

What is a Rooming/Lodging House?

A rooming/lodging house is defined as a house or building, or portion of these, where four (4) or more people are living and where the occupants do not have exclusive access to kitchen facilities and all habitable areas of the building. It does not include a hotel, hospital, nursing home, home for the young or the aged or institution of the hotel, hospital, home or institution.

Why Licence your Property?

It's the law. According to the Hamilton By-Law [Schedule 9](#) (page 108-359); no person shall operate a Rooming/Lodging House without a license for the keeping and operation of that house. The goal is to legalize your establishment, and increase the quality of your building while trying not to displace individuals. Along with the Residential Tenancies Act and Human Rights Laws, both you and your tenants have responsibilities.

Can We Help?

A Rooming/Lodging House Coordinator is available to help you obtain your licence. Your license can be obtained in just six steps. An information kit is available by either calling the Hamilton Housing Help Centre at 905-526-8100, or visiting our [website](#).

How do I obtain a licence? – Refer to the *Six Steps to Obtaining A Rooming/Lodging Home Licence flow chart*.

- 1) A “**Zoning Verification and Property Report Application**” must be filled out. After that has been done, you will receive a “Zoning Verification Certificate” which you will need in order to apply for your licence.
- 2) If there are any discrepancies with the zoning verification (e.g., with parking) you must show how your Rooming/Lodging House works. This is done by taking photos and creating a diagram of the layout of your Rooming/Lodging House indicating size and width in feet or meters. Depending on your specific issue, you may or may not have to contact a surveyor. Please contact the building department AND the Rooming House Coordinator for more information.
- 3) You need to provide **proof that you are registered as a legal business in the province of Ontario**. This means your establishment is run as a sole proprietorship or as a corporation with articles of incorporation. You will be required to provide the City with proof of your business status.
- 4) You will need to have a copy of a **Police Check Clearance** when submitting your application for licensing.
- 5) **Your Rooming/Lodging House must adhere to the Ontario Fire Code**. Licensed Rooming/Lodging House are inspected by Fire Inspectors once per year. If you need to inquire about whether your Rooming/Lodging House adheres to the fire code, call the **Hamilton Fire Department at 905-546-3333**.
- 6) **Your Rooming/Lodging House must adhere to the Health Department and the City of Hamilton Health By-law 4798**. This means that there are Health Standards in your building that need to be addressed. If

FAQ – Licensing your Rooming/Lodging House Information for Property Owners

you want to inquire about the Health Standards in your building, you can call the **Health Department at 905-546-3570**.

- 7) When you have all of these materials, then you are ready to fill out the “**Establishment License Application.**”
- 8) In order to acquire a license for a Rooming/Lodging House, you must receive a “**Certificate of Compliance**” (covered under the property standards By-Law 94-185). This certificate must be obtained no more than 45 days before the date on which the license committee considers the application for a license.

What is a Certificate of Compliance:

The Certificate of Compliance is provided by the City Services Division for the City of Hamilton. The City Services Division is responsible for upholding The Property Standards By-Law (94-185) which falls under Section 31 of the Planning Act. This By-Law was enacted in order to “**establish standards for the maintenance and occupancy of property within the municipality [of Hamilton] for prohibiting the use of property that does not conform to the standards [of the by-law] and for requiring property that does not conform to the standards to be repaired and maintained or for the site to be cleared.**”

What Happens if My Lodging Home is Not Licensed?

If you are found to be operating an illegal Rooming/Lodging House, you may be **charged** under the City of Hamilton By-Law.

The Rooming/Lodging House License that you will receive needs to be renewed every three (3) years.

After you have submitted your Application for licensing, and your fee is paid, the health department, fire department, parking enforcement and By-Law enforcement officers will contact you, and possibly stop by your Rooming/Lodging House, in order to make sure that everything is legal.

Once you receive your license, you then can advertize your establishment as a licensed Rooming/Lodging Home.

There are various other incentives that are available to you once the property is licensed such as applying for grants to improve the quality of your building, support from the Housing Help Centre, direct payment from tenants on Ontario Works, as well as less transient, more long-term tenants.

Who Can I Contact for More Information?

Andrew Loucks, Housing Worker – Rooming Houses, andrew@housinghelpcentre.ca 905-526-8100 Ext 205 www.housinghelpcentre.ca

Disclaimer: This document does not contain all information in regards to licensing and is subject to change. All material provided in this document is for information purpose only and not advice.