

DIRECTIVE

DATE: February 13, 2003

NUMBER: 2003-02

Approved by County Council on: January 28, 2003

The policies, procedures and County requirements in this Directive are to be implemented by housing providers that are funded under the following Programs, which are administered by the County:

Please note if your program is not checked this Directive is not applicable to your project(s), and is for information purposes only.

✓	Federal/Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program	✓	Rent Supplement - Commercial
✓	Ontario Non-Profit Housing Programs	✓	Rent Supplement-Homelessness Initiative
✓	Federal/Provincial & Ontario Co-operative Housing Programs	✓	Rent Supplement-OCHAP & CSHP
✓	Simcoe County Housing Corporation		

SUBJECT: RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME ASSISTANCE: ABSENCE FROM UNIT

BACKGROUND

Under the Social Housing Reform Act 2000 (SHRA), a service manager may establish a local eligibility rule stating that a household receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance (RGI) assistance ceases to be eligible for such assistance if all of the members of the household have been absent from the unit for at least the maximum absence period specified in the rule

LOCAL ELIGIBILITY RULE

The County of Simcoe, as service manager, has decided that **the maximum absence period is 60 consecutive days**. If the household wishes to be absent from the unit for a longer period it must obtain the prior written consent of the housing provider. In deciding whether or not to allow an extension to the maximum absence period, a housing provider shall give consideration to urgent family needs, and compassionate grounds.

MEDICAL REASONS

Under the SHRA, if a household has only one member and that member is absent from the unit for a period of time because of medical reasons, the member shall be deemed not to be absent from the unit during that period for the purposes of the local eligibility rule.

Also, if a household has two or more members, one member is absent from the unit for a period of time because of medical reasons, and the others are absent from the unit for that period of time because they need to be accommodated elsewhere as a result of the absence of the first member, all the members of the household shall be deemed not to be absent from the unit during that period for the purpose of the local eligibility rule.

VERIFICATION

In relation to absence for medical reasons, the household must provide written verification from a certified medical professional of hospitalization or treatment at a recognized medical treatment centre, or of on-going medical care that takes the household member away from his/her unit. Also, the household must provide written verification from a social or medical professional that other members of the household need to be accommodated elsewhere as a result of the absence of a household member for medical reasons.

In relation to granting an extension to the maximum absence period, the household must provide such information and documents as the housing provider may require for the purpose of verifying the reasons for which the extension is being requested.

CESSATION OF ELIGIBILITY

If a household is absent from its unit for more than 60 consecutive days, other than for medical reasons as described above, without obtaining the prior written consent of the housing provider, the household ceases to be eligible for RGI assistance. The housing provider shall then send the household 90 day's written notice that it will have to pay market rent. The household will not be able to get subsidy again without re-applying to the centralized waiting list and rising to the top of it. **It will be important for a housing provider to communicate these things to its tenants.**

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE

SHRA, s. 66, Ontario Regulation 298/01, s. 13