



# RentSafeT0

Apartment Building Standards Program

**YEAR IN REVIEW | 2023**



# Message from the Executive Director, **CARLETON GRANT**

In Toronto, more than 30 per cent of residents live in rental housing and that number continues to grow as the city's population increases. The RentSafeTO: Apartment Building Standards program works to ensure that apartment buildings are well-maintained and that tenants understand their rights and can resolve issues with their apartment.

The 2023 RentSafeTO Year in Review provides a comprehensive overview of the program and highlights the impact and progress made over the past year.

In 2023, the RentSafeTO team received more than 8,500 service requests related to various property standard issues such as adequate heat, plumbing, leaky ceilings, graffiti and pests.

In addition to addressing property standard issues, the RentSafeTO team worked to improve tenant engagement and modernize the evaluation process for apartment buildings by introducing a new evaluation tool that factors ongoing violations and issues that have an impact on the health and safety of tenants into a building's evaluation score.

The City is committed to providing access to safe and secure rental housing and we continue to work closely with our divisional and community partners to enhance overall living conditions for Toronto tenants.

I would like to thank the RentSafeTO team for their dedication and commitment and to everyone who is working to create safe and adequate housing for Toronto residents.





# BACKGROUND

The RentSafeTO Apartment Building Standards Program is the first of its kind in Canada and builds on the City's previous Multi-Residential Apartment Buildings program. The program aims to strengthen enforcement of City bylaws, enhance tenant engagement and access to information, and promote proactive maintenance in apartment buildings to prevent the deterioration of critical housing stock.

## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

**1,758**

Evaluations

**87.5%**

Average  
Evaluation Score

**242,256**

Webpage Visits  
(toronto.ca/RentSafeTO)

**93**

Stakeholder Events  
Attended by more  
than 1,650 people

**35**

Full-time Bylaw  
Enforcement  
Officers (BEOs)

**8,512**

Service Requests  
(inclusive of audits)

## WHAT WE DO

- ▶ Register qualifying buildings for the RentSafeTO program
- ▶ Investigate service requests and address bylaw violations
- ▶ Proactively evaluate buildings every two years to ensure compliance
- ▶ Audit buildings that score within the bottom 2.5 percentile
- ▶ Resolve complaints
- ▶ Engage with tenants, tenant advocates, building owners, councillors, community organizations and other divisions to inform about the latest program updates
- ▶ Educate tenants and buildings owners about the program requirements and regulations
- ▶ Consult tenants, tenant advocates, buildings owners and operators about program changes and policies

## KEEP IN MIND

If you have a property standards issue, put it in writing to your building owner/operator first. If no response is received, please contact 311.



# About the RentSafeTO TEAM

RentSafeTO is a bylaw enforcement program that ensures apartment building owners and operators comply with building maintenance standards. The program applies to apartment buildings with three or more storeys and 10 or more units. Currently, there are more than 3,600 apartment buildings registered for the program, accounting for more than 362,000 rental units across Toronto.

The RentSafeTO team currently has 35 dedicated bylaw enforcement officers (BEOs) that respond to service requests received through 311, conduct building evaluations and audits and ensure apartment buildings are registered with the program.

Tenant engagement and education is a core pillar of the RentSafeTO program. Part of this work includes door-to-door engagement with tenants, distributing literature and resources during building audits, holding workshops to address questions from tenants' associations and residents and collaborating with other City divisions on rental and tenant housing initiatives.



To learn more about RentSafeTO, please visit [www.toronto.ca/RentSafeTO](http://www.toronto.ca/RentSafeTO).







# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT LEAD *Spotlight*

## Meet Anastasia.

As part of this role, Anastasia works to educate tenants, advocates, and building owners about RentSafeTO, the bylaw requirements and how tenants can resolve property standards issues with their apartment. She often can be found at buildings, door knocking or speaking with residents and owners, to ensure people are aware of the program, its requirements and how they can make a service request.

**“It is critical everyone understands that the RentSafeTO program exists and how the program can help. I am always happy to listen and speak with residents and building owners. I pride myself on being extremely responsive to concerns as our work impacts people’s homes.”**



For inquiries or information on how to request an engagement session, please email [RentSafeTO@toronto.ca](mailto:RentSafeTO@toronto.ca). We look forward to assisting you!



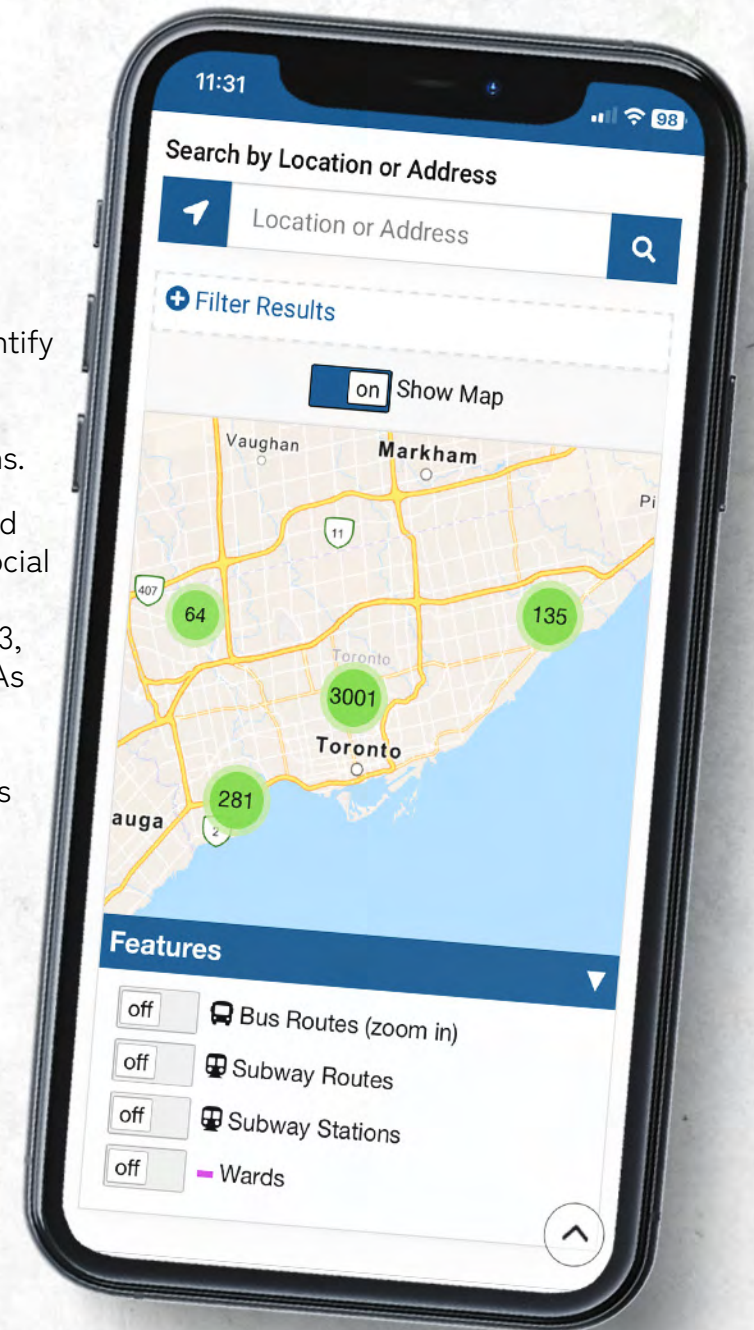
# BUILDING EVALUATIONS & AUDITS

All buildings registered with RentSafeTO are evaluated once every two years to identify issues and to ensure compliance with City bylaws. At its meeting in December 2020, City Council directed staff to improve the evaluation tool and criteria for building evaluations to make the process more dynamic and responsive to building conditions.

To support the evaluation tool redesign process, RentSafeTO conducted surveys and held consultations with tenants, tenant advocates, building owner and operators, social housing providers, bylaw enforcement officers, subject matter experts, City staff and councillors to receive critical feedback, perspective and lived experience. In 2023, RentSafeTO launched the first phase of its redesigned evaluation implementation. As part of this new process, buildings will now be evaluated every two years to ensure that they are measured consistently and evaluated at the same frequency. The redesign created a more comprehensive, 50 category tool that will weight categories that have a greater impact on the health and safety of tenants as well as ensure ongoing violations and issues of non-compliance factor into a building's evaluation score. Full implementation is expected in 2025.

## ONLINE BUILDING EVALUATION SCORES

Residents and prospective tenants can look up building evaluation scores using the RentSafeTO interactive webpage. The webpage allows residents to view, download or print a detailed report that provides a breakdown of each category the building was evaluated against and how it scored. Current and previous building scores are also available publicly on the [City's Open Data Portal](#). Current and historical deficiencies and their impact to the current building score will be incorporated in 2024.







## BUILDING EVALUATIONS PERFORMED

1,758



## BUILDING AUDITS PERFORMED

8



## EVALUATION SCORES

AVERAGE

87.5

MEDIAN

89

The redesigned evaluation tool now includes new evaluation categories, different weighting that prioritizes the health and safety impacts of tenants, and new thresholds to determine which buildings will be audited. In 2024, the bottom 2.5 percentile of buildings evaluated in 2023 will be audited.

\*2023 Audits were based on 2022 evaluation scores.





# BYLAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

## Meet Murtaza.

Murtaza is a bylaw enforcement officer dedicated to the RentSafeTO team. To ensure he provides excellent customer service and is responsive to the dynamic nature of the job, Murtaza organizes his day into two parts. The first half of the day is spent at prescheduled inspections to ensure he can provide residents the time to show him their concerns in-person and can discuss the bylaw requirements and processes for getting deficiencies resolved. The second half is then spent following up with building owners and operators, issuing documentation, and responding to any new service requests received.

**“When you realize you helped someone not just fix their home, but in many cases improve their relationship with property management by bridging the communication and providing tenants the confidence to communicate issues to property management before they become significant, it is really gratifying.”**



# SERVICE REQUESTS



60,688

SERVICE REQUESTS

have been closed since 2017



89%

of service requests  
were closed in 2023

**CLOSED**  
SERVICE REQUESTS

**7,609**

2023



11%

of service requests are  
under investigation

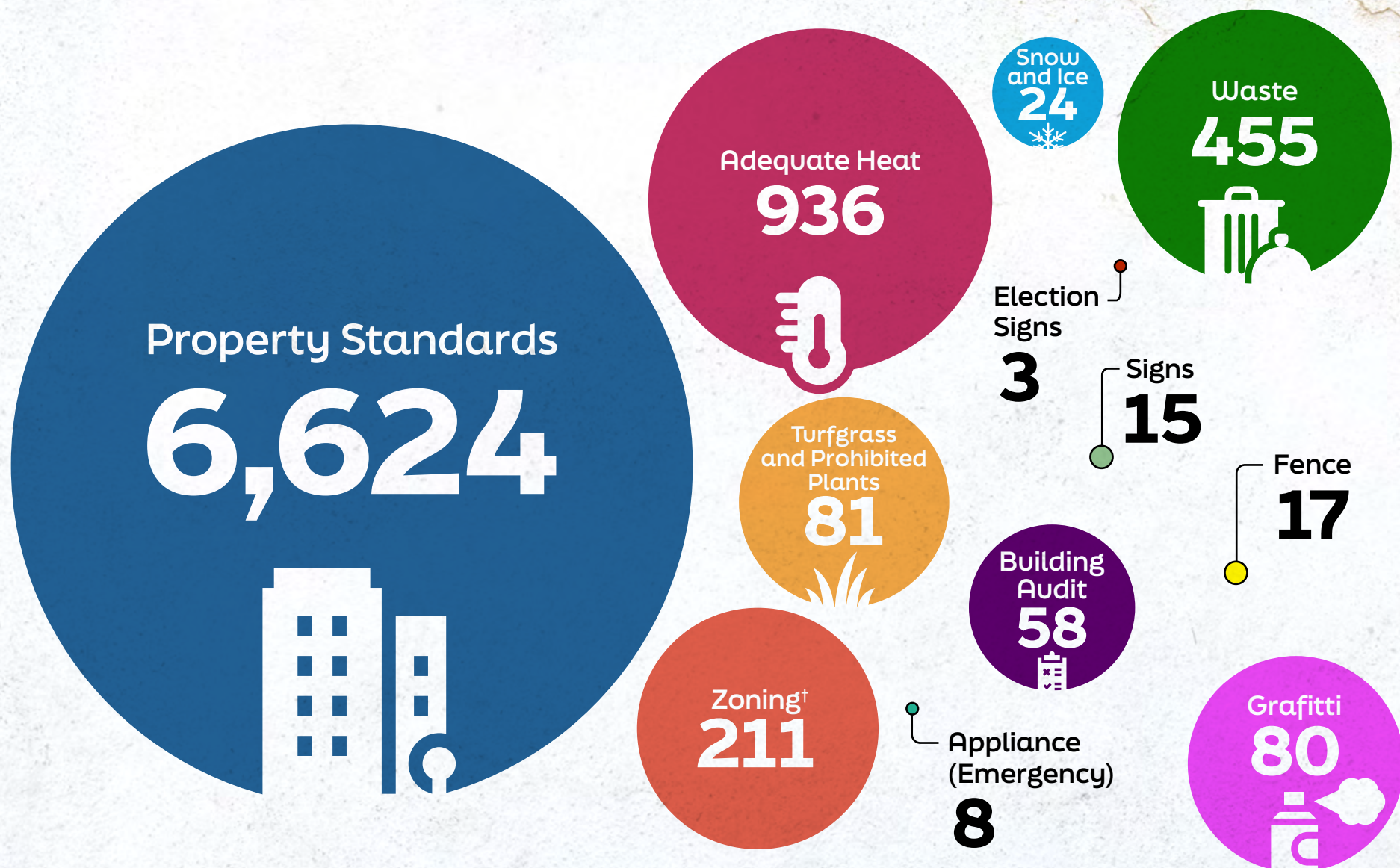
**OPEN**  
SERVICE REQUESTS

**903**

2023



# NUMBER OF SERVICE REQUESTS BY CATEGORY (2023)\*

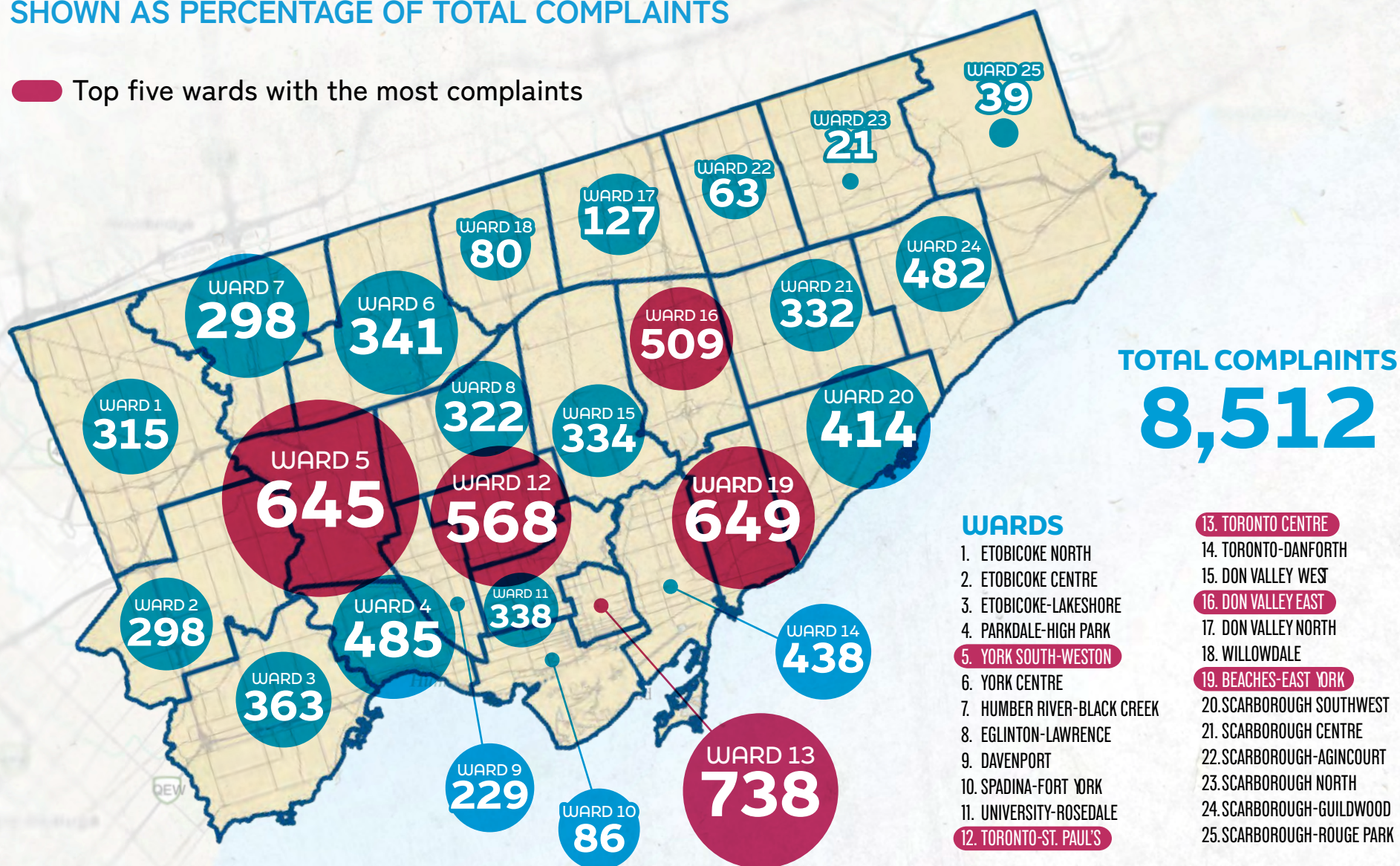





# COMPLAINTS BY WARD

SHOWN AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COMPLAINTS

Top five wards with the most complaints





A photograph of a staircase with a metal railing and a window, with a blue text box overlaid. The text box contains a testimonial from Jocelyn, a volunteer with the High Park Tenants' Association. The background shows a staircase with a metal railing and a window with a grid pattern. The floor is tiled, and there is some debris on it.

RentSafeTO is an indispensable resource for tenants, making sure that Torontonians have safe and healthy rental homes. Our association reached out to the RentSafeTO team and they worked with us to determine how best to engage our members. The team attended our nine buildings and visited each unit to educate tenants about their rights. I would like to thank the team for quickly identifying and responding to issues brought to their attention.

Jocelyn, High Park Tenants' Association volunteer



# LEAKY TAPS ARE NOT GOOD FOR ANYONE.

Leaky taps are costly for the environment. Get them fixed as soon as possible. Contact your building owner or landlord in writing. If no response is received in 7 days, contact 311.





# INVESTIGATION & PERFORMANCE

When a service request is received through 311, a RentSafeTO BEO is assigned to investigate. The BEO reviews the service request and begins the investigation process. Service requests are prioritized based on the impact to health and safety. Emergency service requests which include low or no heat in apartment buildings, discontinuation of a vital service, abandoned appliances or the removal of hate graffiti are prioritized over non-emergency service request which include

turf grass and prohibited plants, zoning or waste. In 2023, the RentSafeTO team aimed to improve their response time for emergency service requests within 24 hours, achieving that goal 95% of the time; an increase of 4% over 2022. RentSafeTO also responded to 92% of non-emergency service requests within 5 days; an 18% improvement compared to the response rate in 2022.

PERCENTAGE OF EMERGENCY SERVICE REQUESTS  
RESPONDED TO **WITHIN 24 HOURS**






# INVESTIGATION RESPONSE TIME

## AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS BY CATEGORY

Since the inception of the program in 2017, RentSafeTO's response time to service requests has significantly improved. With the implementation of the priority response model in 2023, the RentSafeTO team's average [service request response time](#) decreased to less than 4 days, well below the customer service standard. For instance, the average response to waste related service requests dropped from 13.1 days in 2022 to 2.3 days in 2023. Similarly, the median response time was just 1 day across all service request types.





A photograph showing significant water damage on a white wall corner. The paint is peeling, cracked, and discolored with brown stains, indicating a serious leak or moisture problem.

When I called 311, I was concerned about the safety of residents in the building. I received a response very quickly. The bylaw enforcement officer listened attentively to my concerns and explained the process for obtaining compliance, including the actions they would take. Most importantly, they did what they said they would do including re-attending the building and following up until the issue was fixed. Thanks to the RentSafeTO program, the building is safer for tenants.

Thelma, Tenant

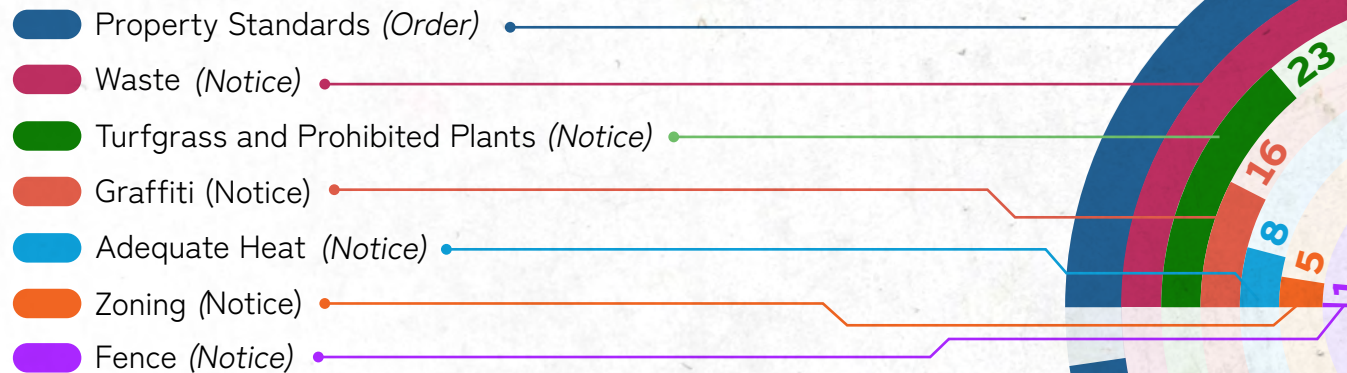


# ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The primary goal of the RentSafeTO program is to bring building owners and property managers into compliance, using progressive enforcement action if compliance is not achieved. This action may involve issuing fines and charges for non-compliance and conducting remedial action, if required. BEOs will issue a Notice of Violation and/or an Order to Comply to notify a building owner and/or operator that they must correct

any bylaw violations. In 2023, 1 in 6.5 service requests resulted in either a Notice of Violation or an Order to Comply being issued, an increase of 8.7% compared to 2022. Only 1.4% of all Order to Comply and Notices of Violation were the result of audits.

## ORDERS TO COMPLY AND NOTICES OF VIOLATION ISSUED AS A RESULT OF SERVICE REQUESTS



## NO ORDERS TO COMPLY OR NOTICES OF VIOLATION WERE ISSUED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Appliance (Emergency Order)

NOTE: This data excludes the Orders issued as a result of audits.



## ORDERS TO COMPLY AND NOTICES OF VIOLATION ISSUED AS A RESULT OF AUDITS

Category	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Property Standards ( <i>Order</i> )	155	122	64	17	25	20
Waste ( <i>Notice</i> )	9	8	6	2	5	-
Graffiti ( <i>Notice</i> )	-	3	1	-	1	-
Turf Grass and Prohibited Plants ( <i>Notice</i> )	1	-	1	-	-	-
Fence ( <i>Notice</i> )	1	2	1	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>

## REMEDIAL ACTIONS TAKEN

Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Property Standards	2	0	4	1	0	0	0
Waste	1	0	6	0	1	0	0
Graffiti	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The most common charge under the RentSafeTO program is the Failure to Comply with a Property Standards Order; staff have issued 196 orders since the introduction of the program, and fines, which are imposed by the Courts, have ranged from \$200 to \$30,000.

As a result of a backlog of cases before the Courts, many of the fines issued by the Courts in 2023 were related to charges brought forth in previous years.







**CHARGES  
SUBMITTED  
TO THE COURTS**

PART 1 (SET FINE)

**34**

PART 3 (SUMMONS)

**8**



**CHARGES  
RESOLVED  
BY THE COURTS**

**18**

**15**

**NUMBER OF  
FINES IMPOSED**

**57 fines totalling \$110,950**

### **PART 1 OFFENCES**

These offences are often referred to as set fines, are for minor offences and they can be issued for non-compliance under several bylaws including Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings.

### **PART 3 OFFENCES**

This type of offence is for more serious violations. It involves issuing a summons and requires the individual to appear in court. Staff can serve a summons for offences under Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings, as well as other bylaws including Chapter 629, Property Standards, in accordance with the procedures in the Provincial Offences Act.





The RentSafeTO program has been a testament to the power of collaboration, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of apartment living. As a large housing provider with more than 22,000 units, we recognize the immense value of working with the dedicated team at RentSafeTO to ensure cleanliness and maintenance standards are continuously met and to ensure our commitment to service excellence and transparency is achieved.

Robert, Building Operator



# RentSafeTO

## COMMUNITY Engagement

The RentSafeTO team works continuously to improve collaboration and communication with tenants, tenant advocates and building owners or operators through a wide range of strategies, including door-to-door engagement, participation at tenant association meetings, hosting Councillor townhalls, conducting walkthroughs with building owners, and participation in community events. In 2023, RentSafeTO successfully completed 93 engagements reaching approximately 1,650 residents.

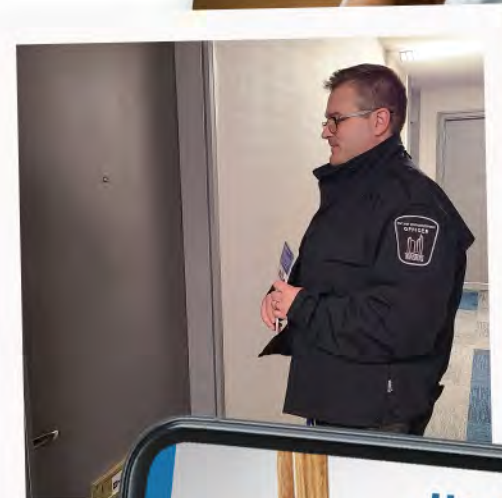
RentSafeTO also conducted virtual and in-person consultations along with online surveys to gain feedback from building owners and the community on the redesign of the building evaluation tool and proposed fee changes. There is also an annual City-wide multilingual public education campaign that leverages various communication channels to increase awareness about the program.

 **93** In-person and virtual events

 **18** Consultations

 **44,000** Webpage views during campaign

 **750,000** People reached through social media





# LOOKING AHEAD

RentSafeTO has numerous initiatives that it will be working towards in 2024, including:

- ▶ Updating the Interactive Building Score Web map to display confirmed violations;
- ▶ Implementing Targeted Engagement when building scores drop 5% or more as a result of Orders to Comply or Notices of Violation;
- ▶ Submitting a report to City Council in 2024 on the redesigned evaluation tool;
- ▶ Conducting 1,750 building evaluations;
- ▶ Conducting audits based on 2023 evaluation results; and,
- ▶ Increasing engagement with more in-person community activities and a revamped public education campaign.

Stay connected and receive the latest program updates at [toronto.ca/RentSafeTO](https://toronto.ca/RentSafeTO).



If you are interested in learning more or having RentSafeTO conduct an education session at a community event, please email [RentSafeTO@toronto.ca](mailto:RentSafeTO@toronto.ca).

