

July 3, 2019

Liz Hanson
MLA Whitehorse Centre
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

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Dear Ms. Hanson:

Re: Safety and Security Issues

Thank you for raising your concerns related to tenant safety at Yukon Housing Corporation's (YHC) downtown seniors' residences. Aging in place is a key priority for our government and we are striving to continually improve services for our senior citizens.

Safety and security is a very complex issue. The number of complaints and security reports received from tenants and our security services at these buildings has remained low over the past year. Without this information it has been challenging to understand the root causes of these problems. We have heard the concerns raised by tenants and are actively working toward improving the safety and security in our seniors' buildings. We have had tenant meetings in all of our seniors' buildings in the last 3.5 months and have heard from residents first hand about their concerns. We have also consulted other Government of Yukon departments and NGOs for advice.

From our conversations with tenants, departments and NGOs we have derived the following recommendations:

- Create more effective and holistic security solutions through security patrols, technological and physical improvements.
- Make it easy for seniors to access security responses through literature, training and on-going communications.
- Create a sense of community within the buildings so that people get to know their neighbors, develop friendships and therefore feel more safe and secure.

In April, as you noted, we increased security at 207 Alexander and 1190 Front Street. The goal was to stabilize any security issues and to investigate what the root causes maybe. For a short period there was 24/7 security, which was gradually reduced to 12 hours a day, then 8 hours, then security patrols; until we eventually resumed normal operations as the communities stabilized. Because of the complexity of the issue, we try different strategies to see what it most effective. Our practice for the last 15 months has been to temporarily increase security to stabilize situations that are brought to our attention.

FOBs are much like the cards you are referencing and can be reprogrammed or disconnected at any time. Our practice is to periodically replace all keys and reprogram all FOBs for common areas and entrances.

This was done last year for 600 College and this year at 207 Alexander. In addition, we are increasing the number of areas that require FOB access so that moving through the building without a FOB is more difficult. For example, we recently added FOB access to the stairwells, common rooms and secondary entrances at 207 Alexander. Alert buzzers with timers have been installed at the back and side doors at 207 Alexander and Greenwood, as well as some of our non-senior buildings.

We are exploring the idea of building superintendents and are currently consulting with other jurisdictions to understand the implementation and effectiveness of this approach.

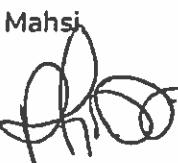
We are working toward installing security cameras in all of our multi-unit buildings. We do not have a centralized surveillance system, nor is that our intention at this time. Although many tenants would like to see security cameras installed, there are also many tenants that feel it is a breach of their privacy. Consistent with Government of Yukon policy, we are currently undertaking a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA). Once the PIA is complete, it will be submitted to the Information and Privacy Commissioner for advice and comment. When YHC receives feedback, we will decide accordingly if installing security cameras is something we will move forward with.

Part of feeling safe and secure in one's home is linked to having a sense of community. We are moving forward with a six month pilot project whereby a contracted Older Adult Engagement Specialist will engage with tenants at our seniors' buildings on a weekly basis. The desired outcome is to have a better sense of community and inclusion, as well as having someone for residents to talk with, who is not a YHC staff member, but can advise YHC on any issues that may need resolution.

We are also actively working with our communications team on how to best share information and training about how to prevent unauthorized people from accessing the building, how to report concerns, emergency procedures, and Safer Communities and Neighbourhood Program (SCAN) information, as you have mentioned.

We believe that the most impactful action that could be taken to improve security would be for tenants to be intentional about who they allow into the building and taking care to ensure that access is only granted to known guests who will respect the space. To complement this effort, when we become aware of a security concern within one of our buildings, we take measures to address the issue, including working closely with other organizations like SCAN and the RCMP if necessary.

Thank you for your inquiry. We are working to address security issues as stated above and continue to improve safety and security within YHC's buildings.

Mahsi

Pauline Frost

Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation