



Update: COVID-19 and CityHousing Hamilton
April 6, 2020

Dear Tenants:

This is our weekly update to keep you informed about our response to COVID-19. Your health and safety is our highest priority. For access to previous notices, please visit our website at www.cityhousinghamilton.com.

Extended Drop Box Hours at End of April:

Right now, the mall at 181 Jackson St W is open Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays from 11am – 2pm to allow access to our drop box.

From April 27, 2020 – May 8, 2020 the mall at 181 Main St W will be open every business day (Monday – Friday) from 11am – 2pm. This is to allow extended access to our drop box for rent payments.

Starting May 11, 2020, it will return to the Monday, Tuesday and Friday schedule.

Vipond – Fire Safety Checks:

Vipond is CityHousing Hamilton's fire safety contractor. They are continuing with their checks of your smoke alarms. This is an essential service as smoke alarms are considered a life safety system. They may attend your unit during the shutdown to check that your smoke alarm is working properly. They will have identification with them. If you are not comfortable having them in your home during this time, you can refuse to allow them to enter. We will reschedule the inspection on a later date. If you or anyone in your family has been exposed to COVID-19 and you are self-isolating, please let them know when they arrive. Working smoke alarms are important to ensure your health and safety in the event of a fire. If your smoke alarm does not work – it is an emergency. Please call our maintenance department to report it immediately so we can have it repaired.

Food Access Telephone Scam:

Some tenants are getting calls from people that are offering food in exchange for a fee or access to withdraw money from their bank accounts. Some of the callers are claiming to be from CityHousing Hamilton. **This is a scam.** These calls are NOT from CityHousing Hamilton. When CityHousing calls you, we will ask if you need food but we will NOT ask you for money in exchange for food. For your protection, please do not give out any money or access to your bank accounts in exchange for food.

Wellness Checks:

CityHousing staff have been working hard to check in with our tenants to make sure you are well and have what you need. To date, we have completed over 4500 calls! We are hearing that most of you are doing ok and have a plan for meeting your needs while you are at home. For those that don't have a plan, we are supporting you in any way we can. If you find yourself in an emergency circumstance, please call us. We can help.

Getting an Education At Home:

The Provincial Government has closed schools until further notice. They are rolling out programming for parents to do with their kids at home. You will need a device and access to internet to get educators' instructions from home. If you do not have a device, you can contact your child's teacher for further details on how to get one.

Emergency Food Benefit for OW and ODSP Recipients:

An emergency benefit for food is available to anyone who receives OW or ODSP. Single people could receive \$100/month. Families could receive \$200/month. Please contact your Ontario Works (OW) at 905-546-4800 or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) at 905-521-7280 for more information.

Utility Relief:

The Ontario Government has suspended time-of-use electricity rates for 45 days. This means tenants who pay their own electricity bills will be paying the lowest rate for electricity, regardless of the time of day (24/7).

The Ontario Government is also expanding eligibility for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP). This can help prevent electricity and natural gas services from being disconnected due to non-payment during the COVID-19 outbreak. For more information, please visit the website:

<https://www.oeb.ca/rates-and-your-bill/help-low-income-consumers/low-income-energy-assistance-program>

Reporting COVID-19 Related Concerns:

Hamilton's Municipal Law Enforcement (MLE) and Hamilton police will be implementing fines for those who are not following the COVID-19 provincial orders. This includes the emergency order that bans gatherings of groups larger than five. Exceptions to this order include private households with five people or more, those operating child care centres supporting frontline health care workers, and first responders provided the number of persons at each centre does not exceed 50 people. Fines up to \$750.00 can be applied to any individual. Corporations could face fines up to \$500,000.

The following are the numbers that you can call to report concerns:

- Businesses with gatherings of 5 or more people: 905-546-2489
- Public gathering of 5 or more without distancing: 905-546-2489
- Business not following proper hygiene: 905-974-9848
- Inquiring if a business is essential: 1-888-444-3659
- Price Gouging: 1-800-889-9768

For COVID-19 related public health and health-related information, call the hotline at 905-974-9848 or email: phscovid19@hamilton.ca

Long Weekend Reminder:

This coming weekend is the Easter long weekend. Our staff are not working on Friday, April 10 and Monday, April 13, 2020. We return to regular business hours on Tuesday. For any emergencies on Friday or Monday, please contact our After Hours Service by calling 905-523-8496 and pressing "8".

We wish you and yours a safe, healthy and socially-distanced long weekend!