



CCOC Circles – Community Safety

On August 5, tenants gathered for CCOC's Circle on Community Safety, the third and final session in a three-part safety series. This session focused on factors that influence tenants' sense of safety in and around their buildings, challenges affecting community safety, and ideas for improving safety across all CCOC's communities.

Key areas we heard about were:

1. Features That Help Tenants Feel Safe

Tenants agreed that certain building features and community supports contribute positively to their sense of safety.

Some examples included:

- Secure entry systems, including buildings with fob access;
- Double-lock entry doors and controlled access points;
- Security patrols, particularly when they provide a visible presence;
- ANCHOR crisis response services accessed through 2-1-1;
- 3-1-1 and City of Ottawa By-law services; and
- communication tools like WhatsApp to share information and resources among neighbours.

Tenants emphasized that both physical security measures and strong neighbour connections contribute to feeling safe at home.

2. Trespassing, Intruders, and Neighbouring Properties

A significant theme was concern about trespassers and non-residents accessing buildings or gathering on nearby properties.

Tenants reported concerns about:

- Vacant lots and abandoned buildings adjacent to CCOC properties attracting camping and other activities;





- Trespassers entering buildings and common areas; and
- Individuals using stairwells and other shared spaces for activities that negatively impact tenant safety and comfort.

Employees encouraged tenants to contact Ottawa by-law services or Ottawa Police as soon as possible when they observe trespassing, suspicious activity, or safety concerns on neighbouring vacant properties. Tenants noted that timely reporting may help address issues more quickly and contribute to improving safety around their homes.

3. Building Access and Security

Tenants identified building access and security systems as an important area for improvement. Key points discussed included requests for expanded and improved fob access systems, concerns about vulnerable entry points and building exits, and interest in stronger measures to prevent unauthorized entry.

Tenants also expressed concerns about unauthorized individuals or former tenants gaining access to buildings. They generally felt that secure and well-maintained entry systems play a major role in helping residents feel protected and contribute to an overall sense of safety within their building.

4. Lighting and Visibility

Lighting was noted as another concern. Tenants suggested improving outdoor lighting around buildings, near entrances and exits, and in areas where increased visibility could enhance the feeling of safety.

Tenants felt that well-lit entrances, pathways, parking areas, and exits can help deter unwanted activity and improve comfort when moving around the property.

5. Security Measures and Monitoring

Many tenants expressed interest in additional security measures. Suggestions included increased security patrols, an enhanced security presence in buildings experiencing challenges, additional cameras in some locations, and better communication about existing security measures, including how security cameras are used and how concerns reported by tenants are addressed.





6. Problematic Behaviour and Community Safety

Tenants discussed concerns related to problematic behaviour occurring within their buildings and raised questions about how concerns involving neighbours can be addressed, as well as what steps CCOC can legally take when safety concerns arise within the building. They expressed an interest in understanding the processes that are followed when concerns are reported and how issues are managed within legal and policy requirements.

Tenants also discussed the balance between supporting vulnerable tenants and maintaining community safety. Some tenants expressed interest in learning more about CCOC's legal obligations, tenant rights, and what tenants can expect when serious concerns are reported.

7. Communication and Tenant Resources

Tenants identified communication as an important part of community safety. They suggested providing clearer guidance on how to report safety concerns and sharing information about what details are most helpful when making a report, such as dates, times, photographs, or witness information. Some tenants also expressed concerns about inconsistent responses to reported issues and suggested that clearer communication about reporting processes, follow-up expectations, and outcomes could help build confidence in the handling of concerns.

Tenants also suggested providing more information about available community and support services, as well as educational resources about tenancy processes and legal requirements. They noted that better access to information could help residents understand available supports, navigate tenancy-related issues, and contribute to a safer community.

