

TORONTO SHELTER BULLETIN

Bulletin No.: 2023-02
Date Issued: April 3, 2023

Bulletin Type:	General Update
Subject:	Updates to the Toronto Shelter Standards (TSS) <i>Please post this bulletin in a conspicuous area accessible to shelter staff.</i>
Bulletin:	<p>Dear Shelter Provider,</p> <p>SSHA has released an updated version of the Toronto Shelter Standards (TSS) that is now available for use by shelter providers. This current version of the TSS incorporates benchmarks from the 24-Hour Respite Site Standards, previously communicated and implemented updates to the sector, including City-issued Toronto Shelter Directives, health and safety practices, and updates to the Shelter Management Information System (SMIS), as well as changes that have taken place to overall shelter systems and processes since the TSS' initial release in 2015.</p> <p>The TSS is now a more up-to-date document that reflects the changes that have taken place within the shelter sector throughout recent years and that are already in place across shelters and being carried out by shelter staff.</p> <p>Key Updates</p> <p>Updates to the TSS focused on incorporating standards that support equity and reflect best-practices within the sector, as well as changes within the shelter system that have taken place since the document was last approved by City Council in 2015.</p> <p>New standards include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addition of sections noting specific supports and services for Indigenous clients (section 10.3.4), and clients with disabilities (section 10.3.5) to align with the <i>24-Hour Respite Site Standards</i>• Definitions added that align with sector programs and practices (section 3), and new service expectations for clients with pets (section 8.1)• New training requirements, where appropriate, to reflect changes in standards related to harm reduction, Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices and equity (section 12 & Training Topics and Professional Competencies Matrix)

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Main revisions include:

- Updates based on [SSHA Directives](#), policy documents and frameworks:
 - *Directive 2021-01 Shelter Standards and 24-Hour Respite Sites on Harm Reduction*
 - [Directive 2019-02 Update to 9.1.2 \(a\) and 9.1.2 \(c\) in Toronto Shelter Standards on Menstrual Products](#)
 - [Directive 2019-01 Shelter Clients on Housing Access Waitlists](#)
 - [HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan and the Toronto Housing Charter](#)
 - [The Homeless Solutions Service Plan](#)
 - [Coordinated Access to Housing and Supports \(Coordinated Access\)](#)
- Updates of intake, referral and admission requirements (sections 8.1, 8.2, 8.3), including references to inputting client information into SMIS:
 - [SMIS Release Notes and Bulletins](#)
 - SMIS Improving Housing Outcomes Training modules (available in [ELI](#) for DOS and on the [City's website](#) for POS)
- Updates to reflect current health and safety standards, including Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), facilities management, custodial services and maintenance standards (section 11)
- Deletion of administrative reporting requirements that are no longer in use (e.g. reporting forms) and updates to reflect current administrative practices and processes (e.g. collecting Next of Kin information)

The full list and description of edits and updates are outlined in the *TSS 2022 Updates Table* document that has been shared with shelter providers (please contact your ARO or email SSHA.QA@toronto.ca to request this document if needed).

Next Steps

Shelter providers are expected to use the updated version of the TSS when referencing the shelter standards. Information sessions will be offered to all shelter supervisory staff to support with understanding the updates to the document and answer any questions relating to its content.

The online training of the TSS that is now available through the Toronto Hostels

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Training Centre will be updated in spring 2023 to align with the current version of the document. New shelter staff can still access and complete the available training in the interim.

SSHA will continue to review and update the TSS as needed to ensure that shelter standards reflect up-to-date sector practices and policies. Currently, a review of shelter standards applying an anti-Black racism lens as per SSHA's Action 10.2 in *Toronto's Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism* is underway and expected to be completed in 2023.

Background

The TSS presents City of Toronto-funded shelter providers and clients with a clear set of expectations, guidelines and minimum requirements for the delivery of shelter services in Toronto. All emergency and transitional shelters funded or directly operated by the City of Toronto are required to adhere to the TSS. The Toronto Shelter Standards (TSS) were created in 1992 to ensure that services are delivered in a consistent manner across the shelter system.

In 2015 City Council adopted the current version of the TSS that require a review of standards every 5 years. This review, scheduled for 2020, was postponed to focus resources on SSHA's COVID-19 pandemic response.

Please ensure that this Bulletin is cascaded to all relevant staff as soon as possible.

Resources: [Toronto Shelter Standards – City of Toronto](#)

[24-Hour Respite Site Standards – City of Toronto](#)

Contact Information: For more information about this Bulletin, please contact your Agency Review Officer (ARO), Manager or email SSHA.QA@toronto.ca.