



# Universal Change Room



Our Universal Change Room provides a safe, inclusive, and accessible space for all facility users. The change room was introduced in 2022, following input received from staff, facility users, and members of the public as part of the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex (CHDRC) renovation.

Many municipalities across Ontario are adopting this model of design to meet the evolving needs of their communities.

This shift has partly been sparked by families, groups of people, and people with disabilities asking for facilities that can better accommodate more users, including caregivers of all genders.

## What Does Universal Mean?

The universal change room, with private changing stalls, and washrooms is just that; it can be used universally by all persons, regardless of who they are or how they may identify. These spaces are inclusive of guests with disabilities, members of all gender identities, and any who wish for privacy for any number of reasons.

## What has been done to ensure my privacy?

Universal change rooms are shared spaces for all users of a facility. It consists of a central open space, including lockers, benches, and sinks. Private change and shower stalls are provided, and clothing or swimsuits are required in all areas outside of these stalls.

These stalls have been designed with a higher standard of privacy than found in most gender-designated washrooms and change rooms to help achieve comfort, while creating openness in adjacent areas to promote safety and visibility. This includes high partitions, a low door clearance, and no gaps between the individual panels.

## What is the protocol for universal change room use?

Change room users are required to be clothed at all times in the common area, including the showers of the change facility. One can only undress once inside one of the private cubicles.

## Have there been any reported incidents at the Universal Change Room?

Like all public facilities, incident reports do occur. However, incident reports are generated for a wide number of reasons, including lost items, mischief/horseplay, using smart phones for selfies or social media, and found contraband items. It should be noted that there has never been an investigated incident that was found to be lewd behavior, or resulted in assault, injury, or arrest. Any activity that is in contravention of the Respectful Conduct Policy should be reported to City staff.

## Why was this done?

Residents and stakeholders provided feedback on the design and development of the change room facilities during the facility renovation in 2019-2020. Feedback indicated a variety of needs from the community, including:

- The desire for more privacy
- Preference for a non-binary or all-gender option
- A space to accommodate people with disabilities
- A space to accommodate families

The CHDRC had an existing universal change room, but consultation indicated that we needed to expand and enhance this space as it had become too small for our growing community.

Given the space limitations at the facility, it was decided to eliminate the existing male and female non-member change rooms to accommodate an enhanced universal change room, to provide a single, flexible space capable of meeting the diverse needs of the community.

## What gender-specific change room spaces are available at the facility?

Members-only female and male change rooms are still available for adults 18+.

### Change Room Features

The Universal Change Room offers:

- 23 private change stalls including 4 oversize change rooms for families, and 3 accessible shower stalls for those requiring more space.
- 150 lockers of various dimensions that allow you to use a traditional padlock
- 8 washrooms including 3 fully accessible washrooms, 1 equipped with a shower
- 3 shower stalls with doors, one of which is an accessible stall
- Bathing suit dryer
- 8 change tables, and an electric lift change table

This initiative is aligned with the City’s commitment to support an accessible, diverse, and inclusive community for all.