

Ontario's Fair Housing Plan

On May 30, 2017, [important changes were made](#) to the law that governs the relationship between residential landlords and tenants in Ontario. These changes provide more protection to tenants at a time when the housing situation is very difficult.

The biggest change affects tenants living in private-market rental units that were first rented after November, 1991. All the rent rules - the annual rent increase guideline and the procedures for additional rent increases and decreases - now apply to these units.

The rent rules for all private-market tenants were changed so that no extra rent increases will be allowed for increases in the cost of heat, electricity or water. New rules will encourage landlords to speed up elevator repairs and more restrictions can be placed on claims for extra rent increases.

Tenants currently are required to sign one-sided leases written to mislead them and take away their rights. Starting sometime in 2018, new leases will be on a government-regulated form that stops these abuses.

For many years, landlords have forced out tenants by making false claims about wanting to personally occupy the unit (legally named Landlord's Own Use). The new rules limit the personal occupation of a unit only to individuals so that corporate landlords or those offering short-term (less than a year) leases cannot claim to occupy these units. Landlords will have to pay a tenant one month's rent if they are evicting for personal occupation and it will be easier for tenants to get further compensation if the landlord was untruthful about moving in.

ACTO has been pushing for these changes for a long time. But it took pressure from many directions to make this happen. The opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) had proposed a law with some of these changes shortly before the Liberal government acted. A number of media stories highlighted landlord abuses in demanding huge rent increases and making false claims to get tenants to move, (known as economic evictions) so higher rents could be charged. Hundreds of people also shared their experiences with landlord's unfair rent increases on social media. The government could no longer deny that action was needed to improve tenants' ability to keep a roof over their heads. So they changed direction and quickly got these laws through the Legislature with the support of all three parties. The Ontario Fair Housing Plan was introduced in the spring of 2017 and marked a new phase in Ontario's commitment to protect the homes of its thousands of tenants.