

STREET LAW SMARTS #5

SHELTERS

What are emergency shelters?

Emergency shelters are run by charities, not-for-profits, and businesses. In the City of Toronto, a department of the City called Hostel Services provides shelter and assistance to homeless individuals including youth. Meals and basic necessities are provided in a secure environment, as well as case management, counselling, and support programs for adults and children. Housing workers help clients in pursuing permanent housing opportunities.

Shelters in Toronto must abide by the City of Toronto's Shelter Standards. In addition to the internal rules and rights provided for at each shelter, the questions and answers below apply to shelters in Toronto abiding by the Shelter Standards.

What are my responsibilities in a shelter?

While staying in a shelter, you are responsible to treat shelter staff and other shelter residents respectfully. You are to respect the private property and belonging of the shelter and other shelter residents and to improve your housing situation if possible.

What are your privacy rights while staying in a shelter?

Every shelter must have a written policy saying that they will not disclose personal information they have collected about you without your consent. However, there are some exceptions when a shelter can disclose information without your consent, including: when refusing or neglecting to provide the information could put staff or other residents in danger; where disclosure is required under the *Child and Family Services Act* (reporting concern about a child at risk of danger); or where disclosure is required by a court order or subpoena.

What are the health and safety standards in a shelter?

The shelter must provide you with access to bathing and where possible, laundry facilities. Soap, shampoo, razors, and feminine hygiene products should also be provided in emergency circumstances and/or if you have no income. Weapons and illegal drugs are not allowed in the shelter or on shelter property. If you take prescription medication, the shelter must store it in a secure location that is locked at all times.

How does discharge from a shelter work?

There is no standard length of stay in a shelter, how long you stay will depend on your specific circumstances. If you are being discharged from a shelter, you and the shelter must have first worked out a plan for your future. There are some cases where a shelter can discharge you without a plan. These include if you were involved in: an assault on

staff or other residents, or other violent behaviour; possession of weapons; trafficking of illegal drugs, or any other serious behaviour that comprises the health and safety of the other residents and/or staff.

Where can I call for concerns or complaints?

All shelters must have an internal process for resolving complaints and they must inform all residents of the process. All shelters will also keep a written record of formal complaints and a written record of the resolution.

If your shelter worker is unable to help you with your concerns, or you want to appeal a decision by your shelter provider, you may contact the Hostel Services at 416-392-8741. Your call will be directed to a supervisor. The shelter will be investigated to ensure that services are provided in accordance with Toronto Shelter Standards.

I need an emergency shelter:

If you are in need of an emergency shelter you can call any of the below numbers:

- City of Toronto helpline: 3-1-1
- Toronto Shelters Central Intake: 416-338-4766 or 1-877-338-3398
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

This is a listing of emergency youth shelters in Toronto. Most shelters take youth between ages 16-24. Intake procedures are different at each shelter. Contact the shelter in your area or the Toronto Shelters Central Intake for more information: (416) 338-4766 or 1-877-338-3398.

Name of Shelter	Phone Number	Address
Covenant House	416-598-4898	20 Gerrard Street East
Eva's Place	416-441-1414	360 Lesmill Road
Eva's Satellite	416-229-1874	25 Canterbury Place
Horizons for Youth	416-781-9898	422 Gilbert Avenue
Second Base Youth Shelter	416-261-2733	702 Kennedy Road
Turning Point Emergency Shelter - Men Only	416-925-9250	95 Wellesley Street East
YMCA House Men Only	416-504-9700	485 Queen Street West
Youth Without Shelter	416-748-0110	6 Warrendale Court
YWCA First Stop Woodlawn - Women Only	416-922-3271	80 Woodlawn Avenue East
Kennedy House	416-421-7776	1076 Pape Avenue

Additional Resources

- Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre
129 Peter Street Phone: 416-392-0090
- Guide to Services for People who are Homeless
<http://www.toronto.ca/housing/pdf/guidetoservices.pdf>