

# Public housing repairs

From time to time repairs will need to be made to your rented property.

The tenancy law requires that all landlords in Victoria, including the Director of Housing,\* maintain their rented premises in good repair.

➔ **If something in your property needs to be repaired you should contact the Maintenance Call Centre as soon as possible on ☎ 13 11 72.**

You can call the Maintenance Call Centre 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (only call after hours if it is an urgent repair).

Tell them what language you speak and the Call Centre will organise an interpreter.

When you call the Maintenance Call Centre it is important to tell them:

- > your name and phone number
- > your address
- > what the problem is (what's not working or needs repairing)

Describe the problem in detail. Be very specific. For example if you have a dripping tap, tell the operator whether it is the hot or cold tap. As another example, if you have a broken stove let the operator know if the stove is gas or electric, which element is broken etc.

Always ask the Call Centre for the Scheduled Contract Number (SC Order). This is a record of your call.

## What kind of repairs?

Repairs can be classified as urgent, priority or non-urgent repairs.

### Urgent repairs

These are repairs that need to be fixed **within 24 hours**.

They include:

- > a burst water service
- > a blocked or broken toilet
- > a serious roof leak
- > a gas leak
- > a dangerous electrical fault

- > flooding or serious flood damage
- > serious storm or fire damage
- > a failure or breakdown in the supply of water, hot water, cooking, heating or laundry service supplied by the Director of Housing
- > a serious fault in a lift or staircase
- > a fault or damage that makes the property unsafe (including faulty or damaged smoke alarms)

### Priority repairs

These repairs need to be fixed **within 7 days**.

Priority repairs are repairs that are serious but do not present an immediate danger to health and safety. For example, a dripping tap.

If the tap is leaking a large amount of water then it may be approved as an urgent repair. When you speak to the Maintenance Call Centre you need to be specific and tell them how much water is leaking.

➔ A good way to measure how much water is leaking is to put a saucepan under the leak and tell the Call Centre how many times the saucepan had to be emptied in a certain time (eg 1 hour).

### Non-urgent repairs

These repairs need to be fixed **within 14 days**.

They are repairs that are not considered urgent or a priority. Examples include a damaged kitchen cupboard, a hole in the wall, a broken blind or a damaged clothesline.

## Having the repairs made

Once you have contacted the Maintenance Call Centre they will arrange for a contractor to come to your property to fix the problem.

If it is an urgent repair the contractor should come within 24 hours.

If it is a priority or non-urgent repair then the contractor will contact you to arrange a suitable time to come to your property.

The contractor must show identification before you let them in.

*continued overleaf*

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If you are not home the contractor will leave a calling card. This will include the date and time they called, plus their name and telephone number.

➡ You do not have to call the contractor. Call the **Call Centre** on ☎ **13 11 72** and tell them what is on the card. They will then call the contractor and arrange a suitable time.

## What if the repairs aren't done?

You can call the Call Centre again and tell them the work hasn't been done. You can also contact the **Tenants Union** for advice on ☎ **1300 068 860**.

If it is an urgent repair you can apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for an order that the repairs be done. For more information contact the Tenants Union or see the **Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal** fact sheet.

If it is a non-urgent repair, you should write a letter to Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) requesting that they carry out an inspection. A Consumer Affairs inspector will visit your property and if repairs are needed, the inspector will contact the Director of Housing to organise for the repairs to be done within a specified time.

If the repairs are still not done, the Consumer Affairs inspector will send you and a copy of their repair report. You can then apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for an order that the repairs be made. The Tenants Union can help you apply to VCAT and can help you prepare for the hearing.

➡ You have a right to complain! You should take the above steps or make a complaint if the repair wasn't fixed within the specified time, the work is of poor quality or if the contractor acted in a rude or offensive way.

Once the work has been completed you will be asked to sign the work order. (Do not sign a blank work order.)

**For more information phone the Tenants Union Advice Line on ☎ (03) 9416 2577.**

\*The government department that manages public housing has used many names over time including the Housing Commission, Department of Housing and Office of Housing. It is now called the Housing and Community Building Division of the Department of Human Services. As an alternative, the Tenants Union is using the name Director of Housing as the best way to describe this service. Please also note that your local housing office may now be located within the Department of Human Services.