



March 27, 2020

To Akelius Canada Ltd.,

We are writing to you with urgent concerns about the vulnerability of Akelius tenants during the COVID-19 crisis.

Many Akelius tenants are faced with a sudden loss of income and can no longer afford rent payments. Urgent action is required to ensure housing security for these tenants while COVID-19 spreads, and to avoid further financial hardship.

Additionally, tenants are concerned about living conditions in Akelius properties and the company's response to the spread of COVID-19.

The company has signalled that it intends to continue construction projects, despite the fact that most tenants can no longer leave their units during construction hours.

While other buildings are installing hand sanitizer dispensers in common areas, Akelius has not yet taken this step in many of its buildings.

Finally, tenants have received limited and at times misleading information about how the company is responding to COVID-19. Likewise, Akelius has not committed to alerting tenants to the presence of confirmed COVID-19 cases within Akelius buildings.

To address these concerns, we urge Akelius to:

- Provide **rent relief to tenants that have lost their income** by deferring their rent for the month of April 2020.
- Temporarily **suspend unnecessary construction work** to ensure livable conditions in units while tenants practice social distancing.
- Install **hand sanitizer dispensers in common areas**, including entrances, lobbies, laundry rooms, and garbage facilities.
- Provide **clear, accurate, and detailed information** regarding positive cases of COVID-19 and steps taken to combat COVID-19 in buildings.

Below, we have included additional details on why these steps are so important to tenants and how these steps should be implemented.

We are requesting that you urgently implement these steps to ensure the health, safety, and security of Akelius tenants.

We also invite you to contact us to discuss other ways by which tenants may work with Akelius to mitigate the risks that COVID-19 poses to both Akelius tenants and Akelius Canada, Ltd.

Thank you,

The Akelius Tenants Network

# **HOW AKELIUS CAN ADDRESS THE COVID-19 CRISIS**

## **1. RENT RELIEF FOR TENANTS FACING ECONOMIC HARDSHIP**

The COVID-19 crisis has resulted in a sudden loss of income for thousands of Ontario residents. As a result, many Akelius tenants in Toronto can no longer afford to pay rent, or are struggling to balance housing costs against critical expenses such as groceries and medications. These tenants will not receive any income before their rent is due on April 1st. Landlords such as Akelius have a responsibility to help shoulder this burden.

We are urgently requesting that any Akelius tenant that has lost their income be able to defer their April 2020 rent payment.

The COVID-19 crisis has caused all of us to adjust to a new life situation on a daily basis. We are all in this together. We are respectfully and urgently requesting Akelius Canada play its part in implementing unprecedented solutions. We are asking Akelius Canada to do the right thing.

## **2. SUSPEND NON-ESSENTIAL RENOVATIONS & CONSTRUCTION**

Social distancing requires that tenants remain at home as much as possible. Due to school closures, parents have been tasked with homeschooling their children during the COVID-19 crisis, while many professionals have been forced to work from home.

In a recent email to tenants, Akelius said: "The government currently allows construction projects to continue. We expect some projects to slow down, due to the suspension of all inspection and permit services. Construction projects are evaluated on a case by case basis."

We feel that it is inappropriate to continue with renovations and construction projects at this time, with the exception of urgent and essential repairs. The noise, dust, and disruption caused by these projects result in severely reduced quality of living conditions, and place an undue burden on tenants caring for children or working from home. It is unfair and unreasonable to subject Akelius tenants to these conditions at a time when they cannot leave their units.

As such, we request that Akelius suspend all non-essential renovations and construction work until social distancing recommendations by both the Province of Ontario and City of Toronto are no longer in effect.

## **3. HAND SANITIZER DISPENSERS IN COMMON AREAS**

Despite the measures taken by tenants to enforce social distancing, tenants must share certain common areas with their neighbours. These include essential areas such as building entrances,

lobbies, elevators, laundry rooms, and garbage facilities, all of which contain high-touch surfaces.

While frequent disinfection can reduce the risk of viral transmission in these areas, surfaces such as door handles, elevator buttons, and garbage bin handles can quickly become recontaminated after disinfection. Individuals who touch these surfaces while contaminated may be unable to sanitize or wash their hands immediately. As a result, they may contaminate other surfaces or accidentally infect themselves with virus particles.

Installing hand sanitizer in common areas would limit these risks, as it would allow tenants to sanitize their hands immediately after coming into contact with high-touch surfaces.

As such, we request that Akelius install and maintain hand sanitizer dispensers next to all building entrances, and inside all building lobbies, laundry rooms, and garbage rooms, as well as any other essential common areas.

#### **4. CLEAR, ACCURATE & DETAILED COMMUNICATIONS**

So long as COVID-19 remains widespread, it's important that tenants receive the information they need to protect themselves and their neighbours. This includes information regarding the presence of COVID-19, as well as the health and safety protocols used by Akelius.

As such, we request that, when a confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs in an Akelius property, that tenants be informed by a public notice placed in the lobby.

Additionally, we request that Akelius provide tenants with clear, accurate, and detailed information regarding cleaning and disinfection protocols used in buildings, including:

- Which products are used for disinfection
- Which surfaces receive disinfection
- How often disinfection is performed
- When disinfection is scheduled

Furthermore, any products that are unproven to eliminate COVID-19 particles should not be portrayed as effective against the virus. While we do not wish to discourage the use of new detergents or antimicrobial products in buildings, notices regarding these products should not imply that they prevent or kill virus particles unless proven to do so.