

Be informed.

Understand your rights.

Know where to get support.

*Your guide to resident rights and protections
in Ontario's licensed retirement homes*



This guide will help you as a resident of a licensed retirement home in Ontario. Whether you have a concern, need support or simply want to stay informed, we're here to help you feel safe, respected and empowered.



Who we are

The Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) is an independent, self-funded, not-for-profit organization created by the ***Retirement Homes Act, 2010***, to protect the safety, rights and well-being of residents in Ontario's licensed retirement homes.

What we do

- » License retirement homes and maintain a public database online.
- » Provide trusted information and guidance about the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*, and the rules that licensed retirement homes must follow.
- » Inspect homes and take action when rules are not followed.
- » Respond to concerns, complaints and reports of resident harm and risk of harm, helping homes and residents work toward solutions.

Contact us

Need help or have a concern? We're just a call or click away:

- » **Call:** 1-855-ASK-RHRA (1-855-275-7472)
 - » **Email:** info@rhra.ca
 - » **Visit:** rhra.ca
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Supporting you, your way

If you have a disability, we'll work with you to make our services easy to access and use. We follow Ontario's accessibility laws and are committed to removing barriers.

If French is your preferred language, you have the right to use it when communicating with us. We may also have materials available in other languages – just ask us.

Understanding your rights

Living in a licensed retirement home means enjoying a safe, supportive space where your rights as both a tenant and a resident are protected.

Your rights as a tenant

When you rent a unit in a licensed retirement home, you are considered a tenant first under Ontario's ***Residential Tenancies Act, 2006***.

This law explains the rules between the home (as a landlord) and you (as a tenant). Every retirement home must give you a written tenancy agreement.

The *Residential Tenancies Act* protects your rights when it comes to:

- » How often rent can be increased
- » Lease terms and tenancy agreements, including care services
- » Safety and maintenance standards in the home

For more information, contact the Landlord and Tenant Board at 1-888-332-3234 or visit tribunalsontario.ca/ltb.

While the *Residential Tenancies Act* covers your rights as a **tenant**, the *Retirement Homes Act* sets rules for your care and safety as a **resident**.

Your rights as a resident

When you live in a licensed retirement home, you are also protected under Ontario's *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*, which includes the **Residents' Bill of Rights**. These rights are designed to support your safety, keep you informed, and involve you in decisions about your care and daily life.

You have the right to:

- » Live in a safe, clean home.
- » Be involved in decisions about your care.
- » Bring in your own care providers if you choose.
- » Know what care services the home offers and how much they cost.
- » Be notified in writing if costs are increased.

These rights must be clearly posted in every home. Staff are trained to understand and respect them. To read the full *Residents' Bill of Rights*, visit rhra.ca.



Speaking up when you have a concern

If something doesn't feel right – whether it's about your care, how the home is run, or how staff treat you – you have the right to speak up. And you are protected: no one is allowed to punish you for raising a concern. If someone tries to stop you, the RHRA will take action.

Start by talking to the home

Every retirement home is legally required to have a process for handling complaints. You can ask staff for details or check your information package.

If you have a concern, such as a missed meal, maintenance issue or other problem, start by speaking with the home.

Once the home knows about your concern, they must look into it and respond within 10 business days. Their response should explain:

- » How they plan to address the issue
- » When it will be addressed
- » Or why they believe no action is needed



What to do if you still need help

If you're not satisfied with the home's response, you can contact the RHRA. We're here to listen, guide and support you.

We start by helping with concerns in a simple, informal way – like offering advice or talking things through with you and the home. This often leads to quicker, more cooperative solutions.

If that doesn't work, we can help you take the next step through our formal complaint process.

What happens in a formal complaint

We ask that you submit your formal complaint in writing and include your contact details. This allows us to respond and support you throughout the process.

Formal complaints cannot be anonymous because we work directly with you and the home to fully understand and address the issue.

Once we receive your written complaint:

- » We'll review it and follow up with you if we need more information.
- » We'll notify the home, sharing your name and the details of your complaint so they can respond appropriately.
- » We'll send you a letter explaining the steps we took and what happens next.

Reporting resident harm or unsafe conditions

If you see or suspect harm to a resident, such as abuse, neglect or unsafe care, report it to:

- » **The retirement home** – they are legally required to report it to the RHRA.
- » **Or the RHRA directly** – you can even do this anonymously, if you prefer.

When reporting, try to include:

- » What happened
- » When and where it happened
- » Who was involved

The RHRA takes every report seriously and acts quickly to keep residents safe. This may include inspecting the home, speaking with staff, and confirming the necessary steps have been taken. If we inspect the home, the final report will be posted on our website and in the home.

Other places to get help

Some issues are outside the RHRA's role.

If your concern is about rent, electrical safety or the building itself (e.g., elevators), here are some organizations that may be able to help:

- » **Landlord and Tenant Board:** tribunalsontario.ca/ltb
- » **Technical Standards & Safety Authority:** tssa.org
- » **Electrical Safety Authority:** esasafe.com

Visit rhra.ca for a list of organizations who can help, or call us and we'll refer you to the right one.

Financial aid if your home closes due to an emergency

If your retirement home closes suddenly due to certain emergencies (like a fire or flood), the RHRA may be able to help cover some unexpected costs, such as:

- » Temporary housing
- » Meals and care
- » Moving costs

You may be eligible for up to \$3,500, depending on your situation. This support is only available in emergencies where your home is no longer able to operate. If that happens, call us and we'll walk you through what to do.

Opportunity to be heard: Join the RHRA Resident Network

Speaking up isn't just about concerns – it's also about sharing your ideas, connecting with others, and helping make retirement living better for everyone.

The RHRA Resident Network is a group of residents from across Ontario that meets regularly to share experiences, offer input and work directly with RHRA staff, who provide ongoing support to members.

- » **Meetings:** 1 hour, 6 times a year (online)
- » **Join when you can:** No pressure or commitment
- » **To join:** Email communications@rhra.ca or visit rhra.ca

You'll learn about your rights, explore public health and safety topics, and help shape a better future for fellow residents. We'd love to hear from you!

With good communication, strong support and clear information, your retirement home can be a place where you feel safe, respected and empowered.