

WoodGreen Community Housing

Policy: Guests

Policy Type: Operational

Policy Area: Housing

Effective Date: 2004/01/01



1. Preamble

The Guest Policy applies to all WoodGreen Community Housing tenants. It is designed to:

- enable tenants to have visitors
- enable tenants to have live-in guests
- ensure both the WoodGreen Community Housing and tenants comply with provincial laws and regulations
- ensure subsidies reflect the true household income, including anyone who has moved into the unit
- ensure all tenants, including those who join the household, maintain the same high standards as other tenants in WoodGreen Community Housing
- treat tenants paying market rents, and tenants paying rent geared to their income, as equitably as possible while complying with provincial regulations.

This policy replaces the Authorized Occupant policy at WoodGreen Community Housing.

2. Policy

2.1 Definitions

Visitors: Persons who visit the tenant, but whose principal address is outside WoodGreen Community Housing.

Guests: Persons who do not have another address, but are staying with a tenant for a limited time while seeking a home. Their income is not included in the calculation of rent-geared-to-income.

Tenants: Persons who have signed a lease, and enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of tenancy.

Occupants: Persons who live in a unit with the permission of WoodGreen Community Housing and the original tenant, but do not have any right to remain in the unit after the original tenant moves out.

2.2 Visitors

Visitors may come to the unit as frequently as the tenant invites them. Very frequent visitors may be asked to demonstrate they have a principal address outside WoodGreen Community Housing.

2.3 **Guests**

Any tenant may invite guests into their unit without WoodGreen Community Housing's prior permission. However, tenants must report in writing to WoodGreen Community Housing any new persons in the unit within 30 days of their moving into the unit. Failure to disclose and document such additions to the household will result in the loss of RGI eligibility.

If a tenant wishes a guest to stay for longer than 30 days, he or she must write to the WoodGreen Community Housing office, stating the length of time the tenant wants the guest to stay.

WoodGreen Community Housing may agree to the stay (and will confirm in writing the length of the stay permitted.)

WoodGreen Community Housing may refuse the request if:

- it appears the guest does not intend, or has no prospects of, moving at the end of the agreed-to term, or
- staff or tenants have complained about the guest's behaviour, and those complaints have been found valid.

At the end of the term, WoodGreen Community Housing staff will check to ensure the guest has left. Guests who wish to stay beyond the term may apply to become tenants immediately (*see the section below on additions to the household*).

If a guest continues to stay in the unit without WoodGreen Community Housing's permission, WoodGreen Community Housing will cut off the household's rent subsidy with 90 days notice. The tenant has the right to ask for a review of this decision.

At all times, tenants are responsible for the behaviour of their guests and visitors.

When the tenant moves out of the unit, the guest must also move out. Any guests staying in the unit after the lease-holding tenant moves out will be removed.

2.4 **Additions to households that receive RGI subsidy**

Tenants must report any new persons in the unit within 30 days of their moving into the unit. Guests wishing to become tenants must make a written request to WoodGreen Community Housing before their term of stay is over.

Persons wishing to join a household receiving RGI subsidy must apply to WoodGreen Community Housing and submit proof of their income.

The person must be eligible to receive RGI subsidy in order for the household to continue to qualify for RGI subsidy. He or she must:

- be a Canadian citizen, landed immigrant or refugee claimant, not under a deportation or departure order
- not be in arrears to a social housing provider in Ontario
- not be guilty of obtaining RGI subsidy wrongfully, or of misrepresenting income, within the last two years

- not own residential property, unless they agree to sell their property within 180 days of moving in
- not have income or assets that place the household above local income or asset limits.

If the newcomer is not eligible for RGI subsidy, WoodGreen Community Housing will inform the tenant. WoodGreen Community Housing may allow the newcomer to become a tenant or occupant, but remove the household's subsidy with 90 days written notice.

If the newcomer is eligible for RGI subsidy, then WoodGreen Community Housing will allow him or her to become a tenant. The household, including the newcomer, will be required to sign a new lease.

WoodGreen Community Housing may also refuse to allow the newcomer to become a tenant, on grounds permitted under O. Regulation 339/01:

- it would be contrary to WoodGreen Community Housing's mandate
- they have a rental history of non-payment of rent
- WoodGreen Community Housing has reasonable grounds to believe that it is unreasonable for the household to reside in shared accommodation
- the physical characteristics of the unit do not suit the needs of the household
- if a special needs unit, the level of service required is significantly greater or less than the level of service needed by the household

If the newcomer insists on staying, then WoodGreen Community Housing may evict the entire household.

2.5 Unreported stays

WoodGreen Community Housing may hear from a third party that a new person may be staying in the unit. In this case:

- Housing staff will phone the tenant to ask for clarification. A letter should be sent if a phone call does not receive a response.
- If it is established there is a new person living in the unit (i.e. a person who has no other address, and no plans or prospects to move out) the occupant must apply to become a tenant (following the steps above).
- If the tenant denies there is another occupant, or the situation is unclear, then the housing staff will prepare a statement to be signed by the tenant, confirming their denial of the original allegations.

2.6 Additions to the household in market rent units

Tenants must report any new occupants in the unit within 30 days of their moving into the unit, in the same way as tenants paying rent-geared-to-income.

It is the decision of the market tenant as to whether they wish the guest to apply for tenancy rights to the unit. To have a guest become a tenant and be added to the lease, the tenant and the guest(s) must make a written request to WoodGreen Community Housing before their term of stay is over.

WoodGreen Community Housing will normally give permission for the newcomer to become a tenant, and will prepare a new lease for signature.

WoodGreen Community Housing may refuse to grant tenancy if the newcomer would not have been accepted had they been a member of the original household, i.e. the occupant has a record of damage, arrears, or disturbance to others). In this case, WoodGreen Community Housing may allow the newcomer to stay without signing the lease as an occupant. This means the original tenant would continue to be solely responsible for the rent. The tenant would also be responsible for the behaviour of the occupant. When the original tenant moved out, the occupant would also have to move out.

Approved by: WoodGreen Community Housing board

Date Approved: 2003/12/2