



# **Repair Guide for Public Housing Tenants**

Prepared by the Victorian Public Tenants Association

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## **What are my repair rights?**

Your landlord is required by law to keep your home in good repair to a rentable standard. You can contact your landlord and organise repairs to your home. For public tenants, this can be done by contacting the **Housing Call Centre on 13 11 72**.

As a renter, there are some smaller routine repairs you must do yourself. This includes changing light globes, testing smoke alarms, general cleaning, pest control, and looking after your garden.

If there is a reason why you are unable to do these things (for health reasons or due to disability) contact your local Housing Office to organise these repairs for you.

Items that you own such as a fridge, television or washing machine are your responsibility and if they need to be repaired you must organise this yourself.

## **Who pays for the cost of repairs?**

Your landlord should pay for the cost of repairs to your home if they are caused by accident or from normal wear and tear.

You must pay repair costs for damage caused by neglect or intentional damage by household members and visitors.

## **Can I do my own repairs?**

No, you cannot complete repairs yourself unless you have approval from your landlord.

Under the Residential Tenancies Act, if you have an **urgent repair** and your landlord has not responded in the required timeframe, you may be

able to carry out the repairs yourself. The landlord should reimburse you up to \$1000 to cover the costs you incurred by arranging the repairs yourself.

## **What is an urgent repair?**

**To be fixed within 24 hours**

These are repairs that may be unsafe and harmful and need to be fixed straight away.

Examples of urgent repairs include:

- A burst water services
- A blocked or broken toilet system
- A serious roof leak
- A gas leak
- A dangerous electrical fault
- Flooding or serious flood damage
- A breakdown of an essential service or appliance that is provided by the department for hot water, water, cooking, heating or washing
- A breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply
- A breakdown of an appliance, fitting or fixture that the department provided which uses or supplies water that causes a substantial amount of water being wasted
- Any fault or damage that makes your home unsafe
- A serious fault in a lift or staircase

Sometimes urgent repairs may be needed outside normal office hours, like at night, on weekends or public holidays.

The department should attempt to do these repairs within two hours of being told of the fault.

## What is a priority repair?

To be fixed within 7 days

These are repairs that are not dangerous, but are still important.

Examples of priority repairs may include:

- A stove where only 1 hotplate is not working
- A dripping tap

## What is a non-urgent repair?

To be fixed within 14 days

These are minor repairs that are not urgent and do not cause safety issues.

Examples of non-urgent repairs can include:

- A hole in the wall
- A broken blind
- A damaged cupboard
- A damaged clothesline

## Who do I contact to request repairs?

The Housing Call Centre:

By phone - 13 11 72

By email - [tenant.maintenance@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:tenant.maintenance@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

By an online form if the repair is not urgent – [www.housing.vic.gov.au](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au)

## **What do I need to tell them?**

- Your full name
- Your address
- Your telephone number
- What needs to be repaired – offer as much detail as possible

By phone, always ask for a call reference number once you have provided details of your request.

Keep this number, as it is a record of your call.

## **The repair person**

The repair person must give you notice before they start work to arrange a suitable time.

You should ask for identification before you let a repair person into your home.

If you are not at home, an orange calling card should be left with the time and date the repair person called and should have their name and telephone number on it.

You can either call the repair person yourself to arrange another suitable time, or call the Housing Call Centre and ask them to speak with the repair person for you and organise another suitable time.

## **What do I do if my repair is not fixed?**

1. Contact the Housing Call Centre on 13 11 72 and tell them the work has not been completed.

2. You can contact Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 558 181 to request an inspection. An inspector should visit your property within 14 days and if repairs are needed, they will contact your landlord asking them to complete the repairs within a set timeframe.
3. You can make an application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to have your matter heard.

## **What do I do if I am not happy with the repair work?**

You have a right to complain if:

- The repairs were not completed within the timeframe
- The work is of poor quality
- The repair person acted in a rude or offensive way

You can provide feedback and complaints confidentially to the Housing Call Centre on 13 11 72, via email at [callcentre@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:callcentre@dhhs.vic.gov.au) or through the department's complaints line on 1300 884 706.

## **Programmed Maintenance**

The department over time carries out work to improve the property, like replacing old carpets, painting, or upgrading your kitchen.

This work is often on a large scale and needs to be planned.

If you ask for this kind of work to be done, there is often a waiting time.

For more information about programmed maintenance, you can contact your local Housing Office.

## **Need more help?**

If you need more assistance with information about repairs in your home you can contact:

**Department of Health and Human Services – 1300 650 172 (General Enquiries)**

**Victorian Public Tenants Association – 1800 015 510**

**Tenants Victoria (formerly the Tenants Union of Victoria) – 9416 2577**

**Victorian Consumer Affairs – 1300 558 181**

**Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) – 9628 9800**