



SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

30 Memorial Road, Somerville, Massachusetts 02145
Telephone (617) 625-1152 Fax (617) 628-7057 TDD (617) 628-8889

March 24, 2020

Dear Resident:

The Somerville Housing Authority would like to update you on measures we are taking in response to the recent news regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19). ***This is an important message, so please take the time to read it in its entirety.***

The SHA's goal is to provide you with information, resources, and tips to ensure that you are taking proper safety precautions to protect yourself and those around you from exposure to this virus.

We would like to inform you of specific changes that the SHA is making to assist in those precautions.

Administrative staff will be taking additional precautions while providing services to tenants. Maintenance staff will be taking additional precautions while responding to work orders and moving from one unit to another. However, we need your help to keep everyone as healthy and well as possible.

WHAT SHA STAFF ARE DOING

- To try and reduce risk and opportunities of exposure, effective immediately, we will modify our onsite workforce and permit staff to work remotely as able. We are taking steps to severely limit person to person contact. We strongly encourage any residents or applicants to make appointments to limit crowding and lines at offices. We will remain available to tenants and applicants by phone and email throughout the authority's regular business hours.
- Staff will only enter occupied units to address **emergency health and safety issues** and health screening questions may be asked of residents prior to staff entering. (Tenants are not required to answer these questions, but it will help us serve you more safely). All routine work orders in occupied units will be **deferred** for duration of emergency.
- Wiping down or spraying frequently touched surfaces at the community building (s) (handles, knobs, doors, laundry machines, phones, etc.) with antibacterial wipes or Lysol disinfectant spray.
- Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), disposable gloves, at a minimum, to enter units.
- Providing automatic antibacterial hand sanitizers in the community areas.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick and maintaining a minimum 6-foot distance from everyone.
- Using gloves while working in resident units and properly disposing of gloves when exiting each unit.

Translation and interpretation services are available upon request by appointment only
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- If a resident is showing any of the signs mentioned (coughing, sneezing, respiratory trouble or the resident tells maintenance staff they're sick) maintenance will be reporting back to the office, so we can determine how to handle your work order. If a resident is not well, and the work order is not an emergency, we will determine if it makes sense to wait the 14-day period suggested before working in the unit.
- Practicing basic hygiene – washing hands frequently, coughing into elbow. Cover your nose & mouth with a tissue; throw out tissue immediately after use.
- Staying updated with information coming from state and national agencies.

WHAT RESIDENTS NEED TO DO

- Stay home if you're not feeling well (sore throat, cough, fever, aches, chills, or respiratory symptoms).
- Wipe down or spray frequently touched surfaces in your unit (handles, knobs, doors, phones, etc.) with antibacterial wipes or Lysol disinfectant spray.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick or socializing in groups.
- Minimize any non-essential trips outside your home.
- Practice basic hygiene – wash your hands frequently, cough into your elbow.
- Cover your nose & mouth with a tissue; throw out tissue immediately after use.
- Strongly consider a flu shot, it's not too late (it may not prevent you from getting the flu but might minimize the symptoms).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay updated with information coming from state and national agencies.

RENT REDETERMINATION & PAYMENT

- We understand that many of our employed residents will face significant loss of income during the pandemic. We remind you that you can redetermine your income **downward** at any time for purposes of rent calculation – please reach out immediately to your manager by phone or email if you have lost work hours and we will work with you on verification.
- Secure lock boxes are being installed at each property to allow residents the opportunity to securely deliver documents and/or rent payments to the SHA. All payments should be in a sealed envelope, accompanied by a rent coupon and should be in the form of check or money order. Cash will not be accepted.
- Enclosed you will find a form to enroll in a direct debit rent payment. As outlined in the attachment, your monthly rent amount would be automatically deducted from your account on the 5th day of each month. In order to process for May 2020 – forms must be received no later than **Monday, April 20, 2020**. The form should either be mailed to the Somerville Housing Authority, 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, MA 02145 or placed in the secure lock box. The form must be in a sealed envelope and accompanied by voided check. If you should have questions regarding this, please reach out to your manager.

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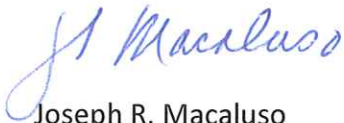


SOCIAL DISTANCING

- In order to practice the strongly recommended *social distancing*, these changes are effective immediately and will be in effect for at least the next thirty (30) days.
- All SHA community rooms will be closed until **Tuesday, April 6, 2020**. Laundry facilities will remain operational, while we encourage you to wipe down buttons and handles of the machines after each use.

Thank you for your cooperation in these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Macaluso
Executive Director

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