



## CCOC Circles – Safety by Design (Built Environment)

In April, tenants gathered for CCOC's Circle on **Safety by Design (Built Environment)**, the second session in a three-part safety series. This session focused on how the design, layout, and maintenance of buildings and outdoor spaces influence tenant safety and perceptions of safety.

### What we heard at the Safety by Design (Built Environment) circle.

Key areas we heard about were:

#### 1. Overall Sense of Safety and Community

Many tenants shared that they generally feel safe in their buildings, particularly when key built-environment features are working well. Some factors that support safety include lighting & visibility, access & entry points, and shared spaces.

Tenants also emphasized the importance of knowing their neighbours. Being able to communicate and check in with neighbours—especially during concerning situations—was seen as increasing their sense of safety. Some discussed the use of apps or online groups for communication, while noting that exchanging contact details with a few neighbours can be especially helpful.

#### 2. Access, and entry points

Tenants noted concerns related to:

- **Intruders and trespassing**, especially at entry points and parking areas.
- Tenants noted that **double doors do not operate consistently**, closing one after the other at times and opening at the same time at others, which **can create safety risks**, particularly in high-traffic buildings.
- **Front doors without peepholes**, where tenants must reveal themselves to see who is at the door.
- **Parking garage security**, where multiple entrances and exits were seen as a positive feature, but damage in several areas raised concerns.

#### 3. Fire Alarms, Emergencies, and Communication

Tenants discussed experiences with fire alarms and emergency situations, including:





- False fire alarms, which have caused confusion and stress.
- A desire for clear communication after false alarms or scheduled fire tests.
- A suggestion to add a chime or speaker to indicate whether an alarm is a fire test or a false alarm.
- Interest in having a building representative present during alarm situations.

Staff clarified emergency procedures, including calling 911 first, informing CCOC, and the availability of an after-hours on-call number for emergencies, as staff are not on site 24 hours. We encourage tenants to treat all fire alarms as real.

#### **4. Shared Spaces: Garbage, Recycling, Laundry room, and Bike Storage**

- Garbage and recycling areas. Trespassers camp there making it feel unsafe.
- Laundry rooms, particularly where they are located in basements with steep stairs and heavy doors, making access challenging while carrying laundry. Lighting above the laundry room door and stair treads with good grip were noted as positive features.
- Bike rooms are overcrowded with old bikes and security concerns has led some tenants to avoid storing their bikes there.

#### **5. Accessibility, Movement, and Physical Hazards**

Tenants highlighted a number of accessibility and safe-movement issues:

- Steep stairs, heavy doors, and unit stairs without handrails.
- Bedroom windows are installed at a height that is not accessible for tenants using wheelchairs, limiting their ability to open, close, or use the windows independently.
- Uneven steps and paving, with large gaps in some areas, and areas where ice accumulates.
- Gardens and landscaping that can become hazardous, especially when surfaces are wet or when items such as hoses are left in walkways. Tenants also suggested using mulch or other organic alternatives to stone for landscaping, as some have raised concerns that stones are sometimes thrown at windows by trespassers.





## 6. Outdoor Environment and Surroundings

Tenants agreed that conditions in the surrounding neighbourhood can influence how safe they feel. Seeing smashed car windows on nearby streets was noted as affecting perceptions of safety, even when incidents do not occur directly on CCOC property.

## 7. Dealing with Unsafe Behaviour

During the plenary discussion, tenants noted that people who make others feel unsafe sometimes live in the building. Participants expressed interest in having more information about how to deal with problematic neighbours.

The next CCOC Circle will focus on Community Safety, this is the last session in the three-part safety series

 415 Gilmour St. Suite 200, Board Room.

 Tuesday July 21, 2026.

 5 pm –7 pm

 In-person

