

RE: PH10.4

Amendments to Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings and Progress Update on RentSafeTO

**Municipal Licensing and Standards
Presentation to Planning and Housing Committee
November 13, 2019**



Agenda

1. RentSafeTO program
2. Progress update
3. Communications and outreach
4. Report recommendations
5. Ongoing improvements

RentSafeTO Program

The RentSafeTO program is the first of its kind in Canada, and builds on the City of Toronto's previous Multi-Residential Apartment Buildings (MRAB) program.

The program is enabled by Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings, which came into effect July 1, 2017.

The program applies to all apartment buildings with three or more storeys and 10 or more units – approximately 3,500 buildings (30% of Toronto residents)

The program requires landlords to develop plans (e.g. cleaning, waste management, electrical maintenance) and inform tenants of building matters through a tenant notification board.

Progress Update

- As of October 2019, a total of **3,446 buildings** have registered with the City.
- In the first year of the program, staff evaluated registered buildings. A total of 68 buildings did not pass the evaluation and were subject to an audit.
- In the second year of the program, staff re-evaluated 1,801 of the lowest scoring buildings from the first year. Buildings evaluated in both years scored an average of **12 percent higher** in the second year.
- Through the audit process, enforcement staff have worked to rectify **3,305** deficiencies, and have closed **43** Notices of Violation and **245** Orders to Comply.
- Staff have also laid **338** charges for non-compliance with **194** convictions.

Communications & Outreach

Staff have developed a **Building Owner Handbook** for landlords, which outlines the program requirements, created **dedicated websites** for both tenants and landlords, and participated in **OpenStreetsTO** in the summers of 2018 and 2019.

Public education campaigns have included:

- multi-lingual advertisements in 12 languages placed in newspapers and online
- advertisements on the September 2018 issue of On-the-Go magazine (commuter magazine in GO Train)
- digital screens in apartment buildings, campuses, restaurants and bars;
- advertisements in high-traffic websites such as BlogTO.com, the Toronto Star, the Weather Network, CP24, Toronto Life, Toronto.com; and on social media.

Information collected through the RentSafeTO program has been uploaded to Open Data portal to be freely used by the public and by organizations that are external to the City of Toronto, including building **registration data** and **evaluation results**.



You have a right to a heated apartment



Talk to your landlord first. If problems persist, contact 311 for the RentSafeTO team.

toronto.ca/rentsafeto



Call **3-1-1**



Have a pest problem?



Talk to your landlord first. If problems persist, contact 311 for the RentSafeTO team.

toronto.ca/rentsafeto



Call **3-1-1**

Research & Consultation

In order to assess the progress of the program and identify opportunities for improvement, staff:

- Engaged approximately **300 individuals** through consultation
- Reviewed **82 written submissions**
- Conducted **research** including jurisdictional scans and data analysis
- Commissioned a representative **public opinion survey**

Staff found that the RentSafeTO program has been effective in meeting its objectives to date. Based on research, analysis and consultation findings, staff are recommending changes to the program moving forward.

Report Recommendations

Staff recommend amending Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings to require that landlords display a copy of the building evaluation result document, received by the City following their last evaluation, on the tenant notification board, and provide copies to any persons who request it.



City of Toronto
Building Evaluation for:
Address of Residence

68 %

For more information on the results of the evaluation, contact your landlord or visit

www.toronto.ca/RentSafeTO

Report Recommendations

Staff also recommend that landlords post the following materials on the tenant notification board:

- Information about the RentSafeTO program and contact information for 311
- Any violations of the Ontario Fire Code
- Additional information about places on the property that offer relief from uncomfortably warm indoor temperatures (e.g. shaded area)
- Additional information related to pest management including documentation of services, schedules and service standards.

Staff also recommend that landlords provide information to tenants on the RentSafeTO program annually and on signing of a lease agreement

Report Recommendations

Staff recommend creating a variable fee for recovery of costs associated with the provision of Emergency Social Services (e.g. temporary lodging) in instances when:

- a) A substantial portion of a building becomes uninhabitable;
- b) the building is three or more stories, with 10 or more units; and
- c) the landlord does not provide re-housing for tenants.

Staff also recommend:

- Greater outreach for tenants, including issuing an RFP for a qualified organization to undertake tenant engagement;
- Enhanced education for landlords related to maintaining elevators in apartment buildings and best practices for pest management; and that
- City Council request the Province of Ontario move forward with legislation to address concerns around safety, reliability and availability of elevators.

Ongoing Improvements

Staff continue to assess the RentSafeTO program and make iterative changes as the program and the needs of the City evolve.

Some key operational improvements that staff are exploring include:

1. An updated tool for building evaluations in 2020;
2. Collection of more robust data through the registration process; and
3. Enhancements to communications and data-sharing.

Thank you