



*Everyone needs a home*

## HFS Shelters' Prohibited Items and Weapons Policy

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Homes First is committed to providing safe shelter for residents as well as a safe workspace for staff.

HFS shelters' staff will enforce the rules and policies related to weapons and prohibited items and materials. Toronto Police Services will be consulted in order to secure and dispose of any firearms or other prohibited weapons.

#### **Policy - During Admission:**

HFS staff may ask all incoming residents about any and all items that the resident intends to bring into the shelter.

Staff may ask all incoming residents during the intake process if they are bringing in alcohol, drugs, weapons, and/or items that may be used as weapons (e.g. penknife, tools, and scissors).

Staff may also ask to look inside residents' bags.

Staff may refuse admission to a resident if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the resident is in possession of a weapon or other prohibited items and they refuse to disclose the items in question. This must be recorded in the Communication Logbook as well as in SMIS.

#### **Policy - While Residents are Staying at the Shelter:**

If staff have reasonable grounds to believe that a resident is in possession of a weapon or other prohibited items - after recording it in the communication logbook, they may ask to look inside the residents' bags or through the residents personal belongings.

Staff may refer the resident to another shelter and/or restrict the resident if the resident refuses to answer the question or to show what they have brought into the shelter.

Staff do not, at any time, conduct body searches.

Staff will neither prohibit nor confiscate the following items:

- Lifesaving medications or medications that have been prescribed (narcotic or non-narcotic)
- Hormones that belong to transgender residents

- Safe injection equipment, safe crack smoking equipment, and/or safe sex products per Toronto Shelter Standards 10.2.1. These may include but are not limited to:
  - Syringes in various sizes and brands
  - Sterile water
  - Alcohol swabs
  - Tourniquets
  - Filters
  - Acidifiers
  - Cookers

HFS shelters are not abstinence-based. As such, staff will not dispose of alcohol but will offer to store it in the office in a locked cabinet. When the resident chooses to leave the shelter they will be given these items on the agreement that upon their return, they will again bring the item(s) to the office for safe storage

Any illegal drugs will be disposed of and will not be stored by staff.

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- As per Toronto Shelter Standards, 2016: Section 11.2.1(a).
  - Created on March 29, 2017.
  - Approved by HFS Governance and Nominating Committee on April 12, 2017; to be reviewed in 2022.
  - Approved by HFS Board of Directors on April 26, 2017.
  - The Policy applies to all of Homes First Shelters.