

# Recovery Housing Complaints Procedure



Department of  
Mental Health &  
Addiction Services

Effective January 1, 2025

When the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Housing Team receives a complaint about a recovery housing residence (RHR), they collect information about the residence that is the subject of the complaint, who submitted the complaint (the “complainant”), and when the complaint was submitted. Among the information they attempt to gather is the full address of the residence; the name and contact information for the operator of residence; the complainant’s name and status (e.g., ADAMHS board employee, city or other local government employee, RHR resident, RHR staff member, neighbor, etc.), the complainant’s mailing address, email address, and telephone number; and the date the complaint was received by the Housing Team. The Housing Team documents this information in a tracking spreadsheet or system along with a summary of the complaint. The Housing Team then notifies the complainant (by email, regular mail, or phone, in that order of preference) that the complaint was received and documents in the tracking spreadsheet or system the method used to notify the complainant.

The Housing Team will check the RHR registry (<https://rhsearch.mha.ohio.gov/>) to see if the residence is accredited or, if newer (in operation less than 18 months), actively engaged in efforts to obtain accreditation.

- If the RHR is Ohio Recovery Housing (ORH)-certified or in the process of attaining ORH certification, the Housing Team will forward the complaint to ORH. OhioMHAS will then notify the complainant in writing or by telephone that the complaint has been forwarded to ORH and that ORH is responsible for the investigation. OhioMHAS will record how and when it notified the complainant.
- If the RHR is chartered by Oxford House or is in the process of attaining an Oxford House charter, the same process above is followed. OhioMHAS will record how and when it notified the complainant.
- If the RHR is accredited by CARF International, OhioMHAS will notify the complainant in writing or by telephone that they need to submit their concern directly to CARF via this website: [CARF International Contact](#). OhioMHAS will record the date and method of referral in the complaint tracking spreadsheet or system.
- If the RHR is not in the RHR registry, the Housing Team will determine if the residence is, in fact, an RHR as defined in R.C. 5119.01 or operating a different type of housing. The Housing Team may need to visit the residence to make this determination and, if it does, will contact the local ADAMHS board and OhioMHAS regional lead and offer them the opportunity to accompany the Housing Team on the visit.

**If the residence is not in the RHR registry and is an RHR**, the Housing Team will send a letter to the RHR reminding of the requirement to attain accreditation within 60 days, and document in the complaint tracking spreadsheet or system the date and method by which the letter was sent (i.e., email, regular mail, or

other method). Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Housing Team will determine if the complaint should be reviewed by a local law enforcement agency, local board of health, city code enforcement office, etc., contact that entity, and forward the complaint to the entity. The Housing Team will then notify the complainant of its actions.

- If the RHR does not receive accreditation within 60 days, OhioMHAS may request that the Attorney General's Office (AGO) seek a court order to close the RHR as authorized by R.C. 5119.392.
- If the complaint is forwarded to another entity to review, OhioMHAS will notify the complainant of that fact and specify how the complainant may contact the other entity for follow-up.

The Housing Team will maintain records in the complaint tracking spreadsheet or system regarding the date and method of any referrals and notifications with other entities and the complainant.

**If the residence is not an RHR**, the Housing Team will determine whether the complaint should be reviewed by another entity, such as another state agency, a local board of health, or a local law enforcement agency. If such an entity is identified, OhioMHAS contacts the entity and forwards the complaint to it. OhioMHAS also notifies the complainant (either in writing or by telephone) that this is not an RHR and that the complaint information has been forwarded to another entity. If OhioMHAS does not identify another appropriate entity to review the complaint, the complaint is closed.

The Housing Team maintains a record in the complaint tracking spreadsheet or system when both types of the foregoing correspondence were sent, the dates they were sent, and the methods of submission.

Oxford House and ORH are responsible for updating the RHR registry with substantiated complaints against RHRs that they operate, and OhioMHAS is responsible for adding substantiated complaints against CARF-accredited residences. The Housing Team will then review the complaint and determine the next steps:

1. If complaint is substantiated but the RHR is working on a plan of correction with the accreditation organization, no further action is needed.
2. If the RHR does not complete the plan of correction in the allotted time and their certification or charter is revoked, the OhioMHAS Director may request that the Attorney General's Office seek an injunction to close the residence pursuant to R.C. 5119.392.
3. If the complaint is substantiated and the accreditation organization revokes the RHR's certification or charter without an opportunity to pursue a plan of correction due the egregious nature of the conduct, the OhioMHAS Director may request that the Attorney General's Office seek an injunction to close the residence pursuant to R.C. 5119.392.

Following resolution of a complaint, the contractor (ORH or Oxford House) updates the RHR Registry.

**If an RHR is operating without appropriate accreditation**, the OhioMHAS Director may request, in writing, that the Ohio Attorney General's Office petition the court of common pleas in the county in which the RHR is located for an order enjoining the individual or government from operating (i.e., closing) the RHR. (R.C. 5119.392(B).)

The circumstances under which a person or government entity may be operating an RHR without appropriate accreditation include:

- When an RHR has failed to comply with OhioMHAS's request that the RHR obtain accreditation within 60 days.
- When an RHR has had its accreditation permanently revoked by the appropriate accrediting organization.
- When an RHR has allowed its accreditation to lapse or had its certification denied or suspended, and the RHR has not had its accreditation reinstated or issued within the 90-day period specified by OhioMHAS.

Failure of a person or government entity to file a registration form with OhioMHAS when required to do so under R.C. 5119.391 also constitutes grounds for which the OhioMHAS Director may seek an injunction.

The Housing Team will maintain a record, in the complaint tracking spreadsheet or system, whenever the OhioMHAS Director has made either type of written request to the Ohio Attorney General's Office as described above.

### **Referring matters to local law enforcement**

Any time OhioMHAS receives credible information from a complainant or any other person that criminal activity is or may be occurring in an RHR, the Housing Team will make its best effort to identify the local law enforcement agency with likely jurisdiction and notify that agency in writing (preferable) or by telephone of the information received. The Housing Team will maintain a record, in the complaint tracking spreadsheet or system, whenever such a notification has been made.

