



blackcommunity
HOUSING SERVICE (QLD.) LTD.

Fact sheet 4) Overcrowding

Black Community Housing Service (QLD) Ltd. (BCHS) is committed to providing accessible and sustainable tenancy management and assistance services. We strive to provide access to affordable housing that will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to position themselves to transition over time into long-term and mainstream housing markets. Providing support and assistance to clients in understanding and meeting their tenancy obligations is a subsequent priority, to support current and future housing, social and economic aspirations for Indigenous individuals and families.

What is overcrowding?

There is no single way of measuring or determining overcrowding in a household. In Australia, the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (the Standard) is the most commonly used method of measuring overcrowding.

The Standard specifies the number of bedrooms required in a dwelling based on the numbers, age, sex and relationships of household members.

The Standard states that:

- There should be no more than two persons per bedroom
- A household of one unattached individual may reasonably occupy a bed-sit (that is, have no bedroom)
- Parents or couples may share a bedroom
- Children under 5 years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom
- Children 5 years of age or over of the opposite sex should not share a bedroom
- Children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom
- Single household members aged 18 years and over should have a separate bedroom.

Essentially, if a household requires one more bedroom to meet the above standards, it can be considered as moderately overcrowded. If a household requires two or more additional bedrooms to meet the Standard, then it could be classified as being highly overcrowded.

This means that overcrowding refers to when you have more people occupying the household than the dwelling can reasonably accommodate.

What are some of the problems associated with overcrowding?

Overcrowding is a concern in Australia due to environmental, health and social risks that can result from too many people occupying a dwelling that is not adequately sized to meet the needs of all who are living there.

Some key issues that can result from overcrowding include but are not limited to the following:

- Too many people in the household can place increased pressure on household infrastructure that supports health and sanitation, for instance, sewerage pipes, washing facilities and heating.
- Overcrowding can be linked to ill health and stress. Too many people in the home can make disease transmission easier and increased stress possible, given the lack of private spaces.
- In addition to negative health and sanitary effects, overcrowding can have a negative impact on family relationships and contribute to poor educational and social outcomes.
- Large household populations can increase bill costs, due to constant use of household amenities by a number of occupants.
- If you have too many people in your home and you have not sought approval from BCHS through Coulson's Real Estate to have additional people living there, you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement.

What are some tips to avoid overcrowding?

The following are some tips to avoid overcrowding.

NOTE: It is important to remember that having too many people stay in your house as a tenant may lead to problems with your tenancy agreement.

- You are allowed to have people visit and stay with you (see Visitor factsheet), but if visitors decide to stay long-term, you need to consider if the dwelling has adequate room for them, as well as seek approval from BCHS through Coulson's Real Estate.
- You should notify Coulson's as soon as living circumstances change in your household and if you intend on having an additional occupant. Any additional occupants need to be approved to reside long-term in the dwelling. Your tenancy agency will consider how much room you have in your dwelling as part of the decision process. If you do not notify BCHS of a new person or people who have moved into your home, you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement.
- It is important to think about your household's health and wellbeing. Having too many people living in the property makes for easy transmission of illness. Your household infrastructure will also be overburdened. This can lead to diminished access to hygiene and

sanitation infrastructure (i.e. bathroom, washing machine) and overall reduce household member space and privacy.

- Remember to think about your bills. Having excess people in the house will increase use of utilities and thus the cost of bills.
- Remember, if your name is on the tenancy agreement, you are responsible for the conduct and behavior of other occupants and visitors. If deliberate damage is cause to the property, or if neighbours experience disturbance due to someone in the household's behaviour, then you will be held responsible and will be in breach of your tenancy agreement.
- If your household composition changes, make sure you promptly advise BCHS through Coulson's Real Estate. It is very important to be honest and transparent about who is staying in the home and seek approval before agreeing to allow a new resident to stay long-term.

I have some more questions

If you have any further questions or enquiries about overcrowding, please contact Coulson's Real Estate:

Email) Kerry@coulsonrealestate.com.au

Phone) 07 3372 9666

Note: Other tenancy factsheets are available via the BCHS website (www.blackcommunityhousingservice.org)