



Dispute Resolution Services

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Residential Tenancy Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

DECISION

Dispute Codes

OPR

Introduction

This matter proceeded by way of an *ex parte* Direct Request Proceeding, pursuant to section 55(4) of the *Residential Tenancy Act* (the "*Act*"), and dealt with an Application for Dispute Resolution by the landlord for an Order of Possession based on unpaid rent.

The landlord submitted a signed Proof of Service of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding which declares that on July 22, 2015, the landlord served the tenant with the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding via registered mail. The landlord provided a copy of the Canada Post Customer Receipt containing the Tracking Number associated with this mailing.

Issue(s) to be Decided

Is the landlord entitled to an Order of Possession for unpaid rent pursuant to sections 46 and 55 of the *Act*?

Background and Evidence

The landlord submitted the following evidentiary material:

- A copy of the Proof of Service of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding served to the tenant;
- A copy of a residential tenancy agreement which was signed by the landlord and the tenant on November 1, 2014, indicating a monthly rent of \$1,190.00 due on the first day of the month for a tenancy commencing on November 1, 2014;
- A Monetary Order Worksheet showing the rent owing during the portion of this tenancy in question, on which the landlord establishes a monetary claim in the amount of \$1,190.00 for outstanding rent owing for July 2015;
- A copy of a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent (the Notice) dated July 7, 2015, which the landlord states was served to the tenant on July 8, 2015, for \$1,190.00 in unpaid rent due on July 1, 2015, with a stated effective vacancy date of July 17, 2015; and

- A copy of the Proof of Service of the Notice on which the landlord states the Notice was served to the tenant by way of registered mail on July 8, 2015. The landlord provided a copy of the Canada Post Customer Receipt containing the Tracking Number to confirm this mailing.

The Notice restates section 46(4) of the Act which provides that the tenant had five days to pay the rent in full or apply for Dispute Resolution or the tenancy would end on the effective date of the Notice. The tenant did not apply to dispute the Notice within five days from the date of service and the landlord alleged that the tenant did not pay the rental arrears.

Analysis

Direct Request proceedings are *ex parte* proceedings. In an *ex parte* proceeding, the opposing party is not invited to participate in the hearing or make any submissions. As there is no ability for the tenants to participate, there is a much higher burden placed on landlords in these types of proceedings than in a participatory hearing. This higher burden protects the procedural rights of the excluded party and ensures that the natural justice requirements of the Residential Tenancy Branch are satisfied.

In this type of matter, the landlord must prove they served the tenant with the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding, the Notice, and all related documents with respect to the Direct Request process, in accordance with the Act and Policy Guidelines. In an *ex parte* Direct Request Proceeding, the onus is on the landlord to ensure that all submitted evidentiary material is in accordance with the prescribed criteria and does not lend itself to ambiguity or give rise to issues that may need further clarification beyond the purview of a Direct Request Proceeding. If the landlord cannot establish that all documents meet the standard necessary to proceed via the Direct Request Proceeding, the application may be found to have deficiencies that necessitate a participatory hearing, or, in the alternative, the application may be dismissed.

I have reviewed all documentary evidence provided by the landlord. Section 89 of the *Act* provides the approved methods by which an application for dispute resolution can be served. Section 89 provides, in part, as follows:

Special rules for certain documents

89 (1) An application for dispute resolution or a decision of the director to proceed with a review under Division 2 of Part 5, when required to be given to one party by another, must be given in one of the following ways:

- (a) by leaving a copy with the person;
- (b) if the person is a landlord, by leaving a copy with an agent of the landlord;

(c) by sending a copy by registered mail to the address at which the person resides or, if the person is a landlord, to the address at which the person carries on business as a landlord;

(d) if the person is a tenant, by sending a copy by registered mail to a forwarding address provided by the tenant;

(e) as ordered by the director under section 71 (1) [*director's orders: delivery and service of documents*].

(2) An application by a landlord under section 55 [*order of possession for the landlord*], 56 [*application for order ending tenancy early*] or 56.1 [*order of possession: tenancy frustrated*] must be given to the tenant in one of the following ways:

(a) by leaving a copy with the tenant;

(b) by sending a copy by registered mail to the address at which the tenant resides;

(c) by leaving a copy at the tenant's residence with an adult who apparently resides with the tenant;

(d) by attaching a copy to a door or other conspicuous place at the address at which the tenant resides;

(e) as ordered by the director under section 71 (1) [*director's orders: delivery and service of documents*].

(3) A notice under section 94.21 [*notice of administrative penalty*] must be given in a manner referred to in subsection (1).

In the Direct Request process, the landlord must prove they served the tenant with the Notice of Direct Request proceeding with all the required inclusions as indicated on the Notice as per subsections 89(1) and (2) of the *Act*, which permit service "by sending a copy by registered mail to the address at which the person resides or, if the person is a landlord, to the address at which the person carries on business as a landlord." The definition of registered mail is set out in section 1 of the *Act* as "any method of mail delivery provided by Canada Post for which confirmation of delivery to a named person is available."

I find that the tracking number provided by the landlord on the Proof of Service Notice of Direct Request Proceeding form is for an item sent by Canada Post's Xpress Post service, which may or may not require a signature from the intended recipient to confirm delivery of the document to the person named as the respondent. In this case, Canada Post's Online Tracking System shows that a signature was not received from the intended recipient for the delivery of this Xpress Post mailing and, as such, this mailing does not meet the definition of registered mail as defined under the *Act*. I further find that there is no evidence before me that establishes that the landlord was given leave to serve the Direct Request Proceeding documents in an alternate fashion as ordered by a delegate of the director of the Residential Tenancy Branch in accordance with sections 89(1)(e) or 89(2)(e) of the *Act*.

Since I find that the landlord has not served the tenant with notice of this application in accordance with section 89 of the *Act*, I dismiss the landlord's application for an Order of Possession based on unpaid rent with leave to reapply.

On the Proof of Service of the Notice form, the landlord indicates that the Notice was served by way of registered mail. However, I find that the tracking number provided by the landlord as evidence for service of the Notice is for an item sent by Canada Post's Xpress Post service, which may or may not require a signature from the intended recipient to confirm delivery of the document to the person named as the respondent. In this case, Canada Post's Online Tracking System shows that a signature was not received from the intended recipient for the delivery of this Xpress Post mailing and, as such, this mailing does not meet the definition of registered mail as defined under the *Act*.

Policy Guideline #39 provides information with respect to the framework of the Direct Request process. The guideline provides information with respect to the approved methods of service available to the landlord to serve the Notice to a tenant in accordance with the Direct Request process. Within the purview of the Direct Request process, service of the Notice via mail other than registered mail is not permitted. However, a Notice for unpaid rent can be served by way of ordinary mail, or in the manner in which the July 7, 2015 was served to the tenant, via Xpress Post service, if the landlord subsequently wishes to pursue an Order of possession based on the Notice by way of the regular dispute resolution process via a participatory hearing.

It remains open to the landlord to reapply for dispute resolution via the Direct Request process if all requirements for an application for dispute resolution via Direct Request, as outlined in Policy Guideline #39, can be met, or, in the alternative, the landlord may wish to submit an application for dispute resolution to be heard via a participatory hearing. Given the manner in which the Notice was served to the tenant, the landlord may wish to submit an application for dispute resolution to be heard via a participatory hearing, or the landlord may serve a new Notice for unpaid rent to the tenant if the landlord so wishes.

Conclusion

The landlord's application is dismissed with leave to reapply.

This decision is made on authority delegated to me by the Director of the Residential Tenancy Branch under Section 9.1(1) of the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

Dated: July 24, 2015

Residential Tenancy Branch

