

Lease Preparation and Signing Policy

Effective Date: September 29, 2025



1. Purpose

The Lease Preparation and Signing Policy provides guidance to staff, tenants and stakeholders on how leases are prepared by the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA). It outlines the information required from prospective tenants prior to lease signing and sets out the steps of the lease signing process, in accordance with Nova Scotia's *Residential Tenancies Act* (RTA).

The lease is a legal agreement between NSPHA and the tenants. It clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of both parties, establishes the terms and conditions for ongoing tenancy and provides a fair and transparent framework for addressing any issues or disputes that may arise.

This policy ensures a consistent and transparent approach across the Agency, helping every tenant begin their tenancy with a clear understanding of their rights, obligations and the terms of their lease.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the preparation and signing of all NSPHA leases. It is intended to ensure a standardized, province-wide approach to lease administration for all prospective tenants.

3. Definitions

- **Fixed-Term Lease:** A lease agreement with a specified start and end date. NSPHA will only enter into a fixed-term lease in accordance with the parameters set out in the Fixed-Term Lease Policy.
- **Landlord:** The Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA) is the landlord.

- **Landlord's rules:** Reasonable rules established by a landlord that apply to the residential premises which shall be given to a tenant prior to executing a lease. NSPHA's leases include two types of Landlord's rule: **Tenant Rules** and **Building/Property Rules** which are defined under "Lease".
- **Lease:** The standard residential lease agreement issued by NSPHA. It includes the following components:
 - **Schedule A** – Statutory Conditions: As required under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA).
 - **Schedule B** – Tenant Rules: Standard rules that apply to all tenants living in government-owned public housing.
 - **Schedule C** – Building/Property Rules: Site-specific rules that apply to a particular building or property.
 - **RGI Certificate:** A document generated by Yardi that provides a detailed breakdown of rent calculation under the RGI model, including household members, income sources, deductions, utility charges and the resulting monthly rent.
 - Any other applicable schedule, as required.
- **Lease Anniversary Date:** The date on which a lease was originally entered into. This date recurs annually for the duration of the tenancy.
- **Lease Package:** Documents provided at the lease signing appointment, including the lease agreement and all required forms.
- **Occupants:** Adults, children, or dependents who will live in the unit but are not named as tenants on the lease.
- **Periodic Lease:** An ongoing lease with no fixed end date. This is the standard lease type issued by NSPHA.
- **Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI):** The standard rent model for the public housing program. Rent is calculated based on total gross household income and composition, in accordance with the Rent Calculation Policy.

- **Residential Property Ownership:** Owner(s) of any real property including land and any buildings or permanent structures attached to it, and the interests, benefits and rights inherent in the ownership of physical real estate used for residential purposes.
- **Tenant:** Any individual who has signed a lease agreement with NSPHA. A tenant is legally responsible for:
 - Paying rent as outlined in the lease;
 - Complying with all lease terms and conditions; and
 - Ensuring all occupants and guests follow the lease rules and do not cause damage or disruption.

Where multiple individuals have signed the lease, all are jointly and equally responsible for fulfilling its terms. In this policy, the term “tenant” refers to any or all such individuals.

4. Policy

A. NSPHA Lease

- i. The lease is a legal contract between the landlord (NSPHA) and tenant. It outlines the rights, roles and obligations of both parties. The lease includes the standard form of lease, Schedule A, Schedule B, Schedule C, the RGI Certificate and any other schedules as applicable.
- ii. The lease is based on the Standard Form of Lease required under the [Residential Tenancies Act](#) (RTA).
- iii. The tenant is the individual who signs the lease and assumes full responsibility for complying with all terms and conditions set out in the lease.
- iv. When more than one person signs the lease, each tenant is jointly and equally responsible for fulfilling all lease obligations

and complying with its terms and conditions.

- v. NSPHA leases may not be sublet or assigned under any circumstances.

B. Lease Preparation

- i. Before a lease can be prepared, the prospective tenant must accept a housing offer and provide NSPHA with the following required information:
 - Household composition – including all individuals (e.g., tenants and occupants) who will be living in the unit.
 - Household income information – to calculate monthly rent.
 - Disclosure of residential property ownership – including any principal residences currently owned.
- ii. If the prospective tenant fails or refuses to provide any of the required information, the lease signing will not proceed.
- iii. At least one day prior to the scheduled lease signing appointment, NSPHA will contact the prospective tenant using their preferred method of communication to confirm and provide the following details:
 - Date, time and location of the lease signing appointment.
 - Address of the public housing unit being offered.
 - Monthly RGI rent amount.
 - Reminder that confirmation of first month's rent payment must be presented at lease signing (e.g., cash/debit, receipt from a site office, completed pre-authorized debit forms, etc.).
 - Available rent payment options (e.g., pre-authorized debit, direct payment through the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program, in-person debit, online/telephone banking, or post-dated cheques).

- Instructions to contact Nova Scotia Power to arrange for electricity service as of the move-in date, if applicable.
- Reminder that, if applicable, the prospective tenant must sign a declaration agreeing to divest ownership of any principal residence within one year of the lease signing.

C. NSPHA Lease Package

- i. Leases are based on the Standard Form of Lease required under the RTA.
- ii. Landlord's Rules, form part of the Lease and are included in the following schedules:
 - a. Schedule B – Tenant Rules: Standard rules which apply to all tenants living in government-owned public housing.
 - b. Schedule C – Building/Property Rules: Rules that apply to a specific building or property.
- iii. All applicable documents in the NSPHA lease package must be completed and signed by the prospective tenant before keys are provided for occupancy. The lease package includes the following:
 - NSPHA Lease (Standard Form of Lease, Schedule A, Schedule B, Schedule C, RGI Certificate and any other applicable documentation)
 - Emergency Contact and Next of Kin Form
 - Unit Inspection Form
 - Key Acknowledgement Form
 - Tenant Insurance Acknowledgement Form
 - Authorization and Consent for Disclosure of Personal Information to a Third-Party Form

- Consent to Disclose Personal Information Form
- Nova Scotia Power Acknowledgement Form
- Vehicle Parking Registration Form
- Pet Permission Form
- Pre-Authorized Payment Form
- Property Ownership Declaration Form
- NSPHA Tenant Handbook Link
- Building Specific Checklist
- Lease Appointment Checklist
- Asbestos Acknowledgement and Agreement Form

D. Lease Signing Appointments

- i. The following NSPHA staff members may arrange lease signing appointments with the prospective tenant and sign leases on behalf of NSPHA:
 - Client Services Manager
 - Senior Property Manager/Senior Client Services Supervisor
 - Property Manager/Client Service Supervisor
 - Assistant Client Services Coordinator
 - Client or Tenant Relations Officer
 - Housing Officer
- ii. NSPHA will conduct lease signing appointments in person, during business hours and at the unit offered.
- iii. Lease signing appointments will be attended by the prospective tenant and the designated NSPHA staff member authorized to sign leases on behalf of the Agency.

- iv. The prospective tenant may bring a support person to the lease signing appointment.
- v. Under exceptional circumstances, NSPHA may authorize a lease signing appointment to be held outside of regular business hours or at an alternative location.
 - a. If the lease is signed off-site, NSPHA will make arrangements to complete an in-person property orientation and walk-through of the unit with the prospective tenant at a later date.
- vi. NSPHA will review the Tenant Handbook with the prospective tenant and provide a link to the online version for future reference.
- vii. NSPHA will ensure all steps of the lease signing process are complete and that the prospective tenant completes and signs all required forms.
- viii. Once all forms are complete and the lease and Tenant Handbook have been reviewed, both the prospective tenant and NSPHA representative will sign two copies of the lease agreement.
- ix. NSPHA will provide the prospective tenant with the keys to the unit and grant permission to occupy the premises only after:
 - Two copies of the lease have been signed by both parties
 - All required forms have been completed
 - Confirmation of first month's rent payment has been received.

5. References

Relevant legislation:

- [Residential Tenancies Act, RSNS 1989, c 401](#)