

# Your Role in Identifying and Reporting Housing Health Hazards

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## Who should take this course?

This course is intended for WRHA Community Health Services providers who conduct home visits, and supervisors, including: Public Health Nurses, Home Care Nurses, Mental Health Workers, Team Managers, Nursing Resource Coordinators, Case Coordinators, and Clinical Nurse Specialists.

This course is designed to help you understand your role in helping clients to address health hazards in their homes.

## What are housing health hazards?

### Injury Risks and Safety Concerns

- Conditions that could cause falls, cuts, poisoning, electrocution or burns
- No smoke alarms
- Loose rugs, electrical cords and clutter on floor
- Lack of easy exit in case of emergency
- Poor lighting
- Indoor temperature (too hot or too cold)

### Health risks

- Indoor air quality (e.g. second-hand smoke)
- Mold
- Inadequate sanitation facilities (e.g., no fresh water or sewage disposal)
- Crowding
- Infestation

## What is your role?

Your primary role is to provide the health services of your program. When it comes to hazardous home environments, your role is to help clients live in safe, healthy environments by identifying unhealthy conditions and providing resources and education to help the client address any of these concerns.

WRHA staff should never inspect homes for by-law infractions.

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**Many housing-related issues will be obvious when you enter a home, but do you know how to respond?**

Health care workers entering homes:

- Must protect client privacy
- Should know where to find resources about the responsibilities of tenants and landlords to create a safe and healthy living environment

**About the learning module:**

- This learning module is to help you connect tenants and landlords to appropriate resources to address health hazards in the home
- It does not provide you with enough information to be certain that something you have noticed is a by-law infraction

**What about health and safety hazards for health care workers entering homes?**

- The Workplace Safety and Health Act states that workers have a right to a safe working environment
- Follow the WRHA SAFT processes to ensure safety for yourself and other health care providers
- Use the **Safety Assessment Form** to document risks
- Complete a **Safe Visit Plan** to document what steps workers must take to protect themselves

**How can I get the most out of this course?**

- The course is divided into four sections: Your Role, Regulations and By-laws, Housing Hazards, Resources, and Case Studies
- Review each section in order
- Follow the links to review additional documents, relevant legislation, quick reference guides to legislation, and for detailed responses to the case studies
- Reflect on your practice, and discuss approaches with your team

For more information, see [WRHA Community Housing Environments Operational Guidelines](#)