



Reading Housing Authority

*Resident Handbook –
Public Housing Program*

1/1/2018

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www.readingha.org

Welcome to Reading Housing Authority!

WE WELCOME *YOU* TO YOUR HOME.

THIS IS *YOUR* COMMUNITY.

A special welcome to the Public Housing Program, where we believe that all persons, regardless of their financial means, deserve a safe, inviting and affordable place to call home. This handbook is intended to be a resource to help as you settle in to your new house or apartment, and for as long as you make this RHA property your home. The information prepared in this handbook can serve as a guide for the most commonly asked questions regarding the rules and procedures at RHA, and should be considered as important as your Lease Agreement and the regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD).

Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have regarding the information contained in this handbook. The best place to direct your questions is to the Property Management staff in your development. They look forward to getting to know you, to answering your questions, and to providing you with RESPECT, HONESTY and ACCOUNTABILITY. We ask the same of you during your tenancy, and hope that together, we can continue to strengthen the community that we believe to be so important to our mutual success. Communities are the most successful when all members know, understand and meet their obligations, so we ask that you join us in following these rules. You may count on us to do the same, by providing you with more than just a place to live – but a place to truly feel at home.

AT READING HOUSING AUTHORITY,
WE PROVIDE THE *FOUNDATION* FOR
PEOPLE TO FIND A *HOME OF HOPE*
AND *ACHIEVE THEIR ASPIRATIONS*.

Office Information

TENANT PLACEMENT OFFICE

815 FRANKLIN STREET, READING, PA 19602-1149

610-372-3933 applications@readingha.org

Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

By appointment only

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (Section 8)

120 S. 6TH ST., READING, PA 19602-1653

610-373-5088 section8@readingha.org

Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Monday – Friday: 1pm – 4:30 pm – By Appointment only

DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENT SERVICES,

125 NORTH 10TH STREET, READING, PA 19601-3732

610-376-8413 residentservices@readingha.org

Monday – Friday: 8 :30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

By appointment only in the office, at the home,
or in a common area

GLENSIDE & HENSLER HOMES

1301 SCHUYLKILL AVENUE READING PA 19601-1601

610-375-4307 glenside@readingha.org

Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. –

By Appointment only

Wednesday & Friday: 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. - Closed

OAKBROOK HOMES

1001 SCOTT STREET, READING, PA 19611-1797

610-777-7627 oakbrook@readingha.org

Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. –

By Appointment only

Wednesday & Friday: 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. – Closed

CENTER CITY APARTMENTS
835 FRANKLIN STREET, READING, PA 19602-1150
610-372-4629 highrises@readingha.org

*OFFICES OPEN MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY 1:00 P.M. –
4:30 P.M. BY APPOINTMENT ONLY*

**EISENHOWER APARTMENTS, 835 FRANKLIN STREET,
READING, PA 19602-1150**
Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**KENNEDY TOWERS, 300 SOUTH 4TH STREET
READING, PA 19602**
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday: 8:30 a.m –11:30 am

**HUBERT APARTMENTS, 125 NORTH 10TH STREET
READING, PA 19601**
Tuesday & Thursday: 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**FRANKLIN TOWER, 120 SOUTH 6TH STREET
READING, PA 19602**
Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**RHODES APARTMENTS, 815 FRANKLIN STREET
READING, PA 19602**
Wednesday & Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WILLIS CENTER FOR ADMINISTRATION
400 HANCOCK BOULEVARD, READING, PA 19611-1802
610-775-4813 info@readingha.org
Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



AIR CONDITIONERS

1. All ACs must be approved, installed, and removed by RHA. Resident MAY NOT install air conditioners on their own. It will be considered a violation of the lease agreement to self-install an air conditioner.
2. All ACs must:
 - a. Have a sticker or label that lists the number of BTUs.
 - b. Have an ENERGY STAR sticker if over 8,000 BTUs. If under 8,000 BTUs, the AC does not need to have an Energy Star sticker, but it must have a minimum Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) of 9.7.
 - c. Be free from faulty wires.
3. The number of ACs permitted in each unit is based upon the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Standards for Air Conditioning. The DOE has determined how many BTUs are necessary to cool a unit, based upon the square footage of the unit and assuming that the AC is used properly. The following are the total maximum number of BTUs permitted in a unit by bedroom size.

Efficiencies and 1-bedroom	10,000 BTUs
2-bedrooms	15,000 BTUs
3-bedrooms	15,000 BTUs
4-bedrooms	18,000 BTUs
5-bedrooms	18,000 BTUs
4. The location of ACs permitted in each unit is determined by the City of Reading Code of Ordinances for fire safety. This is intended to ensure that there is safe egress in/out of all sleeping rooms. Only rooms that have 2 or more windows are permitted to have an AC, except in Oakbrook Homes where agency-installed wall-mounts are in place. Only the small window in Oakbrook Homes' sleeping rooms will permit AC installation. Air conditioners are not permitted to be installed in any kitchen windows because of the demand upon electric by appliances.
5. Transfers between units are treated as new installations, unless the materials can be used in the next location.
6. Central air conditioning systems are provided in Hensler Homes only. Residents who wish to have the central system activated must contact the Property Management Office.
7. ACs must be installed as intended by the manufacturer.

8. New AC installations will only occur during the cooling season of April 1 to September 30. Installations that occur as a result of a transfer will occur year-round.
9. ACs will not be permitted to be installed/reinstalled on a seasonal basis. Units that are installed are expected to remain in the window throughout all seasons. Residents wishing to control any air flow through the unit are encouraged to affix covers to the interior of the AC.

Procedures

1. All requests for installation must be reported to the Property Management Office. The Management Office will verify the number of BTUs and the energy efficiency of the unit and the requested location for installation, and will determine whether the unit may be installed. If approved, the office will contact the Maintenance Department.
2. The Maintenance Department will issue a Work Order. The Work Order will be classified as a Non-Emergency and the installation will occur within 30 days. RHA will make every reasonable effort to install the ACs as soon as possible within the 30-day period.
3. Maintenance Personnel will confirm the BTUs and install the AC, placing an “approved” sticker on the AC unit.

Charges

1. There is a ½-hour maintenance labor charge for the installation of every AC, including new installs and transfers.
2. Materials must be supplied by RHA for every installation. There is a \$20.00 charge for materials for the installation of an AC. This fee does not apply if the same materials can be used to reinstall the unit at a later time or in another location.
3. There is no charge for the removal of AC units if the unit is broken (and is to be repaired or discarded) or upon move-out from the unit.
4. There is a ½ -hour maintenance labor charge for the un-install of illegally installed AC units, even if the AC unit cannot be reinstalled because the unit fails to meet approved AC guidelines.
5. There is a monthly, year-round fee of \$5.00 for each AC, including the use of the central air system in Hensler Homes.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

1. HUD requires that adult residents of Public Housing programs perform community service. Community service is the performance of voluntary work or duties that are a public benefit, and that serve to improve the quality of life, enhance resident self-sufficiency, or increase resident self-responsibility in the community, unless the resident is considered exempt. Residents are exempt if:
 - a. They are 62 years or older;
 - b. They are blind or disabled;
 - c. They are the caretaker of someone who is blind or disabled, and because of providing the care, they are unable to perform the community service;
 - d. They are receiving benefits from Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Unemployment Compensation, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability, or Social Security;
 - e. They are employed or are involved in a work activity at least 20 hours per week;
 - f. They are enrolled in an on-the-job training program or other vocational education program;
 - g. They are enrolled full-time in higher education (in a college or university).
2. The community service requirement is eight (8) hours per month, or 96 hours per year (completed at the time of annual recertification.)
3. Community service must be of benefit to the community, and not to individual persons. Examples of places that community service may be available are in schools, social service agencies and other types of non-profit agencies. Political activity cannot be counted towards community service.

4. RHA will provide time sheets and a list of possible community service opportunities to residents who must perform community service. Proof of completion of community service is required at the time of recertification. If the resident does not comply with the requirement, he/she is subject to non-renewal of the lease agreement.

COMMUNITY SPACES

1. Community space is defined as any property that is owned and operated by Reading Housing Authority; is not considered to be a part of a leased unit; is within, adjoining, or surrounding a public housing unit or an administrative, management or maintenance building; and is not reserved for a specific or exclusive purpose.
2. Community spaces exist in all public housing developments and exist primarily for the benefit of residents.
3. Informal use of community spaces is defined as residents of the respective development gathering to use and enjoy the space for recreation or leisure.
4. Formal use of community spaces is defined as that which is scheduled in advance and approved by RHA, in accordance with the defined procedure. Priority shall be given, in descending order, to activities or meetings that are hosted by RHA, followed by those of a recognized resident council, those hosted by others for the exclusive benefit of residents, and those hosted for residents and non-residents.
5. There are indoor and outdoor community spaces in most developments. Indoor community spaces include community rooms, community centers, elevators and common balconies. Outdoor community spaces include lawns that are not part of a leased unit, fields, courtyards and playgrounds. In some cases, indoor community spaces may be addressed differently than outdoor spaces due to the need to secure a room or building. Informal use of the community space at the O’Pake Center in Glenside/Hensler Homes is not permitted.
6. The following rules apply to both informal and formal use of community spaces.

- a. All terms of the RHA lease apply to residents' use of community space, including maintaining responsibility for guests.
 - b. Non-resident hosts are responsible for all persons participating in the event.
 - c. All persons using community space, for both formal and informal use, are required to restore the space to the condition they found it before the event. This includes placing litter and trash in the appropriate receptacle, cleaning tables/chairs/floors as appropriate and returning furnishings to their previous location.
 - d. Use of alcohol and illegal substances are prohibited.
 - e. The level of noise may not exceed levels acceptable under the lease and/or those acceptable by City of Reading Code of Ordinances.
 - f. RHA reserves the right to reject an application for formal use based upon prior compliance with these rules.
7. Except as specifically approved, community space cannot be 'reserved' to prevent other residents from using and enjoying the space at the same time as a scheduled, formal event. Those hosting formal activities are permitted to enact reasonable rules to cover their event, such as requiring that a community room television be turned off during their event, or that refreshments are reserved solely for those participating in the activity.
8. Some community spaces, such as those occurring in a highrise community room, may be used by residents once per year to host an event that includes non-resident guests, for their personal use, provided that there are no more than 25 non-resident guests in attendance, and that the event is held for no more than 4 hours and occurs between the hours of 10:00 AM and 8:00 PM. All other terms of the procedure apply.
9. Televisions are provided by RHA in some community spaces. Residents are asked to use courteous behavior in refraining from controlling its usage, selecting channels, etc.
10. Outdoor grilling is permitted in the highrise outdoor community spaces, provided that cooled ashes are disposed of in a proper trash receptacle.

11. Community spaces may not be used for revenue-producing activities. This requirement is waived for Resident Councils undertaking fund-raising activities.
12. A Certificate of Insurance that covers RHA is required by all groups who use the community space. This requirement is waived for Resident Councils and for residents who receive permission for a personal event.

Procedures

1. Requests for formal use of a community space must be made by contacting the Department of Resident Services. A Usage Application and Agreement will be mailed upon request.

Charges

1. There are no fees for usage of the community spaces. Charges may be applied for any costs incurred by RHA for cleaning fees, damages, maintenance calls or emergencies.

CONSTRUCTION AND MODERNIZATION

1. In effort to maintain and improve the properties, RHA performs modernization and construction. This includes work that pertains to individual units and to entire developments. Modernization and/or construction are typically performed by a private contractor who has been hired to work for Reading Housing Authority. It may also include inspections of building systems (elevators, sprinklers and smoke detectors), which could require entry into the leased unit.
2. You will be provided with no less than 48-hour written notice for entry into your unit.
3. RHA reserves the right to:
 - a. Make one or multiple visits to the unit or site.
 - b. Use multiple contractors, based upon skills that are needed and in accordance with our Purchasing (buying) Policy.
 - c. Perform work over one or several days.
4. In order to permit modernization and construction, a resident family may have to:
 - a. Remove personal items from a work area.
 - b. Secure personal items.

- c. Be absent from the unit for a period of time not to exceed 8 hours, during reasonable daytime hours.
 - d. Have any pets caged in the unit, or removed from the unit when necessary.
 - e. Perform modest clean up in the unit after the work is completed.
- 5. The RHA contractor is expected to:
 - a. Treat you, your unit and your property with dignity and respect.
 - b. Clean up the immediate work area after the work is completed for the day.
 - c. Ensure the security of your unit while working, including locking the door upon departure.

Procedures

1. If a resident/resident family has complaints regarding property damage or property loss sustained during an episode of modernization or construction, they must:
 - a. Contact Reading Police Department to file a police report.
 - b. Obtain a copy of the report and provide this copy to Property Management.
 - c. Participate in an investigation of the complaint, to be conducted by the RHA and the contractor's designee.
 - d. Be aware that claims that are found to be in need of a financial settlement will be made at the conclusion of the overall project.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

1. While Reading Housing Authority has systems in place to ensure that most services can be sustained through different types of weather and other circumstances, our agency cannot guarantee that all services can be maintained in emergencies. Emergencies might include weather-related events like extreme winter storms, tornadoes or hurricanes, fires, hazardous material spills, warfare, or other natural or man-made disasters.
2. Many services that residents rely upon for the comfort and use of their unit, like water, and electric for heating, cooling and use of

appliances and electronics, can be disrupted without any cause or resolution by Reading Housing Authority. In these circumstances, it is important that all residents understand that RHA cannot be responsible for any inconvenience, regardless of how significant the experience may be for the household.

3. RHA will do its best to support residents in the event of an emergency, but residents are urged to take responsibility for their own, and their families' well-being, by being prepared.

Emergency Preparedness might include the following:

- a. Create an emergency plan with your family or friends.
Discuss where you might meet if you were separated or could not make contact by telephone.
 - b. Have a radio in your home that uses batteries, because a radio station might be the only way to get information from those working on the emergency situation. Listen for alerts.
 - c. Do not rely upon cell phone services or cable television to gain information, as these services might be disrupted.
 - d. Keep a supply of water – one gallon, per person, per day – in your house, and replace it every 6 months.
 - e. Have some non-perishable, packaged or canned foods on hand, along with a non-electric can opener. Keep your refrigerator closed – or opened very minimally – to keep your food cool.
 - f. Ensure that you have a supply of items to meet any medical needs. For persons who use oxygen, ensure that you have back-up canisters that do not require electric. If you use an electric breathing machine, have a supply of inhalers or other doctor-recommended treatments. Electric wheelchairs should be charged in advance of an event, if possible. Electric reclining positions may need to be kept in an upright position or battery-charged.
 - g. Have a flashlight and batteries.
 - h. If you have to leave your home, be sure to take your important cards and papers.
4. For agency high-rises only:
 - a. If electricity to the building is lost, emergency generators are equipped to provide lighting in the hallways and

common areas, heat and hot water, service to the electric doors and one elevator, and maintaining of the fire system and emergency panel. Generators do not provide for any electric in individual apartments, and residents are encouraged to make use of the community space in the event of an emergency. (Note: The requirement to keep pets out of the community room is waived under this circumstance, so long as the pet-owner is able to control his/her pet. The pet must be restrained, and the resident is urged to try to sit away from other residents who may be bothered by the presence of the pet, if at all possible.)

- b. In the event of an evacuation, residents who are unable to use the stairs will be assisted by Reading Fire Department. Residents are instructed to remain in their unit, with the door open, awaiting response. (The exception to this would be in the event of a fire – in this case, the door should be closed but unlocked, and the resident should place a wet towel at the door and await rescue.)
5. Residents are required to make sure that windows are closed and secured during any bad weather (this applies to any emergency event, as well as all other times!).
6. In certain circumstances, the City of Reading or other government offices may have instructions for coping with the storm. Please be reminded that as a resident of the City, or Berks County, or beyond – you are urged to make use of local services, and not rely exclusively on RHA to meet your needs during the emergency.
7. Reading Housing Authority will take every possible step to be in touch with you and keep you informed of efforts to remedy the emergency condition.

EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE

1. Rules regarding exterior maintenance refer to the responsibilities of a resident or resident family in the care and conditions of an area outside of the interior, but included as part of, the leased

- unit. This includes areas such as porches or balconies, yards, and exterior doors and windows.
2. Rules for exterior maintenance that apply to ALL DEVELOPMENTS include the following:
 - a. All exterior areas must be clean and free from trash, graffiti and prohibited items. Prohibited items include:
 - i. Trash cans and trash bags.
 - ii. Automobile parts.
 - iii. Cleaning supplies (brooms, mops, buckets).
 - iv. “Interior” furniture, such as recliners or cloth chairs.
 - v. Items hung from railings or light fixtures, or affixed to brick or siding.
 - vi. Licensed or unlicensed motor vehicles (i.e. gas-powered cycles).
 - b. All exterior areas must be accessible and free from hazards that could cause harm or danger to residents, their guests, and RHA or that could damage the property.
 - c. Seasonal decorations, including window lights and outside displays, may not be displayed more than 30 days before or 15 days after the holiday is celebrated.
 3. Rules that apply to Glenside and Oakbrook Homes only include:
 - a. Residents are required to keep their yard free from trash or litter, without regard as to how or by whose action the litter was placed in their yard. This rule also applies to Hensler Homes.
 - b. Residents are required to maintain the grass areas that are part of the leased unit. Grass may not exceed 6” in length during the growing season. Lawn mowers are available at no charge for resident use in the Maintenance Shop.
 - c. Residents are required to rake and bag any leaves that fall into the areas that are part of the leased unit. Leaf bags are available at no charge for resident use in the Property Management Office.
 - d. Residents are required to remove snow from their porches and walkways within 24 hours of accumulation.

- e. Residents are permitted to garden in the areas along the front and rear of their building. Gardens may not extend past the outer edge of the porch. Residents may use fencing in front of their plantings, provided that they are ornamental, are sold commercially and are not more than 24" in height. This rule also applies to Hensler Homes.
 - f. Residents are permitted to place picnic tables and chairs, canopies, etc., in their rear yard only, provided that they are removable and not permanently affixed. Exceptions will be granted as to the location on a case-by-case basis when the rear yard is not flat enough to support these items.
 - g. Residents are permitted to store charcoal or propane grills, lawn mowers, garden equipment, outdoor planters and bicycles outside of the unit.
 - h. Pools of any type or size are not permitted. Water slides, sprinklers, and other recreational lawn toys that involve water are also not permitted.
4. Rules that apply to the Highrises only include:
- a. Decorative items may be affixed to the front door knocker or by using a door hanger only.
 - b. Bicycles and grills are not permitted to be stored on personal or common balconies.
 - c. Items are not permitted to be hung over railings (i.e. decorative flags, carpets, hanging boxes).
 - d. Residents are permitted to place patio furniture and outdoor planters on their balconies.

Procedures

1. Exterior Maintenance ("Yard") Inspections will occur on a regular basis. No advance notice shall be provided. _Households that are found to be in violation of a rule will be given written notice of the violation and will be required to attend a lease counseling meeting with the Property Manager. Repeat violations may result in lease termination. Violations may be remedied by the Maintenance Department, for which a minimum of 1-hour maintenance labor will be charged to the rental account.

FIRE DAMAGE & PREVENTION

1. IF YOU HAVE OR SUSPECT A FIRE, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.
2. All fires must be reported to the Property Management Office. Do not call the Office until after the fire has been safely put out. The presence or use of personal fire extinguishers is strongly discouraged.
3. Reading Housing Authority will rely upon information provided by the Reading Fire Department and/or the Maintenance Department in determining liability for any repairs necessary to the unit.
 - a. If the fire is determined by the Fire Department/Maintenance Department to not be the fault of a resident or his/her guest, RHA shall be liable for the repair of the dwelling. If relocation is necessary, RHA shall bear all reasonable and necessary relocation expenses to a unit of RHA's choice.
 - b. If the fire is determined by the Fire Department/Maintenance Department to be the fault of a resident or his/her guest, the resident/household shall be responsible for paying the cost of all repairs not to exceed the RHA's insurance deductible. Relocation expenses will not be paid by RHA.
4. Residents shall be responsible for any fire damage related to the personal property of residents or their guests. Residents are urged to purchase Renters Insurance.
5. Residents are required to take reasonable precautions to prevent fires and to refrain from storing or keeping flammable material on the premises. Specifically,
 - a. Residents are not permitted to store propane or gasoline, or items containing propane or gasoline, in their units. These items must be stored outdoors in the proper container.
 - b. Only clean/empty, metal cooking tools may be stored in the oven.
 - c. Range-top drip pans may not be covered in aluminum foil.
6. Repeated fires may be grounds for lease termination.

7. All units are supplied with smoke detectors and stove-top automatic fire suppressor units. Residents are not permitted to remove, replace, cover, modify or disengage either item in any way. If a detector or fire suppressor unit has been found to be removed, replaced, covered, modified or disengaged, the action will constitute a lease violation. A second violation will result in lease termination.
8. Non-working or problematic smoke detectors are required to be reported to the Maintenance Department Work Order Line immediately.
9. "False alarms" may occur in the presence of cooking or other fumes, without the occurrence of an actual fire. Repeated false alarms are reported by the Fire Department to RHA and may be grounds for charges or termination.

Charges

1. In 2017, the insurance deductible is \$1,000.00. See item (3) above.
2. The City of Reading may charge RHA for its fire response. These charges may be passed on to the resident.

GUESTS

1. Residents are permitted to have overnight guests for up to 14 consecutive days, or a total of 30 cumulative days, during any 12 month period. A *guest* is defined as a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a resident or other member of the household.
2. Residents who permit guests to stay overnight beyond the allowable time will be considered to be in violation of their lease.
3. Residents are responsible for the conduct of their guests. This applies to inside the unit, as well as anywhere on or near the RHA property. Any resident who opens his or her door, or provides access through highrise security (front) doors, is considered to have assumed responsibility for that person or persons as his or her guest.
4. Former residents who have been evicted are not permitted as overnight guests.

5. Children who are subject to a joint custody arrangement or for whom a family has visitation privileges, that are not included as a family member because they live outside of the public housing unit more than half the time, are not subject to the time limitations of guests as described above.
6. Reading Housing Authority has a “NO TRESPASSING POLICY”, which is a list of people who have been determined to no longer be permitted to enter onto any agency property. The policy states that:
 - a. Inclusion on this list occurs when residents whose leases have been terminated, guests of residents, or any person who is found upon agency property and is not considered to be a guest of a resident family either commits one incident of violent crime, or drug-related activity, or destruction of RHA property, or weapons offense on any RHA property, OR commits multiple incidences of nuisance crimes on any RHA property.
 - b. The decision to include a person’s name on this list is determined through agreement of the Property Manager, Reading Police Department, and the Executive Director.
 - c. A letter will be hand-delivered by Reading Police Department to the person who has been placed on the list, if an address is known.
 - d. Any current resident who is known to have had immediate association with the person will be informed that the person is no longer permitted to be on agency property and would be considered a trespasser; and any resident who is found to have permitted entry to a person who is on the list will be considered to be in violation of the lease.
 - e. All persons on the “NO TRESPASSING LIST” will remain on the list indefinitely. Any persons wishing to have their name removed from the list are required to submit a written request to the RHA Executive Director.

Procedures

1. Residents are required to notify the Property Management Office when overnight guests will be staying in the unit for more than 3

days. The resident will be asked to register the guest in person in the Property Management Office.

HOUSEKEEPING

1. Rules regarding housekeeping refer to the responsibilities of a resident or resident family in the care and conditions of the interior of the leased unit.
2. The purpose of housekeeping inspections is to:
 - a. Ensure that property which is owned by RHA is not being maintained in a manner that, if left untreated, could result in costs to the agency in repair and replacement;
 - b. Ensure that conditions do not exist which could jeopardize RHA's ability to provide safe and sanitary housing to neighbors and the community.
3. Housekeeping standards are met when areas are considered to be in the following condition:
 - a. Clean – the absence of dirt, dust, grease, food residue, soap, or human/pet waste.
 - b. Clutter-free – the absence of excessive collections or retention of any materials to the point that it impedes day-to-day function or creates a hazard or potential hazard for the resident, resident family, guest or RHA staff.
 - c. Egress – the presence of two unobstructed exits (i.e. window, door) that are accessible with a minimum amount of effort, and the absence of any additional locking devices.
 - d. Accessible – all electrical panels and water shut-off valves must be accessible with a minimum amount of effort.
 - e. Hazard-free – the absence of conditions that may cause physical harm to the resident, resident family, guest or RHA staff. This would include the following conditions that are not permitted at RHA:
 - i. Cooking oil may not be stored on or in the stove/oven.
 - ii. Aluminum foil may not be placed in, under or around stove or heating elements.

- iii. Appliances may not be left in operation during the absence of the resident (stove/oven, fans, etc.).
- iv. Candles may never be left unattended.
- v. Electrical outlets and wires may not be overloaded, frayed or exposed. Wires or cords may not extend across rooms or into walking paths.
- vi. Cabinets may not be loaded to the point of structural damage.
- vii. Insect or rodent droppings may not be present, and if found, are required to be reported to the management office.
- viii. Flammable materials (i.e. gasoline, propane, paint) may not be stored in the unit.
- f. Housekeeping standards apply to the following areas:
 - i. All doors and jams, walls, floors, ceilings, windows, stairs and baseboards.
 - ii. Kitchens, including countertops, cabinetry and surrounding walls, and appliances.
 - iii. Bathrooms, including toilets, tubs and surrounding walls, sinks and cabinetry.

Procedures

1. Housekeeping inspections will be conducted in the following instances:
 - a. Annual Inspections: All units are inspected once per year to ensure overall compliance.
 - b. Interim Inspections: Occurs when it is learned by Property Management that a problem may exist with housekeeping conditions, or at the time of a transfer, or in accordance with the Pet Policy.
 - c. Emergency Inspections: Occurs when emergency conditions exist. This includes the occurrence of water, fire or suspected fire, structural issue, or severe pest infestation of a neighboring unit.
2. Except in the case of an emergency inspection, residents will be given a minimum of 48 hours written notice of inspection. The

inspection notice will indicate the date of the inspection and an approximate time. Inspections cannot be rescheduled.

3. RHA personnel will enter the unit if the resident is not found at home.
4. Inspection results will be recorded on a handheld electronic tablet. Results will be retained in the resident/resident family's electronic file.
5. Inspections will be rated using the following classifications and steps:
 - a. Pass – The unit meets all housekeeping standards. No further action will be taken. A notice will be left in the unit advising that the inspection is complete.
 - b. Re-inspection – The unit does not meet all housekeeping standards.
 - i. The resident will receive a notice within 3 days, defining the deficiencies and providing a date for a follow-up inspection.
 - ii. At the re-inspection, the unit will either 'pass' or 'fail'.
 - c. Fail – The unit does not meet standards. Further action will be taken in the following order:
 - i. The Property Manager will be notified of the failed inspection.
 - ii. The resident will be contacted to discuss the violation by either the Property Manager or the Resident Services Department.
 - iii. The resident will be given an opportunity to remedy the violation.
 - iv. The resident will be notified of the date of a final inspection, and if
 1. The unit passes inspection; no further action will be taken.
 2. The unit fails inspection, the violation will be considered to be a violation of the lease, and an eviction notice will be issued.

Charges

1. If maintenance deficiencies are noted during any housekeeping inspection (i.e. broken shades or appliance parts, holes in walls), the Property Management Office will request action through a Work Order from the Building and Maintenance Department. This work may result in charges.

INSPECTIONS

1. Reading Housing Authority conducts several different types of inspections on an ongoing basis. Inspections are intended to ensure that conditions of the unit are acceptable and that residents are safe. The following are the types of inspections that occur at RHA:
 - a. Maintenance Inspections – These inspections occur once a year to check overall conditions of the unit. For example, staff will look at windows, screens, doors, appliances, electrical and plumbing fixtures, and smoke detectors. Items that need repair or replacement will result in a Work Order, to be performed in accordance with all other Work Order procedures.
 - b. Housekeeping Inspections – In most circumstances, these inspections occur once a year to ensure that residents are maintaining the leased unit in accordance with the Housekeeping Policy (see Housekeeping section). Inspections may occur more frequently if a resident/resident family has a history of failed inspections. Inspections may also result from staff or contractor reports of poor conditions that were observed while in the unit for other purposes. Inspections may also occur for resident-initiated requests related to transfers, or in application for a Pet Permit.
 - c. HUD Inspections - Occur up to once a year to a random percentage of units. (This means that not all units will be inspected.) This inspection is conducted by a HUD inspector, who is accompanied by an RHA employee. The inspector is examining the unit for all the same items as the maintenance inspection, AND:

- i. Health and Safety: Residents must make sure that there is not furniture placed in front of windows; that there is no cable or electrical cords that could create a trip-hazard; and that smoke detectors are in working order. Any instance of a health and safety violation MUST BE FIXED within 24 hours.
- 2. Inspection protocols will be as follows:
 - a. Residents will be given a minimum of 48 hours written notice of inspection, to include the date of the inspection and an approximate time. Inspections cannot be rescheduled.
 - b. RHA personnel will enter the unit if the resident is not found at home. Residents whose units currently have night-chains may not make use of the chain during this inspection time frame. If found in use, the chain will be cut and replaced by RHA within 30 days.
 - c. Inspection results will be recorded on a handheld electronic tablet. Results will be retained in the resident/resident family's electronic file.
 - d. A notice will be left on the inside of the front door with the results of the inspection.
 - i. If the unit has passed inspection, there will be a checkmark in the "YOU PASSED!" box.
 - ii. If the unit has not passed inspection, the "There is work to be done-letter to follow" box will be checked, and will be followed by contact from the Property Management or Maintenance Offices.
 - e. Follow-up visits may take place as follows:
 - i. Maintenance Inspections are likely to result in follow-up visits to the home to remedy any maintenance issues. No further notice will be provided.
 - ii. Residents who do not pass a Housekeeping Inspections will be notified by mail of the date and approximate time of the next inspection.

- iii. Follow-up from HUD inspections for emergency issues and/or issues of health and safety will be done immediately, without notice.

LAUNDRY

1. Laundry facilities, when provided, are an amenity. This means that they are not a guaranteed or fundamental service of the housing program.
2. For agency highrises:
 - a. Laundry facilities are provided on the first floor of each highrise. In Kennedy Towers, laundry facilities are provided on floors 1, 3, and 6.
 - b. Washers and dryers are able to be operated only by use of a laundry card. “Smart Card Centers” are located in each first-floor laundry room, in which residents insert money to be placed upon the card for use.
 - c. Laundry facilities are provided solely for the laundering of clothing belonging to residents of the building. Residents are permitted to allow others (caregivers, family, friends, etc.) to use the facility on their behalf if necessary. Residents are not permitted to allow non-residents to use the facilities for their own (non-resident) purpose.
 - d. Washers and dryers are high-efficiency machines. For optimal performance, residents should use no more than ¼ cup of liquid detergent or 2 tablespoons of powder detergent. Machines are equipped to launder no more than 30 pounds of laundry per load. “Overloading” of a machine will not allow the machine to perform as intended. Evidence of misuse of the equipment by residents will result in charges to the resident.
 - e. Washers and dryers must be properly cared for and maintained by those who use them. Residents are asked to clean the interior and exterior of the machine after usage, empty lint traps, and dispose of any trash in the proper receptacle.

- f. Problems with machines must be reported to the Maintenance Department Work Order Line. Residents are asked to provide the number of the machine, identified by a label on top of the machine, when placing this call.
 - g. Residents who use the laundry facilities are doing so 'at their own risk'. Reading Housing Authority is not responsible for any loss of or damage to residents' clothing or property.
 - h. Residents are asked to use courteous behavior. This would include not leaving laundry unattended.
- 3. For agency low-rises:
 - a. Laundry (washer and dryer) hook-ups are available in all units. Washers and/or dryers must be supplied by the resident.
 - b. Residents are not permitted to launder non-residents clothing or items, or allow non-residents to use the facilities for their own (non-resident) purpose.
 - c. It is recommended that initial or replacement installation of laundry appliances be performed by Maintenance Work-Order so as to guard against leaks or damage to RHA property.
 - d. Laundry appliances must have proper electrical connections. Miscellaneous washer hardware and dryer cords and vents may be purchased from RHA. Installation of these items is the responsibility of the resident.
 - e. RHA will not provide any maintenance service to resident-owned laundry appliances.

Charges

- 1. For agency highrises:
 - a. One laundry card per household is provided free-of-charge upon leasing.
 - b. There is a charge to replace a lost card. Cards may be obtained through the Property Management Office.
 - c. Cards must be returned upon move-out from the unit. A charge will be applied for cards that are not returned.

Monies remaining on the card upon move-out will be refunded.

- d. Residents may be charged for damages inflicted upon laundry machines due to intentional or unintentional misuse. Charges may be incurred up to the amount corresponding with the damage.
2. For agency low-rises:
 - a. Appliances must fit within the space provided, without the removal of doors.
 - b. Residents will be charged for any damage that results from leaks or self-installation.
 - c. Residents may launder items belonging to members of the household/leased unit only. Laundering of items for non-household members is a violation of this policy and a violation of the Utility and Energy Efficiency policy.

LEASE TERMINATION & EVICTION

Lease Termination

1. Reading Housing Authority may take steps to terminate a lease of a resident/resident family when there are violations of the terms of the lease. This means that Reading Housing Authority is requesting that the resident/resident family vacate the subsidized unit.
2. Notice of lease terminations, called a 'Notice of Proposed Adverse Action', are made in writing, and will state the reason for the termination, the date the termination will take place, and the resident's rights to appeal the decision. The notice will be sent by first-class mail.
3. Notice of termination is given to a resident/resident family for acts as follows:
 - a. Most lease violations (see lease) – notice of 30 calendar days to vacate the unit.
 - b. Failure to pay rent and any additional charges – notice of 14 calendar days to vacate the unit.
 - c. Events that threaten the health and safety of other residents, RHA employees or persons in the immediate vicinity – notice of 3 days to vacate the unit.

4. Once a Notice of Proposed Adverse Action is given, the resident/resident family may have the right to request an Informal Settlement or a Grievance Hearing.
 - a. An Informal Settlement is a meeting that is held to see if the lease violation can be remedied. In order to schedule an Informal Settlement, the resident/resident family must make an appointment with the Property Manager within 5 business days of the date of the notice. The Property Manager can also initiate an Informal Settlement. During the Informal Settlement, the Property Manager will advise the resident of the alleged violation. The resident/resident family will be given an opportunity to provide testimony. The decision as to whether the violation can be remedied is up to the Property Manager. The Informal Settlement step can also be waived, and the resident can elect to move directly to a grievance hearing. There are also some cases in which an Informal Settlement will not be permitted. In these cases, the complaint will move directly (when permitted) to the Grievance Hearing stage.
 - b. A Grievance Hearing is a formal meeting that is also held to see if the lease violation can be remedied, but the decision is up to a Hearing Officer. At RHA, the Hearing Officer is another employee of RHA who works outside of the area in which the resident lives. The lease termination notice will state whether a grievance hearing is permitted. (There are some circumstances, by federal law, where a grievance hearing is not permitted.) If a grievance hearing is permitted, the resident/resident family must fill out a form to request a hearing within 5 business days of the date of the termination notice. Forms are available to be picked up in the Property Management Office during regular business hours. The resident will then be informed by U.S. mail of the date of the grievance hearing.
 - i. At the Grievance Hearing, the Property Manager will advise the resident/resident family, the

Hearing Officer, and any witnesses, lawyers, or support parties as to the nature of the alleged violation. The resident/resident family will be given an opportunity to provide testimony. Any witnesses, lawyers, or support parties will also be invited to provide testimony. The Hearing Officer is in charge of this meeting, and is the person responsible for asking questions and directing the process.

- ii. After the Grievance Hearing, the Hearing Officer will determine whether to uphold the determination of RHA or overturn the decision of RHA. The Hearing Officer will send a letter via U.S. mail to the resident/resident family with his/her decision.
 1. If the Hearing Officer rules in favor of RHA, the Property Manager will issue a new Notice of Proposed Adverse Action, providing the same amount of time, to begin on the date of the hearing determination, to vacate the unit, except there will be no further grievance permitted.
 2. If the Hearing Officer rules in favor of the resident/resident family, the Notice is retracted. All terms of the resident/resident family's lease are resumed.

Eviction

1. When a family does not vacate the subsidized unit after receipt of a lease termination notice, by the deadline given in the notice, Reading Housing Authority will follow the Pennsylvania Landlord-Tenant Law in filing an eviction action. In order to enforce a lease termination and require that a resident/resident family vacate the unit, RHA is required to request that a law official authorize an eviction. The steps to this are as follows:
 - a. RHA files a complaint with the Office of the District Magisterial Judge (DJ) in the area that the development

is located. This complaint (form) is how RHA requests a hearing before the DJ. The cost for this step and other DJ steps result in charges. This step typically costs \$138.85 in 2017. All costs are passed onto the resident if the case is won by RHA.

- b. The DJ selects a court date, and a Constable delivers a letter to RHA and to the resident, informing each party of the date of the hearing.
- c. The DJ holds a hearing, during which both parties are invited to provide testimony. At the close of the hearing, the DJ makes a judgment as to whether to support or overturn the decision of RHA.
- d. After the hearing, the DJ sends a letter to RHA and to the resident/resident family with his/her determination. Either side has 10 days to appeal the DJ's decision. If an appeal is made, all processes are placed on hold, pending the outcome of the appeal.
- e. If the DJ rules in favor of RHA and no appeal is made by the resident, RHA can file for "Order of Possession" on the 11th day. There is an additional charge for this step. This step typically costs \$38.35 in 2017. The Order of Possession informs RHA that after 10 days, the resident is ordered to be out of the unit.
- f. If the resident does not vacate the unit after the 10 days, RHA can go to the DJ's office to request that a Constable change the locks on the unit. This step typically costs \$97.85 in 2017. At any time after RHA pays the fee, the Constable comes to the unit to supervise the changing of the locks. If necessary, the Constable escorts the resident/resident family out of the unit.
- g. After a lock-out, the resident/resident family is permitted to enter the unit to gather their belongings during normal business hours. It is the position of RHA that a reasonable time to perform this activity is during the next 10 business days. After that time, any belongings remaining in the unit are discarded.

2. Other Important Information:

- a. If the DJ rules in favor of the resident/resident family, all court action ceases, and all terms of the resident/resident family's lease are resumed, and the costs are paid by RHA.
- b. A resident/resident family is permitted to move out at any time during the lease termination and eviction processes. This avoids further court action and further charges.
- c. Any monies owed to RHA upon move-out, including court charges (and including voluntary move-outs), are passed on to a collection agency. The current name and contact information for this agency is available in the Property Management Office. Any resident/resident family wishing to move back in to a RHA property in the future must satisfy this debt before being considered for future residency.
- d. Residents must return keys in order to avoid charges.

MOVING-OUT PROCESS

1. Residents are required to give notice of fifteen (15) calendar days when they wish to move.
2. Residents will be asked to provide the move-out notice in person by the Head of Household. If this cannot occur because of a serious reason (illness, hospitalization, etc.), the notice can be provided by another adult member, emergency contact, or another person who has the right to act on behalf of the Head of Household. If notice is provided by telephone, keys must be put in the mail slot after locking the unit (family development) or left on the kitchen counter in a locked unit (highrise).
3. Residents are encouraged to prepare for moving by:
 - a. Emptying the unit of all personal property, furniture, and trash.
 - b. Cleaning the unit.
 - c. Leaving in the unit the following items if these items were made part of the unit at move-in: Rake, shovel, recycling can, and toilet plunger.

- d. Replacing those items that may have been temporarily stored elsewhere during the residency, such as light fixtures and shades.
 - e. Giving away any personal items that may be intended for neighbors.
- 4. Residents will be asked to complete a Move-Out Form, which tells RHA a forwarding address and the reason for moving.
- 5. Residents will be invited to attend a move-out inspection. This inspection is when Property Management and Maintenance will determine what charges, if any, will be applied to the security deposit and rental account. Residents are strongly encouraged to attend.
 - a. Inspections must be scheduled in advance with Property Management and must occur within 2 business days of the actual move-out or the resident will be considered to have waived his/her right to attend.
 - b. Staff will make every effort to accommodate a scheduled move-out inspection time if advance notice of 2 days is given by the resident, but in most cases residents may not come to the office without an appointment to make the report of moving and anticipate that staff will be available to attend the move-out inspection at that time.
- 6. In most cases, move-out charges that are directly related to labor and materials are applied to the security deposit/rental account when:
 - a. Damages are found in the unit that exceed normal wear and tear.
 - b. More than routine cleaning has to occur in order for RHA to prepare the unit for the next resident.
 - c. Items are left in the unit, and have to be removed by Maintenance (and thus are disposed of at RHA's discretion). Items remaining in a unit following receipt of a move-out with notice are considered to be unwanted. Items remaining in a unit following a resident's move-out without notice or a lock-out of the resident following court action will be held only for the minimum time required under state law.

7. Common reasons for move-out charges include the following items. Residents are encouraged to pay attention to these areas in order to avoid or limit charges:
 - a. Dirty stove, especially the oven, top, sides, and underneath.
 - b. Dirty refrigerator, especially the top and gasket.
 - c. Dirty tubs and toilets.
 - d. Keys (all properties), key fobs, telephones for tele-entry system, laundry cards (highrises), etc., that are not returned.
 - e. Items that accompany the unit (such as a rake in the Family Developments) that are not returned.
 - f. Damages associated with pets.
8. Residents are encouraged to participate in the inspection process. If the resident disputes a charge during an inspection, and the Property Manager has reason to believe that information may be available to support the resident's claim, the Property Manager will investigate the claim before determining that the charge will be applied to the account.
9. After the move-out inspection takes place, a final bill is prepared and mailed to the forwarding address that is supplied by the resident. Important information includes:
 - a. The final bill includes any unpaid rent, retroactive rent, excess utilities, and additional charges – including maintenance move-out charges.
 - i. The final month of any rent and excess utilities is prorated, and any unused rent will be adjusted to your account.
 - ii. Any refund that is due the resident is sent for payment to the RHA business office. Refunds are to be processed and mailed by U.S. mail within 30 days of move-out. Refunds are mailed to the forwarding address. If no forwarding address is supplied, refunds will be issued to the emergency contact. If no emergency contact is given, the refund will be sent to the PA Treasury Department of Unclaimed Funds.

- iii. Any balance on the account that is left after 30 days of move-out is:
 1. Reported to a collection agency.
 2. Reported to HUD and shared with all housing authorities nationwide through a HUD computer database.
 3. Due to Reading Housing Authority as a condition of readmission to any RHA program, including Public Housing, Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, and any other private housing program that is operated by the agency.
10. Residents are responsible for changing their address with the U.S. Postal Service to ensure their mail is forwarded to their new address. RHA does not take responsibility of resident's mail. Mail received at the unit during transition will be returned to the post office.

PARKING & VEHICLES

1. Vehicles are defined as cars, trucks, sports-utility vehicles (SUVs) and motorcycles.
2. All streets in and around Oakbrook, Glenside & Hensler Homes are the property of the City of Reading. All terms of the *City of Reading Code of Ordinances, Motor Vehicles & Traffic* apply. Important reminders include:
 - a. All vehicles are required to have a valid Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PA DOT) inspection and registration. Inoperable or "nuisance" vehicles are not permitted to remain on a city street (i.e. a car with a flat tire, a car on a jack, a car without windows).
 - b. Parking is not permitted along any yellow curbing, which includes areas in front of dumpsters, bus stops, and within 15 feet of intersections and fire hydrants.
 - c. Reserving of spaces (by use of chairs, etc.) during periods of inclement weather is prohibited.
 - d. Designated handicapped parking spaces are reserved for persons with a PA DOT permit only, which must be

displayed at all times. These spaces are not reserved for individual use, but are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Resident must contact the City for additional designated spaces.

- e. Auto repair work or any work that involves grease may not be performed on city streets (& RHA lots).
 - f. Parking against the flow of traffic is not permitted. Cars may not be washed on streets by any RHA water.
 - g. Gas-powered vehicles (including scooters & miniature cars) are not permitted to be stored or ridden on any RHA property.
3. Most RHA properties contain one or more parking lots. These lots are the property of RHA. In order to be permitted to park their vehicle on a RHA lot, the resident must have a valid driver's license, insurance, and registration, and the vehicle must be registered in the resident's name and address. RHA will issue no more than one permit sticker per household.
4. Parking is an amenity, and not a guarantee. Parking is not a fundamental service of RHA.
5. Permit tags or stickers must be affixed to the approved vehicle. Only vehicles with RHA-issued permits are permitted to park on RHA parking lots. Violations may result in disqualification for permit eligibility.
6. Parking privileges are awarded differently between RHA highrises and other developments, as described below.
- a. In RHA highrises, parking spaces are assigned. The Property Management Offices maintain a waiting list for residents who are eligible for parking.
 - i. Residents with parking permits are only permitted to park in their assigned spot.
 - ii. Residents who have a PA DOT-issued handicapped parking placard are eligible for the waiting list for the spots on the lot that are designated for handicapped parking.
 - b. In Glenside and Hensler Homes, parking is provided equally to all residents who are eligible for a permit on a first-come, first-served basis.

- i. There are no reserved parking spaces in these developments.
 - ii. Only residents who display a PA DOT-issued handicapped parking placard are eligible to park in the spots on the lot that are designated for handicapped parking.
7. Residents who use parking lots are doing so 'at their own risk'. Reading Housing Authority is not responsible for any loss or damage to residents, their guests, their vehicles, or their property.
8. Forward-facing parking is required on all RHA lots. Residents are not permitted to 'back into' parking spaces.
9. Residents who are awarded parking permits whose circumstances change (who have lapses in required coverage, who dispose of the covered vehicle, etc.) are required to notify the Property Management Office within 14 days.
10. Any violation of these rules may immediately result in a loss of parking privileges.
11. RHA reserves the right to have vehicles towed from RHA lots that are considered abandoned by the Reading Police Department, that pose a danger to other vehicles or to RHA, that are considered to be inoperable or a "nuisance" as described above, or that are blocking access to property.
12. Additional information is contained in the Parking Addendum.

Procedures

1. Applications for parking permits may be obtained by contacting the respective Property Management Office.
2. Residents with permits must provide updated proof of driver's license, registration & insurance at Annual Review.

Charges

1. Vehicles that are parked on RHA lots that lack a current permit sticker will be ticketed and fines will be assessed. Charges will be applied for any towing that occurs in accordance with this policy. Charges may be applied for any costs incurred by RHA for damages, etc.

PEST CONTROL

1. RHA provides a range of pest control services. Residents are expected to call the Property Management Office to report the presence of any pest problems, in or nearby the unit, including roaches, bedbugs, ants, mice, fruit flies, fleas, skunks, and squirrels.
2. Preventative extermination is provided to all households and common areas 3 times per year by a licensed, bonded exterminator. Concerns that occur in-between routine treatments must be reported to the Property Management Office, and will receive additional treatment.
3. Resident families will be notified of the date of the preventative treatment plan one week in advance by U.S. mail.
4. The extermination contractor will enter the unit if the resident family is not found at home.

Charges

1. In most cases, there are no costs associated with Pest Control.

Special Instructions for Bedbugs

1. Preventative bedbug inspections will occur once per year. A preventative bedbug inspection notice will be sent or hand-delivered 24-48 hours before personnel enter the unit.
2. Residents MUST REPORT any suspicion of bedbugs to the Work Order Line immediately at 610-777-5500.
3. Do not remove anything from the unit or throw away any belongings until the unit is inspected.
4. Inspection will be conducted within 48 hours to determine whether treatment is necessary.
5. Residents will be notified of the treatment plan by hand-delivered notice within 1 day of confirmation of bedbugs.
6. Treatment will either be conducted by a qualified RHA employee or a contracted extermination company.
7. Treatment typically occurs over three sessions on a weekly basis.
8. Residents are required to prepare for each and every treatment in accordance with their lease agreement.

Process for Treatment

1. If you sleep in a location anywhere other than your bed, i.e., recliner/sofa, please tell the exterminator and prepare this location as if it were your bed.
2. Remove all bedding from your bed (sheets, blankets, pillowcases, etc.).
3. Before treatment, machine-wash the bedding using the hottest cycle, and machine dry the items for at least 45 minutes. Bag and seal the items or place in a sealed container until after the first treatment.
4. Empty nightstands, dressers, and tables that are close to where you sleep. Box these items until after the first treatment.
5. Remove and wash curtains near where you sleep. If you need boxes, call the Work Order Line.
6. Eliminate clutter. If you are throwing out any items, bag and seal the items before taking to the appropriate location to discard. If you are throwing out any furniture items, call the Work Order Line in advance so that necessary measures can be taken.
7. Move everything 3 feet away from the walls.
8. Arrange for the family to be out of the unit for 4 hours following the arrival of the extermination company.
9. Arrange for the removal of pets during treatment.
10. Vacuum your unit throughout the entire process. If you need a vacuum, call the Work Order Line.

Things You Should Know

1. Bedbugs usually feed at night while you sleep, and they are not known to transmit disease.
2. Most people are unable to feel their bites.
3. You can reduce your likelihood of getting bedbugs by not buying used furniture or mattresses and box springs.
4. If you have been treated for bedbugs, you may be provided with a mattress cover which must remain on the bed.
5. Please note that over-the-counter pesticides will not help the process in eliminating bedbugs, in fact, they may make the treatment by the extermination company less effective.
6. Insect repellant that you spray on your body will be helpful in preventing the bites.
7. Bedbugs are very difficult to get rid of, and if left untreated, can infest an entire unit, and an entire building.

8. Bedbugs are highly resistant to pesticides and are difficult to treat.
9. The treatment process is long and can be frustrating.
10. You may experience an increase in activity after each treatment.

PETS & VISITING ANIMALS

1. Pets must be approved by and registered with RHA before they are brought onto the premises. Once the pet is approved, RHA will record within the file that the household has been issued a “pet permit”.
2. The following pets are permitted:
 - a. Dogs - Limit: 1
 - i. Must be/expected to be 25 lbs. or under, or whose adult height will be 14 inches or under.
 - ii. Must be spayed/neutered at the time of registration, or within 30 days of reaching 6 months of age.
 - b. Cats - Limit: 1
 - i. Must be spayed/neutered at the time of registration, or within 30 days of reaching 6 months of age.
 - c. Commercially sold birds – Limit: 2 within 1 cage.
 - d. Commercially sold fish and turtles – Limit: No more than can be maintained in a safe and healthy manner in one 10-gallon tank.
3. Resident/resident families may have only 1 type of pet at a time. (For example, it would not be permitted to have a dog AND a turtle.)
4. The following pets are not permitted in RHA Public Housing Programs:
 - a. Reptiles (except for turtles).
 - b. Rodents.
 - c. Insects.
 - d. Arachnids (such as spiders).
 - e. Wild or feral animals.
 - f. Pot-bellied pigs.
 - g. Any animals used for a commercial (business) purposes.

5. Pets must be kept in the resident's unit. Residents with pet permits are not permitted to take their pets to other residents' units, except with prior approval by Property Management in circumstances in which the resident with the permit has emergency circumstances.
6. Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times when outside of the unit. Extendable leashes may not be used in their extension capacity. Cats and other pets must be kept in a cage or carrier when outside of the unit.
7. Pets are not permitted in any common space, including lobbies, community rooms, laundry areas, playgrounds and courtyards (except for those areas within a courtyard that are designated as 'exercise areas').
8. Pet owners are required to immediately dispose of pet waste by placing it in a sealed plastic bag and disposing of it in a trash container. In Oakbrook, Glenside and Hensler Homes, pet owners are only permitted to allow pets to deposit their waste on areas included within the leased unit (the resident's yard). In RHA highrises, pet owners are permitted to exercise their dogs in the following areas:
 - a. Rhodes & Eisenhower Apartments: Grass area in center courtyard.
 - b. Kennedy Towers: Grass area in rear of building along parking lot.
 - c. Franklin Tower: Grass area in front of building.
 - d. Hubert Apartments: grass area by rear entrance door.
9. In RHA highrises, only one pet is allowed in an elevator at a time. If one pet is in the car when it stops at a floor, the pet owner must wait for a car without a pet.
10. Pet owners are required to designate at least one person to act on their behalf in the care of the pet in the case of the owner's illness, injury or emergency. Dogs may not stay in a unit alone at night. Cats may stay in a unit alone for no more than 2 days. It is the responsibility of the pet owner to make all arrangements for the pet's care.
11. Pet owners must maintain compliance with all lease terms while under pet ownership. This includes adherence to cleanliness and housekeeping guidelines, alterations to the unit, and noise.

12. When an RHA maintenance call or management inspection is scheduled, the pet owner must be available to restrain the pet. If the pet owner is absent, the pet must be caged during the time of the RHA visit. In the case of an emergency maintenance or management visit, RHA will make a good faith effort to ensure the safety of the pet, but under no circumstances will the agency be responsible for any pet that escapes during such visit.
13. Pets are required to be treated humanely, in accordance with Pennsylvania's Animal Cruelty laws. Pets may not be kept in closets. Dogs and cats may not be kept in cages for extended periods of time.
14. "Visiting" pets are not permitted on any premises of RHA. This includes the leased unit and its yard, community spaces, and common areas such as playgrounds and courtyards.
15. Residents are not permitted to feed stray or wild animals.

Procedures

1. Residents may request permission to have a pet at any time during the year by contacting the Property Management Office during normal business hours. At a minimum, the approval process may take up to 2 weeks.
2. A complete application for the pet policy includes:
 - a. Completed pet permit application form.
 - b. Completed lease addendum.
 - c. Completed pet responsibility card.
 - d. Certification by a licensed veterinarian that the dog or cat is in overall good health and has up-to-date shots.
 - e. A 'passed' interim housekeeping inspection that is conducted immediately before issuing approval.
 - i. The interim housekeeping inspection will follow the same process as any annual housekeeping inspection.
3. Pet permits are renewed annually.
4. ANY violation of the pet policy will result in follow-up by Property Management. If the pet owner fails to correct to violation, RHA reserves the right to revoke the pet permit.

Charges

1. A \$50 deposit for dogs and cats must be paid in full before a pet permit will be issued.

2. Deposits may be applied to any outstanding charge at the time of move-out of the resident.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Reasonable Accommodations are defined as a modification of a policy, rule or procedure, or a structural change to a common area or dwelling, such as a railing or a grab bar, which is made as a result of a request by a resident with a disability. The purpose of this accommodation is to provide a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the housing program.
2. A 'person with a disability' is defined as "an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or an individual regarded as having such an impairment, or an individual with a record of such an impairment."
3. An accommodation is considered reasonable if it has a direct relationship to the disability, does not constitute a fundamental alteration of the housing program, and does not pose a substantial administrative or financial burden.
4. Accommodations are made to ensure access to those services that are fundamentally supplied by the housing authority and to all residents. They are not made in order to access amenities like parking and private balconies because these are not supplied to all residents. Fundamental services occur in places like kitchens, bathrooms, and community spaces because they are supplied to everyone.
5. Reasonable Accommodations are meant to provide exceptions to policies, so when something is afforded under a policy, (i.e. peaceful enjoyment) no reasonable accommodation will be considered required as it is not necessary.
6. The agency will at times engage in a conversation with the resident to determine an alternate means to meet the resident's disability-related need. Accommodations are intended to ensure that a specific unmet need of the person with a disability is addressed. At times, this may be different from what is wished-for or desired by the resident, but this method will only

be used if it is believed to adequately meet the identified disability-related need.

Procedures

1. Residents who wish to be considered for a Reasonable Accommodation shall contact the Resident Services Department. The resident will be asked to complete a 'Request for Reasonable Accommodation' Form. The form is to be completed by the resident or his/her designee, in whatever words the resident may use to describe his/her disability-related need and what he/she is seeking from RHA. The request form is not intended to be completed in the 'language' of a service provider, like a doctor. Incomplete forms, or those that are unable to be understood as to the nature of the request, will be returned to or addressed with the resident so that RHA personnel have a full understanding of the accommodation for which the resident/resident family is seeking approval.
2. Upon receipt of a completed request form, a verification form will be mailed to the group or individual designated by the resident as having knowledge of the need for the accommodation. If a form is not returned by the identified designee, the agency will contact the resident, and the resident will be invited to identify a different provider, or make contact with the provider to request completion. It is the responsibility of the requested resident to ensure that this information is received, to agency consider whether a request is reasonable only upon receiving the completed application (the request and the verification).
3. Upon receipt of the verification form, a decision will be made as to whether the request for change or modification is reasonable. The resident will be contacted by mail with an official reply to the request.

RECERTIFICATION

Annual Reexamination

1. Reading Housing Authority is required to conduct a recertification of eligibility for every household in the Public Housing Program at least once per year. The results of the

process determine if the family remains eligible, how much the rent will be, and whether the family is housed in the correct size unit. Recertification may occur at other times during the year, if the family has a change in income or composition.

2. The annual recertification appointment must be attended by all adult family members.
3. Reading Housing Authority will send a notification letter to the family to inform them of the date and time for the appointment. Residents are permitted to reschedule the interview if necessary but the resident/resident family must contact the office no less than 24 hours in advance of the appointment. Residents must arrive on time. Late arrival to the appointment will result in cancellation.
4. The appointment notification will include an application packet. The resident/resident family must bring this packet, completed in advance, to the appointment – along with all of the required documents. Ten (10) business days will be provided for any missed documents.
5. Families will be able to select either the income-based rent or the flat rent.
 - a. The income-based rent is based on 30% of the family's monthly adjusted income.
 - b. The flat rent is based on the market rent charged for comparable units in the private, unassisted rental market.

This choice of rent is only permitted to be made once a year.

- a. If the resident/resident family selects an income-based rent, and the rent is increased because of an increase in income, they must keep that rent until the next recertification, even if it means that the income-based rent is higher than the flat rent.
 - b. If the resident/resident family selects the flat rent, and has a change in income which would otherwise result in a decrease in rent, they must keep that rent until the next recertification, even if it means that the flat rent is higher than 30% of the monthly adjusted income.
6. During the appointment, RHA will determine whether family composition may require a transfer to a different bedroom size

unit, and if so, the family's name will be placed on the Occupancy Standards Transfer List (See Transfers –Procedures, #3.)

7. The appointment will also include a verification of the resident/resident family's status related to Community Service requirements (see section on Community Service).
8. If the family fails to respond to the letter and/or fails to attend the interview, a second letter will be mailed. The second letter will advise of a new time and date for the interview. The letter will also advise that failure by the family to attend the second scheduled interview and provide the required documents will result in Reading Housing Authority taking eviction actions for no-compliance with this program requirement.
9. Rent changes are generally effective on the first of the month prior to your anniversary date with thirty days' notice of any rent increase to the family.
10. If the rent determination is delayed due to a reason beyond the control of the family, then any rent increase will be effective the first of the month after the month in which the family receives a 30-day notice of the amount.
11. If the family caused the delay, then any increase will be effective on the anniversary date. Any reduction will be effective the first of the month after the rent amount is determined.

Interim Reexaminations

1. All family members are required to report changes in income or family composition to the Property Management Office within ten calendar days. These changes may or may not affect your rent.
2. Changes that must be reported include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. A member that has been added to the family through birth, marriage or adoption.
 - b. A household member who has moved out or has left the family unit.
 - c. Any new source of income or increase in income received by any family member 18 years of age and older. Note that family members who are 17, but will turn 18 during

- the recertification year, should report any income once they turn 18, to avoid having a retroactive rent payment.
- d. An increase or change in childcare expense.
 - e. An adult child who goes into the military and leaves the household will be considered permanently absent and must be reported.
 - f. Full-time students who attend school away from the home and live with the family during school recess will be considered permanently absent from the household and must be reported.
3. Sometimes, rent may not increase when a resident/resident family has an increase in income because of the Earned Income Disregard (or Disallowance), referred to as EID. EID is a program that allows residents who have been out of work to accept employment without triggering a rent increase. It encourages residents to enter the workforce by not including the full value of increases in earned income for up to two years. Residents who are eligible are those who:
- a. Have had an increase in income as a result of an employment of a family member who was previously unemployed for the last 12 months, or who worked less than 500 hours in the last 12 months earning minimum wage or less.
 - b. Have had an increase in income because of participating in a economic self-sufficiency or job-training program.
 - c. Have had an increase in income after receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in an amount of at least \$500 within the last six months.
- The EID program lasts for two years. In the first year, 100% of the wages do not count. In the second year, 50% of the wages don't count. Residents are only eligible for EID one time.

RENT COLLECTION

1. Rent and all charges are due on the 1st of every month.
2. Rent statements are prepared by RHA or its contractor, and mailed to the resident/resident family to the leased unit 5 days before the end of the month for the following month's residency.

3. Payments may be made by check or money order. The current mailing address will be posted in the Property Management Office. If a rent statement is lost, a duplicate can be obtained by contacting the Property Management Office.
4. Alternate methods for rent payment may become available at a later date, including electronic payments.
5. Questions about charges on a rent statement should be directed to the Property Manager. It is important to note that any payments mailed after the 5th business day of the month may not be shown on the next month's statement.
6. If the rent and all charges are not paid in full (received by RHA) by the 7th business day of the month, the resident will be sent a Notice of Proposed Adverse Action, which will serve as a 14-day notice of proposed lease termination.
7. If the resident/resident family receives this notice but has already made payment, they should contact the Property Management Office.
8. If the resident/resident family receives this notice and has not made payment, or has made a partial payment, they should call or visit the Property Management Office to discuss the problems and a plan to remedy.
9. If a resident/resident family has a balance that they are unable to pay in accordance with the policy, a Repayment Agreement may be able to be established. A Repayment Agreement is a written contract between the resident and RHA that details the terms under which a balance will be paid.
10. Except in extraordinary circumstances, Repayment Agreements are afforded only in response to charges that were not predicted (such as for maintenance costs or retroactive rent charges resulting from an interim review). Regular, recurring rent charges are typically ineligible for a Repayment Agreement, except as determined on a case-by-case basis.
11. The following are the requirements of a Repayment Agreement.
 - a. The resident must first pay 10% of the balance owed to RHA.
 - b. Future payments must be made in addition to paying all current charges. The amount of months that the balance

can be spread out for repayment depends upon the amount of the balance.

- i. Amounts of \$500 or less must be repaid within 4 months.
 - ii. Amounts between \$501 and \$999 must be repaid within 12 months.
 - iii. Amounts between \$1,000 and \$1,999 must be repaid within 24 months.
 - iv. Amounts between \$2,000 and \$2,999 must be repaid within 30 months.
 - v. Amounts between \$3,000 and the Federal or State threshold for criminal prosecution must be repaid within 36 months.
 - c. If the current charges and the repayment agreement charges are not received by the 7th business day of the month, RHA shall consider the agreement to be breached, and shall pursue lease termination.
 - d. Except in unusual cases, RHA shall enter into only one agreement for delinquent rent and charges. A repayment agreement cannot be renegotiated. In the case of a change in income during the course of a repayment agreement, the current rent amount may change, but the repayment amount will remain constant.
 - e. Except in extreme circumstances, there is no limit as to the number of repayment agreements that a resident/resident family may have during the course of residency.
12. Residents are encouraged to contact the Property Management Office with any questions regarding the rent statement or amount of monies due.
 13. Residents are urged to contact the Department of Resident Services for difficulties associated with paying the rent, including help with budgeting, setting up or understanding a Repayment Agreement, or exploring options for assistance from social service agencies.

RENTERS INSURANCE

1. Renters insurance is a form of property insurance that provides coverage for a policyholder's (the renter's) belongings and/or personal property. Except for very unusual circumstances, Reading Housing Authority does not cover costs associated with any damage or loss to resident's personal property, resulting from events like theft, vandalism, fire or smoke, storms, water damage, or an injury to you or your guest that occurs in your unit.
2. Residents are strongly encouraged to purchase renter's insurance.
3. RHA does not endorse any insurance companies.
4. Renter's insurance policies can be very affordable. Sometimes, people are able to find renters insurance policies from the same companies that sell car insurance or life insurance.
5. A renter's insurance policy may pay for the resident's costs (the RHA insurance deductible) in resident-caused damage to the unit, following events like fire or water damage.

RESIDENT COUNCILS

1. In accordance with guidelines from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Reading Housing Authority promotes resident participation and the active involvement of residents in all aspects of the agency's mission and operation. Residents have a right to organize and elect a Resident Council (RC) to represent their interests.
2. At Reading Housing Authority, there are development-based resident councils, in which a resident council has been established at each public housing development to represent the input of all residents of the specific development, and a jurisdiction-side resident council, called the Citywide Resident Council, which includes all elected officers from the development-based resident councils, and which represents the input of all public housing residents.
3. Resident Councils operate under rules that are established in their bylaws. The bylaws are established by the RC.

4. All residents of the development are considered to be members of the resident council. Voting rights are limited to residents who are age 18 and over.
5. Resident Council officers who are elected through a formal election procedure, in accordance with the bylaws, are recognized by RHA as the officials of the resident council, as long as (as individual residents) they are in compliance with the RHA lease.
6. The RHA Citywide Resident Council assists Reading Housing Authority in its annual planning process by acting as the Resident Advisory Board (RAB). The RAB assists RHA in identifying or reviewing changes in policies, and in maintenance and modernization projects.
7. Most development-based Resident Councils serve as the central point of organization for activities for residents, and have a goal of improving residents' quality of life by providing a forum for resident concerns and suggestions. Most Resident Councils also provide educational, recreational, and economic opportunities and programs.
8. Meetings of the Resident Councils are open to all members. They are not public meetings, and therefore no non-members may attend unless they are invited guests of the Resident Council. Resident conduct at Resident Council meetings and functions remains subject to all terms of the Lease Agreement.
9. Questions regarding current Resident Council officers and meeting schedules should be directed to the developments Resident Council or Department of Resident Services.

RESIDENT SERVICES

1. Through the Resident Services Department, residents of the RHA Public Housing Program may be assisted in obtaining services that will help them to be successful in their residency. The mission of Resident Services is to provide professional social services to residents of Reading Housing Authority. Through direct assistance and collaborations with local organizations and resident associations, the department seeks to support residents in self-sufficiency, lease compliance and overall well-being.

2. The Resident Services Department provides 3 main activities: Service Coordination, Program Management, and Resident Initiatives.
3. All services are voluntary, free and confidential.
4. Service Coordination occurs when Resident Services Coordinators help residents and their families with individual problems or needs. Service Coordination can occur in the resident's home, in a community space, or in the office setting. Help can be delivered in the following areas:
 - a. DAILY LIVING NEEDS, such as help with cleaning, cooking, bathing, shopping, and transportation.
 - b. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, if help is needed with budgeting, paying your rent, or dealing with an insurance issue, or completing applications to gain new resources.
 - c. EMOTIONAL HEALTH, such as help with depression or anger, or in finding a counselor.
 - d. SUBSTANCE ABUSE, for residents facing problems with drugs or alcohol.
 - e. FAMILY SUPPORT, for help with parenting, or a child's behavior problems.
 - f. EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION, for persons seeking employment or continuing education.
 - g. DOMESTIC ISSUES, if help is needed in dealing with a spouse or partner.
 - h. LEASE ISSUES, in any possible area that might help residents to comply with their lease and be successful in their tenancy.
5. Program Management – Reading Housing Authority offers a range of on-site programs to enhance residents' physical, social, emotional, educational and financial well-being. These programs include:
 - a. WELLNESS PROGRAMS, to help residents address issues with their health such as understanding a medical diagnosis, finding a doctor, or receiving instructions as to how to take a medicine. Residents can receive individual wellness counseling, participate in group wellness education, or take part in a wide variety of health-screening and health-care events.
 - b. SENIOR CENTER SERVICES are available to provide

- recreation, socialization & a noontime meal at Kennedy Towers and Hensler Homes.
- c. CHORE SERVICES help older adults and persons with disabilities with housekeeping needs, when the resident does not qualify for services from other community agencies
 - d. The STOKES STITT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM offers financial assistance to residents of Oakbrook and Glenside Homes who are continuing their education
 - e. YOUTH PROGRAMS, to provide on-site after-school and summer camp opportunities intended to help agency youth in areas such as physical recreation, nutrition, homework assistance and substance abuse prevention.
6. Resident Initiatives includes the help that Resident Services staff offer to agency Resident Councils to become organized, to reach their goals, and to represent their ideas to the different departments at Reading Housing Authority and other jurisdictions. Resident Service staff provides technical assistance to resident leaders in the operations of a resident council as defined by the Department of Housing & Urban Development.
 7. Although the Resident Services office is located in the Hubert Apartments, most services are delivered outside of the office unless scheduled in advance. The office does not have walk-in hours.

SAFETY & SECURITY

1. RHA seeks to ensure that all resident families are able to safely use and enjoy their homes. As noted below, the agency undertakes efforts to promote residents' safety and security. Residents are also encouraged to practice smart personal safety skills in and around their unit, including locking all doors and windows.
2. All households are provided with two exterior door keys at the time of leasing. Additional keys may be requested from the Property Management Office for a cost. Keys may not be duplicated independently. Lost or stolen keys must be reported to the Property Management Office and will be replaced for a

cost. Lock change information is described in the “Work Order” chapter of this handbook.

3. Additional locks, or locking or limiting-access devices such as chains or bars, are not permitted to be installed on any exterior or interior door.
4. In the agency’s high-rise apartments, front and rear security doors are in place to ensure that the building is accessed only by residents. The following information applies to this high-rise security feature:
 - a. The security doors open with a key fob. Each occupant is provided with a key fob. Additional key fobs are generally not provided, in order to limit access to the buildings to residents and promote overall safety and security. A resident is permitted to provide his/her key fob to family or caregiver in the event of illness or incapacity on a temporary basis.
 - b. The security doors make use of the tele-entry system so that residents may permit guests to enter the building. At the main security door to the building, a guest will enter a code on a telephone key pad to call the resident’s telephone. The resident can then allow the guest to enter the building by pressing the number 6 to open the security door for the guest. The resident may also view the guest through the RHA CCTV security cameras (see below), viewable on his/her television on channel 956 in order to confirm the guest’s identity. This system is operational from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM. After 10:00 PM, a resident must retrieve guests in person from the security doors.
 - c. Under no circumstances may key fobs be dropped or tossed from windows in order to permit access to a resident or a guest.
5. If a resident does not have landline telephone service to his/her apartment, RHA will provide a basic telephone to the resident to be used during the course of residency so as to permit access to the security door system.
6. Security fencing is installed in the rear of the units in Glenside and Oakbrook Developments. Every household in these

developments may receive one key that will open only the locks to their back yard. The use of the key is for family members of the household only. It is the responsibility of the family members of the household to make sure the gates are locked at all times; RHA will not be responsible for locking gates. To receive your family's key, an adult member of your family should come to the management office with their picture identification. It will cost the family \$10.00 to replace a lost key. As these gates are intended to ensure security to the property, RHA reserves the right to permanently lock these entries when residents/neighbors in the enclosed area collectively demonstrate an inability to keep the area/gates locked and secure.

7. RHA utilizes a Closed-Circuit television (CCTV) system of security cameras in order to promote safety and provide a record of any illegal activities that may occur on or around agency properties. Some cameras are able to be viewed through channel 956 on a resident family's television. In general, camera footage is intended for agency use to capture events occurring in common areas such as streets, playgrounds, lobbies and stairwells, and is only made available outside of the agency for law enforcement entities.
8. RHA maintains close working relationships with Reading Police Department (RPD), including contracting with the Department for dedicated police services from Community Police Officers. The role of the Community Police Officers is to conduct patrol of agency properties, investigate agency or resident complaints regarding illegal activities, serve as a liaison between the agency and RPD, and act as a member of the RHA community in keeping residents safe. While EMERGENCIES SHOULD ALWAYS BE DIRECTED to 911, the dedicated Community Police Officers for RHA can be contacted for help, support and follow-up regarding any non-emergency issues. Officers can be contacted by calling 610-655-6116.
9. In order to ensure the safety and security of the resident population, RHA maintains a list of individuals who are not permitted on agency property. This "No Trespassing" list includes those who are known to pose a threat of danger against

agency property, personnel, or clientele from entering onto the property. Membership on this list is extended to persons who commit violent crime, drug-related activity, destruction of RHA property, have a weapons offense, or commit multiple acts of nuisance crimes. The complete policy and the list of those persons not permitted on RHA properties are available in the Property Management Office.

10. It is the policy of Reading Housing Authority to support all conditions of the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013*. This law applies to any male or female who is the victim of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking. It outlines protections to victims that apply especially to the Public Housing environment. If you believe that you need assistance or consideration as a result of being a victim, please contact the Property Management Office for a confidential discussion of your situation.
11. Residents are encouraged to alert the Property Management Office if intending to be away from their home for a week or more. Among other reasons, this practice will ensure that precautions can apply, if necessary, related to the security of your home and your personal belongings.
12. RHA does its best to ensure safe physical properties, but residents are responsible for their own personal safety. Some elements of personal safety include:
 - a. Ensuring that any hazardous condition is reported to the Work Order Line, so that conditions can be remedied.
 - b. Using surfaces for their intended purpose.
 - c. Keeping window screens closed/in place at all times and supervising persons of any age whose safety might be compromised by an open window.
 - d. Ensuring unobstructed exits in each room.

SMOKING

1. Smoking is prohibited on any property owned and operated by Reading Housing Authority in conjunction with the Public Housing Program. "Smoking" means inhaling, burning or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, pipe, or any other lighted

or heated tobacco or plant product intended for inhalation, including water pipes (“hookahs”). “Smoking” also includes the use of an electronic smoking device (“e-cig”) which creates an aerosol or vapor, in any manner or in any form.

2. Residents who violate this Smoke-Free policy will be considered to be in material non-compliance of the Lease Agreement. In accordance with the Lease Agreement, residents are responsible for the behaviors of their guests and minor household members, and as such, shall be considered to be in breach of the Lease Agreement resulting from violations to this policy that are committed by their guests and minor household members. Violations to this policy will be addressed with a 3-tiered approach, in which violations result in a written notice for the 1st infraction, followed by a written notice and mandatory in-person lease counseling for the 2nd infraction, and lastly, with the issuance of a 30-day notice of lease termination for the 3rd infraction. Property Management reserves the right to re-initiate the 3-tiered approach for cause, should violations occur after the passage of substantial time between occasions. RHA may elect to forgo the 1st and 2nd stages for subsequent episodes in which violations are provocative or deliberate.
3. Residents who observe violations of this policy are strongly encouraged to report the incident to the Property Management Office, and may remain anonymous in doing so. RHA is committed to enforcing this policy to the greatest and most reasonable degree possible, and shall adopt strategic methods for education, enforcement and ongoing resident compliance. Equally, RHA asserts that the adoption of this policy does not make RHA a guarantor of a smoke-free environment or any resident health-related status associated with the policy.

SOLICITATION POLICY

1. This overview is based on the official Policy of Reading Housing Authority Regarding Canvassing and Soliciting on Reading Housing Authority Property. Any difference in the language is intended to make it easier to understand. In the event of any difference in the actual or perceived message, the official policy shall prevail.

2. “Canvassing” is defined as going door-to-door throughout properties owned by Reading Housing Authority, in order to solicit votes, to conduct a survey or a poll, or to have an uninvited discussion.
 - a. Canvassing directly by Reading Housing Authority agency representatives or their designees, on business that has determined to be official acts of RHA, is permitted.
 - b. Canvassing by any other individual or entity is not permitted, except when it is permitted under the Codified Ordinances of the City of Reading. In this case, the person or organization must have a permit, and provide a copy in advance to the Reading Housing Authority Executive Director’s office.
 - i. An exception to this rule is that canvassing is not permitted for any reason at any highrise that is under ownership or management by Reading Housing Authority. This is because the property has a secure access system for residents, and permits guests under the supervision of residents only.
 - ii. Reading Housing Authority does not engage in any political activity. Candidates for elected office may meet with residents in the unit of the resident if the resident permits him/her to do so. Resident Councils may also, at their discretion, invite candidates for elected office to properly scheduled resident council meetings.
3. “Solicitation” is defined as going door-to-door asking for donations, selling items or giving away items. Solicitation is not permitted on Reading Housing Authority owned or managed properties.

TRANSFERS

1. Transfers within RHA public housing units are provided in the following specific circumstances:
 - a. Emergency Transfer: Is required when maintenance conditions exist in the unit that poses an immediate,

verifiable threat to the life, health or safety of the resident that cannot be repaired or abated within 24 hours.

- b. Transfer to make an Accessible Unit available: Is required when a resident family resides in a unit that has an accessible feature that the family does not need (such as a wheelchair-accessible bathroom), and another resident family is in need of this feature.
- c. Occupancy Standards Transfer: Is required when the unit is either too big or too small for the size of the family. The number of bedrooms for which a family is eligible is based on the following:
 - i. Single person families will be allocated a 0-bedroom before a 1-bedroom unless none are available.
 - ii. Two persons will be assigned per bedroom, except that a parent and his/her child, or a grandparent and his/her grandchild will not be required to share a bedroom, and children of the opposite sex over the age of 5 are not required to share a bedroom.
- d. “Safety” Transfer: Occurs by recommendation of law enforcement to ensure the safety of resident family, in circumstances in which the resident family is or may be the victim of criminal activity. Also considered as a resident-initiated request in situations of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, in accordance with the processes outlined in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. (Note that these protections apply to both male and female victims.)
- e. “Quality of Life” Transfer: Occurs as a result of special programs implemented by RHA when circumstances exist that will allow the agency to award transfers for reasons other than those listed above. Residents may inquire in the Property Management Office to see if any such programs are in place at the current time.

- f. Transfers that occur as a result of a Reasonable Accommodation: see Reasonable Accommodation Policy.
2. Residents will be provided with a transfer to the appropriate sized-unit that meets the family's need related to bedroom size and any approved Reasonable Accommodation that relates to those fundamental services provided by the agency. This may mean that the unit to which the family is to be transferred is located in a development that is different from where the family currently lives. For mandatory transfers (as noted above in "a", "b", and "c") this transfer is required, and the family is obligated to move to remain in compliance with the lease. For optional transfers ("d", "e", and "f") this transfer is optional, but if the family refuses the offered unit, the family's name will be removed from the transfer list and no further offers of transfers will be made.
3. A resident family will be provided with 7 calendar days from the date of offer to move from one unit to another. At the end of the 7 days, the resident family is required to have emptied the previous unit of all personal items and returned all keys to the Property Management Office.

Procedures

1. Emergency transfers may be initiated by a resident family, Property Maintenance or Property Management.
2. Accessibility transfers will be initiated by Property Management as the need arises.
3. Each household will be evaluated at Annual Review in regards to bedroom size. At the time of Annual Review, households will be placed upon the Occupancy Standards Transfer List if they are in need of a larger or smaller unit.
4. Safety transfers will be initiated by law enforcement contact with Property Management or pursued for further consideration as requested by a resident.
5. Quality of life transfer information will be provided to resident families at the time that the program is initiated, and will be posted in Property Management Offices and community spaces for the duration of the program.

Charges

1. With the exception of emergency transfers, all costs associated with transfers shall be the responsibility of the resident family.

TRASH & RECYCLING

1. Reading Housing Authority contracts the removal of trash with a private trash hauler in all developments.
2. In Oakbrook, Glenside and Hensler Homes:
 - a. Trash must be retained in the unit until the time at which it is to be discarded. Trash bags, cans or bulk items may not be kept outside of the unit at any time.
 - b. Trash must be discarded into the dumpsters in the trash containment areas. A responsible family member must discard the bag or item into the actual dumpster. Trash may not be left outside of the dumpster. If the dumpster is full, trash should be discarded in the next available dumpster.
 - c. Bulk items are accepted only at the following bulk-sites: the 1000 block of Patton Avenue in Oakbrook Homes, and the 600 block of Avenue B in Glenside Homes. Bulk items include:
 - i. Furniture – Sofa, chair, box spring, mattress, dresser, table, carpets and bed parts.
 - ii. Auto Parts – Tires, wheels, car bumpers, doors, fenders, seats and batteries.
 - d. Recycling must be conducted at each of the trash containment areas, using the 90-gallon containers, for acceptable, recyclable items only (details below).
3. For agency high-rises:
 - a. With the exception of Franklin Tower, all trash is disposed through trash chutes in hallways. Trash items **MUST** be placed into a bag for disposal. Trash chutes are not permitted to be used between 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM. In Franklin Tower, trash is disposed in the same method as described above for Oakbrook, Glenside and Hensler Homes.
4. Recycling information for all properties are as follows:

- a. Residents are asked to use CLEAR PLASTIC BAGS to recycle glass & plastic jars, bottles & jugs, tin & aluminum cans, and cardboard & newspapers.
- b. Only raw recycling items are accepted. The following items DO NOT get recycled: Plastic bags (grocery bags), plastic tubs (fast food containers), garbage (food), and other glass such as drinking glasses, light bulbs or mirrors.
- c. “Sharps”, such as needles, or any other biohazard materials or medical waste must be discarded appropriately. Users of such items are encouraged to discuss disposal methods with their doctor or pharmacy. As an alternative, residents may elect to use sturdy, plastic jugs (such as laundry soap containers), with the lid closed and taped, and the container marked “HAZARD” in large, bold letters. This item should be discarded in the regular trash.
- d. Appliances and electronics may not be discarded at an RHA trash site. This includes televisions, stereos, microwaves, computers, or anything with an electrical cord. Pennsylvania state laws require that these items cannot be disposed of with municipal trash. Disposal of these items WILL NOT be provided by Reading Housing Authority. Violations to this policy will result in charges. Residents are responsible for making their own arrangements for disposal of these items. Some possible options for disposal include:
 - i. Disposal at a retail supplier of like-items (such as disposing of a computer at a store that sells computers).
 - ii. Disposal at a special electronic recycling event, sometimes hosted by environmental groups.
 - iii. Disposal at a local recycling centers, including:
 - 1. Berks County Recycling Center, 1316 Hilltop Road, Leesport, PA 19533: There is no charge to drop off the following items: televisions (max 2 per resident per vehicle per day), computer

equipment (monitors, laptops, keyboards, modems, printers, copiers), microwaves, stereos, VCRs, telephones, answering machines, fluorescent bulbs, air conditioners, rechargeable & lead acid batteries (excluding alkaline batteries).

UTILITIES, APPLIANCES & ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. Most utilities are provided to the resident family as part of the lease agreement.
2. Reading Housing Authority has taken aggressive steps to ensure that utilities are made available and are used in the most cost-effective and environmentally sound methods. As such, this policy is intended to ensure that residents make good decisions regarding use of the heat, water, and electric in their homes.
3. Regarding heating and cooling:
 - a. During the heating season, RHA shall ensure that a degree of heat is provided that is at least as warm as 68°.
 - b. For units with thermostats, the thermostat must be set at a constant temperature between 65°- 70°.
 - c. To ensure that heating systems work most effectively, move furniture away from the heating or cooling system to ensure unrestricted (warm or cool) air flow.
 - d. Windows and doors must be kept closed when heating or air conditioning is in use.
 - e. Do not use oven/stove to supplement heat.
 - f. Portable heaters are not permitted.
 - g. Air conditioners should be covered to reduce airflow from the outside during the heating season.
 - h. Air conditioners should not be in use at the same time as the heat.
 - i. Further information regarding air conditioners is supplied in a separate “Air Conditioners” section of this handbook.
 - j. Residents are encouraged to dress appropriately to weather conditions while inside of the home in order to

derive the level of comfort that is reasonably expected based upon the time of year.

4. Regarding water:
 - a. Residents are required to notify the Work Order Line immediately regarding any leak in a faucet, sink, pipe or toilet.
 - b. Pools of any type or size are not permitted. Water slides, sprinklers, and other recreational lawn toys that involve water are also not permitted.
 - c. Hoses may not be used for any reason (including washing of cars, watering plants, etc.)
 - d. Residents are encouraged to use water sensibly and in keeping with efforts to conserve. This includes turning off the water while washing dishes or brushing teeth, taking shorter showers and eliminating use of the bathtub, and washing only full loads of laundry.
5. Regarding electricity:
 - a. All electronics must be turned off when not in use and/or upon departure from the unit.
6. Regarding appliances:
 - a. Stoves and refrigerators are supplied by RHA and cannot be replaced or supplemented by personal items. Small freezers are permitted at a cost related to cubic-foot size.
7. Regarding land-line telephone service:
 - a. RHA provides access to telephone services inside individual units. Issues regarding internal wiring will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to the Work Order Line.
 - b. For telephone or television services requiring the use of lengths of cable: Residents are instructed to obtain cabling that is long enough to be secured to baseboards and around doorways with proper materials. Wires or cords may not extend across rooms or walking paths.
8. Regarding television services:
 - a. All wiring within RHA units is the property of Comcast Cable.
 - b. All contractual issues regarding use of cable services are between the resident family and the cable company.

- c. Satellite dishes, antennas, wires, etc. may not be erected in any interior or exterior location.
9. Violations of these energy efficiency rules will be considered to be violations of the lease agreement.

WORK ORDERS

1. A “Work Order” is a request for the maintenance department to do work in or around a resident’s unit.
2. A Work Order is generated by calling the Work Order Telephone Line, 610-777-5500. Work Orders are generated by the RHA Building and Maintenance Division, located at the Willis Center for Administration.
3. In most routine cases, maintenance work will only be performed through the process of a work order. Except in extreme circumstances, RHA will not honor requests made verbally to maintenance personnel. In some cases, property management will accept reports of maintenance needs and make the report for the work order.
4. Work orders are accepted during the normal business days of Monday through Friday, from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM, and 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM.
5. Work is performed under a work order Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Work orders may result in one or more visits to the unit to remedy the issue.
6. On weekends, holidays, and after routine business hours, RHA will provide maintenance services for emergency issues only.
 - a. The After Hours Emergency Telephone Number is 610-378-1800.
 - b. Emergencies are defined below in Procedures, 2. a.
 - c. In the case of charges, as defined below in Procedures, 3. a. iii. and iv., any labor charges applied for the work will accrue at an “overtime” or “double time” rate. An updated list of charges is available, each year, in the Property Management Office of each development.
7. Any complaints or disputes regarding Work Orders (i.e. satisfaction with work performed, timeliness, and charges)

should be reported to the Property Manager, who will begin the process of looking into the complaint.

8. Issues regarding entry to unit – Locks, Keys and Lockouts:
 - a. Each adult member of the household is provided 1 key at the time of leasing. Additional or replacement keys may be made by the Property Maintenance Department, at a per-key cost, and must be requested from the Property Management Office. Residents are encouraged to obtain back-up key/keys to provide to family, friend or neighbor, in the case of a lockout.
 - b. Requests for lock changes must be reported to the Property Manager. The Property Manager will report the Work Order, and the resident will be billed for all actual labor and materials.
 - c. If a resident is locked out of the unit during a routine business day, he/she must contact the Property Management Office, who will generate a Work Order. Only adult residents listed on the lease will be provided access to the unit, upon satisfactory proof of identity. Residents will be charged for ¼-hour labor for the 3rd and each consecutive lockout occurring in any calendar year.
 - d. Lockouts occurring after routine business hours will only be performed for an adult member of the household and only until midnight. The household member must be able to supply proof of identification prior to or upon entry into the unit. Maintenance personnel are not required to allow a household member to remain in the household without satisfactory proof of identification. Residents will be charged for overtime services.

Procedures

1. A resident must place a call to the Work Order Line. RHA staff will document in a computerized record:
 - a. The name of the caller.
 - b. The address of the unit.
 - c. The location of the problem (i.e.: “the bathroom”).
 - d. A description of the problem (i.e.: “the drain in the tub is clogged”).

- e. (Except in the case of an emergency), whether or not the caller gives permission to RHA to enter the unit if no one is at home. RHA personnel will ask, “Is it okay to enter?” and document the response on the written work order. If the resident does not state that it is “okay to enter”, the maintenance worker will make 2 attempts to find the resident at home. If the resident is not found at home, the work order will be cancelled.
 - f. The date and time of the request.
2. The Work Order will be sent, by computer, to the development’s Maintenance Shop. Work Orders are categorized as:
- a. Emergency - Includes smoke alarms, police or fire calls, no heat, broken water or sewer lines, gas leaks, or any life-threatening issue. In the case of an Emergency Work Order, RHA Work Order Line Personnel will contact maintenance staff in the appropriate development by telephone or 2-way radio. This work will be performed immediately.
 - b. Per Your Request
 - i. Urgent – Urgent Work Orders include clogged sinks, tubs and toilets, no hot water, overflowing sinks or tubs, inoperable refrigerator, inoperable range (3 or more burners) and lock changes in the case of lost or stolen keys. This work will be performed on the same business day.
 - ii. Non-Emergency – Non-Emergency Work Orders include lock changes, any work related to air conditioners, and any general maintenance complaints that do not pose a safety issue. This work will be performed within 30 days; however, RHA shall make a good faith effort to perform this work as quickly as possible.
3. When a Work Order is completed, maintenance personnel will:
- a. Document on the written Work Order:
 - i. The date of the Work Order.
 - ii. Time spent on the Work Order (time in/time completed).

- iii. Any Labor Charges – Labor Charges are applied when there is evidence of damage or negligence that has been caused, either intentionally or unintentionally, by the resident. Labor Charges are based upon an hourly rate that is established to cover agency personnel costs.
 - iv. Any Material Charges – Material Charges are applied when an item needs to be replaced that is either lost or damaged through an intentional or unintentional act of the resident.
 - v. The signature of the resident, if in the unit at the time of the Work Order.
- b. Leave a “hang tag” on the doorknob on the inside of the front door, which indicates that maintenance personnel were in the unit. The note will indicate the date, time, and purpose of the visit.

Charges

1. An updated list of charges is available, each year, in the Property Management Office of each development.

Miscellaneous

1. RHA will supply and install light bulbs in those interior fixtures that belong to the property, at no cost to the resident. Installation will be considered under the non-emergency category. Residents may also pick up the lightbulbs from the maintenance shops, and replace the lightbulb themselves.
2. RHA will perform snow removal on the main entries and exits into Property Management buildings, on the sidewalks and main crosswalks in the family developments, and in the central-use areas of RHA parking lots.