

## Briefing Note

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To: Board of Directors

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From: Nadia Gouveia, Acting Chief Operating Officer  
Allen Murray, Vice-President, Facilities Management

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Date: April 25, 2024

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Re: Locking of Fire Hose Cabinets

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## BACKGROUND

At the TCHC Board of Directors meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a tenant deputant requested that TCHC review its practice of locking fire cabinets within our buildings. TCHC Management was directed to provide a briefing note to the Board outlining the practice of locking fire cabinets and the associated communication to tenants; this briefing note responds to that request.

## RESPONSE

TCHC is required to always provide and maintain specific fire safety equipment for fire suppression. TCHC currently has approximately 9,144 fire hose cabinets across the portfolio. To date, 3,757 (41%) of total cabinets have been locked; the locking of fire cabinets helps ensure that the equipment in the cabinet is not vandalized or stolen and available in proper working order for Toronto Fire Services (TFS) personnel. The remaining unsecured cabinets are scheduled to be locked through a phased approach with the next capital project for fire hose replacements.

The equipment contained in the fire hose cabinets is not for use by untrained persons, who could unknowingly put themselves in harms way. The contents of the cabinet include a control valve for water supply for suppression, connected fire hose with all required connectors, a pressure nozzle, and fire extinguisher, which are meant for use by TFS personnel only and not for any other persons, including TCHC staff and tenants. The practice is in alignment with the Ontario

Fire Code, Section 6.4.2.6, which states: (1) Except as required in Sentence (2), each hose connection in a standpipe system shall be provided with a legible sign reading: "FIRE HOSE FOR USE BY TRAINED PERSONS ONLY".

Lastly, access to the equipment contained in the fire hose cabinets are for maintenance or emergency purposes; the former requires key access by supervisory staff while the latter requires TFS to shatter the glass.

In line with this direction, no tenant or staff should put themselves in harm's way upon discovery of a fire. The best practice when discovering a fire is to evacuate, pull a pull station and call 911; this message is clearly posted on the inside of every unit door and defined in the buildings fire safety plan. In addition, TCHC's Safety Guide educates tenants to either shelter in place or evacuate, never to extinguish a fire. There is no endorsement for the use of an extinguisher, however, there are various tips provided in the areas of safe cooking, smoking, candles etc. to prevent fires from occurring and instructions on how to handle small cooking fires.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Ontario Fire Code requires all firefighting equipment to be available and in working condition at all times. As such, it is TCHC's responsibility to ensure all required equipment is maintained, readily available and in working condition and that all life safety equipment meets code requirements. Locking of fire cabinets is one method to ensure TCHC is meeting that responsibility.