

***SUNSHINE/ST.ALBANS RENTAL
HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD.***

MAINTENANCE and REPAIRS – POLICY/PROCEDURES

POLICY

The Sunshine/St.Albans Rental Housing Co-operative will endeavour at all times to maintain a system of maintenance to properties under its control in a manner that:

- Complies with the Residential Tenancies Act (1997);
- Complies with the terms of the General Lease;
- Ensures transparency of decision making;
- Provides good service in a timely manner;
- Is equitable between tenancies and across properties.

PROCEDURES

Definitions

The Co-operative will undertake all urgent repairs immediately.

Urgent repairs (as defined under the RTA) include the following:

- Burst water service
- Blocked or broken toilet system
- Serious roof leak
- Gas leak
- Dangerous electrical fault
- Serious storm or fire damage
- Failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance (ie. hot water service, stove or heating)
- Broken windows
- Door locks

All other non-urgent repairs are where possible, to be carried out within 14 days.

Maintenance requests

Urgent repairs

Any emergency maintenance required should be requested via phone to the Co-operative's office or nominated Maintenance sub-committee co-ordinator.

If and when the office is unattended, tenants are authorised to contact the appropriate tradesperson direct to organise urgent works (as defined above). Each tenant is regularly provided with a current list of Tradespersons that the Co-operative uses. Each of these listed contractors has been informed of what constitutes emergency (urgent) works. When emergency works are requested details of such are recorded on a work order in Chintaro (in the case where the tenant has contacted the office). Otherwise each contractor is required to list how they were contacted and details of the work performed.

Non-urgent repairs

For non-urgent (general repairs) tenants are asked to write or email the Co-operative with request details or via a phone call to the Co-operative office especially in the case where a tenant requires assistance to put in a request (ie. due to language, age or disability etc.)

Once a request is received, the Housing Manager is to ascertain if the request may constitute an urgent repair or be a Health and Safety issue. If such is found the Housing Manager is to send out a work order to the applicable Tradesperson immediately.

If the request is of a non-urgent nature or not of a nature where it should be attended to within 14 days, then the request/quote is tabled at the next Board meeting for approval.

The Co-operative has certain policies relating to the life expectancy of such items as carpets and internal painting.

Carpet – requests for replacement of carpet are approved further to reviewing the last property condition report. It is expected that carpet will last at least 12 years in most cases. It may be necessary to re-inspect a property to ascertain the current condition of such if a recent PCR has not been done. Polishing of floorboards may be requested by the tenant instead of carpet (where the existing carpet is deemed as requiring replacement) and where such is possible the co-op will approve.

Wet area floorcoverings – replacement approved further to inspection to ascertain that replacement is actually required and has not been damaged by the tenant.

Internal painting – the current policy of the co-operative is to not paint internally more than once every 6 years and then only at the end of a 6 year period further to an inspection where it is deemed that a repaint is actually required due to fair wear and tear.

In the case of a change to tenancy (ie. further to a vacancy) internal painting is performed further to inspection and approved if required even if having been completed less than 6 years prior.

Tenant additions/modifications to property

Generally the Co-operative does not permit tenant additions or modifications to the property however some types of additions may be permitted further to the tenant submitting a detailed description of what is being proposed. This submission must include plans, drawings, details as to who will do the work, noting if a council permit is required, and outlining if the addition/modification can be removed when the tenant is vacating without damage to the property etc.

The types of items that the Co-operative may approve include a garden shed, bird aviary or installation of an air-conditioner (in a window to enable it to be removed at a later stage).

Disability Modifications

Modifications due to health issues require documentation from a health professional (eg.this may consist of creating a space for a kidney dialysis machine with special water ingress taps and power supply). Some modifications may be able to be provided/installed by a health or council provider and in the case of other requirements documented by an Occupational Therapist the Co-operative will endeavour to carry out these modifications as noted by the therapist in writing.

Tenant Damage

Tenant damage is defined as that which can be identified as to being other than normal wear and tear and was not present at the commencement of tenancy.

Tenants should report all tenant damage to the Co-op office as soon as is possible.

In cases where the tenant does not report any damage that he/she is responsible for - such damage may be identified during a property inspection, during a quality control of completed works inspection or via a Tradesperson's report.

Should there be property damage as a result of a break-in or vandalism – a police report is required.

In regard to rectifying the damage, the tenant is responsible for organising and paying for the repairs.

In extreme cases where the damage is significant and the tenant refuses to co-operate in terms of rectification and payment, such will be pursued via an application to VCAT for compensation.

Yard Maintenance

Tenants are required to maintain lawns and gardens in a reasonable state and not allow rubbish to be strewn about the external areas of the property. If an order to comply is issued by the local council the tenant must act immediately or face a large fine imposed by the council which the tenant will be required to pay (currently fines start at \$500).

Quality control checks

All works completed over the value of \$500.00 should be inspected by the Housing Manager or delegated sub-committee member to ensure that the work has been completed properly.

Planned Cyclical works

Cyclical maintenance is that which is undertaken in a planned programmed manner. Examples of such are replacement of appliances, painting, floor coverings and fences.

Cyclical maintenance required is identified by examining the property files re age of items as well as from property inspection reports.

A five year Asset Plan has been established and is regularly updated and monitored.

Occupation Health and Safety

All contractors used by the Co-operative are required to work in a safe manner. They must also have appropriate levels of insurance cover and comply with workcover arrangements and coverage for all their employees.

Tenants are responsible for ensuring that contractors engaged directly by the Co-operative work in a safe manner. Reports of dangerous activity should be directed to the co-op office for follow up.

Tenants are also responsible for ensuring that contractors have a safe environment to work in. All pets must be restrained, hoses and any other tripping hazards removed, and children kept out of the work area until such time as the works are completed.

Record keeping

Further to receiving maintenance requests, numbered work orders are sent out to the applicable contractor via Chintaro's email system.

Copies of all work orders are kept in an organised fashion and form part of the documentation required to process approval of accounts by the Board.

Individual property files are kept including commencement of tenancy Property Condition Report, maintenance inspection reports, details of appliances and date installed, Warranty papers, details of when last painted and colours used, Compliance certificates, sewerage plans and any other items deemed suitable for inclusion. As much as is possible this data is entered into the Chintaro computer program.

Fencing quotes and letters sent to neighbours are kept in a separate organised lever arch file to enable easy access when neighbours contact the co-op.

Under the terms of the General Lease, the Co-operative is required to submit 6 monthly maintenance reports to DHHS. The Co-operative currently submits these reports in excel format.

A budget for responsive maintenance, cyclical/upgrade works or special projects is set by the Board annually.

Property Inspections

Regular property inspections using a Property Condition Report or similar type form ensure that the Co-operative has accurate records of the condition of all its stock.

Using the inspections as a tool, preventative maintenance can be planned as well as identifying any other repairs required which have not been identified or reported to the co-op by the tenant.

Contractors used by the Co-operative

All contractors used by the co-op must be licensed (where applicable) and have an ABN and be registered for GST (where they charge for GST). The co-op is responsible for checking that all the contractors it uses have got the above items.

A check for ABNs and GST registration can be made via this website:

www.abr.business.gov.au

All contractors used by the Co-operative are selected based on rates charged and the quality of work performed. References are to be sought for any new contractors that the Co-operative may wish to consider using.

Regular quality control inspections are made by the Co-operative to “ensure it is getting value for money”.