



COVID-19 and CityHousing Hamilton

March 16, 2020

Dear Tenants:

The information in this document is being provided to all CityHousing Hamilton tenants to keep you informed about our preparation and response to COVID-19. On behalf of CityHousing Hamilton, we want you to know that your health and safety is a top priority for us.

It is of key importance that you be assured that the overall risk of contracting COVID-19 in our geographical area remains low.

As an organization, we are making every reasonable effort to follow the guidelines as outlined in the City of Hamilton's Infection Control Guidelines.

The most important thing that you can do to mitigate the risk related to COVID-19 is to actively engage in taking universal precautions – this includes regular, thorough handwashing with soap and water, covering coughing and/or sneezing with your elbow or tissue, avoiding touching your face and engaging in social distancing (i.e. standing 6 feet away from others, not shaking hands, avoiding public spaces etc.).

What Pro-Active Action is CityHousing Taking in Response to COVID-19?:

Offices:

Effective March 17, 2020, our First Place Office located at 360 King St E will be closed until further notice.

For the time being, our main office location at 181 Main St W will remain open. We will be making some modifications to reduce the number of people permitted in the office space at any given time. If you do attend the office, please anticipate delays in service.

We encourage all tenants to **avoid attending the office** space in person wherever possible. Please arrange to make rent payments via online or telephone banking. Avoid having to make in person cash rent payment wherever possible. Any paperwork that needs to be handed in should be sent via mail, email (photos attached to email are acceptable) or put in the overnight drop box. All other inquiries regarding urgent maintenance, pest control, complaints etc. should be made by telephone only. We all have an important part to play in slowing down the spread of COVID-19. Your actions have an ability to have a significant impact.

Signage:

The management team is currently working on having signage posted regarding regular handwashing and covering your cough/sneeze in our reception areas and in our buildings at the entrances and in common spaces.

Enacting the Use of a Screening Assessment Tool:

We are enacting the use of a Screening Assessment Tool. The purpose of this tool is to screen, where possible, for COVID-19 exposure risk prior to any face to face contact between staff and tenants. The tool involves a few simple questions that staff are to ask via telephone call prior to any planned visit at a tenant's home and/or making a request that they attend the office. This means that you may be asked a few simple questions over the phone about your risk for exposure to COVID-19. Please be advised that we are asking these questions of all our tenants to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for both our tenants and staff. This will be our standard practice until further notice.

Continued Assessment/Adjustment/Suspension of Organizational Activities:

To preserve the health, safety and wellness of our tenants, staff and visitors **we are suspending the following activities until further notice:**

- 1) Annual Units Inspections
- 2) Site Office Hours for Property Managers and Tenant Support Workers
- 3) Annual General Meetings
- 4) Third party programming at all buildings (i.e. Exercise Classes, programming in Community Houses etc.)
- 5) All tenant-led programming
- 6) Common rooms and community spaces will be closed and locked

We will continue to regularly assess the situation related to organizational activities as COVID-19 progresses and act in accordance with recommendations from the City of Hamilton and Public Health.

Increased Cleaning:

Building Attendants will be cleaning the commonly touched surfaces in all buildings twice per day (i.e. counters, switches, handrails, handles, elevator buttons etc). The Reception and Finance counter top areas at 181 Main St W and 360 King St E will be wiped down with disinfectant wipes twice per day and hand sanitizer will be made available for staff and visitor use.

Urgent Maintenance and Tenants in Isolation:

There is a very minimal probability at this time that we will come across a situation where a tenant is in isolation due to COVID-19 and has a maintenance related emergency. However, we are planning for this scenario in the unlikely event that it does arise. The Maintenance Department has designated three staff persons who will receive training in the proper use and decontamination of personal protective equipment (PPE). They will

observe proper procedure with their PPE in the event that they need to enter a unit where the occupants have been affected by COVID-19. These three staff will respond to any urgent maintenance concerns as required.

What happens if I do get sick or suspect that I may have contracted COVID-19?

As per the Ontario Ministry of Health directives, we are recommending that should you suspect that you may have contracted COVID-19, that you engage in self-isolation and seek medical attention as appropriate. Please do not attend our offices or the common spaces in your building if you suspect you may be ill.

Information related to COVID-19 symptoms can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html>

We have also attached an informational document regarding COVID-19 for your convenience.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring a healthy community!

ABOUT CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

WHAT IT IS

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus.

Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms may be very mild or more serious. They may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus.



FEVER



COUGH



DIFFICULTY BREATHING

HOW IT IS SPREAD

Coronaviruses are most commonly SPREAD from an infected person through:

- ▶ respiratory droplets when you cough or sneeze
- ▶ close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- ▶ touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands

These viruses are not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water.

PREVENTION

The best way to prevent the spread of infections is to:



- ▶ wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



- ▶ avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands



- ▶ avoid close contact with people who are sick



- ▶ when coughing or sneezing:

- Cover your mouth and nose with your arm or tissues to reduce the spread of germs



- Immediately dispose of any tissues you have used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards



- ▶ clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as electronic devices and doorknobs.



- ▶ stay in your unit if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others

- ▶ Avoid using public transport or ride shares

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS

If you have SYMPTOMS of COVID-19 — fever, cough, or difficulty breathing:



- ▶ stay in your unit to avoid spreading it to others
 - if you live with others, stay in a separate room or keep a 2-metre distance



- ▶ call ahead before you visit a health care professional or call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000
 - tell them your symptoms and follow their instructions



- ▶ Contact your property manager
- ▶ if you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and tell them your symptoms.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CORONAVIRUS:

 **Telehealth Ontario**
1-866-797-0000

 ontario.ca/coronavirus

 hamilton.ca/coronavirus