

HOUSING *First*



Manitoba Housing Tenants

Resources and Information Handbook

Welcome to your Manitoba Housing community. Our goal is to provide you with well maintained, affordable, safe housing. This handbook is designed to help you get the most out of our facilities and services.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND INFORMATION FOR TENANTS

Fire or emergency:

In Winnipeg: Call 9-1-1 immediately

Non-emergency police:

In Winnipeg 311

Outside Winnipeg: call your local fire or police station

Safer Communities and Neighbourhood Act

For threatening or disturbing activities that regularly take place on your property

Phone: 945-3475 in Winnipeg; toll free 1-800-954-9361

Manitoba Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS

For local telephone service:

Call **MTS**: 225-5687
(Winnipeg and Rural)

Or visit your local MTS Centre

For local electricity and heating service:

Call Manitoba Hydro

Electricity – 480-5900 in Winnipeg;
outside Winnipeg 1-888-624-9376

Heating – 480-5900 in Winnipeg;
outside Winnipeg 1-888-624-9376

Manitoba Housing Office Hours:

Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Office is closed between
12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Housing Communications Centre (HCC)

We're here for you 24 hours a day,
seven days a week.

In Winnipeg call:
945-4663 (HOME)

Outside Winnipeg call:
1-800-661-HOME (4663)

HCC staff can help you with:

- reporting lost or stolen keys or security access cards
- reporting pests in your unit or building
- arranging for repairs or maintenance in your unit or building
- reporting lock outs
- reporting noise and disturbances after hours
- monitoring medical alarms in selected MHA buildings

Property managers can answer any questions you have about your tenancy.

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Before you move in

To help us serve you better:

Call and make an appointment before you arrive at your Manitoba Housing office.

Report to the receptionist in the office, as soon as you arrive.

For everyone's comfort and safety

- Food and drink are not allowed in the reception and waiting areas.
- Bicycles are not allowed inside the office.
- Children must be with their parents at all times and must not be left unattended.

BRING YOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS WHEN YOU SIGN YOUR LEASE

- your Important Documents

Your important documents should include all current information with respect to your family income. The property manager will then calculate your rent and review the terms of the residential tenancy agreement.

- your Residential Tenancy Agreement

Read it carefully and make sure you understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Sign your agreement, keep one copy and return one copy to your leasing office.

NOTE: Only the people named in your Residential Tenancy Agreement are allowed to live in your home. You must inform Manitoba Housing if any friends or relatives stay with you more than five days. Allowing others to live in your home without permission from Manitoba Housing breaks your Residential Tenancy Agreement and could end your tenancy.

- your Unit Inspection Report

Before you move into a Manitoba Housing property, a Manitoba Housing employee will inspect your unit with you. They will note the condition of your unit in this report and note any repairs that are required. Before you move out, you must leave your unit in the same condition as it was when you moved in. The property manager or tenant services co-ordinator will use this report to inspect the unit when you leave. Any damages to your unit beyond normal wear and tear will be charged back to you.

- Tenants' insurance

Tenants' insurance covers damages to your personal property from fire, flood, theft and other events and the contents of your Manitoba Housing unit are not protected without it. Manitoba Housing cannot be responsible for your personal property, so, for your own protection, we encourage you to purchase tenants' insurance.

Contact one or two reputable insurance companies or agents to find the best coverage at the best price for your situation.

- change of address

Make sure you send change-of-address information to all your important contacts before your moving in date.

After you've moved in...welcome!

PAYING YOUR RENT

It's your responsibility to pay your rent on time. As landlords, we will take appropriate action if you do not pay your rent.

Rental Adjustments

You may be entitled to a rent reduction should your monthly income decrease by \$40 or more. Please remember that you **MUST** apply for an adjustment every month that your income is reduced.

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF PROOFS OF INCOME THAT MAY BE REQUIRED:

1. **Employment insurance** – EI stubs must be submitted at the end of every month until either employed or receiving Employment and Income Assistance (EIA).
2. **Maintenance** – If you have not received maintenance payments, you must submit a statement from the Maintenance Enforcement Program showing the months you did not receive maintenance. If you are not with the Maintenance Enforcement Program, a statutory declaration must be signed and witnessed by a Commissioner of Oaths indicating that no maintenance was received.
3. **Part Time Employment** – As our leases are based on full-time earnings, you must apply for an adjustment every month for a reduction in your rent by submitting **ALL** pay stubs for income received during the previous month.

If you are applying for a permanent adjustment to your lease rate, (ex: Student Aid, permanently reduced working hours, a new job at lower wages, etc.), you must submit all proper documentation.

Please do not hesitate to contact your Property Manager if you have any questions.



Utilities

Tenants are responsible to pay their own utilities, where applicable.

Tenants must agree with their Employment and Income Assistance caseworker whether EIA will pay the tenants' bills directly or whether tenants must pay their own bills.

Arrears (Non-payment of Rent)

It is the tenant's obligation under the Standard Residential Tenancy Agreement and the *Manitoba Residential Tenancies Act* to pay rent in full on or before the first of each month. In cases where this does not happen, it is the landlord's right to take appropriate action to collect rent owed.

As the landlord, Manitoba Housing will proceed with tenant arrears as follows:

1. Tenants will receive notice that their account is in arrears.
2. Failure to make arrangements to pay the rent will result in Manitoba Housing taking necessary action required to regain possession of the premises.

RENT PAYMENT METHODS

All new tenants of Manitoba Housing will be given a Tenant Identification Card when signing their lease agreement. This card will include a personal application number. When a Manitoba Housing tenant makes a rent payment, the application number should be written on the front of the cheque or money order. If a tenant is visiting a Manitoba Housing office, it is also helpful to show this card to the Manitoba Housing staff member so that they can quickly access your information.

Monthly rental payments are to be paid to Manitoba Housing using one of the following options:

1. **Direct payment by phone or Internet:** These payment options are now available through your bank or credit union. Charges may apply, so please check with your financial institution.
2. **Pre-authorized payment service (PAP):** Monthly rental payments are automatically withdrawn from the bank account on the first business day of the month. The bank or financial institution may charge a fee for this service. Manitoba Housing will charge \$20 for each returned PAP.
3. **Post-dated cheques:** Forward your post-dated cheques to your Manitoba Housing Leasing Office.
4. **Cheque or money order:** Please remember to write down the Manitoba Housing application number on the bottom-front of all cheques or money orders. Manitoba Housing will charge \$20 for each returned cheque.
5. **Debit card (Interac):** Rent payments may be made using Interac at all Manitoba Housing Leasing Offices.
6. **Cash payments:** In Winnipeg, cash payments will only be accepted at 100-185 Smith Street (leasing offices in Winnipeg do not accept cash). Cash payments are accepted at some rural district offices. Please check with your local Manitoba Housing leasing office.

Note: Please do not send cash by mail.

Safety and Security

ACCESS SECURITY

You are responsible for all security access cards or keys you receive from your property manager.

- Some Manitoba Housing buildings have security access cards instead of outside door keys. Use your security access card to unlock the building's outside door by putting it close to the security card-reader box beside the entrance.
- Your first security access card is provided free as part of your tenancy agreement. Your property manager or designate will give you your card and/or your keys during regular business hours before you take possession of your home.
- Keep your personal security access card and your keys in a safe place. Do not allow anyone else to use them. If your card or keys are lost or stolen, call the Housing Communications Centre immediately at 945-8765 in Winnipeg or 1-800-661-4663 outside of Winnipeg to deactivate the card.
- If you lose or destroy your access card, you must pay \$20 to have it replaced. If you find the lost card and return it to the property manager your \$20 will be refunded.
- You can apply for additional security access cards to be used by people who supply you with personal essential support services (medical people, home care, etc.) You must have a letter or document from your medical institution to receive an extra card. And, you must agree to notify Manitoba Housing immediately if the services are no longer needed and you must return the access card on the next business day. To cancel additional cards, call the Housing Communications Centre and return the card to your property manager on the next business day.
- If you are locked out of the building after regular business hours, call the Housing Communications Centre at any time. The HCC staff will arrange entry to your unit if you are a Manitoba Housing tenant and can show proper identification. Please make sure you always take your access card and/or keys with you every time when you leave your home. If there are repeated requests, there may be a charge for this service.

PERSONAL SECURITY

Always keep your doors locked

Use your keys or access card to enter your building and do not let anyone you do not know in the door when you enter your building. Report any suspicious-looking people or activity to your local police immediately.

Intercom access

Most Manitoba Housing buildings have an intercom system. When someone buzzes your suite, make sure it's someone you know and trust, before you release the outside door security locks. Intruders often buzz all the suites in a building until they convince someone to let them into the building – don't let strangers in!

All Manitoba Housing employees carry photo identification cards. If anyone claiming to be a Manitoba Housing employee asks you to let them in your building or in your suite, ask them to show you their photo ID.



FIRE SAFETY

Manitoba Housing is concerned for the personal safety of you, your family and visitors, as well as the property. Make sure that every member of your family knows what to do in case of a fire and understands the simple rules of fire safety. If you use babysitters to care for your children, make sure they know the rules too.

If you live in an apartment:

The smoke detector in your suite is designed to go off if there is excessive heat or smoke in your building. It activates the building's main fire alarm so everyone can get out safely. The security systems in the buildings reduce the chances of a false alarm, so if you hear an alarm, leave the building immediately, using the nearest exit.

Do not go back into your suite or the building until the alarm bells are turned off and you are told it is safe to return. Tenants should note that excessive grease buildup in ovens can cause enough smoke to set off the smoke alarm, so keep your ovens clean and be careful when cooking with grease on the stovetop.

In case of fire:

- Immediately close the door of the room or suite where the fire is burning. Pull the building fire alarm if there is one and quickly leave the area. **When you're safely away from the fire, call 9-1-1.** Tell them where the fire is.
- When tenants hear the fire alarm go off, they should immediately check hallways and stairwell exits for signs of smoke or fire and then leave the building quickly by the safest exit route.
- If hallways or exit stairs are filled with smoke, **stay in your suite.** Keep your door closed and put wet towels around the bottom to keep smoke out. Use your home phone or cell phone and call 911 to tell them there's a fire and you're stuck in your suite. Do not panic. You are safer in your suite with the door closed than attempting to escape through fire and smoke.
- Make sure doors to stairwells are closed and latched to contain fire and smoke.
- Do not use elevators.



If you live in a house, duplex or townhouse:

Fires can quickly get out of control, especially when they're caused by electrical wiring, careless smoking or children playing with matches, lighters, electric heaters or stoves.

In case of fire:

- Close doors to contain the fire if at all possible and immediately get everyone to leave the building. When you are safely away from the building, call 9-1-1 and tell them where the fire is.
- Do not re-enter the building until fire fighters tell you it's safe to do so.
- Warn your neighbours if at all possible.

SMOKE ALARMS

All Manitoba Housing buildings are equipped with fire safety equipment. Under no circumstances are they to be tampered with. Tampering with a fire alarm system or any fire protection equipment is a criminal offence. It is subject to a heavy fine, imprisonment, or both, and will also seriously jeopardize your tenancy with Manitoba Housing.

If you live in a townhouse or duplex, your smoke alarm may be connected to some of your neighbours so everyone receives an early warning if there's a fire.

- Tenants are responsible for testing their smoke alarm regularly and reporting any malfunction so it can be fixed. Call the maintenance and repair line immediately at 945-8765 in Winnipeg; or 1-800-661-HOME (4663) outside Winnipeg, if your alarm isn't working.
- It's good to check the smoke alarm daily to see if the indicator light is on: LIGHT ON – the alarm is receiving adequate power to operate properly. LIGHT OFF – the alarm needs maintenance.
- To test your smoke alarm, press the test button. Within five seconds you should hear a constant sound. To stop the alarm, release the button. Again, check the smoke alarm to see if the indicator light is on. If the alarm does not sound, you must report it immediately.
- After an electrical storm, check your smoke alarm to make sure that the indicator light is on.

SMOKING REGULATIONS

A Province of Manitoba Smoking Regulation Bylaw prohibits smoking in all public places. This includes entrances, hallways and stairways of Manitoba Housing buildings.

Manitoba Housing tenants are permitted to smoke in their homes.

LIGHT FIXTURES

For your safety and to prevent fires, make sure you check the recommended wattage noted on your light fixtures and do not use bulbs that exceed that amount. Using a higher wattage bulb creates a severe fire hazard.

Do not use older style halogen lights without light bulb protectors.

BARBECUES AND PROPANE TANKS

To prevent fires, barbecues are not allowed on the balconies of Manitoba Housing buildings. You may use a barbecue on a concrete patio or in a yard if it is a minimum of three feet away from the building. Check with your property manager to see what the fire regulations are for your home.

Propane must be stored outside the building in a secure approved cage or affixed to the appliance. Ask your property manager if it's safe and legal to use propane tanks or a barbecues in your facility.

ELECTRIC BASEBOARD HEATING

Electric baseboard heaters are controlled by either a remote, wall-mounted thermostat; or a built-in thermostat. Both will turn on the baseboard heaters depending on the thermostat setting (which is usually set at about 22° C). Once the air temperature in the room has reached the set temperature, it will automatically shut off.

Caution: Do not cover or block the baseboard heaters or the thermostat with anything, including curtains, bedding, furniture or beds. This stops proper heat/air circulation and can start fires. Baseboard heaters can be very hot, to prevent injury don't let young children touch baseboard heaters. Portable space heaters are not recommended.

Do not place clothing or articles against a hot water heater or gas or electric furnaces. This could cause a fire.

Call the maintenance and repair line at 945-8765 in Winnipeg; or 1-800-661-HOME (4663) outside Winnipeg, if baseboard heaters are not working properly.

Tenant Information

GENERAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Keep children away from windows. Make sure children's beds are not located beneath windows.
- Screens are not secure enough to withstand people pushing or leaning on them.
- Don't leave windows and doors open when it's raining or snowing. Excess moisture can damage property. Open windows and doors may also interfere with the heating of the building, causing pipes to freeze and break.
- Report any broken windows to the maintenance and repair line. If someone breaks into your unit, also contact your local police.
- Don't throw any objects off of roofs or balconies, or out of windows.



KEEP YOUR HOME IN GOOD WORKING ORDER

- Report any damage or repairs promptly.
- Report pests in your unit or your building, immediately.
- Do not get rid of sweepings, garbage, rags, sanitary items or similar substances by throwing them in your sewage system – toilets, sinks, sewer drains. Do not allow water to run continuously unless in actual use.
- Never run extension cords under carpets or hook them on nails.
- Keep rubbish out of basement and closets. Items should not be stored or piled directly on basement floors due to the possibility of sewer back up or flooding.
- Never keep gasoline or other combustible containers, such as propane tanks, inside your home.
- When defrosting your refrigerator – DO NOT USE HOT WATER, KNIVES OR A TEA KETTLE. Turn your refrigerator off and leave the door open until your freezer is thawed and ready for cleaning. When cleaning is complete, turn your refrigerator back on. If knives, hot water or electric kettles are used, you will be charged for any damage they cause to the refrigerator.
- Report any required maintenance of windows, screens, doors, and balconies to the maintenance and repair line immediately.
- Keep your home neat and clean. Maintaining your grounds, shrubbery, private walkways and driveways is your responsibility.
- Remove snow from steps, walkways and driveways.
- Cut your grass regularly (weekly is recommended).
- Clean up any litter on your property, including the parking area. Put your garbage in plastic bags, tie them securely and place them in the containers provided.
- Backyard skating rinks are not permitted.
- Portable swimming pools are not allowed in common areas.
- Portable swimming pools must be emptied after use. Do not leave water in the swimming pool if it is not in use.
- Pools must meet city and municipal bylaws.

NOISE AND DISTURBANCES

- Apartment block hallways are not to be used as play areas and parents are asked to properly supervise their children at all times.
- Any disturbance involving violence of any kind should be reported to the police or RCMP and the Housing Communications Center (HCC).
- Minor incidents of nuisance and/or disturbances should be reported to your tenant service co-ordinator (if living in Winnipeg) or to your local Manitoba Housing office (if living outside Winnipeg). For Manitoba Housing to act on issues arising from nuisance and/or disturbance, written complaints must be sent to your local Manitoba Housing office.

NOTE: When you invite guests into your home, you are responsible for their actions.

MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR HOME

Check with your Manitoba Housing leasing office or property manager before you make any changes to your home. You must send a written request to the leasing office asking for approval to make any changes such as adding air conditioners, satellite dishes, wallpapering, painting, carpeting, fencing, etc. Specific conditions may apply before authorization is given.

Damages that are considered beyond normal wear and tear are the tenant's responsibility and are subject to payment at the landlord's request.

Tenant Services

If you need a rental statement for your Income Tax, contact your property manager. This service is provided free of charge. Note: Revenue Canada allows only one tenant to claim this tax deduction. To receive your rent receipt, you must have made all rent payments.

TENANT SERVICES CO-ORDINATORS

Tenant service co-ordinators are available in some Manitoba Housing facilities. They help tenants get assistance, information on health or social services. They are also available to help promote independent living in the community as long as possible by:

- providing information about health, social services and community programs and services developing and supporting tenant groups such as tenant associations and tenant advisory committees
- providing information on education and training programs by referring tenants to appropriate resources
- developing community programs and resource centres
- referring tenants to appropriate support service providers and/or agencies
- working with tenant groups and other agencies to co-ordinate various onsite support services such as :
 - income tax clinics
 - health clinics
 - community senior services
 - health fairs
 - income assistance programs
 - recreation/leisure programs
 - food banks
 - community mental health services where relevant, programs for parenting, youth and children



SENIOR SUPPORT SERVICES

Manitoba Housing offers some housing especially designed to help seniors remain independent. Check with your Tenant Services Co-ordinator, property manager or leasing office to see what services are available. They may include:

- security systems
- snow removal for public areas
- tenant associations or tenant advisory committee
- laundry facilities
- recreational areas
- provincial homecare
- congregate meal programs
- elevator service
- grab bars in bathroom
- supportive housing
- health clinics
- transportation services

Medical alarms

Manitoba Housing has installed medical alarm systems in selected buildings to support seniors in Winnipeg, Selkirk and Portage La Prairie. The Housing Communications Centre monitors these systems 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The medical alarm switches can be found either in the bathroom or in the living area of the apartment. When the medical alarm is activated, HCC will respond to the alert by calling the tenant first to enquire if emergency medical services such as an ambulance are required and call for them if needed. The fee for this service is currently \$4 per month, which is included in the rental calculation.

Congregate meal services

An optional congregate meal service is provided in many senior communities throughout the province. Meal menus are posted every month and participants are asked to make reservations 24 hours ahead of serving time. A fresh, hot meal, including a beverage and dessert, is served for a reasonable cost. Business hours and serving times vary depending on the building.

Tenants are encouraged to attend the congregate meal programs, but, under special circumstances, meals can be delivered to a tenant's suite. To find out which buildings provide this service, please contact your leasing office.

Tenant associations/tenant advisory committees

A tenant association or tenant advisory committee operates in some residential complexes. They focus on the overall well-being and interests of the tenants, giving them more independence and a stronger voice in the operation of their communities. They strive to improve the lifestyles within their communities by:

- planning recreation activities for the benefit of the tenants
- providing volunteer opportunities for tenants
- arranging information seminars
- representing the tenants of their communities

If you are interested in starting a tenant association or tenant advisory committee in Winnipeg, contact your tenant service co-ordinator or property manager for more information. Funding may be available from Manitoba Housing to help you.

Parking

TENANT PARKING

Parking at Manitoba Housing buildings is limited. To be fair, parking is provided for one car per unit, unless there is extra parking available. When requested, a second place will be assigned only if first priority tenants have been provided for. Verification of vehicle registration will be required. The vehicle must be registered to the tenant. All vehicles must be appropriately insured. Only one commercial vehicle that meets the size limits is allowed.

Visitors can park in designated spots where provided. Overnight visitors should report to the building manager to get a temporary parking permit.

Talk to your property manager about your parking requirements. You will be asked to provide your licence number and phone number. Any changes to your needs should be reported to the property manager promptly.

All parked cars that do not follow the building's parking regulations can be towed away at the owner's expense. Park within the boundaries of your allotted space. Do not park on grass or boulevards. If someone is parked in your assigned parking stall after hours, call the Housing Communications Centre at 945-4663 (HOME) in Winnipeg or 1-800-661-4663 (HOME) outside Winnipeg.

Use block heaters only. Interior car warmers are not permitted. Tenants may be charged to re-energize electrical circuits due to faulty equipment or car warmers.

Vehicles (trucks, buses, trailers, etc.) over ¾ ton capacity or over seven feet wide and/ or 20 feet long are strictly prohibited and will be towed away at the owner's expense.

Tenants are responsible for cleaning the driveway, including snow removal. Keep your area free of all litter, trash, junk (car parts, old tires, etc.) and derelict cars.

Any damage to asphalt surfaces in the parking areas or to electrical outlets by tenants or their visitors will be charged to the tenant.

Tenants are required to co-operate with building managers and move vehicles when necessary for snow removal, sweeping of parking areas, etc.

PARKING RESTRICTIONS

For everyone's safety the following restrictions apply to all Manitoba Housing parking areas:

- Do not park in fire lanes or in front of garbage bins. Failure to comply means you can be towed at your own expense, without notice.
- Cars that are not mobile or that cannot be made mobile within 24 hours will be towed away at the owner's expense after one written request to remove the vehicle.
- Vehicles not being used are not to be left unattended on jacks, blocks or ramps.
- Major vehicle repairs such as removing engines, transmissions, rear-end assemblies, etc. are not permitted.
- Leaking or dumping oil or automotive fluids are not permitted due environment regulations and damage to asphalt surfaces.
- Any vehicle considered to be derelict will be towed away at the owner's expense.

When you move out

- Clean your unit and remove all personal property. Make sure you leave it in the same condition as it was when you moved in.
- Complete your outgoing tenant inspection with your property manager.
- If you abandon personal property, your landlord will follow the Residential Tenancy Branch guidelines to dispose of it.
- Return your keys and any security access cards the day you move or by very next business day. If your cards are not returned, you will be charged \$20 for each card and your rental account will be considered to be in arrears.
- If you owe rent when you leave, Manitoba Housing will file the account with the Canada Revenue Agency to collect money owed. This may be recovered from the Income Tax Refund and Goods and Services Tax credit (GST credit) until the debt is paid.

