



Dispute Resolution Services

Page: 1

Residential Tenancy Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

DECISION

Dispute Codes OPR, MNR

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 and a monetary Order.

The landlord submitted two signed Proof of Service of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding forms which declare that on March 29, 2016, the landlord served each of the above-named tenants 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*?

Is the landlord entitled to monetary compensation for unpaid rent pursuant to section 67 of the *Act*?

Background and Evidence

The landlord submitted the following evidentiary material:

- Two copies of the Proof of Service of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding served to the tenants;

- A copy of a residential tenancy agreement which was signed by the landlord and the tenants on January 11, 2016, indicating a monthly rent of \$1,200.00 due on the first day of the month for a tenancy commencing on January 25, 2016;
- 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 \$1,200.00 for outstanding rent, comprised of the balance of unpaid rent owing for the month of March 2016;
- A copy of a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent (the Notice) dated March 11, 2016, which the landlord states was served to the tenants on March 14, 2016, for \$1,200.00 in unpaid rent due on March 01, 2016, with a stated effective vacancy date of March 24, 2016; and
- A copy of the Proof of Service of the Notice showing that the landlord served the Notice to the tenants by way of posting it to the door of the rental unit at 10:30 AM on March 14, 2016. The Proof of Service form establishes that the service was witnessed by "YX" and a signature for "YX" is included on the form.

The Notice restates section 46(4) of the Act which provides that the tenants 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 tenants did not apply to dispute the Notice within five days from the date of service and the landlord alleged that the tenants 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*].

In the Direct Request process, the landlord must prove they served each 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.”

On the Proof of Service of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding forms, the landlord indicates that each tenant was served the Direct Request Proceeding documents by way of registered mail. If service of the Direct Request Proceeding documents is carried out in this manner, the landlord must provide evidentiary material, in the form of a Canada Post Registered Mail Receipt which includes the tracking number, and the name of the person to whom the registered mailed item was addressed, along with the destination address to which the mailed item is to be delivered, as proof of service via registered mail.

Although the landlord has provided two signed Proof of Service of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding forms which declare that on March 29, 2016, the landlord served each of the above-named tenants with the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding via registered mail, I find that the landlord has provided only one copy of a Canada Post customer receipt containing the tracking number associated with this mailing. Although there are two copies of a receipt provided, the landlord has provided a duplicate copy of the same Canada Post customer receipt, and the information contained on the receipt, such as the tracking number, and other identifiable information, demonstrates that although there are two copies of the receipt, there is actually only one Canada Post customer receipt containing the same tracking number associated with one mailed item.

The landlord has provided only one Canada Post Mail receipt which does not contain the name of the individual to whom the mailed item was sent, nor the address to which the mailed item was to be delivered. In the absence of this supporting information, I am unable to determine or infer within the limited scope of the Direct Request process, which of the two respondent tenants were the intended recipients of the mailed item.

I further 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. On the Canada Post website, the tracking number associated with this Xpress Post mailing provides information which demonstrates that a signature option for confirmation of delivery was not required.

Based on the evidentiary material provided by the landlord, I find that the landlord has not demonstrated that a signature was 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*.

Therefore, I find that the landlord has not proven service of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding to either respondent tenants in accordance with the *Act*. Since I find that the landlord has not served either 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 and a monetary Order with leave to reapply.

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: March 31, 2016

Residential Tenancy Branch