

FIRE SAFETY WHEN THE ELECTRICAL OR GAS SERVICES HAS BEEN TURNED OFF

Woodstoves and Fireplaces

- If you have not used the fireplace and woodstove for a long time, have it checked by a professional technician before using it. The chimney may be blocked or damaged, which could cause a fire or a build-up of carbon monoxide inside the building.
- Always empty ashes into a covered metal container and store them outside, away from flammable materials.

Portable Generators

- Portable generators should be used outdoors only. They should be carefully placed outside to ensure that fumes do not enter the building.
- Generators and hot gases should be kept away from flammable materials.
- Store fuel for the generator outside in an approved container a safe distance away from the building and generator.
- Refuel only after shutting it down and letting it cool. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Hire a licensed electrical contractor or electrician to install the unit. Have the installation inspected by the Electrical Safety Authority.



Candels/Other Lighting

- Place in secure candleholders, protected by a glass chimney.
- Keep candles away from all flammable materials, such as draperies, paper, etc.
- Place them out of reach of children and pets.
- Avoid walking with a lit candle or taking it into a closet or similar area to look for things.
- Put out candles when you leave the room or go to sleep and NEVER leave candles unattended.
- Keep all matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children.
- For other lighting use flashlights or chemical light sticks instead of candles or lanterns to reduce the risk of fire.

If you have any questions regarding fire safety in your home, contact:

Hamilton Emergency Services
Fire, Fire Prevention Division

Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 905.546.2424 Ext. 1380
Email: fire_department@hamilton.ca

Additional information can also be found on our website at:
<http://www.hamilton.ca/Fire>



Hamilton Emergency Services – Fire

For more information contact:

**Municipal Law Enforcement Section
Parking and By-law Services Division**
Planning and Economic Development Department
Hamilton City Centre - 77 James Street N
2nd Floor, Suite 250
Hamilton, Ontario, L8R 2K3
Website: www.hamilton.ca/mle

Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 905.546.2782
Email: mle@hamilton.ca

After Business Hours
Phone: 905.546.2489



PARKING AND BY-LAW SERVICES DIVISION
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



Introduction

The Vital Services By-law deals with utility shut off; fuel oil, electricity (hydro) and/or gas in rentals units in homes and/or apartments. The By-law was developed to help protect tenants and may assist you if you rent a home/apartment, and

1. Your landlord is the person/company responsible for the utility payments as part of your lease/rent agreement and;
2. Your utility has been or is about to be shut off because your landlord has not paid the utility bill for which they are responsible.

If you meet the above conditions the By-law may allow the City of Hamilton to pay the monthly service bills so that the service can be turned back on temporarily. As a tenant you need to know your rights so that you can consider the options available to you. The By-Law does not apply if the tenant has agreed as part of their lease/rent to pay the utility bills for a vital service (fuel, electricity and/or gas).

The City of Hamilton provides high quality services in a fiscally and socially responsible, environmentally sustainable and compassionate manner in order to ensure a healthy, safe and prosperous community.

What is the Law Regarding Vital Services?

If the landlord is the person/company responsible for paying for vital services as part of the lease/rent agreement, they shall provide an adequate suitable supply of these vital services to each of their rental units. No landlord shall end a vital service except:

- When necessary to change or repair the rental unit/or
- Only for the least amount of time necessary to correct the problem

The supplier of fuel, electricity or gas cannot legally stop providing the vital service to a rental unit unless notice of a discontinuance of the vital service has been given in writing to the City at least 30 days before the vital service is turned off.

PARKING AND BY-LAW SERVICES DIVISION
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



Where To Go For Help

It is important to contact your landlord first to discuss the situation. After you contact your landlord you can contact the following for assistance:

The City of Hamilton's *Municipal Law Enforcement* Section to lodge a formal complaint:

Monday - Friday

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Phone: 905.546.2782

Legal Clinics

Free legal advice and assistance regarding landlord/tenant matters is offered by a number of agencies based on your area in the City:

Dundurn Community Legal Services

Assistance for:

Downtown Hamilton, West End and Dundas

Phone: 905.527.4572

Hamilton-Mountain Legal Services

Assistance for:

Stoney Creek Mountain, Glanbrook and Ancaster

Phone: 905.575.9590

McQuesten Legal & Community Services

Assistance for:

Downtown east of Sherman,

Stoney Creek and Winona

Phone: 905.545.0442

Tenant and Housing Information

Landlord and Tenant Board:

- Resolves disputes between landlords and tenants
- Educates landlords and tenants about the rights and obligations each has under the Residential Tenancies Act
- Let the Board know that the City is temporarily paying the utility

Phone: 1.888.332.3234

Website: www.ltb.gov.on.ca

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- Investigates and enforces rental issues

Phone: 1.888.772.9277

Website: www.mah.gov.on.ca

Hamilton Tenant Helpline

- Provides basic information about tenants' rights and referrals to community resources

Phone: 905.526.9119

Housing Help Centre

- Offers free information and assistance regarding rights and responsibilities of tenants

Phone: 905.526.8100

Subsidized Housing

- Apply to access subsidized housing

Phone: 905.524.2228

Housing Allowance Program

- Provides affordable housing for low-income households that are on, or eligible to be on, a social housing wait list

Phone: 905.546.2424 ext. 1445

Community Legal Education Ontario

- Provides publications to help clients with legal problems, by describing the law as simply and clearly as possible

Phone: 416.408.4420

Website: www.cleo.on.ca

Tips if Your Electricity is Shut-Off

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to maintain their temperature.
- Without power, the refrigerator section will keep cool for 4-6 hours – if the door is kept closed.
- Without power, an upright or chest freezer that is completely full will keep food frozen for about two days. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for one day.
- Avoid opening and closing your refrigerator and freezer to check the food inside.
- If possible, add bags of ice to keep temperatures cooler for a longer period of time.
- Throw out perishable foods such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs and leftovers that have been at temperatures above 4°C for more than 2 hours.
- Throw out any food that is off-colour or has an odour as soon as possible.
- When in doubt, throw it out! If you are not sure whether an item is spoiled, play it safe and throw it out. Eating unsafe foods may cause food-borne illness.
- Contact a doctor or pharmacist for information about safe storage of medication that requires refrigeration (i.e. insulin).
- Be sure to discard any items in either the freezer or the refrigerator that have come into contact with raw meat juices.
- If the power is going to be off for an extended period of time, consider taking food to a freezer belonging to a friend or neighbour – if they have power!

FIRE SAFETY WHEN THE ELECTRICAL OR GAS SERVICES HAS BEEN TURNED OFF

Warning

When your electricity or gas service has been shut off or disconnected, great caution must be taken when thinking about other lighting, cooking and heating methods. The following information will help you ensure your family stays safe.

Alarms - Smoke, Carbon Monoxide

Alarms are very important for your family's safety. All alarms that work off electricity will not work when the electricity is off, unless they have battery backups. Test your alarms to find out if they work. Make sure your home has a battery-operated smoke and carbon monoxide alarm on every level. You are responsible for notifying your landlord that the electricity is off.

Home/Apartments Fire Escape Plan

It is important for your entire family to be prepared, make a family fire escape plan. Education and pre-planning are the best tools to help in an emergency.

- Determine two ways out of every room in your home
- Feel all doors, before opening. If the door feels normal open it carefully
- Crawl low if there is smoke or unusual heat
- Have an exact meeting place outside for all family members to meet
- Call 911 from a neighbour's house or other safe area
- Do not go back into your home for any reason. Once you are out, stay out
- Have at least one telephone (not cordless) that works during a power failure
- During power or gas shut offs, do regular safety checks of all rooms and keep a watchful eye on children and older adults.
- All high-rise buildings (apartments) will have an approved Fire Safety Plan posted throughout the building. Read this plan and talk to your family so they know what to do if there was a fire in the apartment unit or building

Flood Information

People must be aware of the possible danger with underwater live wires, electrical equipment, and water damaged appliances. DO NOT START to cleanup until a qualified electrician has inspected the location.

Once repairs are completed, the Electrical Safety Authority will need to complete a safety inspection before the service is turned back on.

Gas equipment including gas meters that have been exposed to flood waters may require the gas service to be shut off. Once the flood waters have cleared, Union gas will inspect the gas meter regulators and re-light appliances as deemed appropriate. Defective appliances must be inspected and repaired by licenced contractors.

Heating and Cooking

Make sure electric stove elements, ovens, kettle's, frying pans, clothes irons, hair-dryers, etc., are OFF or unplugged to prevent fire from starting when the electricity is turned back on.

Think carefully before you bring a fuel-burning appliance into your home. Any device that burns fuel requires oxygen to burn properly and ventilation to remove the deadly fumes that could start a fire. Carbon monoxide is made by any device fuelled by natural gas, propane, heating oil, kerosene, coal, charcoal, gasoline or wood. It is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas that can be deadly.

Propane and charcoal barbeques are to be used outdoors only. DO NOT bring them indoors for any reason!

Portable Space Heaters

- Use only portable space heaters that have been designed for indoor, home use.
- Read the manufacturer's suggestion for usage and follow the instructions carefully. Make sure you use the right fuel for the appliance.
- Provide lots of ventilation (air) by opening a window slightly, when the heater is in use.
- Before refueling, turn off the heater, wait for it to cool and take the heater outside to refill.
- Keep all heaters at least 1 m (3 feet) away from flammable materials including drapes, carpeting and furniture.
- Turn portable space heaters off when you are not in the room or going to sleep.



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