



Annual Pest Control Report

Item 9

March 29, 2022

Tenant Services Committee

Report: TSC:2022-18

To: Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

From: Chief Operating Officer

Date: March 1, 2022

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an annual update on the provision of pest control services at Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that TSC receive this report for information.

BACKGROUND

The provision of pest control services is governed by municipal by-laws and federal regulations and is a key responsibility of the landlord as set out in the *Residential Tenancies Act* (“RTA”). The provision of pest control services is an essential component of a broader clean buildings and maintenance strategy, which is intended to establish achievable service standards sustainable service models, and enable consistent and cost-effective delivery of service geared to enhancing tenant satisfaction.

PEST MANAGEMENT DATA & TRENDS

The pest management program was deemed an essential service and continued to be available throughout the pandemic. In 2021, TCHC staff fielded 52,222 work order (“WO”) requests related to pest management issues (see Table 1). Of those issues, the top pest management treatments were for bed bugs and cockroaches.

Some factors influencing pest control requests:

- Seasonal fluctuation
- COVID-19 restrictions and;
- Integration of contract managed buildings

While staff have maintained service levels related to preventative maintenance treatments of common spaces and building exteriors throughout the Covid 19 pandemic, there have been substantive challenges contributing to a notable increase of in-suite demand treatments in 2021. Staff believe that this increase is directly related to COVID 19 restrictions, which required vendors to modify treatment techniques to support households while in place significantly. Where services have been required, staff worked with both the vendors and tenants to complete the services while maintaining social distancing and limiting the need for tenants to vacate their homes for any time.

With the transition of the contract manages west region into direct management in 2020, the 2021 year increased total number of residential units that would receive services under the TCHC pest management program. Regional environmental health staff worked to assess and stabilize program delivery in these communities throughout the year.

Table 1: Pest Treatment (Demand & Preventative) by Categories – 2020 vs. 2021

Quarter	Region	Bed Bugs	Bed Bugs Total	Cockroaches	Cockroaches Total	Mice	Mice Total	Other	Other Total	2021 Grand Total	2020 Grand Total
Q1 2021	East	1070	5,557	547	3,276	382	1,942	240	952	11,727	11,495
	Central	1160		745		394		294			
	West	1336		882		920		342			
	Seniors	1991		1,102		246		76			
Q2 2021	East	1057	6,185	496	2,960	346	1,783	249	1,079	12,007	8,616
	Central	1313		685		387		263			
	West	1466		691		806		475			
	Seniors	2349		1,088		244		92			
Q3 2021	East	1321	7,243	792	4,507	378	1,869	410	1,366	14,985	17,296
	Central	1662		1,023		408		338			
	West	1559		1,180		654		455			
	Seniors	2701		1,512		429		163			
Q4 2021	East	979	5,943	843	4,534	360	1,858	270	1,168	13,503	13,223
	Central	1139		1,037		389		302			
	West	1438		1,108		708		455			
	Seniors	2387		1,546		401		141			

There was a higher volume of service requests for bed bug treatments in Q2 2021 compared to the same quarter in the previous year. This is attributed to the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions, which in turn allowed more households to participate in the treatment process comfortably.

Table 2: Quarterly Average Number of Treatments in 2020 vs. 2021

Categories	2021 Average	2020 Average
Bedbugs	6,232	5,585
Cockroaches	3,819	4,058
Mice	1,863	1,832
Other	1,141	1,183

In Q4 2021, the TCHC portfolio included 52,621 rent-geared-to-income (“RGI”) and 6,336 market units; RGI units accounted for most pest treatments completed. Vacant unit treatments are a standard operating procedure of the TCHC unit turn process and a requirement under the Rentsafe by law.

Table 3: Pest Treatments by Unit Types in 2021

Quarter	RGI	Market	Vacant	2021 Totals	2020 Totals
Q1 2021	10,679	927	732	12,338	11,495
Q2 2021	10,875	893	850	12,618	8,616
Q3 2021	13,980	1117	770	15,867	17,296
Q4 2021	12,182	1,068	770	14,020	13,223

Table 4A: 2021 Count of Units Requiring Multiple Treatments by Pest Type

# of repeat treatments	0	1	2	3	More than 3	Grand Total	%
Bedbugs	380	332	1,589	532	1,060	3,893	27.23%
Cockroaches	253	363	1,388	494	431	2,929	14.71%
Mice	231	237	594	192	240	1,494	16.06%
Total	864	932	3,571	1,218	1,731	8,316	20.82%

Table 4B: 2020 Count of Units Requiring Multiple Treatments by Pest Type

# of repeat treatments	0	1	2	3	More than 3	Grand Total	%
Bedbugs	495	342	1,209	516	902	3,464	26.04%
Cockroaches	289	261	885	476	356	2,267	15.70%
Mice	149	140	316	164	135	905	14.93%
Total	933	743	2,410	1,156	1,393	6,635	20.99%

REQUIREMENT FOR MULTIPLE PEST TREATMENTS

Most pest incidents require more than one pest management treatment to be fully addressed per Health Canada Guidelines, the timing between each treatment being equally vital to achieving an optimal outcome. At TCHC, contracts with pest vendors highlight clear expectations for follow-up treatments, including the provision of a mandatory inspection as part of the warranty program in cases of bed bugs.

Considerations contributing to increase per unit treatments are:

- Limitations to Health Canada approved product application methods;
- Adherence and accommodation are related to COVID-19 safety protocols;
- Modifications to a treatment plan to accommodate tenants in-place; and
- Onboarding and reset activities with former contract-managed sites.

PEST MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges in safely and effectively addressing pest control concerns. Where standard chemical application measures require tenants to vacate their units for a period of 4 to 6 hours, TCHC has worked with our vendors to establish interim measures to complete treatments while limiting the need for tenants to leave their units for extended periods. Enhanced use of mechanical treatments such as steaming, vacuuming, heat treatment, and limited pesticide use has allowed for infestation level control while it is recognized that achieving a complete resolution to pest incidents has been exceptionally difficult due to these limitations.

SUPPORTING TENANTS

In 2021, approximately 15% of all the units visited by the Environmental Health team demonstrated the need for additional support, including access to support, de-cluttering, and preparation assistance for treatment or extreme cleaning services. Our partnerships with agencies such as Toronto Public Health and Ontario Works through Toronto Employment, and Social Services have assisted tenants in accessing approximately \$350,000 of additional supportive funding and services. The TRO and the Regional teams continue developing and implementing resources, partnerships, and tools to continue to provide support and monitoring of units.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A vital lever to pest reduction is ensuring that staff and communities engage in dialogue with tenants and communities; it provides staff with a better understanding of our tenants, and it provides tenants with the information and resources they require to support a proactive approach to pest management in their units and communities. Although in-person tenant education has been paused due to COVID-19 safety restrictions, TCHC staff continue to work with our communications team to update education and preparation materials, including the translation into 24 languages.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Pest problems within TCHC buildings can significantly disrupt the comfort of our residents and limit the enjoyment of their homes. Without a solid and sustainable pest management program, the organization potentially faces orders and costs related to any perceived mismanagement, including potential awards of rent abatement at the Landlord and Tenant Board, MLS orders for failure to maintain the premises “pest-free,” and Health Protection orders from Toronto Public Health.

SIGNATURE:

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