



Log Books and Incident Reports

This document describes how front desk staff, other front line staff, and managers should record and communicate regarding incidents that occur in the building. The Log Book is used to record all activities, and the incident report is used to document activities that violate house rules or other serious incidents.

Log Book

The Log Book is a vital tool for property management. The Log Book can be an important record, which can be used in legal proceedings by or against tenants and/or the housing owner. Staff should use the Log Book to record activity they observe and/or in which they participate. The Log Book should not be used to record opinions or inferences, only observable incidents. Note the following examples of incidents, behavior and/or observations that staff should be trained to note and report:

- Visits by police, medical, fire or Sheriff's Department personnel, child and adult protective-service personnel, Parole Officers, and other authorities.
- Any physical or verbal altercation occurring on the premises.
- Any maintenance needs on the premises.
- Visits by vendors and contractors.
- The pulse of the building - at least once each hour, site staff should note the level of activity and any unusual or noteworthy circumstances as observed from the Front Lobby/Desk Station.

Each desk clerk should review the log when beginning a shift, to be better prepared for duty. Building managers should review the Log Book on a daily basis at a minimum.

Incident Reports

On a daily basis, supportive housing managers should review all building incident reports as soon as possible, usually after completion of building rounds. A copy of all incident reports should go directly to the designated support services staff, so that they can outreach and try to engage the tenant(s) involved.

Guidelines for Preparing an Incident Report

An incident report provides a description of certain unusual or significant events that should be documented to ensure appropriate management of the property. The building manager should be the lead staff person responsible to follow-up on incident report(s). The manager should ensure the following:

Note: This document is included within the *Housing Operations* section of CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, which is available at www.csh.org/toolkit2. This document has been adapted from CSH's *Supportive Housing Property Management Operations Manual*, which is available at www.csh.org/publications.

- All supportive housing staff should be required to follow agency guidelines and applicable laws and regulations regarding confidentiality and the tenants' right to privacy. Staff should be encouraged to reach-up, and seek advice and direction regarding confidentiality and privacy guidelines from the manager and/or director of property management.
- The housing owner should also note the limits of their liability in following up Incident Reports. As noted, building management may request that the tenant who initially filed an anonymous report to subsequently report on the record (for example: by signing the Incident Report form; by agreeing to testify in legal proceedings to terminate tenancy), for effective response to the reported lease violence and/or criminal activity. The rental agreement should clearly define limits of landlord liability in enforcing all of the terms of the agreement. On-site support services staff should work with property management staff to help tenants learn more about limits of owner liability and the legal processes owners must adhere to in addressing lease violations and/or criminal activity reported by tenants, visitors and staff on Incident Reports and/or on Tenant Complaint forms.
- Tenants should be encouraged to file incident reports or tenant complaint forms, to report violations of the leasing agreement/house-rules and/or any activity that jeopardizes building safety. Tenants should be allowed to file anonymous reports. However, tenants should also be advised that follow-through by the owner may require that the reporter goes on record in reporting the incident, activity and/or violation of the leasing agreement/house rules.
- Incident reports must be reviewed for accuracy and evidence of lease violations. Appropriate follow-up must also be determined.
- Tenants should have the opportunity to explain or rebut the incident report, if they have been accused of violating a house rule or lease provision.

When managers determine that a house rule/lease violation occurred, they should promptly send the offending tenant written notice informing him or her of the violation, requesting compliance with the lease, and requesting a meeting with the tenant (and/or member(s) of the household if applicable) to discuss the incident.

Once the manager investigates the incident(s), the goal of intervention and follow up should be to help the tenant achieve compliance with the terms of the rental agreement/house rules. Intervention may result in initiation of termination procedures for serious matters. Managers should encourage the tenant to speak with them directly, and should follow up with a memo to the tenant, reviewing the conversation and any agreements reached. All follow-up documents should be placed in the tenants file, attached to the incident report.

Supportive housing managers should exercise legal remedy to immediately address behavior that jeopardizes the safety and security of tenants and staff. Legal remedy may include contacting local law enforcement; initiating procedures to terminate the rental agreement; contacting Child Protective Services (CPS) or Adult Protective Services (APS).

Depending upon the nature and/or severity of the lease violation or offensive behavior, supportive housing property managers should also:

- *Involve support services* in addressing violation(s) of the rental agreement. Think of supportive services as a resource to help the tenant, not as punishment to the tenant or as an impediment to good building management.
- *Emphasize collaboration.* The support services team can be effective allies to the property management staff, and to the tenant. Managers should be encouraged to work with the support service team on a joint approach to address lease violations and/or community concerns. Property management and supportive services staff should discuss follow-up to incident reports at weekly site coordination meetings.