

How to Make Your Community Safer

Be aware of safety issues in your community. Connect with neighbors, staff at the local community centre, library or neighbourhood organization and schools about your concerns. Make your local City Councillor aware of these issues.

How to Find your City of Toronto Ward and Councillor

Enter your home address in the ward search on the City of Toronto's website (app.toronto.ca/wards/jsp/wards.jsp). It's as simple as that!

Key City Repair Contacts

View the City of Toronto's "Whose Job It Is" page for phone numbers for various repairs in your neighborhood (www.toronto.ca/services/pdf/whose_job_is_it.pdf). If the number you need is not here, contact Access Toronto, the public information and referral service for the City of Toronto, by email at accesstoronto@toronto.ca or phone at 416-338-0338.

Lights: Audit groups on residential streets have commented on how much safer they feel along a section of street where porch lights are on. This safety measure costs only a few cents extra per day and is highly effective. For more information, go to the Energy Services website (www.torontohydroenergy.com/street_form.asp). Report burnt out or flickering lighting on streets, laneways and sidewalks to the Toronto Hydro Street Lighting Hotline at 416-542-3195 (Monday to Friday, between the hours of 7:30 AM and 3 PM). You can report a streetlight issue online at the Energy Services website.

Underground Garages: Toronto bylaw number 73-68 sets standards for garages in the city. Garage owners must:

- ensure lighting is adequate and uniform
- ensure that light fixtures are protected, cleaned regularly, and replaced when burned out or broken
- paint walls and ceilings white to improve lighting levels
- secure entrances and exits by installing and maintaining locks
- remove abandoned vehicles and keep exit routes clear
- install and maintain signs which clearly indicate exit routes and doors
- place "alert" signs on each floor to remind drivers to lock all vehicle doors and check back seats

If you have a safety problem in a parking garage, contact your local Councillor, who can assist you in arranging an inspection with the appropriate department.

Parks: Report broken lights, graffiti, litter, and areas of concern in parks to Access Toronto. The general Parks and Recreation customer service enquiries phone number is 416-392-1111. They can provide details on Toronto Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities.

Laneways: Ensure your house number is clearly visible at both the front and rear of your property. This saves valuable time when emergency response teams are needed. Consider exchanging addresses and phone numbers with your backyard neighbors so that they can contact you or properly direct police, fire, or ambulance personnel during emergencies.

Ensure that laneways are kept clear from garbage, vehicles, bikes, etc. If you notice a problem in the laneway, call Access Toronto at 416-338-0338 who can direct you to the appropriate city department.

Making our Communities Safe and Accessible

What may seem to be a small inconvenience to some may be an important safety issue for certain members of a community. For people with disabilities, things like potholes in sidewalks or inaccessible public telephones can become a problem in an unsafe situation. Lack of physical access to buildings such as local stores, community organizations and other public spaces prevents people with disabilities from fully participating in a community. Stigma and discrimination can lead to a lack of support and assistance for people with disabilities, including those with physical and developmental disabilities.

If you have a disability, identify ways that your community is unsafe and inaccessible. For others, try to connect with your neighbors who may have disabilities and find out what their safety concerns are. Make your local City Councillor and the City of Toronto aware of these issues (call Access Toronto). Here are some examples of issues to report:

- potholes in sidewalks and on streets
- paths, sidewalks, ramps, and parking lots that are unpaved
- public telephones that are not wheelchair accessible or do not have TTYs/TDDs (Tele Type writers or Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf) for Deaf people and people who are Hard of Hearing
- broken ramps or railings leading into public buildings
- lack of a sound system at street lights to assist people who are blind or visually impaired
- snow and/or ice that has not been removed from public paths, streets, ramps, and parking lots

Toronto Police Services

Each police division has a Crime Prevention Officer and a Community Relations Officer, who can assist you with crime prevention concerns and help you create an open dialogue between your community groups and the police. To find your local police division contacts, call the Toronto Police's general number, 416-808-2222 or go to the Toronto Police Services' website (www.torontopolice.on.ca). Here you will be able to enter your home address and the local police division contact information will be displayed. Police officers of the Hate Crime Unit can be reached through Intelligence Services at 416-808-3500.

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)

Visit the TTC's website for phone numbers, emails, and an online complaint form regarding TTC services and/or employees (www.ttc.ca).

Other Important Contacts

Business Improvement Areas: A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an association of business people within a specified district who join together, with official approval of the City, in a self-help program aimed at stimulating local business (www.toronto-bia.com). While a BIA arises from the retail and professional activities of a main street, it has a profound effect on the surrounding area. It serves as an economic and social anchor, helping to stabilize and revitalize the local community. If there isn't a BIA in your neighborhood, consider organizing one!

- **Community Connection:** 211 Toronto is an online resource that lists Toronto-specific community, social, health, and related government services (211toronto.ca). You can also dial 211 and speak to an operator.
- **Parks and Recreation:** The Toronto Parks and Recreation website (www.toronto.ca/parks/recreation_facilities/comcen/comcen_index.htm) lists community centres and a synopsis of all major services offered at each centre (e.g. swimming, arts, youth, fitness).
- **Streets and Sidewalks:** The City of Toronto's website (www.toronto.ca) provides a listing of who to contact for traffic light services, sidewalk concerns, potholes, etc.
- **Emergency Numbers:** For 24-hour emergency phone numbers for women in the Greater Toronto Area, visit METRAC's get help page.