home.
- Please do not give out copies of your keys. HCHC cannot manage access to your building if you have provided others with keys.

- Please always keep hallways clear of items such as scooters, wheelchairs, walkers, boot trays, and doormats. This will help emergency workers and cleaning staff when they need to access the area.
- If you see something happen and you think a person or property is in immediate danger, please immediately call 911 to report the emergency.

No soliciting

HCHC does not permit soliciting in its buildings. Salespeople may claim to be Halton Region employees or claim to have the permission of the Region to enter your building. Always ask for identification of anyone you do not know or who claims to be an employee of Halton Region.

Candidates for elections may campaign door-to-door as allowed by municipal, provincial, and federal legislation as outlined in HCHC's [Elections Policy](#).

Extended absences from your home

If you plan to be away from your home for an extended period, be sure to close and lock all your doors and windows before you leave. Consider using window locking devices for additional security.

Before you leave, contact your Tenant Services Advisor to let them know that you will be away to avoid unintended consequences:

- If your unit is empty and you are late paying rent or have arrears, your unit could be considered abandoned.
- Long absences from your unit could affect your eligibility for reduced rent or rent-geared-to-income (speak to your Integrated Housing Worker for details, their contact information can be found on page 6).

HCHC recommends you also contact your tenant insurance provider to determine if your absence could affect your policy.

Fraud and scams

Be aware of fraud and scam attempts by mail, phone, email, text, and even door to door. Trust your instincts: if something sounds suspicious or seems to be too good to be true, it may be an attempted scam.

Here are some resources that could help you protect against fraud and scams:

- *The Little Black Book of Scams*: This book, available online at competitionbureau.gc.ca, provides information about the most common types of scams and what to do if you have become a victim of a scam.

- **Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre website**: The website of the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre collects information on fraud and identity theft and provides information on common scams affecting Canadians.
- **GetCyberSafe.ca**: This national public awareness campaign was created to inform Canadians about cyber security and the simple steps they can take to protect themselves online.
- **CRA Slam the Scam**: This web page offers education on recognizing scams and protecting yourself against identity theft.

Fire safety

Fire prevention equipment

To protect against fire, HCHC properties are equipped with appropriate safety equipment, including fire alarms, door closers, and smoke detectors.

Every unit has a smoke detector on each floor. All units with gas-fired appliances, and those units above, below, or beside a service room with a gas-fired appliance have a carbon monoxide detector. In many units, there are combination smoke/carbon monoxide detectors.

Smoke detectors are tested when you are provided with your key at move-in and annually by HCHC staff. HCHC inspects all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replaces batteries annually. Call Maintenance Service at 311 to report faulty equipment right away.

Equipment tips:

- **Never** disconnect or disable your smoke detector. If you suspect your smoke detector is faulty, it is your responsibility to report it to HCHC Maintenance Services without delay.
- **Never** disconnect your carbon monoxide detector.
- It is illegal to tamper with or disconnect any heat, smoke, or carbon monoxide detectors, fire alarms, door closers, or any other safety equipment that HCHC has installed in your home or in the building.

Fire safety tips

Many fires are preventable. These tips can help to prevent an accidental fire in your home:

- Please do not leave pots or pans unattended on the stove.
- Please do not hang curtains, towels, paper, or other combustible materials above the stove.
- Have a fire extinguisher available in the kitchen. Never carry a burning pot to the sink or outdoors, and do not put water on a grease fire.
- Candles or incense are common causes of accidental fires and not recommended. If you do use candles or incense, never leave them unattended.
- Please do not leave lit cigars or cigarettes unattended, or smoke in bed.
- Please do not sleep in the basement as it does not have proper fire exits (applies to detached, semi-detached and townhouse properties).

- Please use temporary space heaters with extreme caution; never leave them on when you leave the room.
- Please keep combustible materials at least one metre from appliances such as furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces, and electrical panels.
- Please use electric cords safely. Do not place them under rugs or where they can be walked on or damaged. Regularly check for cords that are broken, frayed, damaged, tied in knots, or that have melted insulation. Have them repaired or replaced promptly.
- Please use extension cords with three-pronged plugs only as a temporary measure, use power bars instead. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and powerbars.
- Please use only ULC/CSA-approved power bars and avoid overloading circuits.
- Have a plan: talk to your local fire department about how to create a family fire escape plan. **Practice your family home escape plan regularly.**

If there is a fire

- Leave the fire area immediately.
- Close the door in the fire area; do not lock it.
- Pull the nearest fire alarm.
- Call 911 once you are in a safe location.

When an audible fire alarm sounds, or a visual strobe flashes:

- Stop what you are doing.
- Feel a door for heat before opening it.

If you live in an apartment:

- If smoke is heavy in the corridor, it may be safer to remain in your apartment:
 - Keep your apartment door closed and unlocked.
 - Place a wet towel at the base of door.
 - Call 911 to advise them of your location.
 - Wait on balcony or in the solarium.
 - Signal your position by waving.
 - Follow all direction provided by the Fire Department.

If you live in a townhome, semi or detached home:

- Exit the premises and meet your family in a prearranged location.
- Call 911 once you are in a safe location.

You can view more fire safety tips at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/fire-safety-home>

Emergency preparedness

Emergencies can happen at any time, and your best defense is to be prepared!

Find more information online at: halton.ca/For-Residents/Emergency-Preparedness, including:

- *Emergency Preparedness: Your Personal Guide.*
- Videos on how to be prepared.
- Tips for household plans and how to prepare 72-hour emergency kits.

Home maintenance

HCHC performs routine, regularly scheduled maintenance to ensure the continued safe and effective operation of properties. For example.

- Annual smoke and carbon monoxide detector checks.
- Annual HVAC (furnace) inspections and filter replacement.
- Electrical safety authority (ESA) inspections.
- Annual unit inspections.

HCHC staff also support tenants when they need repairs in their unit. Requests are responded to as soon as possible, but please note that priority is given to urgent and emergency repairs.

- **For emergency repairs**, call 311 or 905-825-6000 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- To submit a maintenance request, visit halton.ca/HCHC (see the chart below for more details).

Urgent Repairs Call 311 24 hours a day	Priority repairs Use the online form or call 311	Routine Maintenance Use online form or call 311
Flooding	Leaky faucet	Light fixtures
Gas leak	Running toilet	Doorbells
Roof leak	Fridge or stove repairs	Towel bars
Dangerous electrical issue	Grab bar repairs	Drywall repairs
Broken smoke or CO detector	Pest control	Cabinet repairs
Loss of heat		Interior door repairs

BEFORE YOU CALL: Refer to the section below on basic maintenance.

Accessing your unit for maintenance and repairs

In an emergency, (e.g., flood or fire), if there is threat to lives, or when substantial damage threatens the building or unit, staff are permitted to enter your unit with NO notice.

For basic or routine maintenance that requires access to your unit, you will be given at least 24 hours written notice unless you are home and willing to accommodate staff or have otherwise provided your express permission.

Basic maintenance

No heat

Before you call for assistance:

- Make sure the furnace power switch (similar to a light switch located near the furnace) is in the ON position.
- Check that the furnace filter is clean. Before opening the furnace access panel to check, turn off the furnace power switch. Then, after checking the filter, close the furnace access panel and turn the power switch back on. Make sure the access panel is closed fully.
- Check the fuse or circuit breaker (located in the main electrical panel of your home).
- If your heating system thermostat has settings for both heating and cooling, check that it is in the heat position.
- Turn up the thermostat a few degrees and see if your heating system comes on.
- Make sure your warm air registers and cold air returns are free of any items that could restrict air circulations.
- Make sure there is a 0.9 metre clearance around furnaces and water heaters.
- If your heating system fails to operate, turn your system off and contact us.



TIPS

- Know where your home's main electric switch is, so you can turn off the electric supply to your entire home quickly in case of an emergency.
- Know where your fuse box or circuit breaker box is located.

Clogged toilet

Before you call for assistance, **please try to clear the clog yourself:**

- Place the cup of the toilet plunger over the outlet opening (a flanged plunger works best on toilets).
- Pour enough water into the bowl to cover the rubber cup.
- Plunge down and up rapidly.
- Pour a bucket of water into the bowl. If water passes through, flush the toilet several times to wash debris through the drain.

Running toilet

Some toilets run constantly. This may happen if the float arm doesn't rise high enough, the float

ball has become waterlogged, the tank stopper (flapper) doesn't sit in the valve properly, or an inlet valve doesn't shut off.

Before you call for assistance:

- Reach into the tank and reset the tank stopper (flapper) in the flush valve or try bending the float arm down or away from the tank.

Tripped circuit breaker

Before you call for assistance:

- Try to reset the breaker switch. Turn off or unplug appliances on the circuit, then push the switch firmly to the OFF position, and then back ON. If the overload is cleared, the electricity will come back on.

If your circuit breaker trips repeatedly, there could be a problem with the appliances on that circuit, or too many devices plugged in. If the appliances are unplugged but the circuit breaker trips again, please contact HCHC Maintenance Services who will investigate.

Note: If your home is equipped with fuses, never replace a fuse with a one of higher amperage. Only replace a fuse in your home if you know how.

Water leaks

Before you call for assistance, help prevent further damage by turning the water off:

- Shut off the main valve, if necessary. To drain the water lines, open faucets at the highest and lowest points in your home (top floor and basement).
- Shut off individual valves as necessary (sinks and toilets). Turn the valve clockwise to stop water flow, then open a faucet or flush the toilet to release water standing in the lines.



TIPS

- Know where the main water shut-off valve is (located near the water meter). Do not turn the handles too hard as the valve stems can break, which will require replacement or repair.
- Individual shut-off valves (sinks and toilets) are generally located at the supply tubes to the fixture.
- For outdoor taps, the shut-off is usually in the basement ceiling or inside a kitchen or bathroom cupboard.
- To prevent broken water pipes in freezing temperatures, turn off the water to your outdoor hoses in the winter.

Tenant charges for repairs

If a member of your household, or a visitor/guest to your unit causes property damage, HCHC will send you an invoice for the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged property. You may also be charged for staff time if they have to go to your unit for something other than equipment failure or repairs related to normal wear and tear.

Some reasons for charging tenants include, but are not limited to:

- Staff having to attend after hours (e.g., for lock changes/locked out of unit).
- Lost keys or laundry cards.
- Utilities not placed in your name (if required by your lease).
- Repair or replacement of tenant or visitor/guest damages to HCHC property.
- Removal of garbage or bulk materials that have not been stored or placed out correctly.

HCHC will consider the condition and life span of the property when assessing the amount to charge the tenant.

Moving out

You must give at least 60 days' written notice before moving out of your unit.

Steps to ending the tenancy:

- Complete the Landlord and Tenant Board's form [N9 – Tenant's Notice to End the Tenancy](#). The termination date you use on the N9 must be the last day of the rental period (that is, the last day of the month). For example, if you give your notice on May 14, the final day of your tenancy will be July 31—being a minimum of 60 days' notice, with the tenancy ending on the last day of the month.
- Submit your N9 to the attention of your Tenant Services Advisor. (You can leave it in the site drop box.)
- Follow up by phone or email in a few days to ensure that the form has been received.

HCHC will send you a letter to confirm the end of your tenancy and provide instructions on what you must do before you leave.

- You are responsible to pay rent and utilities (if applicable) and maintain tenant's insurance until the final day of your tenancy. Please contact the utility providers to advise them of your move-out date so that they can prepare your final bill.
- Please provide a forwarding address so HCHC can contact you after you move out, if needed. If you have unpaid charges after you move out, and HCHC is not able to reach you, your arrears may be sent to a collection agency.

Policies and legislation

If you need more information about HCHC's policies or provincial legislation that affects your tenancy, refer to the resources below.

Policies

HCHC's 10 policies listed below are available online at [halton.ca/hchc](https://www.halton.ca/hchc). If you have questions about a policy, please contact your Tenant Services Advisor.

Halton Community Housing Corporation Policy List:

Accountability and Transparency

- Accessibility and Accommodation

- Formal Complaint Procedure

Legislated

- Internal Transfer

- Visitors/Guests

Tenancy Management

- Arrears Management

- HCHC Tenant Handbook

- Safe Communities

- Tenant Insurance

- Special Purpose Units

Units and Common Spaces

- Elections

- Integrated Pest Management

Halton Region Customer Code of Conduct

Employees and anyone working or acting on behalf of Halton Region are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. Equally, all customers are responsible for behaving in a manner to promote a respectful environment that can be shared by everyone. Customers are expected to be respectful in their communications and their conduct when dealing with Halton Region.

Please view <https://www.halton.ca/Terms-of-Use> to review the entire policy.

Legislation

HCHC policies and procedures all follow relevant provincial and federal legislation. The following list provides a brief overview of some of the most frequently referenced legislation:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

HCHC is committed to following Halton Region's Accessibility Plan and Policy to remove barriers and meet our obligations under the AODA as described here:

<https://www.halton.ca/The-Region/Accountability-and-Transparency/Accessibility>

For more information, visit [accesson.ca](https://www.accesson.ca) or [mcass.gov.on.ca](https://www.mcass.gov.on.ca).

Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA)

The Housing Services Act, 2011 allows for community-based planning and delivery of housing and homelessness services with general provincial oversight and policy direction. It sets out the requirements for rent-gear-to-income rent calculations, waiting lists, and other areas affecting tenants.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

All information relating to reduced rent tenants that is provided to, collected, or maintained by HCHC falls under the provisions of the MFIPPA. HCHC cannot share any information contained in your housing application and tenancy files with anyone, not even another family member, without your written permission.

Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code provides protection from discrimination and harassment based on race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religious beliefs, political beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, physical and mental disability, or receipt of social assistance. For more information, visit www.ohrc.on.ca/en.

Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA)

The purpose of the RTA is to:

- Protect residential tenants from unlawful rent increases and unlawful evictions.
- Establish a framework for regulating residential rents.
- Balance the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants.
- Provide other processes to informally resolve disputes.

The Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB)

The LTB is a provincial body established under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. It governs landlord and tenant issues and resolves disputes between both parties. You can reach the Landlord and Tenant Board at 1-888-332-3234 from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.