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| Code of conduct for public housing contractors |
| With guidelines for public housing tenants |

# Introduction

The Department of Health and Human Services employs private contractors to carry out maintenance and upgrade work on public housing properties.

This work ranges from minor repairs to major upgrading. It usually takes place while properties are occupied. This may create some inconvenience for both tenants and contractors.

To ensure the work is done as smoothly as possible, tenants and contractors need to cooperate with each other. They also need to honour agreements and treat each other and each other’s property with care, courtesy and respect.

Contractors follow a code of conduct when working in occupied premises. The code of conduct sets out rules advising contractors on how to behave while carrying out work for the department.

The contractors’ employees, sub-contractors and suppliers are given a copy of this code. They are expected to understand the code before doing any work for the department.

The department does not employ contractors who do not follow this code.

# Code of conduct for contractors

**As a contractor you will need to:**

* wear identity cards at all times. If not yet issued, you will carry a letter of authority or a ‘job order’. You will also need to identify yourself on request
* dress appropriately for the task and take care with personal appearance
* be polite and courteous at all times. You will need to minimise noise, disruption and inconvenience to tenants
* respect and respond appropriately to tenants’ culture
* avoid discussing departmental policy with tenants or matters relating to previous work carried out at the property
* consider tenants’ safety, health, comfort and security. You also have to make allowance for shift work
* avoid depositing mud, paint, grease and other contaminants in occupied properties. You need to restore any item you soil or damage, to pre-maintenance condition
* give tenants notice before commencing work. You need to advise them of the anticipated sequence and duration of the work. If there is a change, you need to inform tenants
* explain to tenants the nature of the work, the timing of dirty or dusty work and any shut-downs of services. You need to advise occupants of neighbouring properties that may also be affected
* for general maintenance and upgrade contracts, work is carried out between the hours of 8.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday, and at other times by mutual agreement with tenants. For responsive maintenance, work is carried out between the hours of 8.30am and 5.30pm Monday to Saturday
* for general maintenance and upgrade works, restore services, cooking and sanitary facilities at the end of each working day. You must remove all work residue and off-cuts, and leave work areas in a clean, tidy and liveable condition
* obtain prior permission before using tenants’ toilets. You have to reach agreement with tenants regarding the use of their power, gas and water and offer to reimburse them for the cost of those services.
	+ consider the safety of children and young people at all times and conduct yourself in a manner which does not harm the safety or wellbeing of children or young people.

**As a contractor you will not:**

* use offensive language, play loud music or engage in loud or boisterous behaviour
* comment on the property, the tenants or their lifestyles
* smoke indoors, consume alcohol or use prohibited substances or carry out work while under their influence
* eat food or leave wrappers or empty containers in occupied premises
* bring visitors unrelated to the work or pets to the work site
* interfere with or mistreat tenants’ animals or pets
* block private or common driveways, access paths, crossings, tenants’ parking areas or vehicles, without prior permission and for no longer than necessary use tenants’ telephone, except in cases of emergency
* leave the property unsecured or subject to damage from the element
* use any part of the building or site for on-site storage, parking or any other purpose, without prior agreement with the department or the tenant, as appropriate
* enter or remain in occupied properties if the tenant is not present without prior permission from tenant. If you cannot get this permission promptly, you must discuss this with the department
* try to resolve situations where tenants’ lifestyles affect the work or there are difficulties or disputes with tenants. In such circumstances, you will remain calm and polite, and refer any problems to the department’s project manager.

# Guidelines for tenants

**As a tenant, you have the responsibility to:**

* be polite and courteous towards contractors
* 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 a reasonable time before leaving your property
* restrain or pen your animals or pets if they are a risk to health and safety or 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 if you are asked to do so 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
* respect the rights of others, including contractors, consultants and departmental staff to feel safe. If there is real or likely damage to a contractor’s property or threatening behaviour by tenants or pets, contractors will gather their equipment and leave the property and immediately notify the department
* for programmed maintenance and upgrade works, refer any concerns about the standard of workmanship to the consultant, not the contractor. For any concerns regarding responsive maintenance, call the **Housing
Call Centre** on **13 11 72** **(free call)**
* sign and date ‘Schedule Contract Orders’ (job orders) only after the work is completed
* approach your local office if you are seeking a change to the scope of work. Do not ask contractors or consultants. Maintenance work is determined by the department. It cannot be altered by contractors or consultants
	+ contact your local office if you require more information or assistance with moving and securing your possessions.

# Shared responsibility

* For programmed maintenance and upgrade works, contractors and tenants jointly inspect furniture and appliances in the work area and note any existing damage before work commences.
* If you witness illegal acts, including domestic violence or the harm or abuse of children or young people, you will need to ensure your personal safety. You are to call the police, ambulance or other appropriate emergency services. You also need to inform the department.
	+ Where theft is alleged, report the incident to the police and to the department.

# Breach of the code

For tenants who believe a contractor is in breach of this code, **contact your local office** in the first instance so that the consultant or project manager can take appropriate action.

If you are the contractor and you believe a tenant is not complying with these guidelines, you may also take action and contact the department’s project manager.

If breaches of the code are not satisfactorily resolved through your local office or by the department’s project manager, you can call the department’s Complaints and Privacy Unit on **1300 884 706 (free call)** or email Complaints and Privacy Unit  <complaints.reception@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

To receive this publication in an accessible format, call 1300 475 170, using the National Relay Service (13 36 77) if required.

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Available on the Housing website’s [Request maintenance and repairs page](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjkau1405%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5Cnotes81ADC1%5CRequest%20maintenance%20and%20repairs%20page) <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/request-maintenance-and-repairs>

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