

Policies and Procedures

Subject: **Absence from Unit**

Date: **July 1, 2021**

Replaces: **April 24, 2017**

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Municipal & Private Non-Profit | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal Subsidies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Co-operatives | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rent Supplement*
<small>*incl. former OCHAP/CSHP</small> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Centralized Waiting List (CWL) | |

Content This document contains the following information:

Legislation
Purpose
Policy
Extended Absence
Extenuating Circumstance
Verification
Cessation of Eligibility
Monitoring Absence
Questions

Legislation *Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA), [Ontario Regulation 367/11 s.37](#)*

Purpose The purpose of this document is to provide the Housing Provider with information as it pertains to the maximum period in which household members(s) can be absent from their unit.

Policy A household will be found ineligible for RGI assistance if **all** members of the household are absent from the unit for more than 60

consecutive days or more than 90 days total within a 12-month period
unless:

- It is determined that the household has an extenuating circumstance.

Consecutive means: following one another in uninterrupted succession.

12-month period means: a period of 12 consecutive months regardless of the year.

Example: A household that was absent from their unit from December 1, 2020 to March 1, 2021 would be considered absent for more than 90 consecutive days.

Extended Absence

It is the responsibility of a household member to report an absence to their Housing Provider that will exceed 60 consecutive days or 90 days total within a 12-month period.

In the event a household is absent from their unit, the Housing Provider should review the reason for the absence to determine if the household remains eligible for RGI.

Important: If a Housing Provider suspects a household is no longer residing in their unit based on the number of days, they have been absent, the Housing Provider should refer to the lease/occupancy agreement for further action.

Extenuating Circumstances

Examples of extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Incarceration, which for this policy includes serving time/awaiting trial prior to conviction.
Note: Verification must be provided, see the [Verification](#) section for details.
- Medical reasons that require the household to be absent for more than 60 consecutive days.
Note: See the [Exemption from Policy](#) section for details.

A household that has provided verification and has been found to have extenuating circumstances is not considered absent from the unit.

Important: The Housing Provider is required to monitor the absence

to ensure the household will (at a future date) be able to return to the unit to live independently with or without support services. Please refer to the [Verification](#) and [Monitoring Absence](#) sections below for details.

Verification

The following table provides the types of verification documents Housing Providers can accept in situations where a household has been or will be absent for longer than 60 consecutive days:

If the household is absent from the unit for more than 60 days because a household member is...	Then a letter of verification must be provided from the...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incarcerated, while serving time/awaiting trial prior to conviction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • member's lawyer, a prison official or social worker
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to be accommodated elsewhere for medical reasons <p>Note: In situations where the medical emergency or serious injury occurred during travel, the household member must satisfy the same verification requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ patient's physician (who lives and is licensed to practice in Ontario), verifying that the member has a medical condition requiring treatment that will result in the members absence from the unit. ○ The length of time of the absence. ○ Will be able to return to the unit to live independently with or without support services.

Cessation of Eligibility

If a household is found to be absent from the unit for more than 60 consecutive days or more than 90 days total within any 12-month period, the Housing Provider will issue an Opportunity to Comment letter (as per the Region's HIP Policy) requesting further information.

If the household does not provide or provides unacceptable verification, the Housing Provider will deem the household ineligible for rent geared-to-income assistance and issue a 90-day loss of subsidy notice:

- Notification must be issued within seven (7) days of the ineligibility decision and include the following:
 - date of the decision
 - reason(s) for the decision

- process for submitting a Service Manager Appeal within 30-days from receipt of the notice (refer to the [Service Manager Appeal](#) policy document for details).
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Monitoring Absence

When a unit is left vacant for an extended period of time for medical reasons, the Housing Provider must request that the household provide verification from their physician verifying the continued need to be absent from the unit for medical reasons every three months or when the previously specified treatment was scheduled to end.

Note: It is not practical for an RGI unit to remain unoccupied for an indefinite period for any reason, including a medical reason, even if the rent is being paid. As such, the Housing Provider should be satisfied that the household will be able to return to the unit and be able to live independently, with or without support services within a reasonable period.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact your Housing Specialist at the Region of Peel.