



Property Repairs and Maintenance Policy [H08]

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline YWCA Australia's (YWCA) approach to managing property repairs and maintenance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to YWCA Australia (YWCA) staff responsible for working with YWCA residents and properties.

This document is a national policy covering YWCA Housing and YWCA National Housing. All references to YWCA Housing include both unless specifically stated otherwise. Where state-based variations exist in policies and procedures, these will be identified in this document.

This policy applies to all forms of housing owned and/or managed by YWCA including community and affordable residential rental properties and rooming houses.

Where other YWCA policies also need to be considered, these are identified in this policy and supporting procedures.

3. Definitions

Rental agreement	A lease agreement under the applicable legislation, which sets out the rights and duties of the resident/resident/tenant and the rental provider/landlord.
RTA/RTRAA	The Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic), Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT), Residential Tenancies & Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (QLD). The principal legislation governing rental housing in Victoria, Northern Territory, and Queensland respectively.
Resident	For brevity, the term 'resident' refers to renters and tenants of rented premises, and residents of rooming houses.
VCAT/QCAT/NTCAT	State/Territory based Civil and Administrative Tribunal. A legal institution set up to administer several Acts. For residential tenancies, the Tribunal administers the RTA/RTRAA.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Leaders –General Manager Housing Operations

- Assisting housing staff to follow this procedure. Ensuring good management of evidence in the tenancy management system.
- Recommending any changes to this procedure.

4.2 People and Culture

- Incorporating this procedure into staff induction and training.
- Ensuring staff are aware of and have access to this procedure.
- Escalating feedback about this procedure to the document owner/writer.

4.3 Employees – Housing staff and Community Housing Officers

- Informing tenants of their rights and responsibilities in accordance with this document.



- Keeping records of the process in the relevant systems.
- Recommending improvements to this policy and procedure.

5. Policy

In applying this policy YWCA will ensure:

- All YWCA properties are safe, secure, functional and maintained in good repair and fit for use.
- Delivery of effective, timely and good quality maintenance services.
- Long term viability of YWCAs housing assets.
- Consistent, fair, and accountable processes are followed, and residents are provided with information about processes that impact their tenancy.
- Compliance with the State Based Residential Tenancies legislation and Regulations as they relate to repairs, maintenance and minimum standards.
- Proper consideration is given to the human rights of residents in accordance with the applicable Human Rights legislation.
- All contractual, legal and regulatory duties are met.

5.1 Minimum rental standards

The State based Residential Tenancies legislation and regulations outline the minimum standards for rental properties. They cover the following areas:

- Locks.
- Vermin proof bins.
- Toilets.
- Bathroom facilities.
- Kitchen facilities.
- Laundry facilities.
- Structural soundness.
- Mould and damp.
- Electrical safety.
- Windows and window coverings.
- Lighting.
- Ventilation.
- Heating.

5.2 YWCAs responsibilities

YWCA is committed to providing and maintaining its properties in a good state of repair. All maintenance activities carried out on YWCA properties are undertaken in compliance



with the RTA and/or any other relevant legislation and standards and are performed to protect the value of the assets and maximise the useful life of properties.

In line with this commitment, YWCA will:

- Ensure the premises are in a reasonably clean, safe, secure and functional prior to a rental agreement commencing.
- Provide residents with a written statement setting out the rights and duties of YWCA and the resident under the rental agreement.
- Ensure all residents are provided with the following information at the start of a residential rental agreement:
 - What are urgent and responsive repairs
 - How to request repairs
 - How to provide feedback regarding the standard of repairs.
- Inspect the property every 6 months to monitor the condition of the property, ensure it is being maintained to an acceptable standard, and identify any required repairs and/or maintenance (see Property Inspection Policy).
- Engage appropriately skilled tradespeople to undertake repairs and maintenance to ensure properties are maintained to a high standard.
- Undertake responsive and cyclical maintenance and have a flexible program of upgrades that can take advantage of vacancies.
- Not seek to recover repair charges for fair wear and tear as defined in the RTA; and
- Seek to recover repair charges from residents for damages caused by household members or a visitor (see Resident Related Damage Recharge Policy).

Instances where a resident feels that replacement is required instead of a repair; these decisions will be made on advice from an appropriately skilled tradesperson and take into consideration the age and purpose of the repair.

YWCA is unable to arrange for repairs to a resident's personal items such as a fridge, TV, or washing machine.

5.3 Resident responsibilities

Residents are responsible for looking after their home by:

- Maintaining the property in a safe and reasonably clean condition.
- Ensuring the property is ventilated by using exhaust fans (if available) in bathrooms when running a shower etc.
- Looking after internal and private external areas of the property.
- Replacing light bulbs.
- Pest control.
- Maintaining grassed areas.
- Tidying the garden and paths.



- Disposing of rubbish appropriately.
- Avoiding damage to the property.
- Reporting all property damage and defects to YWCA for action.
- Keeping appointments with YWCA and its contractors and allowing access to the property by YWCA and its contractors.
- Obtaining YWCAs consent before installing fixtures in the property.

Where damage to the property is caused by residents or their visitors, YWCA may seek to recover the costs of the repair (see Resident Related Damage Recharge Policy).

During maintenance works, residents have further responsibility to:

- Give contractors the necessary access and freedom to do their work so it can be completed in the shortest possible time.
- Keep appointments with contractors. If a contractor is delayed, allow reasonable time for them to arrive.
- Restrain or pen animals or pets if they are a risk to health and safety, liable to escape from the property, or if requested by the contractor.
- Empty kitchen and bathroom cupboards if the nature of the work requires it, and/or if requested by the contractor.
- Move ornaments, paintings, clothing and other personal and small item fixtures. The contractor will assist with moving furniture, appliances and other large items.
- Contact YWCA if residents require more information or assistance with moving and securing possessions during maintenance works.
- Respect the rights of others, including contractors, consultants and YWCA staff to feel safe. If there is real or likely damage to a contractor's property or threatening behaviour by residents or pets, contractors will gather their equipment and leave the property and immediately notify YWCA.
- Refer any concerns about the standard of workmanship to YWCA and not the contractor.
- Contact YWCA if seeking a change to the scope of work. Maintenance work is determined by YWCA and cannot be altered by contractors.

5.4 Contractor responsibilities

YWCA requires contractors performing works on YWCA properties to:

- Identify themselves before entering the property and/or at any time identification is requested.
- Hold and maintain all necessary public liability, property damage and public risk insurance.
- Be appropriately trained, and hold current licences, permits, certificates, registrations and qualifications for activities they perform and any plant and equipment they operate.



- Ensure compliance with all permits, approvals and requirements of local councils or other authorities.
- Carry out works in a proper and workmanlike manner; with the professional skill, care and diligence expected of a competent and experienced contractor.
- Complete works within the times specified.
- Complete works so that the works and any materials used are fit for purpose and comply with all laws.

Contractors are required to make up to two attempts to contact and arrange with the resident to carry out the maintenance work on the property. Contractors are required to leave a calling card at the property if their attempts to gain access to the property are unsuccessful.

YWCA requires contractors performing works to act respectfully toward residents, their families and neighbours and abide by the Code of Conduct for Maintenance Contractors. If residents are concerned about the quality of repair and maintenance works, or the behaviour of YWCA contractors, they can contact 03 8341 8700.

Residents can raise concerns if contractors have not:

- Completed or carried out works in a timely way.
- Carried out works to the required standard.
- Followed the Code of Conduct for Maintenance Contractors.

5.5 Responsive maintenance

Responsive maintenance refers to day-to-day maintenance, including repairs to return an item to working condition. Residents are encouraged to report required repairs and maintenance to YWCA as soon as possible and have a responsibility to allow access to the property for completing the required work.

In some instances, repairs may not be completed in full within the timeframe, for example, a part needs to be ordered in by the contractor. In the meantime, the area will be made safe, and repairs will be carried out as soon as practicable.

Where repairs and maintenance result from fair wear and tear, YWCA will complete the works in accordance with the applicable legislation. Where repairs are the result of resident damage, YWCA may seek reimbursement from the resident (see Resident Related Damage Recharge Policy).

5.6 Urgent repairs

Urgent repairs are defined under state-based legislation and must be fixed within 24 hours of notification. Urgent repairs make a property unsafe or difficult to live in.

In some instances, repairs may be completed in full within the timeframe, for example, a broken window may be temporarily boarded up, so that the property is made safe, and the window glass replacement will be undertaken separately as a non-urgent repair.



5.7 Reporting responsive or urgent maintenance

5.7.1 Reporting responsive maintenance

Responsive maintenance can be reported directly to YWCA by phone, email or via the website.

5.7.2 Reporting an urgent repair

Urgent repairs during office hours, 9am to 5pm, can be reported directly to the Maintenance Officer on 03 8374 8700.

Urgent repairs required after hours can be reported to the after-hours maintenance number provided at sign up.

Refer to Property Repairs and Maintenance Fact Sheet for more information.

5.8 Cyclical maintenance

Cyclical maintenance refers to regular, scheduled maintenance that will assist in extending the life of a fixture or building element. Cyclical maintenance can include maintenance of any safety feature, in accordance with building codes or safety standards such as:

- Electrical safety checks every 2 years.
- Gas safety checks every 2 years.
- Smoke alarm testing annually.

5.9 Upgrade maintenance

Upgrade maintenance is non urgent work that is usually to make an improvement to the property. These works are large scale works that are delivered on a schedule, frequently have an extended wait time, and may typically include the following:

- Internal or external painting.
- Full or part replacement of floor coverings.
- Upgrades to kitchens or bathrooms.
- Major window and other carpentry work.
- Re-stumping.
- Re-roofing.
- Aids, adaptations and disability modifications (see Accessibility Modifications Policy).

When scheduled work is programmed, YWCA will contact residents to advise them that their property is included in the works program. YWCA will take all reasonable steps to meet any special resident requirements and to resolve any resident issues relating to scheduled works.

5.10 Vacate maintenance

Vacated maintenance is completed to ensure properties are clean, secure, safe and functional prior to re-letting. Where damages or works are required that are not fair wear and tear, the resident may be responsible for completing the works prior to vacating.

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Where the resident does not complete these works, YWCA may make an application to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT/QCAT/NTCAT) for compensation (see Ending a Tenancy Policy and Resident Related Damage Recharge Policy).

5.11 Modifications

Residents can make the following modifications without YWCAs consent at the resident's expense:

- Adding picture hooks.
- Wireless doorbells.
- Letterbox locks.
- Security lights, alarm systems and security cameras that are not hard wired.

A full list of modifications that can be made without consent is available on the applicable Consumer Affairs or the Residential Tenancies Authority website.

When a resident vacates the property, the changes must be reversed or the cost to do this may be charged back to the resident.

For residents with a disability and/or accessibility needs, see the Accessibility Modifications Policy for more information.

6. Transparency and accessibility

This policy is made available on the YWCA Housing website www.ywcahousing.org.au/policies.

7. Appeals

Staff will inform residents of their right to appeal organisational decisions and to complain about the services of YWCA in accordance with the appeals and complaints process.

8. Record keeping

Staff will maintain all relevant information associated with in the tenancy management system.

Document Data Control

Property Repairs and Maintenance Policy				
Responsible Body		Director, Development and Housing		
Accountable Officer		General Manager, Property		
Supersedes		-		
Associated documents		Accessibility Modifications Policy Sustaining Tenancies Policy Resident Related Damage Recharge Policy Mould Policy Pest Management Policy		
Legislation		Housing Act 1983 (VIC) Housing Act 2003 (QLD) Housing Regulations 2015 (QLD) Housing Act 1982 (NT) Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (VIC) Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021 (VIC) Residential Tenancies & Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (QLD) Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT) National Affordable Housing Agreement Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Queensland Human Rights Act 2019 National Community Housing Standards Social Service Standards (VIC) Guidelines for registered housing agencies Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies. Consumer Charter for Community Managed Housing and Homelessness Services (VIC) National Community Housing Regulatory Code Victorian Community Housing Regulatory Code State based agreements between YWCA and statutory bodies		
Approval and Amendment history				
Review period – 2 years				
Approval date	Effective date	Version	Amendments	Next review
May 2022	May 2022	1.0	Superseded Maintenance and Repairs Policy	May 2024
Aug 2024	Aug 2024	2.0	Review to align with WHF principles.	Aug 2026