

Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy applies to all properties owned by Portway Housing (PH) and where it has financial responsibility for maintenance expenditure. It does not apply to properties managed for other organisations where the leaseholder, tenant or Renewal SA (RSA) is responsible for payment for repairs and maintenance. For those properties PH will order required maintenance, in line with established protocols and procedures, as soon as the need is reported or identified.
- 1.2 PH is committed to ensuring that properties are well maintained to ensure the wellbeing of tenants and the sustainability of PH properties. PH staff will make a risk determination and exercise judgement when making maintenance approval or non-approval decisions, taking into account the health risk to a tenant, neighbour or the general public.
- 1.3 PH will provide a 24 hour 7 day maintenance service with a single landline contact telephone number that will divert to a mobile number if unanswered. After-hours requests for maintenance will be restricted to *critical emergency maintenance* and *emergency maintenance* and tenants will be informed of the process at the beginning of their tenancy.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 *Fair wear and tear* means the gradual and expected deterioration to fixtures and fittings caused by normal usage over time.
- 2.2 *Responsive maintenance* is unplanned and reactive maintenance performed to restore an asset to an operational or safe, secure condition.
- 2.3 *Programmed maintenance* is maintenance that is planned for in advance.
- 2.4 *Vacancy maintenance* refers to maintenance that is done when a property becomes vacant. It can be preventative, programmed and responsive maintenance.
- 2.5 *Preventative maintenance* means the ongoing day-to-day maintenance on essential services to prevent breakdowns.
- 2.6 Priority 1 - *Critical emergency maintenance* refers to any repair work that is urgent and immediately affects tenants' health, safety or security.

Work to commence within 4 hours after notification – includes storm damage, major flooding, large area of roof blown off or collapsed, a serious roof leak, fallen trees, electrical faults resulting in shocks or injuries, fire damage to building or contents, internal or confined area gas escapes, damage caused to building by vehicle, burst pipes where the service can't be isolated, faulty external main door locks or where premises need securing.

- 2.7 Priority 2 - *Emergency maintenance* refers to any repair work that is urgent but does not immediately affect tenants' health, safety or security. Examples include:

Work to commence within 24 hours after notification – includes no light, no power, no water, blocked sewer drains/waste pipes/storm water drains, repair or replacement of hot water units, gas escapes (if not priority 1), faulty pans and cisterns, faulty ball valves, leaking taps, major roof leaks, broken or damaged asbestos or broken window.

- 2.8 Priority 3 - *Routine repairs* refers to required repairs that do not pose a threat of serious property damage or to the safety of tenants and do not prevent the regular use of the property. It covers any other work not defined in either priority 1 or 2. Examples include dripping taps and blocked sinks.

3. POLICY

3.1 Responsive Repairs

All responsive repairs will be undertaken within the targeted response times outlined below. PH staff will determine the priority of the request based upon the information provided and all repairs will be carried out to a tradesman like quality by a person who is qualified, licensed and insured.

- *Priority 1: Critical emergency* Order work immediately. Response within 4 hours
- *Priority 2: Emergency* Order work immediately. Response within 24 hours
- *Priority 3: Routine repair* Work to commence within 14 days

3.2 Tenant Charges

Tenants will be charged for repairs that are deemed to not be *fair wear and tear*. If the tenant is responsible for repairing damage or undertaking services and PH arranges the repair or service, PH will charge the tenant for reimbursement of the costs incurred.

There is a separate PH policy devoted to Tenant Charges that explains the full process.

3.3 Lock and Security Devices

- 3.3.1 Tenants are not permitted to change locks or add additional locks or security devices without PH approval in writing.

- 3.3.2 PH will generally approve such requests provided that:

- the additional items do not compromise safety by limiting emergency egress from the property
- extra deadlocks are keyed from the outside only – internally keyed door locks can cause emergency egress difficulties and compromise tenant safety
- there is no immediate or ongoing cost to PH
- two keys for each additional lock are provided to PH as soon as the new lock has been fitted.

- 3.3.3 Existing locks will not be re-keyed without the written approval of PH and if approved two keys for each lock will be provided to PH.

- 3.3.4 All locks will be re-keyed upon a PH property becoming vacant.

- 3.3.5 Tenants can request that their locks be re-keyed for personal or safety reasons, at their own expense and will be required to reimburse PH as per the Tenant Charges process.
- 3.3.6 Tenants who lock themselves out will be assisted where possible during office hours. This may involve a staff member, if practicable, attending to let them in, or the tenant collecting and returning a spare key from the PH office. Spare keys issued must be signed for by the tenant, including date and time. If staff attendance is not possible for any reason, a locksmith will be called at the tenant's expense.
- 3.3.7 For after-hours lock-outs, PH will assist tenants by calling a locksmith at the tenant's expense. The tenant will have to agree to reimburse PH via the Tenant Charges process prior to the work order being issued. Alternatively, the tenant may choose to pay the locksmith on site

3.4 Exempt Items

Exempt items are items for which Housing Associations are not responsible in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Regulations (General) 1995*. These include:

- air conditioners
- antennas
- ceiling fans
- washing machines
- dishwashers
- external blinds, floor coverings, garden sheds, internal blinds and curtains
- light fittings
- rain water tanks , other than where the tank is the only source of water for the premises
- refrigeration units
- room heaters
- waste disposal units
- window treatments
- water pumps, other than where the water pumped is the only water supplied to the property
- spa bath motors
- swimming pools and associated plant and equipment.

3.5 Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms will be legally compliant and tested at each property inspection. Tenants are encouraged to test them regularly and shown how to do so. Replacement of batteries is a tenant responsibility, but PH may provide assistance in exceptional circumstances.

3.6 Common Areas

Repairs and maintenance of common areas is a PH responsibility, but tenants are not permitted to dump unwanted furniture or negatively affect common area facilities or amenity in any way.

3.7 Pests and Vermin

- 3.7.1 PH will be responsible for eradicating pests and vermin only if they were evident at the beginning of the tenancy or are reported within the first three months of a new tenancy.
- 3.7.2 PH will be responsible for eradicating termites and repairing any termite damage.

3.7.3 PH will be responsible for removing birds in roof spaces.

3.7.4 PH will be responsible for fumigating vacant properties where required.

3.8 Environmental Considerations

Where possible and practicable, PH will take into account environmental sustainability principles in its maintenance practices, including replacement of stoves and hot water units. PH contractors will be encouraged to adopt environmentally friendly work practices.

3.9 Relationship to Summary Maintenance Plans

All maintenance work will be recorded and used to inform the planned maintenance process and the PH Summary Maintenance Plan.

3.10 Feedback

Tenant and contractor feedback will be sought after every critical emergency or emergency repair. Feedback on approximately 10% of routine repairs will be sought and results will be recorded.

4. REFERENCES

- 4.1 *Residential Tenancies Act 1995*
- 4.2 Maintenance Policy and Procedures Oct 2013 – Issued by Housing SA
- 4.3 Community Housing Maintenance Accommodation Standards June 2016 – Issued by RSA on behalf of SAHT
- 4.4 Work Health and Safety Act SA 2012
- 4.5 PH Code of Conduct for Maintenance Contractors April 2016
- 4.6 PH Asset Management Policy April 2016
- 4.7 PH Residential Tenancy Agreement
- 4.8 PH Tenant Declaration
- 4.9 PH Privacy and Confidentiality Policy 2016
- 4.10 PH Appeals Policy June 2016