

MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS Policy & Procedure

QA REFERENCE	P&T P&P No 08
INTRODUCED	28 th March 2019
LAST REVIEWED	28 th March 2019
NEXT REVIEWED	28 th March 2022
RESPONSIBILITY	Property and Tenancy Management is responsible for the review and currency of this policy and associated procedures
APPROVED	Approved by the Chief Executive Officer on 28 th March 2019 <i>This policy is valid from the date of introduction and remains in force, as amended from time to time, until such time as formally revoked by resolution at a meeting of the Operational Leadership Group.</i>
ENDORSED	Endorsed by the Operational Leadership Group on
REFERENCES –	
Related Legislative Acts and other sources of Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Act 1983 (Vic) Part VIIIA – Social Housing • Residential Tenancies Act 1997
Related Standards, Guidelines and other References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies • DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines • Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS • Legal agreements between MASP and the Director of Housing relating to the VHR
Related MASP Policy and Procedure Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Modifications – P&T P&P No 04 • Allocations – Internal – P&T P&P No 07 • Allocations – VHR – P&T P&P No 06 • Bonds Management – P&T P&P No 11 • Code of Conduct – HRM P&P No 12 • Conflict of Interest – HRM P&P No 28 • Complaints & Appeals Tenants & Prospective Tenants – P&T P&P No 03 • Eligibility – P&T P&P No 10 • Inspections – P&T P&P No 12 • Maintenance and Repairs – P&T P&P No 08 • Privacy and Information Security – P&T P&P No 01 • Property Damage by Tenant – P&T P&P No 02 • Rent Arrears Management and Evictions – P&T P&P No 09 • Rent Setting and Collection – P&T P&P No 05
Related MASP Instructions and Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a Good Neighbour – P&T B&P No 05 • COVID 19 Maintenance P&T I&G No 01 • Urgent After-Hours Repairs – P&T I&G No 02
Related MASP Forms and Templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition Report – Entry – P&T ED • Condition Report – Exit – P&T ED • Residential Rental Agreement – P&T ED • COVID 19 Health Declaration Contractor Maintenance Worker – P&T F&T No 06 • COVID 19 Health Declaration MASP tenant – P&T F&T No 03 • COVID 19 Letter to contractor or tradesman – P&T F&T No 05

ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHHS • VHR • MASP • Tenant • Household members 	<p>Victorian Department of Health and Human Services</p> <p>The Victorian Housing Register, the state-wide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing</p> <p>Mallee Accommodation and Support Program Ltd</p> <p>The person who signed the Tenancy Agreement</p> <p>The person who signed the Residential Tenancy Agreement</p> <p>Other people who have been authorised by MASP to reside at the property</p>

PURPOSE

This policy explains how MASP will provide repairs and maintenance services to its tenants.

MASP believes that providing a good standard of maintenance improves the wellbeing of our residents and ensures that the amenity and value of properties is retained.

Through this policy, MASP will ensure that

- obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 are met
- a high quality, consistent maintenance service to tenants and their families is provided
- all social housing properties are kept at a benchmarked standard for safety, function and amenity
- the quality of the homes we manage and own is retained and improved, and
- an efficient and effective maintenance service is provided.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all properties in MASP's property portfolio.

POLICY

MASP recognises the importance of protecting and preserving the condition of the properties it manages so that they continue to meet the needs of its current and future tenants. To this end MASP adopts a strategic planning approach to its maintenance programs. This approach is underpinned by MASP's Asset Management Framework.

MASP's approach to maintenance aims to

- minimise the volume and cost of unplanned, responsive repairs
- meet all legislative requirements including building, health and safety standards
- meet our contractual obligations
- protect MASP's long term financial sustainability
- maximise the life of the homes we manage
- continue to meet and improve the tenant experience in relation to the maintenance of their homes.

Tenant Responsibilities

MASP tenants will have a responsibility to promptly report repairs and maintenance required to their property, and to allow access for completing required work.

They will also be responsible for ensuring they notify MASP 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
- regular testing of smoke alarms
- looking after gardens
- general cleaning

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

Tenants are to notify MASP immediately if

- smoke alarm batteries are not working
- keys have been lost

MASP Responsibilities

MASP is responsible for ensuring that maintenance is undertaken on the properties and common areas of the properties we manage or own, to ensure that they are safe and all amenities are maintained in a proper working order.

In doing so, we undertake maintenance in three broad categories, being Responsive Maintenance, Planned Maintenance, and Cyclical Maintenance.

- **Planned Maintenance** as the scheduled replacement, upgrade or renovation of major items in a property. This includes Vacant Maintenance.
- **Cyclical Maintenance** as a series of regular checks and inspections to ensure that properties comply with health and safety, legislative and duty of care obligations.
- **Responsive Maintenance** as time critical repairs necessary to reinstate a building or component to a safe or functional level of service. This also includes routine repairs that cause inconvenience or could become a risk to health and safety if left unattended.

Planned Maintenance

MASP 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 based on the following considerations

- Any legislative requirements must be met.
- Life cycle upgrade timeframes as identified through our 3 yearly technical scoping inspections.
- Risk assessment for each property undertaken through our technical scoping inspections.
- Overall budget allocation in line with “MASP’s Properties 5 Year Capital Expenditure” Plan.

Wherever possible, MASP will involve tenants in decisions about work proposed for their homes. For example, tenants may have a choice in the use of colors and materials used in planned maintenance upgrades to their home. Throughout the process tenants will be kept informed about what work is required and when it will be done.

Instead of replacing property elements like-for-like, when scoping planned maintenance works, MASP will actively undertake value adding enhancements to improve amenity where economically viable, e.g. improving car-parking facilities, widening driveways and altering kitchen and bathroom layouts.

Scheduled maintenance is sometimes brought forward or deferred to suit tenant needs and other priorities. Properties that require upgrades for safety and security issues will be prioritised.

Where a property becomes vacant, MASP will consider the feasibility of bringing forward the work to minimise the impact on future tenants. As a minimum MASP will ensure that the property is clean, safe and habitable for the next tenant. This includes

- carrying out compliance assessments for smoke alarms, electrical safety and window restrictors
- ensuring that the property is appropriately secured and change locks if required
- ensuring all appliances are functional.

Cyclical Maintenance

MASP's cyclical maintenance program is divided into three categories as follows

- **Maintenance on Vacated Properties:** Maintenance is carried out on common areas, grounds and/or gardens. Works include general upkeep and cleaning of internal common areas, lawns and gardens prior to the next tenant moving in.
- **Compliance/Safety Program:** This includes maintenance programs to ensure that MASP meets legislative and regulatory requirements to maintain the safety and security of tenants. These include electrical safety, preparation of Annual Fire Safety Statements, smoke alarm inspections and lift safety.
- **Preventative Maintenance:** MASP defines preventive maintenance as regularly scheduled work that is undertaken to avoid breakdown and deterioration of the property. By undertaking preventative maintenance effectively, MASP will reduce the amount of responsive, planned and structural work that may be required. Works include roof and gutter inspections, tree pruning and termite inspections.

Responsive Maintenance

MASP will provide a responsive repairs and maintenance service, appropriate to both tenant and portfolio needs. Our responsive approach will have four categories. These categories will be subject to regular review to ensure they are up to date with legislative requirements and meet customer expectations.

Category	Description	Response Time
Emergency	Repairs that cause serious health or safety risk to the tenant and/or property, including gas leaks, broken sewer pipes or serious flooding.	Within 4 hours of being notified
Urgent	Repairs that pose a serious health and safety risk or inconvenience to the tenant such as failure or breakdown of electrical or hot water supplies to the property.	Within 24 hours of being notified
Priority	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.	Within 5 days of being notified
Routine	Repairs that do not cause a health or safety risk such as tiling repairs and minor fencing repairs. MASP will aim to complete non-urgent repairs and maintenance as promptly as possible, subject to the inconvenience to the tenant and the potential for the repair to become a risk to health and safety if left unattended.	21 business days, taking into account the age and remaining life of the property.

For emergency repairs, a contractor will aim to attend and, wherever possible, complete all necessary work within four hours. In circumstances where this is not possible, the contractor will make sure that the fault is temporarily fixed and arrange for the permanent maintenance to be undertaken within the appropriate timeframe. The tenant will be informed why the issue could not be fixed immediately and when the work is likely to be completed.

Where a number of routine responsive maintenance requests are received in a short timeframe for a common area or block, MASP reserves the right to "batch" these so that they are all completed together. This will be more cost effective and cause less disruption to our tenants.

Requesting Repairs and Maintenance

It is important that tenants report any maintenance issues as quickly as possible. Timely reporting ensures our tenants can continue to enjoy their home fully and can reduce the likelihood of repairs issues escalating.

MASP operates a 24 hour, all year round on call telephone service for all our tenants. This enables our tenants to speak with a real person regardless of the time of day. Tenants may be asked to call back during office hours for nonurgent repairs requests.

Tenants can simply and easily report repairs by

- 1) Contacting MASP's Property and Tenancy Worker on 03 5021 6500
- 2) Calling MASP's after hours on call number 03 5022 1473 **FOR URGENT REQUESTS ONLY**
- 3) Visiting MASP's main office during business hours 9am to 5pm weekdays (excluding public holidays).

MASP also provides a free interpretation service for tenants who are having difficulty communicating their repair or maintenance request.

Each repair request is assessed by MASP's Property and Tenancy worker or their representative to determine the nature and priority of the work to be undertaken.

MASP then assigns responsibility for completing the work to one of its approved contractors

MASP will ensure that there is clear communication with the tenant and contractor throughout the repairs process to ensure that the work is completed in a timely and professional manner.

Ensuring Quality Services

All staff and MASP preferred contractors must comply with MASP's Code of Conduct. The Code outlines our expectations of behaviour to ensure all residents are treated with respect and courtesy and that receive the best possible service with the minimum disruption to their household.

Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the MASP website www.masp.org.au