

# RISKY BUSINESS



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**Safe-T-Element® Helps Prevent Cooking Fires Before They Start**

In the last decade, Ontario averaged 6,046\* preventable home fires annually. The Office of the Ontario Fire Marshall has identified cooking equipment as the major source of these fires and home fire injuries, with average losses of \$23.1 million annually. The vast majority of these fires originate on the stovetop. In fact, 68% of all home cooking fires involve a cooking range, and more specifically, an electric range.

But some of the most shocking statistics reveal that 43.4% of all stovetop fires occur in multi-unit residences and that 63.2% of stovetop fires are in subsidized units. Not surprisingly, one of the

Ontario Fire Marshall's recommendations is to use public education and stovetop fire mitigation technologies in high-risk populations such as multi-family buildings, particularly affordable housing units.

As part of the SHSC Bulk Buy Program, we are offering ranges equipped with Safe-T-Elements®. The Safe-T-Element® cooking system is a patented product upgrade for electric coiled stovetops that is engineered to help prevent cooking fires.

*(continued on next page)*



## Safe-T-Element® Helps Prevent Cooking Fires Before They Start *(continued)*

Each Safe-T-Element® is an electronically controlled solid cover plate that is installed on top of your existing stovetop burner. The patented control unit inside the stove controls the temperature of the plate cover, allowing it to only reach a maximum of 350°C, when it automatically shuts the burner off. As the temperature cools, the burner is turned on again. This maintains a constant temperature for cooking, while not allowing the stovetop materials to ignite.

The Safe-T-Element® not only prevents cooking fires, it also reduces the amount of electricity

required to cook, leading to lower utility costs and saving you money.

To learn more about the bulk buy program and Safe-T-Elements® contact:

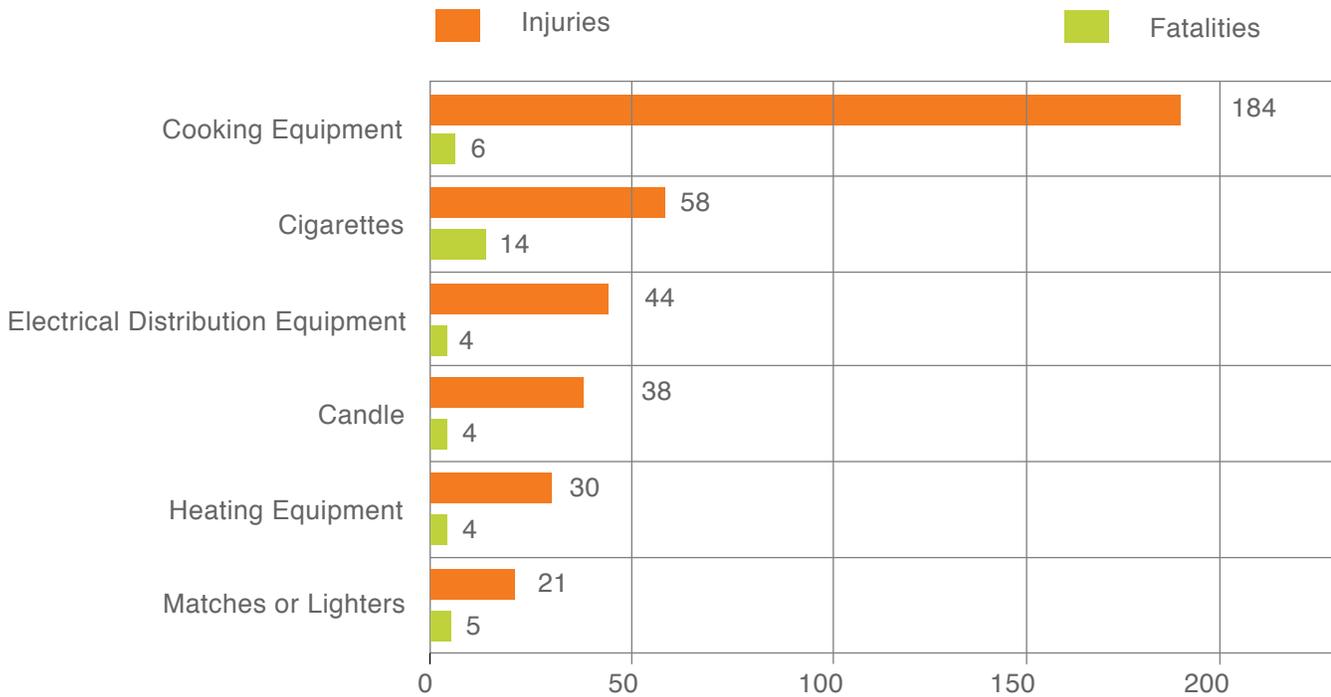
John Osmond, SHSC Customer Care  
1-866-268-4451 ext 237  
josmond@shscorp.ca

To learn more about how you can reduce your risk of fire contact SoHo Insurance Inc. at  
1-866-440-2492

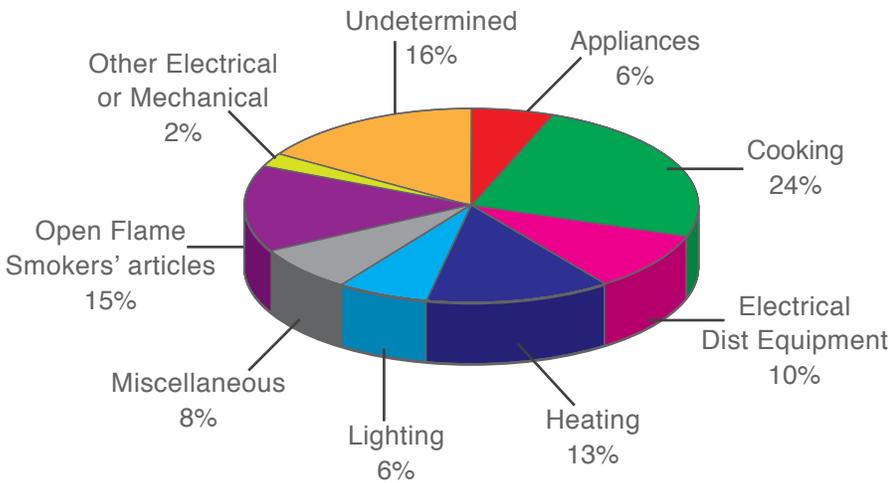
*\* All statistics: Reducing Residential Stovetop Fires in Ontario, Office of the Fire Marshall, Ontario, 2009.*

## Ontario preventable residential fires that have NOT been deliberately started, 2003 to 2007

Average number of injuries and fatalities per year



## Preventable Residential Fires—Ignition Source 1998 to 2007



A review of fire losses for the 10-year period between 1998 and 2007 revealed that Ontario averaged approximately 6,046 preventable home fires annually. During this period, cooking equipment was identified as the leading ignition source attributed to preventable home fires, averaging 1,494 cooking equipment fires annually or 24% of all preventable home fires.



## SoHo Tenant Insurance Offers Social Housing Residents Peace of Mind

As part of our commitment to provide comprehensive insurance services to the housing sector, SoHo Insurance Inc. developed a Tenant Insurance product for social housing residents in Ontario. For as little as 40 cents a day, tenants can protect themselves in case of fire, water damage or theft.

Many housing providers are now requiring that their tenants have Tenant Insurance as part of their rental agreement. Housing providers such as Victoria Park Community Homes and Toronto Community Housing have seen the benefits for their residents and for themselves as a corporation. When unforeseen accidents and problems have arisen, their tenants have been able to replace their belongings such as furniture and clothing and have been provided emergency accommodation in a local motel. Without SoHo Tenant Insurance, many

social housing tenants would have to rely on local charities to replace their belongings and would have to stay in a shelter until they could return home or find a new place to live.

Depending on their circumstances, many tenants receiving Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits may be able to have their shelter allowance cover the cost of this insurance. Advise your OW and ODSP tenants to contact their case workers to see if they are eligible.

If you or your tenants would like more information about SoHo Tenant Insurance, or if you would like to have us come out and talk to your tenants or your staff about insurance coverage, please contact SoHo Insurance Inc. at 1-866-440-2492.

## Fraudulent Claims Don't Pay

Imagine this scenario: A tenant's basement gets flooded, resulting in extensive water damage. He calls the insurance adjuster who, when he arrives, takes some pictures of the basement, as per his standard practice. The pictures show a TV, a stereo, and 5 bags of clothes that would all have to be replaced.

The next day a contractor arrives and he also takes pictures before starting the clean-up. His pictures tell a very different story than the adjuster's. Instead of one TV there are three, two stereos instead of one, and more than 40 bags of clothing!

When the adjuster and the contractor subsequently compared notes and photos, a common practice, it became evident the man had submitted a fraudulent claim. Not surprisingly, the insurance company then denied the claim.

### So why does this matter to you?

Such investigations cost time and money. In addition while adjusters and contractors typically work closely together, fraudulent claims that aren't caught end up costing more than their fair share of money. And when claims costs become high, insurance companies must increase premiums to compensate for losses. So we all end up paying.

### What can you do?

- **Report fraud if you know about it.** Fraud is a criminal act and someone else's fraudulent claim could affect your premiums.

- **Ensure that your claim accurately reflects the losses you have incurred.** If a discrepancy is identified, your claim may be denied and you may have trouble getting insurance coverage in the future. Knowingly making a fraudulent claim can result in being unable to find coverage altogether.
- **Take common-sense steps to protect yourself from false claims.** For example, to prevent false slip-and-fall claims perform regular property maintenance to reduce the risk of accidents happening, such as clearing debris from common areas, organizing snow and ice removal procedures and hiring contractors before winter. Be sure that you and your staff document your maintenance and risk management activities, including the date and time the activity was undertaken, its current status and the work that was done, if any, on everything that requires inspection.

To report insurance fraud contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

Confidential tip line:  
1-877-IBC-TIPS (1-877-422-8477)

Anonymous online form:  
[www.ibc.ca/en/Insurance\\_Crime/Report\\_Insurance\\_Crime.asp](http://www.ibc.ca/en/Insurance_Crime/Report_Insurance_Crime.asp)



## If It's Broken, Fix It

**B**y definition, accidents are unexpected incidents that catch us unaware. However, sometimes they can reveal problems that we didn't even know existed. Such revelations can sometimes make us fearful about who is accountable and what to do next. If an accident does happen on your property and the cause can be fixed, you do have a duty to make changes or repairs. You should not let the fear of a lawsuit or insurance claim by a third party prevent you from fixing the problem in a timely manner.

Making repairs after an accident does not mean that you are admitting liability; it simply means that you are taking steps to ensure that it does not happen again. Fixing something that is broken is not the same as accepting fault. The key is whether or not you knew it was broken before the incident.

Say someone fell on a broken step in a staircase that is almost never used. You inspect the staircase regularly and your records show that

the steps were fine at the last inspection. You did not know the step was broken, so you may not be found liable. But now that you are aware of the deficiency you need to fix it as soon as possible, or it is likely that you will be held liable if another accident happens as a result of the broken staircase.

## Steps to take after an accident

1. The first thing that you need to do is to secure the area to prevent anyone from using it. Next, take photos and witness statements that include contact information, and then call or email your insurance adjuster. Don't make any changes until your adjuster has had a chance to look at the area and document it in its current state.
2. You then need to write a report that includes the site details, the physical and environmental conditions at the time of the incident, and any other relevant information.

## Claims Reporting Contact Information

ClaimsPro has in place a 24/7 answering service for SHSC. All new claims should be directed to the following number:  
1-866-532-7315.

To fax in new claims, please fax to, 416-360-7172 (24 Hours). To report new claims by email, please send them to:  
claimsdesk@scm.ca.

Automobile claims should be reported to Aviva via telephone toll free at  
1-866-692-8482.

Claims reporting forms are available on our website at [www.shscorp.ca](http://www.shscorp.ca). Look under the Insurance section for View / Submit Claims.

You can also access information about your claims history from the SHSC site. Go to the Insurance section on [www.shscorp.ca](http://www.shscorp.ca) and click on View / Submit Claims.

You need a SHSC login to access this part of our site, so please contact us if you don't have a login id and password.

3. Point out what the corporation or its employees did correctly, particularly if it was something that helped prevent the incident. Do not include any information on disciplinary action that you took with employees, even if you did, and do not include anything that could be interpreted as speculation. Include only the verifiable facts associated with the incident, the implementation of improvements or enhancements, and the monitoring of the outcomes of those enhancements.
4. In your report, make reference to any existing policies that apply to the situation and show how practices have been reviewed and possibly changed to prevent a recurrence. It is also

critical to have and document periodic spot-checks to make sure that any new procedures or changes in policy are working properly.

All of these actions will assist you in demonstrating a thorough response and a commitment to make changes that will prevent a similar incident from happening in the future, without admitting any liability.

*For more tips on how you can manage risk and other insurance-related topics, visit the SHSC blog at <http://blog.shscorp.ca>*



## Think carefully before signing Proof of Loss Forms

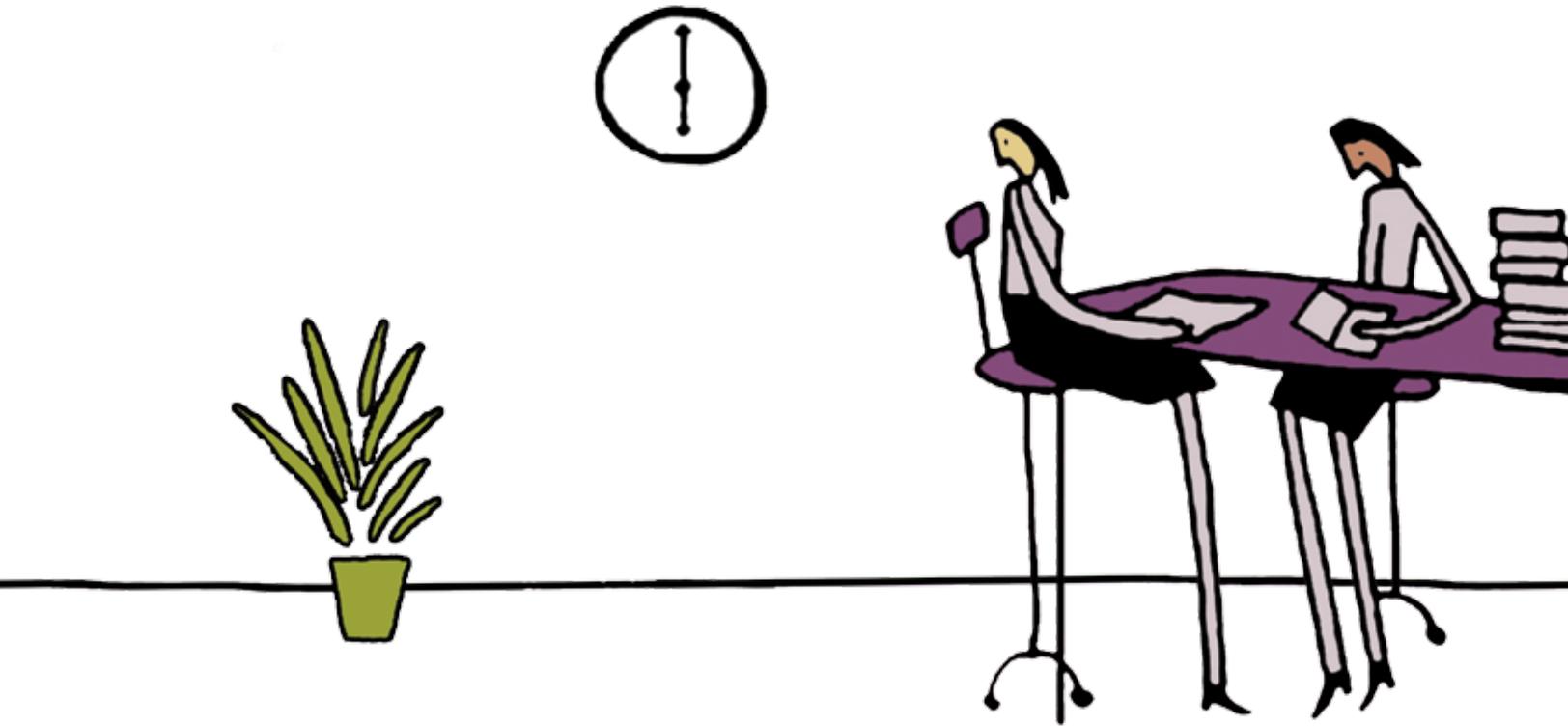
When you make a claim for property damage, your first priority is restoring your building so your tenants can move back in. But there are many steps involved in resolving all of the financial aspects of your claim – so that both you and the insurance company are satisfied that all repairs are made to your specifications and their obligations to you under the insurance policy have been met. One of the least understood steps in the claims process is the Proof of Loss form, what to do when you get one and when you should sign it.

There are two kinds of Proof of Loss forms – **Interim** and **Final**.

Depending on the size of the claim and extent of repairs required, you may first be asked to sign an Interim Proof of Loss form. This document enables the insurer to make progress payments

to the contractor or reimburse you for emergency repairs. If you are unhappy with the quality of the contractor's work completed up to that point, you should contact SHSC before signing the Interim Proof of Loss. We will work with the broker, insurer and adjuster on your behalf to rectify any outstanding issues or deficiencies and get your project back on track.

The Final Proof of Loss form is usually sent at the close of a claim. At that point the contractor has finished his work, all outstanding invoices have been submitted, you have received your lost rents and your tenants have moved back into their units. The Proof of Loss form will show the final cost of your claim including your deductible, all amounts paid to contractors, all unpaid invoices, and any funds paid to reimburse you for your losses including rents or common area fixtures

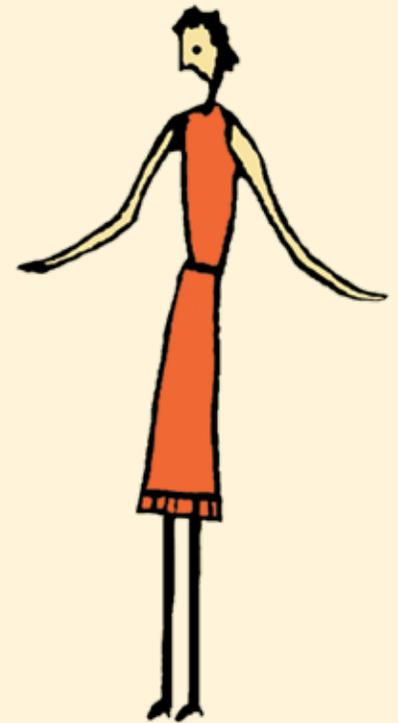
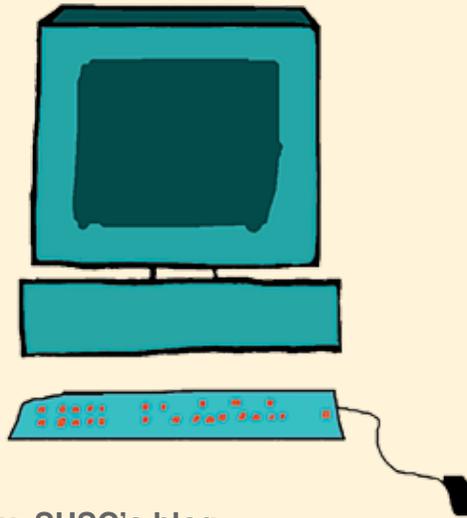


and furnishings. **Do not sign this form before you are fully satisfied with the repairs, and have confirmed that all paid and outstanding amounts are included in the total.** As with the Interim Proof of Loss form, when you sign the Final Proof of Loss is also critically important – it has significant legal implications.

When you sign the Final Proof of Loss a 60-day limitation period starts. This is important because under the Insurance Act the insurance company must finish paying any outstanding amounts owed on the claim during this 60-day period or must reject the Proof of Loss form because they don't agree with the amount being claimed. If it is rejected, the 60-day limitation period stops until a new settlement is negotiated and a revised Final Proof of Loss is signed.

If you are unsure about signing the form, or about your rights and responsibilities under the insurance policy terms and conditions, call SHSC before signing any Proofs of Loss. Once the insurance company closes the claim our ability to help you renegotiate is gone as signing the Proof of Loss certifies that you are satisfied with the final amount offered by the insurer and absolves the insurance company of any further responsibility to pay your claim.

Like any business or legal document, you should never sign something that you don't agree with or understand. If you have any questions about your claim, don't hesitate to call SHSC. We're here to help!



## Introducing Social Housing Today: SHSC's blog

This fall, SHSC launched [Social Housing Today](#), a web log or 'blog' to help professionals in the sector keep up-to-date on the latest developments. To date, Social Housing Today has published more than 10 entries on topics that include insurance and risk management information for property owners and managers, the Social Housing Renovation and Retrofit Program (SHRRP) and energy conservation. Recent posts relating to insurance include: getting the right insurance to support your SHRRP project; understanding insurance premiums; and safety tips for the holiday season.

A blog is a website that allows users to reflect, share opinions, and discuss various topics in the form of an online journal. It also allows readers to comment on posts and discuss topics among themselves. Visitors to Social Housing Today can discuss entries with each other and interact

informally with a wide range of subject matter experts at SHSC, whose knowledge spans the sector. In addition to being able to access the blog via our website, users can get to it by using popular social networking sites like LinkedIn and Facebook.

Blogs are increasingly used by leading organizations as a means of communicating more informally than through traditional methods, like reports, marketing materials and press releases. For SHSC, using platforms like blogs is part of our commitment to explore online learning and social networking technologies outlined in our 2009-2011 strategic plan. It will help build capacity in the sector by engaging youth and encouraging collaboration with like-minded people and organizations.

Join the conversation and visit the Social Housing Today blog at: <http://blog.shscorp.ca/>

## SHSC Group Insurance Update

**A**fter six consecutive years of premium decreases, in 2009 the SHSC Group Insurance Program experienced its first property premium increase. This increase happened because the SHSC Group Insurance Program has incurred several large property claims over the last two years. Since insurance premium pricing is very sensitive to claims experience, these claims have negatively affected the Group Program.

While the overall group premium rate has gone up, the increase is not being shared equally across the group. Providers with poor property claims histories are paying more of the increase than providers with good experience.

The best way to prevent premium increases is to prevent claims. Regularly inspect your property for hazards, document all of your maintenance and inspection activities, and educate your tenants about risk management. A high number of claims occur as a direct result of tenant activity.

SHSC also offers discounts on SHSC Training workshops, many of which are specifically tailored to help housing providers manage risk.

In spite of the premium increase, we were able to improve several aspects of our insurance coverage including:

- Higher aggregate limits for liability claims
- Individual provider policy aggregate limits for directors and officers liability claims
- Increased builders' risk coverage for repairs and alterations to \$1 Million per project

To learn more about these insurance program improvements, or if you have questions about this year's premium increase, risk management, or your coverage, please contact SoHo Insurance Inc. at 1-866-440-2492

### What's happening...

To ensure we are giving you the best service at the best possible price SHSC, as the group insurance program manager, routinely issues Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for various services provided through the program. In 2009 we issued an RFP for claims adjusting services.

After evaluating all of the proposals against industry standards of service, claims management and tracking, and fair and competitive rates, we have decided to stay with our existing adjuster ClaimsPro (formerly called SCM Adjusters).

Since we are keeping the same adjuster, nothing has changed for you. Housing providers will file claims the same way as before, using the same forms and contact information.

Please refer to page 7 for full contact information.

- Reintroduction of coverage of mould directly caused by an insured peril and coverage for property damage caused by drug activities

# RISKY BUSINESS

## Contact us

- For more information on the SHSC Group Insurance Program, including risk management, insurance or advocacy, contact:

**Daryl Carre:**

416-360-0761 ext 244  
Toll free 1-866-440-2492  
[dcarre@shscorp.ca](mailto:dcarre@shscorp.ca)

**Rachel Magee**

416-360-0761 ext 215  
Toll free 1-866-440-2492  
[rmagee@sohoinurance.ca](mailto:rmagee@sohoinurance.ca)

- For more information on coverage, limits or deductibles, contact Aon Reed Stenhouse, the program broker:

**Paul Speck:**

416-868-5560  
Toll free 1-800-711-7511  
[paul.speck@aon.ca](mailto:paul.speck@aon.ca)

**Zobeeda Rouch:**

416-868-5764  
Toll free 1-800-711-7511  
[zobeeda.rouch@aon.ca](mailto:zobeeda.rouch@aon.ca)

- Reporting Claims and Incidents: Please report all claims and incidents, whether self- or externally-adjusted, to ClaimsPro at 1-866-532-7315



THE BUSINESS OF HOUSING

## About the SHSC Group Insurance Program

The SHSC Group Insurance is one of the largest in North America and offers competitive prices and coverage tailored specifically for social housing providers. Our program operates from a single master insurance policy administered by SHSC. The program is extremely flexible and allows our customers to choose their own coverage types, limits and deductibles.

The Social Housing Services Corporation is a non-profit corporation led by social housing representatives who are committed to providing Ontario's housing providers and municipal service managers with programs that add significant value to their operations. SHSC provides services that empower housing providers to develop safe and affordable homes and vibrant communities. We use our expertise to develop and deliver investment, insurance, natural gas purchasing, research, training and energy management programs.

For more information on SHSC and our programs, visit: [www.shscorp.ca](http://www.shscorp.ca), call: 1-866-268-4451/416-594-9325, or email: [feedback@shscorp.ca](mailto:feedback@shscorp.ca).

Risky Business is published by the Social Housing Services Corporation for participants in the SHSC Group Insurance program. Your comments are welcome. Please contact Jeff Herrle at [jherrle@shscorp.ca](mailto:jherrle@shscorp.ca).



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