



**SOMERVILLE HOUSING  
AUTHORITY**

**NEW RESIDENT  
WELCOME PACKET**



STATE PUBLIC HOUSING



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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear New Resident,

On behalf of our staff, welcome to the Somerville Housing Authority (SHA).

For over 75 years, the SHA has been proud to provide affordable housing to low- and moderate-income families and elderly individuals in Somerville. Currently SHA manages developments across the city, housing over 1,300 residents. Every day our staff works hard to surpass our mission to offer decent, safe and sanitary housing. Through our efforts, we strive to bring you the highest quality housing and services available every day.

To help make your move easier, we're offering this WELCOME PACKET. In addition to your lease, this packet includes essential information you'll need to know as a new resident. In it, you'll find:

- Your Housing Manager's and other key contact information
- Important information including rent payment options, annual and interim recertification information, information if you are a victim of domestic violence & City of Somerville Rights and Resources for Tenants at the end of their tenancy
- Evacuation procedures, Public Safety information & Summer Safety Rules
- Instructions on how to request a work order for repair, air conditioner installation guidelines & laundry room information
- SHA policies outlining your rights and obligations (Tenant Lead Law Notification, Smoke-Free Policy, Parking Policy, Lock-Out Policy & Pet Policy)

Again, we want your move and residency with the SHA to be successful. Please note that your Housing Manager is available to answer any questions regarding your housing. Additionally, our Resident Services Department is available to discuss any concerns or special needs, schedule a visit, or inform you of our SHA resident programs.

We wish you the very best and welcome you to our community.

Sincerely,

*Diane L. Cohen*

Diane L. Cohen  
Executive Director

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## RENT PAYMENT NOTICE

Rent is payable to: **SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**The rent is due on the first (1st) business day of each month. If your rent is going to be late, you must notify your manager.**

### OPTIONS TO PAY YOUR RENT

As a reminder, there are three (3) methods to pay your rent:

**1) Mail your check** or money order to:

Somerville Housing Authority  
P.O. Box 277  
Medford, MA 02155

**2) Pay in Person at Eastern Bank**—cash or check—at:

102 Fellsway West, Somerville  
503 Riverside Ave., Medford or  
647 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge

**3) Automatic Withdrawal** from your bank account:

If you choose this option, please complete the **Automatic Monthly Rent Deduction Form**

**BE SURE TO INCLUDE A RENT COUPON WITH YOUR PAYMENTS OR THEY WILL NOT BE PROCESSED!**

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## ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION & INTERIM RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

### ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (**Federal Public Housing & Multifamily Housing**) and Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) (**State Public Housing**) requires that SHA review pertinent information as to the Household's income, employment, continued eligibility, and family composition every year to redetermine your rent.

Your housing manager will process your recertification and will send you a reminder notice when it is time for your next recertification interview. Completing your annual recertification is **REQUIRED**. Failure to complete your annual recertification can result in termination of your lease.

### INTERIM RECERTIFICATION

To ensure that assisted tenants pay rents commensurate with their ability to pay, tenants must supply information for use in an interim recertification of family income and composition in accordance with HUD and State requirements.

All tenants **must** notify the SHA of:

- A change in family composition: A family member moves out or a family member proposes to move into a unit. (**\*New members must be screened by SHA and receive written approval prior to moving in.**)
- An increase in a family's cumulative income of \$200 or more a month (**Multifamily Housing**).
- An increase by 10% from the amount contained in the most recent notice of rent determination. (**Federal Public Housing & State Public Housing**)
- An adult member of the family who was reported as unemployed on the most recent certification or recertification obtains employment.
- A change in citizenship or eligible immigration status of any family members.

All tenants **may** notify the SHA of:

- Decreases in income including, but not limited to, loss of employment, reduction in number of hours worked by an employed family member, and loss or reduction of welfare income.
- An increase in allowances (e.g., number of dependents, a new disability assistance expense, increased medical expenses, higher childcare costs).
- Other changes affecting the calculation of a family's annual or adjusted income including, but not limited to, a family member turning 62 years old, becoming a full-time student, or becoming a person with a disability.

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## SHA EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

For your household's safety, please review and follow these SHA evacuation procedures in case of emergency. Make sure you know where the stairways and emergency exits are in your building.

**AT ANY TIME, if you SEE FIRE or SEE OR SMELL SMOKE in the building, CALL 911**

- **Evacuate** the building using the nearest stairway.

**If you HEAR the FIRE ALARM**

- **NEVER USE THE ELEVATOR, ALWAYS USE THE NEAREST STAIRWAY.**
- Before you leave, **feel the doorknob and door to see if it is hot.**
- Stand behind the door and open it slowly. Be ready to close it if needed.

**If there's a FIRE in YOUR APARTMENT, CALL 911**

- **LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.** Do not collect valuables.
- Close the door to the room of the fire and close the door to your apartment.
- **Pull the nearest fire alarm (on the pull box).** Wait for the fire department in the lobby to tell them the exact location of the fire.

**If the DOOR is HOT, DO NOT OPEN IT**

- Put a wet towel along the bottom edge of the door.
- **CALL 911** and let them know you are still in your apartment.

**If SMOKE is TOO HEAVY in the HALLWAY**

- **Do not enter the hallway. CALL 911** and let them know you are still in your apartment.

**If you smell gas, CALL 911**

The SHA maintains a list in each development of disabled residents and those who may need assistance in evacuating the building. This list is made available to the Somerville Fire Department.

Should the building need to be evacuated, the SHA will work with residents to locate alternative lodging with relatives, friends, the Red Cross and other resources.

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## REPAIRS and WORK ORDERS

### How to Report a Needed Repair in Your Unit or Building

The SHA works hard to ensure everything in your apartment and building runs smoothly. But if you find anything in your apartment or building needs repair, please **CALL SHA MAINTENANCE to report the needed repair, and get a WORK ORDER NUMBER.**

### What is a Work Order and Work Order Number?

SHA Maintenance staff generates a work order and a work order number each time residents call to request a repair. A work order describes the nature of the repair and records the date and time of the request. Work order numbers enable SHA staff to easily track each repair. **To ensure problems are addressed promptly, you must get and keep your work order number each time you call to request a needed repair.**

**Please DO NOT ask Maintenance staff at your building to make repairs.**

*Maintenance workers will **not** make apartment repairs until a work order is created.*

### TO REQUEST REPAIRS OR REPORT AN EMERGENCY MAINTENANCE ISSUE

Call **617-625-4522.**

**Get a WORK ORDER NUMBER.**

Staff response for requested repairs should be no more than 14 days.

Staff response for emergency repairs should be within 24-48 hours.

**If maintenance does not respond to your problem within a reasonable amount of time, please call SHA Management at 617-625-1152.**

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## AIR CONDITIONER POLICY

- Air conditioners may be installed beginning on **May 1<sup>st</sup>**.
- A window mounted air conditioner is not allowed in a room that has only one window, due to emergency egress requirements.
- Air conditioners may only be installed on the lower part of the window.
- Air conditioners must be removed no later than **November 1<sup>st</sup>**. You may keep an air conditioner year-round if:
  - Your building has a “built in” air conditioner opening.
  - You or someone in your household has an SHA-approved reasonable accommodation due to a disability or medical reason.

### AC INFORMATION FOR ELDERLY DEVELOPMENTS:

BRADY TOWERS, BRYANT MANOR, CIAMPA MANOR, CORBETT APARTMENTS, HAGAN MANOR HIGHLAND GARDEN, PROPERZI MANOR, WESTON MANOR

- Please **do not** attempt to install your air conditioner yourself. Air conditioners should not be installed by you or a family member.
- SHA Maintenance will install your air conditioner for you. Please place a work order by calling (617) 625-4522.

### AC INFORMATION FOR FAMILY DEVELOPMENTS:

MYSTIC VIEW, MYSTIC RIVER, SYCAMORE STREET, FOUNTAIN AVENUE

- For a \$25 fee, SHA Maintenance will install an air conditioner for you. Please call (617) 625-4522 to request a work order.
- Air Conditioners must be installed safely. The Air Conditioner Policy & Instructions are available on [www.sha-web.org](http://www.sha-web.org). Click on “Policies and Procedures,” then click on “AC Installation.” Your housing manager can also provide these instructions.
- SHA will inspect the installation. Notify your housing manager the next business day upon installation to schedule an inspection.
- Air conditioners not properly installed will be removed. If removed, you will have to pay a \$25 fee for reinstallation by SHA staff.

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## REUSABLE & RELOADABLE LAUNDRY CARDS & KIOSK

### How it works:

- \*A reusable smart card stores a dollar balance
- \*To start a machine, apply care to the card reader
- \*To reload the balance, use the Value Add Center kiosk
- \*Supported by online management and convenience apps

### The kiosk will accept:

- \*Credit/Debit Cards (EMV/Chip Cards accepted)
- \*Mobile Wallet (ApplePay/AndroidPay)

### Aquí te explicamos cómo funcionará:

- \* Con una tarjeta inteligente reutilizable, tendrás un saldo en dólares para usar en las máquinas.
- \* Para comenzar a usar una máquina, simplemente desliza tu tarjeta en el lector.
- \* Para recargar tu saldo, usa el kiosco del Centro de Recarga.
- \* Además, puedes administrar todo en línea o con prácticas Apps.

### El kiosco aceptará:

- \* Tarjetas de crédito/débito (también se aceptan tarjetas con chip EMV).
- \* Wallet (ApplePay/AndroidPay)

### Kijan li fonksyone:

- \*Yon kat ou kapab itilize plizyè fwa ki gen yon pis elektwonik, estoke kòb ou genyen sou kont ou a an dola
- \*Pou ou demare yon machin, fè atansyon ak lektè kat la
- \*Pou w rechaje kont ou, itilize kyòs Value Add Center la
- \* Li baze sou jesyon anliy ak sou aplikasyon Pratik

### Kyòs la ap aksepte:

- \*Kat Kredi/Debi (Kat EMV/Kat ki gen pis elektwonik)
- \*Bous mobil (ApplePay/AndroidPay)

### Como funciona:

- \*Um cartão inteligente reutilizável armazena um saldo em dólares
  - \*Para ligar uma máquina, coloque o cartão no leitor de cartões
  - \*Para recarregar o saldo, utilize a instalação do Centro de Soma de Valores (Value Add Center)
  - \*Apoiado por aplicativos de gerenciamento online e conveniência
- A instalação aceitará:
- \*Cartões de Crédito/Débito (Cartões de EMV/Chip são aceitos)
  - \*Carteira Móvel (Mobile Wallet - ApplePay/AndroidPay)



Card and card readers use contactless technology. No inserts, no wear-and tear. Simply place and present the card.

Nuestras tarjetas y lectores funcionan con tecnología sin contacto (contactless). No hay necesidad de insertarlas ni preocuparse por el desgaste. Simplemente acerca tu tarjeta.

Kat yo ak lektè kat yo itilize teknoloji san kontak. Pa gen kote pou foute kat la, pa gen andomajman. W ap sèlman plase epi prezante kat la.

Cartões e leitores de cartões utilizam tecnologia sem contato. Sem inserções, sem desgastes. Simplesmente coloque e apresente o cartão.



**If you have any questions, please contact your Housing Manager.**  
**Si tienes alguna pregunta, no dudes en ponerte en contacto con tu Administrador de Vivienda.**  
**Si ou genyen kesyon, tanpri kontakte jesyonè lojman ou an.**  
**Se tiver dúvidas, entre em contato com seu Gerente de Habitação.**

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## PUBLIC SAFETY NOTICE

The mission of the Somerville Housing Authority's Public Safety Department is to assist residents in maintaining a safe and secure living environment. Our Public Safety Department is located at **35 Memorial Road, Somerville, Massachusetts**. Currently, we have one or two police officers working every shift. An Officer is on duty from 10:00 am to 6:00 p.m. and another from 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on weekdays.

The SHA's Public Safety Department works closely with the Somerville Police Department to ensure the safety of our residents. **If there is a crime in progress or an emergency, please call 911.** The Somerville Police Department will dispatch the appropriate response to your complaint.

Public areas of some buildings are under constant video monitoring. Viewing of live and archival film may be reviewed by security and management staff and under certain circumstances may be provided to authorities.

If there is an on-going security or safety problem in your building such as vandalism, unwanted guests in the hallways or suspected drug activity, help us maintain a safe environment by calling your Housing Manager, a Public Safety Officer, or the SHA TIP LINE AT 617-628-1258. This line is checked for messages during Public Safety hours and is for non-emergencies only. Callers may remain anonymous. You do **NOT** have to leave your name, and we do not have caller ID on this phone. Please leave as much detail as you can. If you have a non-emergency situation you can call the SHA Public Safety Department during normal business hours.

Get involved and help protect your environment! Statistics have shown that an effective deterrent to crime is resident involvement. When individuals in a neighborhood look out for each other and communicate with law enforcement crime goes down. This does not require you to carry any weapons, nor does it require you to apprehend any suspicious looking individuals. However, it does require each resident to be more active in reporting suspicious activities or persons to the proper authorities. Therefore, we encourage each resident to know his or her neighbors and become alert to suspicious persons or activity on the property.

Feel free to contact the SHA with your questions concerning parking, security, crime prevention, fire prevention and disaster preparation.

Telephone: 617-625-1152  
Fax: 617-628-7057  
TDD/TTY: 617-628-8889  
ANONYMOUS TIP LINE: 617-628-1258



### Public Safety staff:

Director of Public Safety Daniel Meade	Ext. 338	<a href="mailto:danm@sha-web.org">danm@sha-web.org</a>
Investigator Sean Browne	Ext. 339	<a href="mailto:seanb@sha-web.org">seanb@sha-web.org</a>
Investigator William Rymill		<a href="mailto:williamr@sha-web.org">williamr@sha-web.org</a>
Investigator Michael de Bethencourt		<a href="mailto:michaeld@sha-web.org">michaeld@sha-web.org</a>

## IMPORTANT PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS & INFORMATION

- Always deadbolt/lock your door when you're home and lock your door and windows when you go out.
- If you find doors wedged open, dislodge them and close and lock them.
- Report any suspicious activity in your hallway to Public Safety of the Somerville Police Department.
- In buildings with a doorbell system, do not let strangers in.
- Tell your visitors to always ring your doorbell to gain entry to your unit.
- If you notice any hazardous or potentially unsafe conditions such as broken locks or hallway lights out, report this to the Maintenance Department at 617-625-4522.
- Make sure to register your household's vehicle(s) with your Housing Manager to obtain a SHA parking sticker.
- Any vehicle without a SHA parking sticker or illegally parked will be ticketed and/or towed at the owner's expense.
- City of Somerville parking rules are enforced by Public Safety.
- Ensure your visitors are parked in assigned visitor parking area(s) at each development. SHA does not issue or recognize any Visitor Passes on any of our properties.
- Remember to take your house keys with you. Residents requiring lock-out services after their **second** lock-out will be charged a fee for each lock-out service rendered.
- When having guests over, refrain from illegal acts, making excessive noise or any other activity that can affect the peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
- Parents should always be aware of their children's activities and will be held responsible for their actions.
- All sports activities are forbidden between family development buildings and must be conducted in designated areas, playgrounds, or parks.
- Residents are **prohibited** from smoking in their units, building hallways, community rooms or administrative offices.
- Tampering, blocking, or disabling a smoke detector is prohibited and against the law.
- When the fire alarm rings, always assume it is not a drill and evacuate quickly and immediately.
- When moving into any apartment, locate the closest escape route and designate a location away from the building for your family to meet.

**For more information about SHA Policies, please visit our website at  
[www.sha-web.org](http://www.sha-web.org)**

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## SUMMER SAFETY RULES

### **SWIMMING POOLS:**

- Only small tot-sized pools are allowed.
- Pool must be placed on a paved surface and never on grass areas.
- Pools **must** be carefully emptied into storm drains when not in use.
- Pools **must** be removed from the grounds/common areas by 10:00 p.m.
- Children should **never** be left unattended.
- After the pool has been filled, the water **must** be turned off.
- Sprinklers and hoses with constantly running water are **not** allowed.
- Due to water costs and conservation efforts, SHA will monitor and may restrict exterior water usage.
- Tenants may be held liable for damages caused to SHA property due to improper water use and SHA reserves the right to discontinue exterior water usage.

### **COOKOUTS:**

- Propane (gas) grills are allowed on SHA property, but **the location must be approved by SHA. The grill must be secured and stored outside. SHA reserves the right to immediately remove any grill it deems to be unsafe or inappropriately stored.**
- Do **not** store propane tanks in hallways, apartments, basements, automobiles. **It is strictly prohibited.**
- **Charcoal grills are not allowed.**
- Cookouts are allowed **only** in the back entrance areas.
- Hot grills **must** be always supervised by an adult.
- **No alcohol** can be consumed outside, not even when placed in glasses or cups. **It is illegal.**

### **NOISE/PARTIES:**

- Stereos, Bluetooth speakers and televisions should **not** be heard outside of your apartments, regardless of the time of the day.
- Your guests should be quiet coming in/out of the apartment and SHA property.
- Quiet hours begin at 10:00 p.m.
- Respect your neighbors, be polite and do **not** force your neighbor to call the police.

### **FIREWORKS:**

- Fireworks **are illegal and are not allowed** in the development at any time.

### **AIR CONDITIONERS:**

- Air Conditioners **must be installed safely.** Residents may request SHA to install for a \$25.00 fee or ask for installation directions from SHA Maintenance staff. **Air conditioners not properly installed will be removed.** If removed, tenants will be required to pay a \$25.00 fee for reinstallation by SHA staff.

**Thank you for your cooperation.  
Please call your Housing Manager if you have any questions about these Safety Rules.**

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## TENANT LEAD LAW NOTIFICATION

### **What lead paint forms must owners of rental homes give to new tenants?**

Before renting a home built before 1978, the property owner and the new tenant must sign two copies of this Tenant Lead Law Notification and Tenant Certification Form, and the property owner must give the tenant one of the signed copies to keep. If any of the following forms exist for the unit, tenants must also be given a copy of them: lead inspection or risk assessment report, Letter of Compliance, or Letter of Interim Control. This form is for compliance with both Massachusetts and federal lead notification requirements.

### **What is lead poisoning and who is at risk of becoming lead poisoned?**

Lead poisoning is a disease. It is most dangerous for children under six years old. It can cause permanent harm to young children's brain, kidneys, nervous system and red blood cells. Even at low levels, lead in children's bodies can slow growth and cause learning and behavior problems. Young children are more easily and more seriously poisoned than others, but older children and adults can become lead poisoned too. Lead in the body of a pregnant woman can hurt her baby before birth and cause problems with the pregnancy. Adults who become lead poisoned can have problems having children, and can have high blood pressure, stomach problems, nerve problems, memory problems and muscle and joint pain.

### **How do children and adults become lead poisoned?**

Lead is often found in paint on the inside and outside of homes built before 1978. The lead paint in these homes causes almost all lead poisoning in young children. The main way children get lead poisoning is from swallowing lead paint dust and chips. Lead is so harmful that even a small amount can poison a child. Lead paint under layers of nonleaded paint can still poison children, especially when it is disturbed, such as through normal wear and tear and home repair work.

Lead paint dust and chips in the home most often come from peeling or chipping lead painted surfaces; lead paint on moving parts of windows or on window parts that are rubbed by moving parts; lead paint on surfaces that get bumped or walked on, such as floors, porches, stairs, and woodwork; and lead paint on surfaces that stick out which a child may be able to mouth such as window sills.

Most lead poisoning is caused by children's normal behavior of putting their hands or other things in their mouths. If their hands or these objects have touched lead dust, this may add lead to their bodies. A child can also get lead from other sources, such as soil and water, but these rarely cause lead poisoning by themselves. Lead can be found in soil near old, lead-painted homes. If children play in bare, leaded soil, or eat vegetables or fruits grown in such soil, or if leaded soil is tracked into the home from outside and gets on children's hands or toys, lead may enter their bodies. Most adult lead poisoning is caused by adults breathing in or swallowing lead dust at work, or, if they live in older homes with lead paint, through home repairs.

## **How can you find out if someone is lead poisoned?**

Most people who are lead poisoned do not have any special symptoms. The only way to find out if a child or adult is lead poisoned is to have his or her blood tested. Children in Massachusetts must be tested at least once a year from the time they are between nine months and one year old until they are four years old. Your doctor, other health care provider or Board of Health can do this. A lead poisoned child will need medical care. A home with lead paint must be delead for a lead poisoned child to get well.

## **What kind of homes are more likely to have lead paint?**

In 1978, the United States government banned lead from house paint. Lead paint can be found in all types of homes built before 1978: single-family and multi-family; homes in cities, suburbs or the countryside; private housing or state or federal public housing. The older the home, the more likely it is to have lead paint. The older the paint, the higher its lead content is likely to be.

## **Can regular home repairs cause lead poisoning?**

There is a danger of lead poisoning any time painted surfaces inside or outside the home are scraped for repainting, or woodwork is stripped or removed, or windows or walls are removed. This is because lead paint is found in almost all Massachusetts homes built before 1978, and so many of Massachusetts' homes are old. Special care must be taken whenever home repair work is done. No one should use power sanders, open flame torches, or heat guns to remove lead paint, since these methods create a lot of lead dust and fumes. Ask the owner of your home if a lead inspection has been done. The inspection report will tell you which surfaces have lead paint and need extra care in setting up for repair work, doing the repairs, and cleaning up afterwards. Temporarily move your family (especially children and pregnant women) out of the home while home repair work is being done and cleaned up. If this is not possible, tape up plastic sheets to completely seal off the area where the work is going on. No one should do repair work in older homes without learning about safe ways to do the work to reduce the danger of lead dust. Hundreds of cases of childhood and adult lead poisoning happen each year from home repair work.

## **What can you do to prevent lead poisoning?**

- Talk to your child's doctor about lead.
- Have your child tested for lead at least once a year until he/she is four years old.
- Ask the owner if your home has been delead or call the state Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) at 1-800-532-9571 or [www.mass.gov/dph/clppp](http://www.mass.gov/dph/clppp). You can also check with your local Board of Health.
- Tell the owner if you have a new baby, or if a new child under six years old lives with you.
- If your home was delead, but has peeling paint, tell and write the owner. If he/she does not respond, call CLPPP or your local Board of Health.
- Make sure only safe methods are used to paint or make repairs to your home, and to clean up afterwards.
- If your home has not been delead, you can do some things to temporarily reduce the chances of your child becoming lead poisoned. You can clean your home regularly with paper towels and any household detergent and warm water to wipe up dust and loose paint chips. Rub hard to get rid of more lead. When you are done, put the dirty paper towels in a plastic bag and throw them out. The areas to clean most often are window wells, sills, and floors. Wash your child's hands often (especially before eating or sleeping) and wash your



child's toys, bottles and pacifiers often. Make sure your child eats foods with lots of calcium and iron and avoid foods and snacks that are high in fat. If you think your soil may have lead in it, have it tested. Use a door mat to help prevent dirt from getting into your home. Cover bare leaded dirt by planting grass or bushes, and use mats, bark mulch or other ground covers under swings and slides. Plant gardens away from old homes, or in pots using new soil. Remember, the only way to permanently lower the risk of your child getting lead poisoned is to have your home delead if it contains lead paint.

### **How do you find out where lead paint hazards may be in a home?**

The only way to know for sure is to have a lead inspection or risk assessment done. The lead inspector will test the surfaces of your home and give the landlord and you a written report that tells you where there is lead in amounts that are a hazard by state law. For interim control, a temporary way to have your home made safe from lead hazards, a risk assessor does a lead inspection plus a risk assessment. During a risk assessment, the home is checked for the most serious lead hazards, which must be fixed right away. The risk assessor would give the landlord and you a written report of the areas with too much lead and the serious lead hazards. Lead inspectors and risk assessors have been trained, licensed by the Department of Public Health, and have experience using the state-approved methods for testing for lead paint. These methods are use of a sodium sulfide solution, a portable x-ray fluorescence machine or lab tests of paint samples. There is a list of licensed lead inspectors and risk assessors at [www.mass.gov/cph/clppp](http://www.mass.gov/cph/clppp).

### **In Massachusetts, what must the owner of a home built before 1978 do if a child under six years old lives there?**

An owner of a home in Massachusetts built before 1978 must have the home inspected for lead if a child under six years old lives there. If lead hazards are found, the home must be delead or brought under interim control. Only a licensed deleader may do high-risk deleading work, such as removing lead paint or repairing chipping and peeling lead paint. You can get a list of licensed deleaders from the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Deleaders are trained to use safe methods to prepare to work, do the deleading, and clean up. Either a deleader, the owner or someone who works for the owner who is not a licensed deleader can do certain other deleading and interim control work. Owners and workers must have special training to perform the deleading tasks they may do. After the work is done, the lead inspector or risk assessor checks the home. He or she may take dust samples to test for lead, to make sure the home has been properly cleaned up. If everything is fine, he or she gives the owner a Letter of Compliance or Letter of Interim Control. After getting one of these letters, the owner must take care of the home and make sure there is no peeling paint.

### **What is a Letter of Compliance?**

It is a legal letter under state law that says either that there are no lead paint hazards or that the home has been delead. The letter is signed and dated by a licensed lead inspector. What is a Letter of Interim Control? It is a legal letter under state law that says work necessary to make the home temporarily safe from serious lead hazards has been done. The letter is signed and dated by a licensed risk assessor. It is good for one year but can be renewed for another year. The owner must fully delead the home and get a Letter of Compliance before the end of the second year.

Where can I learn more about lead poisoning?

<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health  Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program  (CLPPP)  (For more copies of this form, as well as a full range  of information on lead poisoning prevention,  tenants' rights and responsibilities under the MA  Lead Law, how to clean lead dust and chips,  healthy foods to protect your children, financial  help for owners, safe deleading and renovation  work, and soil testing.)  1-800-532-9571 or 781-774-6611  www.mass.gov/dph/clppp</p> <p>Massachusetts Department of Labor and  Workforce Development  (List of licensed deleaders)  617-626-6960</p>	<p>Your local lead poisoning prevention program  or your local Board of Health,  www.mhoa.com/roster/htm</p> <p>U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  (Information about lead in consumer products)  1-800-638-2772 or www.cpsc.gov</p> <p>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region I  (Information about federal laws on lead)  617-918-1328 or www.epa.gov/lead</p> <p>National Lead Information Center  (General lead poisoning information)  1-800-424-LEAD (or 5323)</p>
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## SMOKE-FREE POLICY

(Adopted as of May 1, 2017)

**1. Purpose.** The purpose of the Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) Smoke-Free Policy is to mitigate irritation and known health effects of secondhand smoke for residents, guests, contract workers and SHA employees. In addition, the smoke-free policy is intended to decrease the risk of fire in SHA units and reduce the cost of maintenance and cleaning resulting from smoking.

**2. Definition of Smoking:** Smoking is defined as the ignition and burning of tobacco leaves or marijuana such as (but not limited to) cigars, cigarettes, pipes, and waterpipes (hookahs). In addition, smoking shall include the use of E-cigarettes and similar products by which vapor is inhaled.

**3. Smoke Free Areas:** Effective September 1, 2016, all buildings on SHA property will be smoke free buildings. All living units and interior areas, including but not limited to community bathrooms, lobbies, community rooms, laundry rooms, hallways, stairways, elevators, the Mystic Activity Center, management and administrative offices, balconies, entryways, hallways, porches are designated as smoke-free. Also designated as smoke-free areas are SHA walkways, lawns and parking areas within 25 feet of building windows or doors, and all playgrounds and tot-lots located anywhere on all SHA property.

The Somerville Housing Authority staff, contractors, current residents, all guests, and all new residents of the Somerville Housing Authority shall not smoke, nor permit anyone to smoke, in smoke-free areas except that, notwithstanding the provisions above, residents and their guests shall be permitted to use E-cigarettes and similar products by which vapor is inhaled in their own living units.

**4. Smoking Areas:** The Somerville Housing Authority staff, contractors, current residents, all guests, and all new residents of the Somerville Housing Authority are permitted to smoke on SHA property beyond 25 feet of building windows, building doors, playgrounds and tot-lots. In any SHA development where there is no area greater than 25 feet from the building windows, doors, playgrounds, and tot-lots, then the SHA shall designate (after consultation with tenants) one or more well-lit smoking areas for the residents and guests of that development. The SHA will post signs indicating these designated smoking areas. Smoking shall also be permitted on city-owned sidewalks regardless of the number of feet from SHA buildings and playgrounds.

**5. Resident Report of Suspected Violation:** If a resident or SHA employee notices or observes a violation of this policy, they may submit a voluntary report to the Housing Manager as soon as possible. Management will seek the source of the smoke and take appropriate action.

**6. Promotion of this Smoke Free Policy:** The SHA will post no-smoking signs and promote this policy in meetings and discussions with residents and enforce compliance with this policy. There will be smoking cessation information available for all residents that will provide information on outside smoking cessation programs, tips on how to quit, and informational pieces about what support one can expect from insurance providers. The Somerville Housing Authority will support and work with resident councils or resident groups who may wish to use community rooms within developments to hold non-smoking support groups for residents. New residents will be given a copy of the smoke free policy and will be required to sign a smoke free lease addendum at the time of lease up. This will be kept in the resident's file. Current residents will be provided with a copy of this Smoke Free Policy and will be required to sign a smoke free Lease Addendum by July 30, 2018. This will be kept in the resident's file, with a copy provided to the resident.

**7. Lease Enforcement of the Smoke-Free Policy:** Head(s) of Household will sign a Lease Addendum and agree that all members of the household and all guests of the household will abide by the Smoke Free Policy. Each Head-of-Household will be responsible to ensure that all household members, their visitors and their

guests adhere to the Smoke Free Policy. A breach of the Smoke-Free Lease Addendum constitutes a breach of the lease and grounds for initiation of the enforcement remedies. Residents in breach of this policy will receive a verbal warning upon the first violation; a written warning on the second violation; and a request for a conference with the Housing Manager on the third violation. Through all enforcement steps, the Housing Manager will share cessation resources with the resident. Upon the fourth violation, the SHA may commence eviction proceedings, in which case it will send the Resident a written Pre-Termination Conference Notice. Residents shall have the right to file a grievance under the SHA's grievance policy if the matter is not otherwise resolved to the satisfaction of the Resident. The SHA will only pursue eviction in court as a last resort.

**8. Somerville Housing Authority/Landlord not a guarantor of smoke-free environment.** The SHA's adoption of a smoke-free policy does not make the SHA nor any of its managing agents the guarantor of Resident's health or of the smoke-free condition of Resident's unit and common areas. However, the SHA shall take reasonable steps to enforce the smoke-free terms of its leases and to make the non-smoking areas as smoke-free as is reasonably possible. The SHA will address violations of this policy upon the SHA's actual knowledge of said smoking or if the SHA has been given notice of said smoking and said notice can be substantiated.

**9. Disclaimer by Somerville Housing Authority/Landlord.** The SHA's adoption of a smoke free policy does not in any way change the standard of care that the SHA or managing agent would have to a resident household to render buildings and premises designated smoke-free any safer, more habitable, or improved in terms of air quality standards than any other rental property. The SHA specifically disclaims any implied or express warranties that the building, common areas, or Resident's premises will have any higher or improved air quality standards than any other rental property. The SHA cannot and does not warrant or promise that the rental premises or common areas will be free from secondhand smoke. The SHA's ability to police, monitor, or enforce the agreements of the Smoke Free Lease Addendum is dependent in significant part on voluntary compliance by Resident and Resident's guests, as well as by all residents and guests in other parts of the smoke-free area. Residents with respiratory ailments, allergies or a physical or psychological condition relating to smoke are put on notice that the SHA does not assume any higher duty of care to enforce the smoke free lease addendum than any other SHA obligation under the Lease.

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## PARKING POLICY

All vehicles parked on Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) property must display a Somerville Housing Authority parking sticker on the lower left front windshield. SHA parking stickers are valid only at the development in which the resident lives. Cars parked on SHA property from 9 P.M. to 7 A.M. without a SHA sticker will be ticketed and/or towed.

SHA permit parking stickers are issued by the Housing Manager. Only authorized household members of a SHA household with a current, valid driver's license can obtain a SHA parking sticker. *Each household may be issued **no more than two (2) parking stickers** per household.* A second parking pass will only be issued for an additional household member with a valid driver's license. *Any household granted more than two (2) parking passes prior to the amendment of this Policy will be allowed to retain their current number of passes. Should any excess passes be revoked, no additional passes will be reissued for any reason.*

**Residents are required to provide a copy of their registration and driver's license annually. Failure to supply the required information will result in revocation of their parking sticker.**

### Parking Pass Eligibility:

- Passenger vehicles
  - Registration must display the insurance carrier and the resident's address as the principal place of garaging
- Rental cars for the temporary use
  - Authorized household members, only.  
*Note: Issued ONLY for the duration of the Rental.*

### Parking Pass Ineligibility:

- Vehicles displaying commercial license plates, registered for commercial use or displaying a business name or logo will not be issued a parking permit and are not allowed to park on SHA property. *Note: Exceptions may be made for vehicles garaged on SHA property or for a business registered from an SHA address.*

SHA Management must be notified immediately when a vehicle's license plates are changed or a new vehicle is acquired, even if the household has already been issued a parking sticker. **The SHA reserves the right to revoke parking stickers if the vehicle is unregistered or uninsured, if an inspection rejection sticker has gone beyond the sixty (60) day limit or if there are multiple motor vehicle infractions committed on SHA property.**

### TEMPORARY PERMITS:

Any resident that acquires a car after regular business hours may contact SHA Public Safety for a Temporary Pass, which must be displayed on the dashboard of the car. The pass is valid until the expiration date listed on the pass. Upon expiration, residents must notify their Housing Manager to obtain an updated permit or parking sticker. Passes may only be obtained for cars registered to the SHA address or rental cars for the temporary use of an authorized household member.

## **VISITOR PARKING:**

Visitors who are in a development after 9 P.M. must be parked in a posted “VISITOR PARKING” space. Due to space limitations, not all developments have spaces available for visitors. SHA does not provide Visitor Passes nor honor City of Somerville Visitor Parking placards.

## **SNOW EMERGENCY/COMMUNITY PARKING UPDATES:**

All emergency communications regarding parking will be done through a mass notification calling service (ROBO-Call). Vehicle owners must provide a valid telephone number and notify the Housing Manager of any change in phone number.

In the event of a snow emergency or inclement weather, SHA will make every effort when conditions allow to notify residents by posting notices in first-floor hallways as well as by the mass notification calling service to alert residents of snow removal operations.

After major storms, residents should be prepared to move their vehicles the next day. The SHA reserves the option during MAJOR SNOWSTORMS to request that vehicles be moved to a snow cleared location for purposes of snow removal. If this occurs the SHA will notify residents through the mass notification calling service. To prevent the risk of towing, it is advisable for households to keep a spare set of keys available to the household or with a trusted person in the event the primary driver is unavailable to move the vehicle. All residents are required to remove the snow from their vehicles within 24 hours after the end of a storm to display their parking permit and to move the vehicle if necessary. SHA Public Safety and Maintenance staff **ARE NOT AUTHORIZED** to clean snow from any vehicle. Any vehicle not cleaned of snow may be subject to a ticket and/or tow.

## **OVER FORTY-EIGHT HOURS:**

Any vehicle remaining in the same space for a period exceeding 48 hours may be subject to a ticket and/or tow. In case of an emergency or any other valid reason, an exception may be made. Please contact your Housing Manager to notify them of special circumstances. Vehicles must always be in operating condition. The SHA does not allow motor vehicle repairs on SHA property.

## **PARKING TICKETS AND APPEAL PROCESS:**

The Somerville Housing Authority has adopted all ticketing criteria enforced by the City of Somerville. City of Somerville Parking tickets may be issued by SHA Public Safety and by the Somerville Police Department. Any car blocking a dumpster or access to gated areas and fire lanes will be towed.

Any resident who receives a parking ticket has the right to appeal the ticket through the City of Somerville Traffic and Parking Department. SHA staff are not allowed to conduct hearings. If a ticket is given in error and has not been sent to Somerville Traffic and Parking, the ticket will be voided by Public Safety. All tickets are payable to the City of Somerville.

## **TOW COMPLAINT PROCESS:**

Any resident who feels that their vehicle has been towed in error may contact Public Safety. If the motor vehicle was towed in error, it will be released at no charge to the resident.

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION:**

If a reasonable accommodation is needed, please contact the Somerville Housing Authority’s 504 Coordinator at 617-625-1152. For more information, please see the SHA Reasonable Accommodation/Modification Policy on SHA’s website at [www.sha-web.org](http://www.sha-web.org).

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

<b>SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY OFFICES</b>	
<b>MYSTIC MANAGEMENT OFFICE (MYSTIC RIVER/CORBETT APARTMENTS/MYSTIC VIEW/PROPERZI)</b> 5 Canal Lane, Somerville, MA 02145	617-625-1152
<b>CLARENDON HILL MANAGEMENT OFFICE (BRYANT/HAGAN/CLARENDON HILL)</b> 278 Powder House Boulevard Somerville MA 02144	617-666-0425
<b>CLARENDON HILL MANAGEMENT OFFICE (BRADY/CIAMPA/HIGHLAND/WESTON)</b> 278 Powder House Boulevard Somerville MA 02144	617-666-2117
<b>CAPEN COURT</b> One Capen Court, Somerville, MA 02144	617-629-6872
<b>WATERWORKS</b> 485 Mystic Valley Parkway Somerville, MA 02144	617-625-1152
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE</b>	617-625-1152

<b>TOWING COMPANY</b>	
<b>B&amp;B TOWING</b> 50 Mooney Street, Cambridge, MA 02138	617-492-4419

Board Approved 7.18.2024

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## LOCK-OUT POLICY

A resident who is the head of household or a member who is 18 years or older can gain entry to their unit with SHA assistance, in the instance of getting locked out of their unit. Any household member under 18 requesting access to their unit would require explicit permission from a resident parent or guardian before they will be granted access. If unable to get permission, the minor household member will be guided to the community room at the Mystic Activity Center, Community Room, or Manager's office during normal business hours or advised to contact a friend or family member they can stay with until permission from their guardian can be granted. Written permission from a parent or guardian of an underage household member may be accepted prior to the requested access to the unit depending on the specific circumstance. If permission is not obtained prior to lockout, SHA will attempt to contact the resident parent or guardian of record to gain permission.

### Weekday Lock-out services:

- Monday-Friday between the normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10 a.m. will be conducted by the Housing Manager of the housing development.
- Monday-Friday between the normal business hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. will be conducted by the Public Safety Department.
- Monday-Friday between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. will be conducted by the Public Safety Department.
- Monday-Friday between the hours of 12:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. will be provided by the On-Call Maintenance employee.

### Weekend Lock-out services:

- Weekends between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. will be conducted by the Public Safety Department.
- Weekends between the hours of 12:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. will be conducted by the On-Call Maintenance employee.

### Lock-out Fees:

Residents requiring lock-out services after their **second** lock-out will be charged a fee; each lock-out service rendered.

- Monday-Friday after normal SHA business hours between 4:00 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. will be charged \$37.50.
- Monday-Friday between 12:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. will be charged \$125.
- During the weekend between 5:00 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. will be charged \$37.50.
- During the weekend between 12:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. will be charged \$125.

Approved by the Board of Commissioners on 6/20/2024

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## PET POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of the Pet Policy (hereinafter “policy”) is to establish rules and guidelines regulating the keeping of “common household pets” in the Somerville Housing Authority (SHA). Management must approve of any pet except for caged birds and fish. A service animal which is specially trained to assist an individual with a disability in specific activities of daily living (for example, a dog guiding individuals with impaired vision or alerting individuals with impaired hearing) is not considered a pet for which permission to keep is required. When it is kept in a safe and sanitary manner by an individual with a disability to whom the animal gives necessary assistance in activities of daily living, a service animal shall be considered a pet in computing the number of pets kept.

For this policy an example of a “common household pet” includes domesticated animals such as dogs, cats, birds, hamster, gerbil, fish, or turtles. A monkey or snake is an example of an animal that is not a “common household pet” (hereinafter “pet”).

This policy provides that the SHA will not prohibit an elderly or disabled resident from owning and/or keeping a common household pet in their dwelling unit.

**This policy is deemed to be an addendum to the resident’s lease.**

### **A. Ownership of Pets:**

Because of the vast number of young children residing in the family developments and the threat to personal safety and sanitary conditions, dogs will not be permitted in the Mystic or Clarendon developments. Senior buildings will retain their right to keep a small dog in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

1. Each pet kept in a dwelling unit must be licensed and immunized to the extent required by state or local law. The pet must be restrained while in any common area of the development.
2. Cats or dogs that are kept in dwelling units must be spayed or neutered and certified clean by a veterinarian.

### **B. Number and Size of Pets:**

1. A resident may only have one (1) pet at a time. However, any resident that owned more than one cat prior to December 15, 1998, will be permitted to keep a maximum of two (2) cats. Cats are the only pets that will be recognized as preexisting under this provision.
2. No pet may exceed 30 pounds in weight. **Animals used to assist the disabled are excluded from this size limitation.**
3. Any pet other than a cat or dog must be kept in a cage when in a dwelling unit. No rodents are allowed unless kept in a cage. Fish and turtle tanks are limited to 20 gallons.

### **C. Financial Obligation of Pet Care:**

1. Each pet owner must provide adequate daily care to maintain the pet in good health including immunization.
2. Damage to any property within the dwelling unit or common areas that is the direct result of a pet's behavior is the financial responsibility of the pet owner.
3. If an owner is incapacitated to the extent that they cannot provide daily care for the pet, the owner will arrange to provide for the pet's care, either on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on the individual circumstances.

### **D. Pet Registration:**

1. All pets must be registered (form SHA-PF) annually with the SHA property manager. Registration must include the following:
  - a. For cats and dogs, veterinary certificate of inoculation;
  - b. For cats and dogs, license information about the pet;
  - c. The name of the person who will care for the pet if the owner dies or becomes incapacitated.

The designated pet caretaker and the pet owner must sign the lease addendum for pets (Form \_\_\_\_ ) indicating that they have read the Pet Policy and agree to comply with it.

2. SHA may refuse to register a pet if SHA reasonably determines that the pet owner, because of practices, habits, or physical condition, is unable to keep the pet according to the rules, or if the pet temperament is such that the rules will not be followed. SHA will notify the pet owner in writing within ten (10) business days if registration of pet is refused. The notice will state the basis for the refusal.
3. A resident keeping an unregistered pet is violating Policy rules and will be treated according to the rules in Section J of this Policy.

### **E. Pet Restraints:**

1. Pets must be restrained at all times when not in the dwelling unit.
2. A pet may not roam loose. Each pet **must be attended** when outside the dwelling unit.
3. Tethering of unattended pets is not allowed.
4. Pets are not allowed in any interior common area unless entering or exiting the dwelling unit.
5. Pets are allowed to be upon exterior common area provided the pet is restrained at all times.

### **F. Disposal of Pet Wastes:**

1. Each pet owner is responsible for the immediate removal of all pet waste in a sanitary manner. Disposal must be in waterproof containers to avoid leakage and odor and must be in the manner prescribed by the SHA for each development.
2. Pet owners who fail to remove pet waste will be charged a cleanup fee of \$5.00 per occurrence. Repeated failures to remove pet waste and/or pay cleanup fees are grounds for eviction.



### **G. Pet Behavior:**

1. Each pet owner is responsible for the behavior of his/her pet and must control behavior such as noisiness to ensure the peaceful enjoyment of the premises.
2. If there are pet-related disturbances or damages, a notice of lease violation will be issued to the pet owner by the management staff. If the pet owner fails to correct the condition or permits its reoccurrence after notification, SHA may terminate the resident's lease for good cause.
3. In an emergency, when it is necessary for the protection of the pet, other residents, resident's guests, or SHA staff, SHA may immediately remove the pet.
4. Dogs may not be left unattended inside a dwelling unit for more than ten (10) hours. All other pets may not be left unattended for more than 24 hours.
5. In the event of an animal bite or attack on another tenant or pet, the pet owner is solely responsible for any costs arising from the incident.
6. All pets must be housebroken.

### **H. Visiting Pets:**

The SHA will not allow visiting pets in any dwelling unit for any period of time unless expressly approved in advance by the management staff.

### **I. Pet Rule Violation Procedures:**

If the SHA determines that an owner has violated a provision of the Policy, a lease violation will be issued. Failure to correct any identified problems within (10) days, or a repetition of a similar violation occurring within six (6) months, will constitute grounds for eviction. Failure to correct violations of the policy or pay for pet damages will result in removal of the pet and/or termination of the resident's lease.

### **J. Pet Grievance Panel:**

A pet grievance committee will be established for the purposes of resolving disputes arising from the SHA pet policy. The pet grievance panel will be comprised of one SHA designee, one resident representative, and a third member agreed upon by these two members. The panel will render written decision based upon majority opinion, based upon material facts, applicable law and regulations.

In cases where appeals are sought, the SHA will directly furnish a list to the tenant concerning information and process necessary to pursue an appeal

*Amended on 10/21/21*



## **NOTICE TO ALL TENANTS: INFORMATION REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, DATING VIOLENCE AND STALKING IN STATE-AIDED PUBLIC HOUSING**

- **Protections for tenants:**
  - A tenant in state-aided public housing generally may not be evicted because the tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence.
  - With limited exceptions, if a tenant is a victim of domestic violence and removes the abuser from the unit, the Local Housing Authority shall not evict the non-abuser tenant/remaining household members for damage, disturbance, or other lease violation caused by the abuser.
  - These protections also apply to victims of sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.
  
- **Requesting a lock change:**
  - Tenants/household members who reasonably believe that they are under an imminent threat of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault or stalking at the premises also have the right to request that the LHA change the locks to their dwelling unit and deny the abuser a key to the new lock. If the LHA fails to change the locks within 2 business days, tenants may change the locks and must make a good faith effort to provide a key to the LHA within 2 business days in accordance with the law ([Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 186, section 26](#)).
  
- **Moving to another unit:**
  - Upon a tenant’s request to move to another unit due to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking, where moving to another unit would help the tenant to be safer, the LHA may provide an administrative transfer to an appropriate size unit owned by the LHA within the LHA’s state-aided public housing portfolio, subject to unit availability.
  
- **Resources:**
  - SafeLink (877) 785-2020 or <http://www.casamyrna.org/chat> (includes options for the Deaf and hard of hearing), the state domestic violence hotline. SafeLink is a toll-free domestic violence Massachusetts hotline that provides callers 24/7 live response in English, Spanish, Portuguese, with access to translation in more than 130 languages. See also <http://www.casamyrna.org>.
  - The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (1-800-787-3224 (TTY) for persons with hearing impairments).
  - Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network’s National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (or visit the online hotline at <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>).
  - National Center for Victims of Crime’s Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “tenant” generally includes members of the tenant household.

# Rights and Resources for Tenants and Former Homeowners at the End of a Tenancy



As required by the Housing Stability Notification Act, City of Somerville Ordinance Nos. 2019-19 and 2022-06



City of Somerville  
Office of Housing Stability



We encourage you to read all of this informational material.

There are **2 sections** of information:

- ▶ *Tenant Resources*
- ▶ *Tenant Rights*

**To help you understand your rights** as a tenant or former homeowner and make sure you are aware of the many resources available if you are facing eviction, the Somerville Housing Stability Notification Act (HSNA), enacted in 2019, requires your landlord or the foreclosing owner to provide you with information when your tenancy or occupancy is being terminated. Amendments to the HSNA in 2022 also require landlords to provide a separate notice of rights and resources at the start of a new tenancy.

Although the City cannot provide legal advice, the Somerville Office of Housing Stability (OHS) is here to provide residents with information, advice, and assistance for your housing-related questions or needs. Visit [somervillema.gov/ohs](http://somervillema.gov/ohs), call us at 617-625-6600, Ext. 2581, or submit a referral form at [bit.ly/OHS-Referral](https://bit.ly/OHS-Referral) to speak with OHS staff. OHS staff members speak English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Hindi and use telephone interpreters for all other languages. (See Tenant Resources for more information.)

**This is an important notice.** This notice is available at [somervillema.gov/ohs](http://somervillema.gov/ohs) in Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Nepali, and Traditional and Simplified Chinese. If you speak another language, please have it translated.

<p>Este es un aviso importante. Este aviso está disponible en los idiomas de español, portugués, criollo haitiano, nepalí, y chino tradicional y simplificado en <a href="http://somervillema.gov/ohs">somervillema.gov/ohs</a>. Si habla otro idioma, por favor solicite que lo traduzcan.</p>	<p>Este é um aviso importante. Este aviso está disponível no <a href="http://somervillema.gov/ohs">somervillema.gov/ohs</a> em espanhol, português, crioulo haitiano, nepali, e chinês simplificado e tradicional. Se você fala outra língua, por favor traduza.</p>
<p>Sa se yon avi enpòtan. Avi sa ap disponib an Espanyòl, Pòtigè, Kreyòl Ayisyen, Nepali, ak Chinwa Tradisyonèl ak Senplifye nan <a href="http://somervillema.gov/ohs">somervillema.gov/ohs</a>. Si ou pale yon lòt lang, tanpri tradwi li.</p>	<p>यो महत्त्वपूर्ण सूचना हो। यो सूचना <a href="http://somervillema.gov/ohs">somervillema.gov/ohs</a> मा स्पेनिश, पोर्चुगिज, हाईटियन क्रियोल, नेपाली, र परम्परागत तथा सरलीकृत चिनियाँ भाषामा उपलब्ध छ। यदि तपाँईं अर्को भाषा बोल्नुहुन्छ भने कृपया यसलाई अनुवाद गर्नुहोस्।</p>
<p>这是一则重要通知。此通知已翻译成西班牙语、葡萄牙语、海地克里奥尔语、尼泊尔语、繁体中文和简体中文，并可以在 <a href="http://somervillema.gov/ohs">somervillema.gov/ohs</a> 找到。如果您说另一种语言，请自行翻译。</p>	<p>這是一則重要通知。此通知已翻譯成西班牙語、葡萄牙語、海地克里奧爾語、尼泊爾語、繁體中文和簡體中文，並可以在 <a href="http://somervillema.gov/ohs">somervillema.gov/ohs</a> 找到。如果您說其他語言，請自行翻譯。</p>

# Tenant Resources

## Facing eviction? We can help. All services are free.

If you are a Somerville resident, you may be eligible for help from the following agencies, regardless of immigration status. Income limits or other eligibility criteria may apply.

### City of Somerville Office of Housing Stability

[somervillema.gov/ohs](http://somervillema.gov/ohs)

To access OHS services, call 617-625-6600, Ext. 2581, or submit a referral form at [bit.ly/OHS-Referral](https://bit.ly/OHS-Referral).

OHS staff members speak English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Hindi and use telephone interpreters for all other languages.

#### Services include:

- Advice and information on housing issues
- Help resolving landlord/tenant matters, including evictions
- Referrals for legal services
- Help applying for rental assistance
- Help applying for affordable housing
- Tenant outreach and education



### Legal Services

If you receive a Notice to Quit (the first step in an eviction proceeding), a Court Summons and Complaint, a 48-Hour Notice, or any other court papers related to your housing, get legal help as soon as possible. Free legal services are available for eligible low-income tenants through the agencies listed here, regardless of immigration status. Contact OHS if you need assistance with this.

- **Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services**  
Call 617-603-2700
- **De Novo Center for Justice and Healing**  
Call 617-661-1010
- **Harvard Legal Aid Bureau**  
(closed for intake in the summer)  
Call 617-495-4408

### Rental Assistance

Need help paying your rent or moving and start-up costs? Financial assistance is available through the agencies listed here, regardless of immigration status. Income limits or other eligibility criteria may apply.



#### Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS)

Apply at [caasomerville.org/hap-application](http://caasomerville.org/hap-application) or call 617-623-7370.



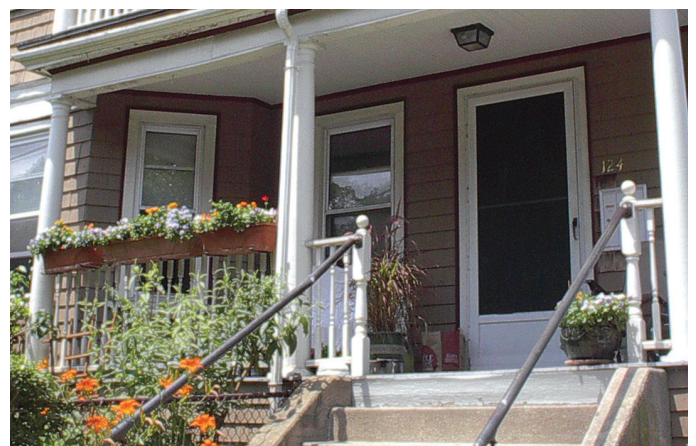
#### Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC)

Apply at [somervillehomelesscoalition.org/rapid-response](http://somervillehomelesscoalition.org/rapid-response) or call 617-623-6111.



#### Metro Housing Boston – RAFT

Apply at [metrohousingboston.org](http://metrohousingboston.org).



## Need help with your rent but not sure where to start?

Call OHS at 617-625-6600, Ext. 2581, or submit a referral form at [bit.ly/OHS-Referral](https://bit.ly/OHS-Referral).



# Tenant Rights

Only a **COURT** can order you to leave your home. This is the most important thing to remember!

- If your landlord or the owner tells you or you get a notice that says you must leave your home, that does not mean you have to leave—whether you have a lease or not.
- You may choose to, **but you do not have to move** by the termination date in the Notice to Quit. We do **not** recommend that you just leave your home, especially if you have a voucher or other subsidy.
- There is a court process that must be followed to evict you, and financial and other help is available to try to prevent eviction before going to court.
- If you receive an eviction notice, **get legal help or contact the Office of Housing Stability (OHS) as soon as possible.** (See Tenant Resources and below.) Each individual eviction case is different, so please seek assistance.
- If you can show the court that you have applied for emergency rental assistance **and** your eviction is only for nonpayment of rent due to financial hardship, **State law** protects you from eviction while your rental assistance application is pending. (See Tenant Resources for where to apply, or contact OHS.)

## Where can you get help with the eviction process?

- See Tenant Resources for a list of agencies that may help with eviction and related issues.
- OHS can refer tenants to an attorney or other important eviction resources such as rental assistance. Visit [somervillema.gov/ohs](http://somervillema.gov/ohs), call us at 617-625-6600, Ext. 2581, or submit a referral form at [bit.ly/OHS-Referral](http://bit.ly/OHS-Referral) to speak with OHS staff. OHS staff members speak English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Hindi and use telephone interpreters for all other languages. There are some income limits and other eligibility requirements that apply in order to get legal representation.
- See [MassLegalHelp.org](http://MassLegalHelp.org) for more information about the eviction process and for the Answer and other forms you will need to file.
- If you can't obtain legal help, see [gbls.org/MADE](http://gbls.org/MADE) for help completing necessary court forms.
- For personal help in filling out forms, contact the Boston Court Service Center. There are no income or other eligibility guidelines, but the Center's attorneys do not provide legal representation. Currently, services are in person (at 24 New Chardon Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Boston) on Tuesday and

Thursday (8:30 – 1:00 and 2:00 – 4:30) and remote on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 – 12:00 (via Zoom at [zoomgov.com/j/1615261140](https://zoomgov.com/j/1615261140) or by calling 686-828-7666 and entering meeting ID 1615261140). Check [mass.gov/guides/housing-court-resources](http://mass.gov/guides/housing-court-resources) for updated information.



# Tenant Rights

## What are the steps in an eviction and what do you need to do to be prepared?

Below are the usual steps in a typical eviction, but each individual eviction case is different, so please seek assistance. (See Tenant Resources.)

### 1. Notice to Quit

- In most cases, the landlord or owner provides you with a written Notice to Quit. It may be hand delivered, mailed, or sent by a constable or sheriff.
- The amount of notice will vary depending on the type of tenancy and why you are being evicted. In most cases, the notice will be for 7, 14, or 30 days, or a rental period.
- If you receive a Notice to Quit for nonpayment of rent, you have a **right to pay the money due by certain deadlines and prevent an eviction:**
  - ▶ If you are a tenant at will (no current lease), you have one chance in a 12-month period to pay the full amount owed within **10 days** from receipt of the Notice to Quit.
  - ▶ If you have a lease, you have a longer time (until the **Answer Date** set by the court) to pay the full amount of rent due plus interest and court costs (generally \$250 -\$275).
    - **Immediately contact** the listed agencies for help with back rent and legal assistance. (See Tenant Resources.)

### 2. Court Complaint

- If you do not pay the rent owed or you are being evicted for another reason, and you do not move by the end of the time period in the Notice to Quit or Notice of Nonrenewal, your landlord or the owner may file an eviction case in court.
- You will receive a court Summons and Complaint. It must be hand-delivered by a constable or sheriff OR left at your apartment and sent by first-class mail.
- A Somerville eviction case may be filed in Eastern Housing Court or Somerville District Court. (The court name will be listed in the upper left corner of the Complaint.)
- The Summons and Complaint will not list a trial date. For cases filed after June 4, 2023 in Housing Court and after June 19, 2023 in District Court, the clerk's office will notify your landlord or the owner with the date and details of the first court event. Your landlord or the owner will have a constable or sheriff hand deliver (or leave and mail) you a notice of the first court event, giving you at least 14 days' notice of that court date.
- The first court event is called a "Housing Specialist Status Conference" in Housing Court and a "Case Management Conference" in District Court. **Read carefully all court notices you receive.**
- Once your landlord or the owner files the Complaint with the court, you may search online at **MassCourts.org** to see important scheduling and other information about your case. You may also sign up for text message reminders about court events at **mass.gov/forms/civil-court-date-text-reminders**.
- If you have not already done so, **immediately contact** the listed agencies for help with back rent and legal assistance. (See Tenant Resources.)



# Tenant Rights

## 3. Right to File an Answer and Other Documents

- You should file with the court and give your landlord (or landlord's attorney) an Answer by **3 business days** before the first court event (Housing Specialist Status Conference or Case Management Conference) unless otherwise ordered by the court. **Read carefully all court notices you receive.**
- The Answer explains any **defenses** or **counterclaims** you have to your landlord's claims for possession, any rent due, and any lease violations. Counterclaims are claims that you have against your landlord, such as bad conditions or mishandling a security deposit.
- If you do not file the Answer in time, you can ask the court for permission to file late by filing a Motion to Allow Late Answer and Counterclaims.
- You also have the right to file and serve Discovery Requests (requests for information from your landlord about the case) and a Demand for Jury Trial by the Answer deadline (generally 3 business days before the first court event).

For more information about these forms, see **MassLegalHelp.org** or **gbls.org/MADE**. Tenants should get legal help as soon as possible to fill out the Answer and other documents. (See Tenant Resources.)

## 4. Right to Transfer

- You have a right to transfer cases filed in Somerville District Court to Eastern Housing Court.
- You should talk to an advocate about whether to transfer your eviction case. For information on how to transfer a case see **MassLegalHelp.org**.

## 5. First Court Event

- The first court event is a Housing Specialist Status Conference or a Case Management Conference held by Zoom, on the phone, or in person.
- If you need a free, court-provided interpreter, **immediately contact the court clerk's office.**
- **If you do not appear on time at the conference you will "default"** (that is, your landlord or the owner will automatically win possession and any rent claimed due in the Complaint).
- At the conference, referrals to agencies for rental assistance and mediation may be provided. In Housing Court, there may be a Lawyer for the Day program to provide limited help to tenants and landlords without their own lawyer.
  - ▶ If you are being evicted only for nonpayment of rent, the nonpayment was due to financial hardship, and you show proof of a pending application for RAFT or similar rental assistance, the court should stop the eviction until there is a decision on the application.
- With help from a mediator and/or lawyer or on their own, the parties may sign a Court Agreement to resolve the case. **You should be very careful that you understand and can follow through on the terms of any Agreement, as it will be almost impossible to undo.** Again, try to get legal assistance before signing.
- If an Agreement is not reached, the court will notify the parties of the date and purpose of the next event, which might be a trial, and will notify the parties of any deadlines. **Read carefully all court notices you receive.**



# Tenant Rights

## 6. Trial

- If the matter is not resolved at the conference or otherwise, there will be a trial. Both parties must attend the trial. A judge (or jury) will make a decision on your landlord or the owner's claims (for possession and any rent) and your defenses (and, if raised, counterclaims). In most cases, the trial will be held in person. The trial before a judge will generally be 14 days after the conference, and a jury trial will be at a much later date.
  - ▶ If you are being evicted only for nonpayment of rent due to financial hardship and show proof of a pending rental assistance application, the court should postpone the trial until there is a decision on the application.
- If you do not attend the trial on time, you will "default" and automatically lose the right to possession. You may file a Motion to Remove the Default and should immediately consult with an advocate about this process. (See Tenant Resources.)

## 7. Decision

- A decision about who gets possession of the apartment and any money due can be made through an Agreement, by the judge or jury after trial, or automatically by the court if either party defaults (does not appear before the court).

## 8. Right to Appeal

- If your landlord or the owner wins the right to "possession" of the apartment, you have **10 days to file a Notice of Appeal** (if there was a trial) or other motions.

## 9. Physical Eviction

- If your landlord or the owner wins the right to "possession" of the apartment and there is no appeal, the court will issue an Execution, which is the legal document that allows the constable or sheriff to physically evict you.
- The constable or sheriff must provide you with at least 48 hours written notice of the date and time that your belongings will be moved into a warehouse and the locks changed and must let you know the storage unit location and fees.
- If you receive a 48-Hour Notice, in some cases you may file a Motion to Stay Execution, asking the court to postpone your physical eviction. You will need to act very quickly, and the judge's decision will depend on a number of factors, including whether the eviction was your fault, whether there was an Agreement, and whether you can pay rent. For more information see **MassLegalHelp.org**. (See Tenant Resources.)

