



**Servants Community Housing Limited**

ABN: 86 623 370 034

## **Maintenance and Repairs Policy**

## Purpose

Servants Community Housing Limited is committed to improving and maintaining our properties, providing a safe work environment and supporting our residents to maintain stable and safe tenancies. Servants believes that providing a good standard of maintenance improves the wellbeing of our residents. It supports our Strategic Plan which says:

- We provide safe, affordable, high quality, long-term accommodation for at-risk individuals.
- Our operations are managed for the long term and are financially viable.

This policy includes the Alterations and Disability Modifications policy and implements the obligations of Servants under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- [Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS](#)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

Servants works in partnership with various property owners and there are differences in each lease agreement. This means the delivery of asset maintenance services can vary in some instances because we have less control. However, we strive to deliver the same high standard across all properties by maintaining good relationships and communications with all our landlords.

## Definitions

**Responsive Maintenance works** - addresses day to day maintenance and any repairs to restore an item or component to working condition.

**Upgrades** - extensive work to maintain properties in good repair and achieve or extend the life of specific property attributes.

**Cyclical Maintenance** - planned maintenance resulting from an annual inspection on a percentage of properties that, if attended to, should reduce responsive maintenance or upgrade. These works are predictable, regular maintenance that can be planned for.

**Programmed works** - planned and systematic approach to carrying out non-urgent works that improve the amenity or extend the life of the property. These are treated under Cyclical Maintenance in this policy.

**Vacated Maintenance** - maintenance that is performed when a room becomes vacant.

## Policy

We will protect the value of our properties and enhance the physical condition to promote the amenity of the environment for our staff and residents.

The Maintenance and Repairs Policy is committed to and guided by the principles of:

- Meeting building, health and safety standards
- Planning and undertaking responsive, cyclical and lifecycle maintenance to maintain and improve property conditions
- Where possible, involving residents in planning and monitoring maintenance
- Facilities across all properties will be kept as equitable as possible.
- Delivering a maintenance service that is efficient, effective, reliable and timely

## Guidelines

- Maintenance conducted with a view to prolong the life of the building rather than a 'patch up' job that will need further attention in a short period of time.
- Preventative maintenance plans will be developed and adhered to.
- If resources fall below expected levels, upgrades for security and current OHS and building standards will be prioritised.
- Servants ensures that regular building inspections are conducted and schedules three-yearly property condition surveys and communicates this information to the Committee and to properties owners. Recommendations from these reports will guide the development of maintenance plans and negotiations with property owners.
- Repairs and maintenance are managed in a timely manner and carried out by staff or contractors with suitable qualifications.
- Communication with tenants is clear and tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance is monitored. Tenant feedback will be used to develop maintenance and development plans based on short/medium and long term needs of residents.
- Decisions concerning maintenance and refurbishment will consider costs, efficiencies, resources, performance, and amenity.
- All maintenance will recorded to provide evidence for future decisions.
- All contractors must abide by Servants Code of Conduct.
- Quality assurance will be monitored by inspections of work from Servants

onsite Housekeepers, Servants Asset Manager, resident feedback and annual resident surveys

## Goals

Servants aims to complete all repairs within a targeted response time, listed below.

We aim to have:

- greater than 95% of repairs completed on time
- greater than 95% satisfaction with repairs and
- less than 2% rework required

Some repairs are the responsibility of the property owner and there may be occasions when repair times and quality are beyond our control. We will report all repairs promptly and assist the designated contractors to attend to the repair as quickly as possible.

Responsive Repair Category	Target Response Time
<p><b>Emergency</b></p> <p>Repairs that cause serious health or safety risk to the tenant and/or property including gas or dangerous electrical leaks or flooding</p>	<p>Immediate action required</p>
<p><b>Urgent</b></p> <p>Repairs that pose a serious health and safety risk or inconvenience such as:</p> <p>(a) a blocked or broken lavatory system; or</p> <p>(b) a serious roof leak; or</p> <p>(c) serious storm or fire damage; or</p> <p>(d) a failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance provided for hot water, water, cooking, heating or laundering</p> <p>(e) an appliance, fitting or fixture provided by Servants that uses or supplies water and that is malfunctioning in a way that results or will result in a substantial amount of water being wasted; or</p> <p>(f) any fault or damage that makes a rooming house or room unsafe or insecure e.g. bedroom lock broken; or</p> <p>(g) a serious fault in a lift or staircase;</p> <p>(h) burst water service</p>	<p>Within 24 - 48 hours of being notified</p>

<p><b>Priority</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Within 7 days of being notified</p>
<p><b>Routine (non-urgent)</b></p> <p>Repairs that do not cause a health or safety risk such as tiling repairs, repairs to cupboards, repairs to clothes line, cupboards, floor coverings, dripping taps.</p>	<p>14 calendar days, taking into account the age and remaining life of the property.</p>

### **Modifications and Alterations**

The needs of a resident may change as a result of illness, injury, age or disability.

When we receive a health care professional's confirmation (e.g. occupational therapist) that the needs of a resident have changed, we will seek to modify their room and undertake to organise the work. Costs must be paid by the resident where it is feasible and economically viable to do so, however residents may discuss alternative arrangements if experiencing financial hardship. See our Arrears Management and Hardship Policy for further details.

We make this commitment to significantly improve our tenants' quality of life, to enable them to live safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible, with or without support. This gives them the option of staying at home rather than living in a nursing home or other care institution.

Minor modifications, that do not require structural changes to a property, include items such as a handheld shower set, lever style taps and grab rails.

Servants is not able to undertake major modifications in our rooming houses. We will assist residents to find alternative housing options.

### **Resident Responsibilities**

- Servants residents are responsible for cleaning their own rooms and cleaning up after they use communal areas.
- Residents have a responsibility to promptly report repairs and maintenance required to their room or public areas, and to allow access to their room for completing required work or maintenance. Residents will be given at least 24 hours notice unless emergency maintenance is required. If a room is unattended, Servants staff will enter the room in the event of an emergency.
- Residents will also be responsible for ensuring they notify Servants 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.

- If keys are repeatedly lost, residents will be required to pay for the key after the second replacement key.

### **Flat maintenance and repairs**

Residents in the Carrical flats have slightly different responsibilities to residents living with communal facilities. Residents in the flats are responsible for replacement of light bulbs in the property and repairs to any items that have erected/installed by themselves e.g. picture hooks.

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

### **Planned Maintenance**

Servants undertakes regular inspections to develop maintenance plans to minimise ad hoc, expensive, disruptive responsive maintenance. Residents are informed of any planned maintenance during resident meetings and notices to residents. Planned works consider legislative requirements, life cycle upgrades, risk assessment and budgets.

Changes to the plans may be modified to take advantage of vacant rooms when residents leave to reduce disturbing current residents. This may have a flow on effect and cause changes to the program in other areas.

### **Cyclical Maintenance**

Servants leases all our properties and we have different maintenance responsibilities with each lease.

All property owners are responsible for the fire safety system, but Servants liaise with their contractors to assist them to undertake the checks and inspections.

There are other legislative requirements regulated by the local council and Consumer Affairs. Servants conducts regular compliance checks to adhere to these requirements. These include, but are not limited to, gas and electrical checks, vehicle checks and OHS checks.

Servants undertakes a regular preventative maintenance program to reduce equipment repairs and deterioration of the property. These include regular property inspections and arborist checks. When we notice structural problems, we will report these to the property owner.

## Complaints and Appeals

Residents are encouraged to report any unattended maintenance or maintenance that has been completed but is not satisfactory. Complaints about repairs and maintenance will be investigated and residents will be informed of the outcome.

Complaints can be lodged at the Servants Office on 9819 6073 however it is recommended to read our Complaints and Appeals Policy before lodging a complaint.

## Related policies

Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Inspection Policy

## Legislation and standards

This policy implements the obligations of Servants under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- [Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS](#)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

## Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the Servants Community Housing website [www.servants.org.au/policy](http://www.servants.org.au/policy).

## Review

This policy was written in April 2019 and is currently being reviewed (February 2022)