

***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 Amendment Act 2018 and the Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021
- Complies with the terms of the General Lease with the Director of Housing;
- 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 as set out in the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018 and the Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021

Urgent repairs 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
- Breakdown or failure of a cooling system supplied by the rental provider
- Breakdown or failure of any safety-related device including smoke alarms
- Faults or damage that makes the premises unsafe or insecure including mould/damp relating to the building structure or an infestation by pests

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, renters are authorised to contact the appropriate tradesperson direct to organise urgent works (as defined above). Each renter 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 renter has contacted the office). Otherwise, each contractor is requested to list how they were contacted and details of the work performed.

Non-urgent repairs

For non-urgent (general repairs) renters 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 renter 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

Under s64 of the amended RTA, renters may make certain modifications to their property without seeking the rental provider's consent. These modifications are outlined in the RT Regulations (Regulation 26) and include:

- Installing picture hooks, screws for wall mounts, shelves or brackets on surfaces other than exposed brick or concrete walls;
- Installing anchoring devices for items of furniture on surfaces other than exposed brick or concrete walls;
- Installing LED globes which do not require new light fittings;
- Installing water efficient shower heads (as long as the original shower head is retained);
- Installing blind or cord anchors;
- Installing safety measures (sensor light, cameras and alarms) if they do not need to be hardwired into the property and do not interfere with the privacy of neighbours;
- Installation of baby gates;
- Installation of non-permanent window film for insulation; to reduce heat transfer or for privacy;
- Replacement of curtains if the original curtains are retained;
- Installation of adhesive child safety locks on drawers and doors

Other than the above prescribed modifications, a renter must not make any alteration, renovation or addition to the property or install any fixtures without the rental providers' consent. In addition to modifications that do not require consent, there are certain modifications that rental providers must not unreasonably refuse to provide consent to (refer to RT Regulation 26 for detail)

The Co-operative does not normally permit major tenant additions or modifications to the property however some types of additions may be permitted further to the renter 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.

Renter Damage

Renter 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.

Under s61(1) of the amended RTA, a renter or their visitor has a duty not to intentionally or negligently cause damage to the rented premises or any common areas. If damage is caused due to a failure to comply with that duty, a rental provider can serve a breach notice.

Safety related duties on a renter include a duty not to remove, deactivate or otherwise interfere with the operation of a prescribed safety device at a rented premises unless it is reasonable in the circumstances to do so.

Renters should report all renter damage to the Co-op office as soon as is possible.

In cases where the renter 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 renter 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 an

order under s212, requiring the renter to either complete the repairs or pay the provider's (i.e. the Co-operative's) reasonable costs.

Yard Maintenance

Renters 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 renter must act immediately or face a large fine imposed by the council which the renter 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.

Renters 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.

Renters 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 Homes Victoria. 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 renter.

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".