

Adaptations in Rental Buildings

Information for Residents



This publication is for residents in rental units who need changes in their unit in order to be able to continue to live safely. Hamilton's Plan for an Age Friendly City recommends that property managers install adaptations (grab bars, modified door handles, etc.) upon request at little or no cost to the tenant. (Recommendation 1.4.8)

Furthermore, the Age Friendly Plan also encourages property managers to create common spaces and opportunities for information sharing (i.e., apartment bulletin board, newsletter) that will foster a sense of community and enhance opportunities for mutual support. (Recommendation 1.4.6)

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, a property manager may be required to take special steps to make a unit or building more accessible. This is called the "duty to accommodate." Your property manager must make necessary changes to the point of undue hardship – meaning that it is too difficult or expensive to do the necessary work. Undue hardship will depend on the size and the resources available to your property manager. For example, installing a grab bar is generally considered a reasonable request.

The following adaptations are recommended:

1. Safety in the Bathroom:

- a. Grab Bars: a minimum of two grab bars should be installed for the bathtub or shower or combination. For individual adaptations, a consultation with an Occupational Therapist is recommended. For those residents who often shower in the tub combination, they may request an additional higher horizontal bar.



Warning-Do not use clamping or suction cup grab bars as they pose a safety hazard.

- b. Toilet: Wherever possible a higher toilet and grab bars are recommended.
- c. A shower head on an adjustable pole is also a benefit.

For slip resistance when showering –a wet hand towel can be placed on floor of the tub to provide a non-slip surface. This has been shown to work more effectively than many non-slip mats in a tub.

2. Better Grasp:

- a. Facets: lever handles are recommended
- b. Cupboards and Drawers: "D" shaped pulls are recommended
- c. Doors: lever handles are recommended



3. Improved Vision:

- a. Use a night light with an automatic sensor in your bathroom and hall.
- b. Increase the brightness of your lightbulbs. With the new technology of LED bulbs they will not use more power.

4. Safety in the kitchen:

- a. Place the microwave solidly on a counter
- b. A stove with front controls is recommended if reaching is a problem



5. Safety in the building

- a. Stairs: railings on both sides of stairways, entry ways or any other areas that have steps (even a single step) are recommended. The best railings are the kind shown in the photo that can be grasped by wrapping your hand around the railing.
- b. Automatic door openers are recommended.
- c. Common areas need to be well lit.



6. Fostering a sense of Community

Creating a sense of community contributes to successful aging-in-place. This can be done by creating a newsletter or having a bulletin board to advertise activities both within and outside the building that fellow tenants may be interested in attending. You may even organize a social get together or ask an organization to come and give a presentation. The property manager should be open to putting up a bulletin board, if one is not already in place and providing space in common areas for such activities.



Approaching Your Property Manager

Property managers who belong to the Hamilton and District Apartment Association or the Certified Rental Building Program are willing to provide most of the above adaptations that may be requested.

You should be able to approach your Property manager and request the necessary adaptations or the use of the common space.

If you are reluctant to make this approach alone, you may want to contact a family member or support worker to accompany you.

For more information, Contact the Hamilton Council on Aging
905-777-3837 ext. 12238 | kielys@hhsc.ca | www.agefriendlyhamilton.ca



McMaster University

Age Friendly



City of Hamilton
Seniors Advisory
Committee

St. Joseph's
Home Care

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www.crbprogram.org

www.agefriendlyhamilton.ca