



TITLE

Housing Services Internal Policy, Social Services Department, United Counties of Prescott and Russell, Occupancy Standards

Policy NO.:

SL 017

REVISIONS:

November 1, 2016

March 16, 2017

EFFECTIVE DATE

October 31, 2012

Applies to:

The policy and procedures contained in this document apply to the following Housing Providers:

- Public Housing
- Municipal & Private Non-Profit
- Rent Supplement*
- *incl. former OCHAP/CSHP



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Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

Provide guidelines and direction for housing providers (HP), board members, and Housing Services staff to determine the size and type of housing unit a household is eligible to occupy as a rent-geared-to-income (RGI) unit.

Establish occupancy standards to ensure that families of the appropriate size occupy the units. This policy maintains the maximum usefulness of the units, while preserving them from excessive wear and tear or underutilization.

Policy statement

- A household may cease to be eligible for RGI assistance if the household occupies a unit that is larger than the largest size permissible as defined in the “Occupancy limits” section of this policy.
- A household ceases to be eligible one (1) year after the household has been notified that the household occupies a unit that is larger than the largest size permissible.
- A household remains eligible if the household is following the process to be transferred to an appropriate unit as specified in the *Internal Transfer Policy* – SL 004.
- A household may be permitted a larger unit than would otherwise be permitted if a larger unit is reasonably necessary due to the disability or medical condition of a member of the household.

Definitions

“Unit” means a unit intended for use as residential accommodation in a housing project.

“Rent-geared-to-income assistance” means rent-geared-to-income assistance as defined in section 38 of the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

“Recognized educational institution” means any of the institutions listed in O. Reg. 367/11, s. 42 (2) of the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

“Spouse” means two (2) persons who live together if the social and familial aspects of the relationship amount to cohabitation and one (1) individual provides financial support to the other or the individuals have a mutual agreement or arrangement regarding financial responsibilities.



Authority

The *Housing Services Act, 2011*, s. 43 (1) states, “a service manager shall establish occupancy standards for determining the size and type of unit permissible for a household receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance.”

Occupancy limits

Occupancy limits are as follows:

- There cannot be more than two (2) persons to one (1) bedroom.
- Spouses must share one (1) bedroom.
- Children of the opposite sex may have their own bedrooms unless the household wants two (2) children to share one (1) bedroom.
- Two (2) children of the same sex must share one (1) bedroom until one (1) of them has reached the age of sixteen (16).
- A single parent may share one (1) bedroom with a child if the applicant wants to share.
- A household is eligible for an additional bedroom under the specific circumstances indicated below. To qualify for an additional bedroom for medical reasons, the HP and/or Service Manager (SM) must be satisfied that there is a compelling and ongoing need for the additional space. Written requests must be accompanied by verification from a medical practitioner recognized by the College of physicians.
- For medical conditions that may be adversely affected by sharing a room, the medical verification must indicate the nature of the condition, the degree of severity, and the reason(s) that justifies the necessity for an additional bedroom.
- In all circumstances, our semi-detached units are reserved for household with children, or household consisting of at least three members.
- For conditions requiring additional space for medical equipment, the need for the equipment must be medically verified and the equipment must either:
 - a) present a danger to anyone sharing the bedroom; or
 - b) encompass 30% of the area of the bedroom.
- For conditions requiring a person to have attendant care between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., the need for an additional bedroom will be assessed based on the length of time the care will be required and other relevant factors.
- If the request is from a household already housed with a HP, each request for additional space under this clause will be evaluated on its merits by the HP

involved. Should the decision by the HP not suit the household, the household may request that the SM make a ruling. All requests to the SM must be in writing and accompanied by a copy of the original request, the medical certificate, and the HP's written decision. The applicant will have thirty (30) days from the receipt of the HP's decision to appeal to the SM. The SM's decision is final and binding.

- A child of a member of a household will be treated as a member of the household for the purposes of the occupancy standards in the following situations:
 - a) The child is in attendance at a recognized educational institution and, while in attendance, does not live with the household.
 - b) The child must live with the household while not attending that educational institution; and
 - c) The child is dependent, in whole or in part, on the household for financial support.

If a member of the household has joint custody or visiting rights to a child, the member is required to provide accommodation for the child, and the bedroom is required to accommodate the child.

Exceptions to occupancy standards

The HP may grant exceptions from the guidelines in cases where it is the family's request, or the HP determines the exceptions are justified by the relationship, age, sex, health, or disability of family members or other individual circumstances.

Acceptable documentation

The HP may request that the tenant/applicant provide documentation to verify the status of family members. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, separation agreement, divorce order, court order, request from Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell, post-secondary school registration, or proof of Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).



Other resources

- *Housing Services Act, 2011*
- *Internal Transfer Policy – SL 004*

Questions

If you have questions about this document, please contact your Housing Services Supervisor at the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

APPROVED BY: Original copy signed by Sylvie Millette

DATE: _____