

Chapter 5

OCCUPANCY GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The Occupancy Guidelines are established by RCRHA to ensure that units are occupied by families of the appropriate size. This policy maintains the maximum usefulness of the units, while preserving them from excessive wear and tear or underutilization. This Chapter explains the Occupancy Guidelines used to determine minimum and maximum unit sizes for various sized families when they are selected from the waiting list, or when a family's size changes, or when a family requests an exception to the occupancy guidelines.

A. DETERMINING UNIT SIZE

RCRHA does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room, but there must be at least one person per bedroom. RCRHA's Occupancy Guideline standards for determining unit size shall be applied in a manner consistent with Fair Housing guidelines.

For occupancy standards, an adult is a person 18 years or older, or an emancipated minor.

All guidelines in this section relate to the number of bedrooms in the unit. Dwelling units will be so assigned using the following guidelines:

Generally RCRHA will assign one bedroom to two people within the following guidelines:

Adults of different generations, persons of the opposite sex (other than spouses), and unrelated adults will not be required to share a bedroom.

Separate bedrooms should be allocated for persons of the opposite sex (other than adults who have a spousal relationship and children under 5).

Children of the same sex will share a bedroom.

Foster adults and/or foster children will not be required to share a bedroom.

Foster children will be included in determining unit size only if they will be in the unit for more than 6 months.

Live-in attendants will generally be provided a separate bedroom. No additional bedrooms are provided for the attendant's family.

Space will not be provided for a family member who will be absent most of the time, such

as a member who is away in the military.

The living room will not be used as a bedroom except at the determination of the family and so long as it does not constitute an overcrowded unit.

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING BEDROOM SIZE

| Bedroom Size | Persons in Household: (Minimum #) | Persons in Household: (Maximum #) |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0 Bedroom | 1 | 1 |
| 1 Bedroom | 1 | 2 |
| 2 Bedrooms | 2 | 4 |
| 3 Bedrooms | 3 | 6 |
| 4 Bedrooms | 4 | 8 |
| 5 Bedrooms | 5 | 10 |

B. EXCEPTIONS TO OCCUPANCY STANDARDS

RCRHA will grant exceptions from the guidelines in cases where it is the family’s request or the RCRHA determines the exceptions are justified by the relationship, age, sex, health or disability of family members, or other individual circumstances, and there is a vacant unit available. If an applicant requests to be listed on a smaller or larger bedroom size waiting list, the following guidelines will apply:

In all cases, where the family requests an exception to the general occupancy standards, RCRHA will evaluate the relationship and ages of all family members and the overall size of the unit.

The family may request to be placed on a larger bedroom size waiting list than indicated by the RCRHA’s occupancy guidelines. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger bedroom size, and must be verified by RCRHA before the family is placed on the larger bedroom size list. RCRHA will consider these requests:

Person with Disability

RCRHA will grant an exception upon request as a reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities if the need is appropriately verified.

Other Circumstances

Circumstances may dictate a larger size than the occupancy standards permit when:

Persons cannot share a bedroom because of a need for medical equipment due to its

size and/or function. Requests for a larger bedroom due to medical equipment must be verified by a doctor and will be processed similar to a reasonable accommodation.

Requests based on health related reasons must be verified by a doctor, medical professional, or social service professional.

RCRHA may house families in larger size units if there is not a need for the larger unit required by families currently in occupancy or from the waiting list. The smaller family is then required and agrees that they will move to another available unit after 30 days notice is given, should a family then qualify for the appropriate sized unit.

Larger units than required may be offered in order to improve the marketing of a development suffering a high vacancy or criminal activity rate.

All members of the family residing in the unit must be approved by RCRHA. The family must obtain approval of any additional family member before the person occupies the unit except for additions by birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, in which case the family must inform RCRHA within 10 days.

C. ACCESSIBLE UNITS

RCRHA has a limited number of units designated for persons with mobility impairments. These units meet the needs of persons requiring the use of wheelchairs and persons requiring other modifications.

Preference for occupancy of these units will be given to families with disabled family members who require the modifications or facilities provided in the units.

No non-mobility-impaired families will be offered these units until all eligible mobility-impaired tenants and then applicants have been considered.

Accessible units will be offered and accepted by non-mobility impaired applicants only with the understanding that such applicants/tenants must accept a transfer to a non-accessible unit at a later date if a person with a mobility impairment requiring the unit applies for the accessible unit and is determined eligible.

D. FAMILY MOVES

When a change in the circumstances of a tenant family requires another unit size, the family's move depends upon the availability of a suitable size and type of unit. If the unit is not available at the time it is requested, the family will be placed on the Transfer List.

The unit considerations in this section should be used as a guide to determine whether and when the bedroom size should be changed. If an unusual situation occurs, which is not currently

covered in this policy, the case should be reviewed by the supervisor who will make determination after review of the situation, the individual circumstances, and the verification provided.

Transfers will be considered first, before referral of applicants from the Waiting List. However, due consideration shall be given to the number of vacant units prior to any transfer. If for any reason, the number of vacancies is significant to the extent that transfers would place RCRHA in a position of operational instability, restrictions such as a three to one (3:1) ratio of new move-ins from the Wait List to the number of transfers from within will be imposed in order to maintain the financial stability of the program and operations. The 3:1 ratio shall be maintained at either a site level or at a programmatic level, depending on the distribution of the vacancies and whether such vacancies are confined to a greater degree programmatically or within a specific site. The nature of transfers will also be considered even under these restrictions, as it is recognized that certain life-endangering conditions as may be cause for transfer cannot be restricted by operational objectives.

See chapter on Reexaminations for changes in unit size for existing residents.