

Purpose

This policy explains how Pacific Link Housing (PLH) provides repairs and maintenance services for tenants.

PLH aims to ensure all tenants live in properties that are well maintained, safe and comfortable and to an adequate standard considering the age and life of the premises.

Through this policy, PLH will ensure that we:

- Meet our obligations under the NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and workplace health and safety laws
- Provide a high quality, consistent maintenance service to our tenants and their families
- Keep all social housing properties, that are managed on behalf of NSW Government, at a benchmarked standard for safety, function and amenity and comply with lease obligations
- Preserve and improve the quality of the homes we manage and own.

Scope

This policy applies to all properties in PLH's portfolio except for properties managed under the Community Housing Leasehold Program (CHLP), Home Purchase Assistance (HPA) program and under Fee for Service contract. The arrangements for these properties are detailed separately below. There are a number of other relevant policies including CP39 Bonds, Tenant Charges & Property Damage Policy.

Strategic Planning

The PLH Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) has the following objectives:

- To maintain requisite quality housing stock and meet the housing needs of residents
- Comply with regulatory standards and legislative requirements
- Be financially viable and sustainable, through optimising our efficiency and effectiveness by adoption of best practice planned maintenance systems
- To maximise the effective life of dwellings and protect the assets owned by PLH or managed on behalf of government, and
- Strategically adapt and update the portfolio to align with changing demographics.

The SAMP sets out the long term portfolio objectives to meet the social housing needs in the areas serviced by PLH in an efficient and cost effective manner. The PLH SAMP forecasts the maintenance requirements over 20 year projections to manage cash reserves and meet upgrade requirements.

Tenant Responsibilities

PLH tenants have a responsibility to promptly report repairs and maintenance required to their property, and to allow access for completing required work. They are also responsible for ensuring they notify PLH 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 in the property
- replacement of lost keys or resultant change of locks to doors and windows where keys are lost (tenants should contact PLH to arrange this), and

- repairs to any items that have been erected/installed by themselves (eg hooks and air conditioning).

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

PLH Responsibilities

Our policy aims to ensure that high quality, timely and efficient maintenance services are coordinated by our Assets team with works being carried out by competent, licenced contractors in a safe manner.

PLH is responsible for ensuring that maintenance is undertaken on the properties, common areas and community facilities of the properties we manage or own in three broad categories:

Planned Maintenance – scheduled replacement, upgrade or renovation of major items in a property.

Cyclical Maintenance – a program of regular checks and inspections to ensure properties comply with legislative and duty of care requirements.

Responsive Maintenance – time critical repairs to restore a property to a safe and functional condition that are reported by tenants or identified from housing inspections.

PLH also maintains an Emergency Response Plan to ensure a coordinated response for disaster management including flooding, storms and bushfires.

Planned Maintenance

PLH 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 according to considerations including:

- life cycle upgrade timeframes,
- legislative and lease requirements
- findings from regular property condition inspections that are required to be conducted at least every three years
- budget resources allocated over long term forecasts and
- aligning the timing of works with periods of vacancy between tenancies.
- tenant needs, where possible.

Upgrades for safety and security issues are prioritised. Where possible, tenants will be consulted about work proposed for their homes. Throughout the process tenants will be kept informed about what work is required and when it will be done.

Cyclical Maintenance

Cyclical maintenance is a program of regular checks and inspections to ensure properties comply with legislative and duty of care requirements and include:

- cleaning of internal common areas
- upkeep of lawns and gardens
- annual fire safety checks
- annual smoke alarm inspections and replacement of batteries
- annual pest inspections
- lifts and other equipment inspections
- roof and gutter inspections

- tree and shrub pruning
- residual current device checks
- key window locks
- swimming pool barriers
- thermostatic mixing valves inspections

Cyclical maintenance may be tendered out across the entire portfolio for efficiency and cost minimisation. Cyclical maintenance will generally be scheduled to minimise disruption to tenants.

Responsive Maintenance & Repairs

Our responsive approach has categorised repairs as emergency, urgent and non-urgent in compliance with obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. These categories are subject to regular review to ensure they are up to date with legislative requirements and meet customer expectations.

Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs are works that involve an immediate threat of danger to health, safety or security risk to the tenant. Action will be taken by the Assets team to arrange contractors to attend the property and remedy the problem within 24 hours of notification.

Categories of emergency repairs are:

- Trees and /or large branches that have fallen on to a house
- Flood or water entry to living areas
- Cracked or removed roof tiles following high winds or storm damage or
- fire damage to a property.

If the property is leased under the CHLP, the owner or their real estate agent should be contacted as soon as possible or the next working day. For NSW Government or PLH-owned properties, an insurance claim may need to be made, depending on the extent of the damage.

Urgent Repairs

Urgent repairs are works for essential items and appliances that are not working or that may pose a risk to health and safety if left unattended. The Assets team will notify the appropriate contractor within 5 days of notification.

Categories of urgent repairs:

- Non-functioning external door locks;
- Essential services – hot water, cooking, heating or laundry;
- Broken windows;
- Electrical supply from the distribution board or fittings malfunction

Non-urgent repairs (routine maintenance)

For non-urgent repairs and routine maintenance, that do not cause a health or safety risk the Assets team will ensure appropriate action is taken within 28 days if the property is NSW Government or PLH-owned. For leasehold properties under the CHLP, maintenance requests will be managed as set out below.

Requesting Maintenance & Repairs

Tenants may request repairs and maintenance by:

- phone call to the PLH office on 4324 7617

- notification through the PLH smartphone app attaching photos
- the PLH website at <https://www.pacificlink.org.au/maintenance-repairs/>
- email to Maintenance@pacificlink.org.au, attaching photos, or
- visiting the office.

Outside of business hours callers will be directed to an emergency phone number, providing tenants with service at all times. During holiday periods, PLH may appoint a call centre to manage repair requests. State Emergency Services may be contacted for flood and property damage caused by storms.

Requests for maintenance may also be initiated by the Tenancy Services team following property inspections

Each repair request is assessed by PLH Assets team or their representative to determine the nature and priority of the work to be undertaken. PLH then assigns responsibility for completing the work to one of its contractors or contacts the landlord or agent to inform them of the repair request for leasehold properties. PLH will ensure that there is clear communication with the tenant, contractor or landlord/agent throughout the repairs process to ensure that the work is completed in a timely and professional manner.

The recovery of costs from tenants for repairs will be administered according to CP-39 Property Damage Policy. Inspections of properties to assess property condition or monitor the quality of maintenance and repair work will be conducted according to CP-33 Property Inspections Policy.

Repairs and Maintenance Requests for Leasehold and Fee for Service Properties

PLH will expect landlords and agents that it rents properties from to meet their responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. PLH will advise the appropriate landlord or agent with details of any repair or maintenance request. The landlord or agent is then expected to contact the tenant to advise what action it will be taking and when. PLH will always encourage landlords to complete repairs within the timeframes stated above. Where a landlord or agent persistently fails to complete work in accordance with their obligations under the NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010, PLH will use a range of actions to resolve issues. This includes:

1. Make a formal urgent request to the landlord or agent, advising them of a breach of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and proposing a timeframe for completing the work
2. Complete the work and claim reimbursement from the landlord or agent and/or
3. Applying to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for an order to remedy.

PLH will ensure that the tenant is kept informed throughout the process. In rare and exceptional circumstances where matters cannot be resolved, PLH may offer the tenant a transfer to another property.

Repairs and Maintenance Requests for Strata Properties

Where PLH manages properties under strata schemes the Executive Manager, Assets will be appointed as PLH's representative for consultation on repairs and maintenance matters.

Ensuring Quality Services

All staff and PLH contractors must comply with PLH'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.

CP-24 REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE POLICY

In addition, PLH undertakes a number of actions to ensure that our maintenance services meet the standards that we expect:

- Tenant maintenance survey – PLH sends out a survey to all tenants following responsive maintenance works. Where a negative result is obtained, we contact the tenant and investigate as part of our continuous improvement process.
- Inspections by our Assets team – each month we inspect a sample of responsive maintenance works to check for quality and workplace health and safety compliance.
- Submission of photographic evidence with all invoices from our contractors to verify works
- Tenant confirmation that works have been carried out
- Tenant feedback through our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys.