

# Maintenance and Repairs Policy and Procedures

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## Introduction

Veteran Housing Australia (VHA) believes that providing a good standard of maintenance improves the wellbeing of tenants and ensures that the amenity and value of properties is retained.

## Aim

This policy explains how VHA will provide repairs and maintenance services to its tenants ensuring that obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 are met and a high quality of consistent maintenance services are given. VHA will ensure that a properties are kept at a benchmark standard for safety and functionality and that efficiency and effective maintenance service is provided.

## Principles of VHA Maintenance and Repairs Policy and Procedures

### TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

VHA tenants will have a responsibility to promptly report repairs and maintenance required to their property, and to allow access for completing required work.

They will also be responsible for ensuring they notify VHA of any damage to their property and for meeting the cost of repairing any damage caused by the neglect, misuse, wilful or accidental damage by a resident or visitor to the home.

Tenants are responsible for undertaking minor repairs in their dwelling including:

- replacement of light bulbs
- regular testing of smoke alarms
- looking after gardens
- general cleaning

Tenants are also responsible for general upkeep and property care of their dwellings and any private open space attached to their dwelling.

Tenants must notify VHA immediately if:

- smoke alarm batteries are not working
- keys have been lost

## VHA RESPONSIBILITIES

VHA is responsible for ensuring that maintenance is undertaken on the properties and common areas of the properties we manage or own, to ensure that they are safe and all amenities are maintained in a proper working order.

In doing so, VHA undertake maintenance in three broad categories, being Responsive Maintenance, Planned Maintenance, and Cyclical Maintenance.

- **Planned Maintenance** as the scheduled replacement, upgrade or renovation of major items in a property. This includes Vacant Maintenance.
- **Cyclical Maintenance** as a series of regular checks and inspections to ensure that properties comply with health and safety, legislative and duty of care obligations.
- **Responsive Maintenance** as time critical repairs necessary to reinstate a building or component to a safe or functional level of service. This also includes routine repairs that cause inconvenience or could become a risk to health and safety if left unattended.

## PLANNED MAINTENANCE

VHA believes that a planned approach to maintenance, rather than a responsive approach, is more cost effective, delivers better maintenance solutions and causes less disruption to tenants.

Planned works are scheduled based on the following considerations:

- Any legislative requirements must be met
- Risk assessment for each property
- Overall budget allocation

## CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

VHA's cyclical maintenance program is divided into three categories as follows:

- **Maintenance on Vacated Properties:** Maintenance is carried out on common areas, grounds and/or gardens. Works include general upkeep and cleaning of internal common areas, lawns and gardens prior to the next tenant moving in.
- **Compliance/Safety Program:** This includes maintenance programs to ensure that VHA meets legislative and regulatory requirements to maintain the safety and security of tenants. These include electrical safety, preparation of Annual Fire Safety Statements, smoke alarm inspections and lift safety.
- **Preventative Maintenance:** VHA defines preventative maintenance as regularly scheduled work that is undertaken to avoid breakdown and deterioration of the property. By undertaking preventative maintenance effectively, VHA will reduce the amount of responsive, planned and structural work that may be required. Works include roof and gutter inspections, tree pruning and termite inspections.

## RESPONSIVE MAINTENANCE

VHA will provide a responsive repairs and maintenance service, appropriate to both tenant and portfolio needs. Our responsive approach will have four categories. These categories will be subject to regular review to ensure they are up to date with legislative requirements and meet customer expectations.

Category	Description	Response Time
<b>Emergency</b>	Repairs that cause serious health or safety risk to the tenant and/or property, including gas leaks, broken sewer pipes or serious flooding.	Immediately once notified
<b>Urgent</b>	Repairs that pose a serious health and safety risk or inconvenience to the tenant such as failure or breakdown of electrical or hot water supplies to the property	Within 24 hours of being notified
<b>Priority</b>	Repairs that may pose a risk to health and safety if left unattended within a reasonable period. These include limited malfunctions in electrical and water supplies such as a dripping tap or a plug socket not working	Within 5 days of being notified
<b>Routine</b>	Repairs that do not cause a health or safety risk such as tiling repairs and minor fencing repairs. MASP will aim to complete nonurgent repairs and maintenance as promptly as possible, subject to the inconvenience to the tenant and the potential for the repair to become a risk to health and safety if left unattended.	21 business days, taking into account the age and remaining life of the property

For emergency repairs, a contractor will aim to attend and, wherever possible, complete all necessary work immediately. In circumstances where this is not possible, the contractor will make sure that the fault is temporarily fixed and arrange for the permanent maintenance to be undertaken within the appropriate timeframe. The tenant will be informed why the issue could not be fixed immediately and when the work is likely to be completed.

Where a number of routine responsive maintenance requests are received in a short timeframe for a common area or block, VHA reserves the right to “batch” these so that they are all completed together. This will be more cost effective and cause less disruption to our tenants.

## Requesting Repairs and Maintenance

It is important that tenants report any maintenance issues as quickly as possible. Timely reporting ensures tenants can continue to enjoy their home fully and can reduce the likelihood of repairs issues escalating.

Tenants can simply and easily report repairs by:

1. Contacting VHA's Tenant Liaison Officer on TLO@VHA.ORG.AU
2. Ringing the VHA landline during business hours (03) 9629 2648
3. Ringing the VHA Mobile after hours 0499 122 444

Each repair request is assessed by VHA staff to determine the nature and priority of the work to be undertaken. VHA then assigns responsibility for completing the work to one of its approved contractors. VHA will ensure that there is clear communication with the tenant and contractor throughout the repairs process to ensure that the work is completed in a timely and professional manner.

## Ensuring quality of services

All staff and VHA preferred contractors must comply with VHA's Code of Conduct. The Code outlines our expectations of behaviours to ensure all residents are treated with respect and courtesy and that receive the best possible service with the minimum disruption to their household.

## Related legislation

### EXTERNAL LEGISLATION AND FRAMEWORKS

<b>Residential Tenancies Act 1997</b>
<b>Residential Tenancies Regulation 2008</b>
<b>Owners Corporation Act 2006</b>
<b>Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998</b>
<b>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</b>
<b>Privacy Act 1988 (National)</b>
<b>NRSCH Regulations</b>
<b>Housing Registrar Victoria Regulatory Framework</b>
<b>National Rental Affordability Scheme Act 2008 (National)</b>

### VHA RELATED POLICIES AND PROCESSES

<b>VHA Client Promise</b>
<b>VHA Client Feedback Policy</b>
<b>VHA Duty of Care Policy</b>
<b>VHA Code of Conduct</b>