

Toronto Community Housing



2023 Annual Pest Management Report

Item 9F

April 11, 2024

Tenant Services Committee

Report: TSC:2024-20

To: Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

From: Acting Chief Operating Officer

Date: March 12, 2024

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an annual update on the provision of pest management services at Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that TSC receive this report for information.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

BACKGROUND

The provision of pest management services is governed by municipal by-laws and federal regulations and is a key responsibility of the landlord as set out in the *Residential Tenancies Act* (“RTA”). It is an essential component of TCHC’s broader clean buildings and maintenance strategy, which is anchored against adherence to established service standards, delivery of cost-effective pest control services geared to enhancing tenant experience and satisfaction.

ANNUAL OVERVIEW

The TCHC pest management program, delivered by the Environmental Health Unit (“EHU”), plays an integral role in supporting tenants and staff. The program extends its services to the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (“TSHC”) while they establish their dedicated pest management program, and also includes the legacy contract management buildings that were transitioned to the respective direct managed portfolios. As part of the approach, the pest management program adopts a holistic and targeted approach to addressing pest management issues, which includes a blend of prevention and mitigation measures, combined with education activities.

In 2023, the pest management program delivered services against 57,773 work orders (“WO”) associated with a range of pest management issues (see Attachment 1). When compared to previous years, this represents a 5% increase (2,926 WOs) since 2022 and a 14% (7166 Wos) increase since 2021. The reported pest management issues were primarily related to bedbugs (40%), cockroaches (37%), mice (16%), and other issues (4%).

While there are numerous factors that can influence the fluctuations in the number of pest management issues and subsequent requests, an in-depth analysis reveals several factors contributing to the increase of Wos. First, the above normal climate conditions throughout 2023 provided the optimal conditions for pest populations to increase and migrate; these abnormal conditions do not provide natural control against pest populations. Secondly, the increase in construction activity throughout many buildings and communities has disrupted pest colonies, forcing them to seek alternate areas to establish nesting sites. Lastly, there have been notable challenges faced with the former contract management buildings that were transitioned into the direct managed portfolio; these buildings previously received pest control measures through their respect contract provider.

Although the former contract management buildings account for only 11% of units within the TCHC portfolio, they contributed to 29% of all pest management Wos. This can likely be attributed to non-compliance with pest control protocols and limited follow-up with identified issues. Furthermore, while these buildings require 3.4 treatments per unit, TCHC and TSHC buildings typically necessitate approximately one treatment per unit.

SUPPORTING TENANTS

In 2023, 22% of the units visited by the EHU team were identified as requiring additional support related to de-cluttering, preparation assistance for treatment or extreme cleaning services. Through existing partnerships with Toronto Public Health (“TPH”), Ontario Works, and Employment and Social Services, TCHC was able to facilitate access to additional support to these units. As an example, EHU engaged Employment and Social Services and TPH to assist tenants to access over \$125K in additional funding and services, providing necessary supports, including replacing mattresses, providing bedbug covers, helping tenants prepare their units for pest treatments, and de-cluttering units. Moving forward, the EHU will continue to collaborate with the regional teams to develop and implement resources, partnerships, and tools to ensure ongoing support and monitoring of units.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Effective pest management entails a proactive approach, ensuring staff engage in timely and targeted dialogue with tenants and communities, which provides opportunities to better understand the needs of tenants and communities and convey the appropriate supports and resources that are available. In 2023, in-person training and education sessions for staff resumed after a pause during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sessions were delivered in the west region in Q4 of 2023 and additional sessions will be delivered throughout the other regions during the remainder of 2024. In addition, EHU collaborated with tenants to develop education resources and sessions, with plans to expand these initiatives throughout 2024. Lastly, the EHU has developed a poster campaign, incorporating input from tenants and aimed at providing information on pest prevention and management. These posters will be part of a broader communications strategy targeting building sites monthly. The poster campaign is scheduled to be launched in Q2 2024.

LOOKING AHEAD: 2024 AND BEYOND

In 2023, the EHU undertook initiatives to strengthen its comprehensive and holistic approach to pest management including:

- Initiated engagement with tenant representatives regarding the pest management program refresh;
- Initiated development of new tenant education on pest control, with sessions to start in various regions in Q2 2024;
- Conducted staff education sessions around pest control procedures, with similar sessions scheduled for Q2 2024;

- Implemented initiatives targeting at-risk buildings for pest and environmental concerns with full building audits;
- Collaborated with partner departments (e.g. move-out, capital project team, state of good repair) to proactively address pest and environmental issues;
- Updated the pest control contract and scope of the program to inform the upcoming Request for Proposal (“RFP”) that will be posted in Q1 2024; and
- Partnered with the TCHC waste management team to address pest concerns at sites that are connected to waste disposal procedures.

In 2024, EHU will continue to evolve the pest management program through engagement with tenants and communities, enhancement of vendor quality assurance, and collaboration with external partners, including Toronto Public Health and Toronto Employment and Social Services. EHU will leverage data to inform resource allocation across the portfolio to ensure that full building audits are conducted at sites with known or trending pest management issues. Lastly, EHU will proactively canvas and engage with key industry and housing sector partners to adopt best practices.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:

Issues arising from pests can result in significant disruption of the comfort of tenants and limit the enjoyment of their homes. Without a comprehensive and sustainable pest management program, TCHC would be at risk of receiving orders and costs related to perceived mismanagement, including potential awards of rent abatement at the Landlord and Tenant Board, Municipal Licensing and Standards (“MLS”) orders for failure to maintain the premises “pest-free,” and Health Protection orders from Toronto Public Health.

SIGNATURE:

“Nadia Gouveia”

Nadia Gouveia
Chief Operating Officer

ATTACHMENT:

1. Pest Treatments by Categories

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Pest Treatments by Categories

Period	Regions	Bed Bugs	Total	Cockroaches	Total	Mice	Total	Other	Total	2023	2022	2021
Q1 2023	East	1,052	4,512	1,143	4,568	529	2,341	128	505	11,926	11,206	11,495
	Central	816		834		462		138				
	West	880		1,083		818		120				
	TSHC	1,764		1,508		532		119				
Q2 2023	East	1,192	4,823	1,027	4,033	606	2,214	169	576	11,646	11,918	8,616
	Central	904		726		390		143				
	West	985		950		814		174				
	TSHC	1,742		1,330		404		90				
Q3 2023	East	1,713	7,418	1,492	6,078	641	2,414	218	832	16,742	15,343	17,296
	Central	1,251		1,168		472		187				
	West	1,380		1,354		832		279				
	TSHC	3,074		2,064		469		148				
Q4 2023	East	1,369	6,356	1,631	6,443	727	2,420	54	240	15,459	16,403	13,223
	Central	1,160		1,312		458		81				
	West	1,307		1,522		877		83				
	TSHC	2,520		1,978		358		22				
Total	Total		23,109		21,122		9,389		2,153	57,773	54,870	50,630
	TCHC		14,009		14,242		7,626		1,774	39,651		
	TSCH		9,100		6,880		1,763		379	18,122		