

Does 6,000 unresolved maintenance requests make you a slum lord?



DAVID YIN

Reddit user u/Accommod8u revealed maintenance requests and preliminary report on the conditions of properties owned by Accommod8u. They also raised questions on the conditions of its sister company, KW4Rent, and how it treats its tenants, most of whom are students.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

IMPRINT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO IS SITUATED ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES OF THE ATTAWANDARON (NEUTRAL), ANISHNAABEG, AND HAUDENOSAUNEE PEOPLES. THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO IS SITUATED ON THE HALDIMAND TRACT, LAND PROMISED TO SIX NATIONS, WHICH INCLUDES SIX MILES ON EACH SIDE OF THE GRAND RIVER. THEREFORE, IMPRINT RECOGNIZES AND RESPECTS THIS LAND THAT IT IS SITUATED UPON.

UW INDIGENOUS STUDENT ASSOCIATION



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Editor

On Sept. 8, 2019, Reddit user u/Accommod8u posted a report titled *Fuccommod8u* which outlines a security vulnerability in the website of rental agency Accommod8u. That vulnerability exposes 6,000 maintenance requests made to the rental agency since December 2017. The report was written by an anonymous author who refers to themselves as the Team.

The report classifies the requests into four main categories: mold, fire alarm/carbon monoxide alarm and vermin, and heating. For each category, examples of requests and relevant provincial rental regulations were described.

According to the report, the average time taken to update a case was 13 days and roughly 30 per cent of requests took over two weeks to fix.

The report also provides recommendations for tenants on how they can deal with unresolved maintenance issues and some tools for students to be legally and practically armed against the poor conditions.

The report says the findings show “the frustration of tenants and the indifference of Accommod8u,” claiming that “the actions of Accommod8u are in many cases illegal.” The Team concludes the report by saying they hope the data leak would “act as a catalyst for improving tenants’ living conditions” and that “something has to be done.”

WUSA Vice President of Operations and Finance, Seneca Velling, addressed the post under the name u/GreenBurette on Reddit. “This is a travesty and totally unacceptable for students to be experiencing. I fear the data might be fruit of the poisonous tree, but I intend to inquire about organizing a class action lawsuit or at least [make] students aware of their new legal protection to get representatives at the Landlord & [Tenant] Board,” he wrote.

Velling said he will explore ways in which WUSA can help students with the situation. He also said he will reach out to other local universities and colleges to see how they can “jointly support all KW students experiencing this bullshit.” Velling invited students to attend the upcoming Students’ Council meeting on Sept. 15 to discuss how to support impacted UW students.

Of the maintenance requests uncovered by the Team, a large percentage include the names of tenants, phone numbers, and emails—all of which were redacted in the report. Issues in the buildings, including mold, pests such as cockroaches and mice, plumbing and electrical defects, heating and cooling issues as well as problems with fire, smoke, and carbon monoxide alarms. Of the 6,000 maintenance requests, over 140 had a status of In Progress, New, or Re-open, indicating they had not yet been resolved by the landlords. The earliest unresolved request was filed almost 18 months ago.

Accommod8u is one of the largest rental agencies in Waterloo, with a large number of their tenants being students at UW and WLU. Accommod8u is owned by the parent company Prica Global Enterprises Incorporated, who also owns KW4Rent, another large rental agency in Waterloo. The following Accommod8u buildings were mentioned in the report: The Hub on 326 Albert Street and 130 Columbia Street; 228 and 246 Albert Street; 250 Lester Street; 255 and 258 Sunview Street; and 222 Albert Street, which was owned by Accommod8u until 2018.