



Dispute Resolution Services

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Residential Tenancy Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

DECISION

Dispute Codes OPR-DR

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 landlords for an Order of Possession based on unpaid rent.

The landlords provided two Canada Post Registered Mail Customer Receipts containing tracking numbers, as well as two Canada Post transaction receipts.

Issue(s) to be Decided

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

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 landlords 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 relevant documentary evidence provided by the landlords. 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 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.”

Under the provisions of Policy Guideline #39 – Direct Requests, the onus is on the landlord to serve the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding in a manner approved under section 89 of the *Act*. Section 89 of the *Act* does permit a respondent to be served the Direct Request Proceeding documents by way of registered mail.

However, Policy Guideline #39 states that the landlord must complete and submit the Proof of Service Notice of Direct Request Proceeding form (form RTB-44) that was included as part of the landlords’ Direct Request package. Policy Guideline #39 provides, in part, the following:

After the Notice of Dispute Resolution Proceeding Package has been served to the tenant(s), the landlord must complete and submit to the Residential Tenancy Branch a Proof of Service Notice of Direct Request Proceeding (form RTB-44) for each tenant served.

Although the landlords have attempted to prove service of the documents by providing copies of two Canada Post Registered Mail tickets and transaction receipts (all of these documents include tracking numbers), I find that within the Direct Request Process, the landlord remains obligated to prove service of the documents by completing the Proof of Service Notice of Direct Request Proceeding form (form RTB-44) that was included as part of the landlords’ Direct Request package.

As the landlords have not completed and submitted the Proof of Service Notice of Direct Request Proceeding form as required under the provisions of Policy Guideline #39, I find that the landlords have not sufficiently established that the Direct Request Proceeding documents have been served in accordance with the *Act* and Policy Guideline #39, and further find that I am not able to confirm service of the Notice of Direct Request to the tenants, which is a requirement of the Direct Request process.

I further find that there is no evidence before me that establishes that the landlords were 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*.

As previously indicated, in an ex parte Direct Request Proceeding, the onus is on the applicant 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. I find that there are deficiencies with this application, as outlined above, which cannot be clarified by way of the Direct Request Proceeding. These deficiencies cannot be remedied by inferences in the absence of more evidentiary material, or oral testimony, which may clarify the questions raised by these inconsistencies.

Based on the foregoing, I dismiss the landlords' application for an Order of Possession with leave to reapply.

It remains open to the landlords 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 landlords may wish to submit an application for dispute resolution to be heard via a participatory hearing.

Conclusion

I dismiss the landlords' application for an Order of Possession 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: October 24, 2019

Residential Tenancy Branch