# H10. DURING A TENANCY - REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

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|---|---|
| Content: | Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation Policies and Procedures |
| Version: | 2.0 |
| Section: | Housing |
| Applies To: | Board, Management and Staff of all IAC Services |
| Date: | March 2011 (Review March 2014) |

## Background and Purpose

The IAC's Housing policies articulate our aims, goals and philosophies in providing housing services for Aboriginal tenants and their families. They explain how the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation works with its staff and other agencies to ensure that our tenants are afforded the best and most appropriate services and that we meet all of the requirements of the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Office of Community Housing.

## Principle

Tenants can expect the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation to provide them with premises that are in good condition and to maintain that condition through the life of the tenancy. Tenants are expected to take good care of their premises and to take responsibility for property damage other than that caused by fair wear and tear or the criminal activity of a third party.

## Types of Repairs & Maintenance

*The IAC grades maintenance to its houses as:*
- urgent repairs & maintenance
- non urgent responsive repairs & maintenance
- planned or cyclical repairs & maintenance

## Urgent Repairs & Maintenance

*Urgent R&M is where:*
- there is an immediate threat of danger due to health, safety or security risks. Examples include broken windows, sewerage leaks and gas leaks
- there is a threat to the safety or security of the tenant. Examples include doors that can't be locked, dangerous ceiling fans and dangerous steps
- essential items are not working. Examples include Hot Water service, faulty cooking appliances (where the IAC has provided these appliances) and blocked sewerage
- the lack of an immediate repair would see the problem escalate causing additional cost to the IAC. Examples include taps that are leaking excessively. Tenants are required to notify the IAC or its agent as soon as they notice excessively leaking taps so as to prevent large water bills.

## Urgent Repairs & Maintenance (cont)

Where urgent repairs are required the tenant should immediately contact the IAC or its agent. The IAC or its agent will assess whether the repair is urgent and, using a list of essential repair services, will arrange for the repair to be completed as soon as possible. The Housing Sub Committee will review all urgent repairs during the previous period.

## Tenant cannot contact IAC or its agent

If there is an immediate threat such as a gas leak or hot water spray leak and the tenant cannot contact the IAC or its agent (eg outside of business hours), the tenant has permission to call the appropriate repair service (using the list provided at the start of their tenancy) and to organise immediate repairs. The tenant must contact the IAC or its agent as soon as possible to notify them of the issue. Tenants are expected to make a reasonable assessment of the risk and urgency of the required repairs.

## Alternative accommodation

If the repair represents a significant threat to the safety and security of the tenant and the repair cannot be completed within a maximum of five working days, the tenant may request that the IAC provide them with alternative accommodation until the repair work is completed. The IAC will assess each request on its merits and will organise and cover the cost of the alternative accommodation. The tenant is still liable for the rent on their property while they are in alternative accommodation.

## Budgeting

The IAC makes provision in its annual budget for Urgent Repairs & Maintenance.

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## Non urgent responsive repairs & maintenance

*… is where the repair is:*

- not an urgent repair
- part of a planned maintenance program but the IAC has determined that the repair cannot wait until the planned date
- an unplanned maintenance issue that, although not an immediate threat, impacts on the tenants common use of the property. Examples include leaking taps, cracked wall tiles and faulty clothes lines

The tenant should notify the IAC or its agent as soon as possible after the repair issue is discovered. The IAC or its agent will assess the repair issue and endeavour to complete the maintenance within 20 working days from notification.

Where the repair issue represents a substantial cost to the IAC, the IAC will assess whether there are sufficient funds available to complete the repair in the short term and if there is a cheaper temporary solution that can be enacted until sufficient funds are available.

## Tenant Requests for Repairs

All request for non urgent responsive repairs and maintenance must be sent to the IAC using the standard request form included with the tenancy package. The Housing Sub Committee will assess all requests for repairs and maintenance. Where the repair costs are within the delegated authority limits of the Housing Sub Committee the committee can authorise these repairs. Where the repair costs exceed the delegated authority limits the committee must make a recommendation to the Board for the repairs to go ahead.

## Non urgent responsive repairs & maintenance (cont)

## IAC or Agent Requests for Repairs

If IAC staff or agents note a required repair or maintenance issue during a property inspection or other visit they must complete the request for repairs form with or without the tenant.

Staff and agents will inform the tenant that the request will go to the Housing Sub Committee for review and that they will be informed of the committee's decision.

Staff and agents must be aware of and declare any conflict of interest in preparing a request for non urgent repairs and maintenance. Where there is a familial or other connection to the tenant the Housing Sub Committee may request that a neutral staff member visit the property to assess the need for repairs and maintenance.

The Housing Sub Committee will assess the staff or agent request for repairs and maintenance. Where the repair costs are within the delegated authority limits of the Housing Sub Committee the committee can authorise these repairs. Where the repair costs exceed the delegated authority limits the committee must make a recommendation to the Board for the repairs to go ahead.

## Budgeting

The IAC makes provision in its annual budget for Non Urgent Responsive Repairs & Maintenance. The Housing Sub Committee also reviews expenditure and activities by property to identify any potential issues of over or under servicing or endemic repair issues.

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## Planned or cyclical repairs & maintenance

The IAC plans for the long term maintenance of significant items within all of its properties.

*Planned or cyclical maintenance includes:*
- the replacement of carpets, blinds and hot water systems
- the removal of trees that are encroaching on sewerage or water services
- internal and external painting
- the replacement of bathroom, kitchen and laundry tiles
- the replacement of integral appliances such as stoves

Maintenance of items in the planned maintenance program may be completed earlier if the IAC determines that the repair cannot wait until the planned maintenance date and if there is sufficient funds available. The planned maintenance items may be deferred if the relevant items are in better condition than expected at the planned maintenance date. If a planned maintenance item is deferred, the IAC will review the condition of the item at each property inspection and arrange the maintenance as required. The IAC maintains a register of all planned and cyclical maintenance by property and year.

## Budgeting

The IAC makes provision in its annual budget for Planned or Cyclical Repairs and Maintenance.

### Cyclical Maintenance calculation
The IAC will take into account the Housing NSW rates for calculating Cyclical Maintenance but will use the IAC Standard rate which will be set by the Board of the IAC annually. This rate will be between 0.5% and 2.5% of the value of the actual building (but not the land).

## Contractors

The IAC and its agent will provide tenants with a list of recommended contractors for all urgent repair issues including emergency numbers. Tenants are requested to use only those contractors on the recommended list unless the contractor cannot be contacted or is unable to attend the premises in the required time.

The recommended list of contractors is a list of our preferred contractors that have a record of quality work with the IAC and where the IAC maintains records of their licences and insurances.

## Contractors - Quality of Work

The IAC aims to ensure that you as the tenant and we as the property owner achieve good standards of workmanship (based on AHO quality standards) and value for money.

Depending on the nature of the repair the IAC may:
- contact the tenant to seek feedback on the quality of the repair or maintenance
- inspect the quality of the repair or maintenance ourselves
- seek a qualified opinion on the quality of the repair or maintenance where that is in doubt

We use tenant feedback and our own assessments to select preferred contractors and to give them feedback on the way they conducted their work.

## Tenants with Special Needs

The IAC encourages its tenants to make the organisation aware of any relevant health problems and disabilities within their household that may impact on the perceived urgency of repairs and maintenance. Where the tenant provides any health or personal information this information must be stored securely and confidentially and only be available to the Housing Sub Committee when making decisions about repairs and maintenance on the property.

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## Major Repair Work

Where major repair work has been identified through the cyclical maintenance plan or in response to an urgent or non urgent request by the tenant, the IAC will:

- discuss all plans with the tenant
- seek appropriate council or government approval
- seek two or more quotations from licensed contractors
- select the preferred contractor at the Housing Sub Committee level based on a number of factors including price, timeliness and cultural awareness
- approve a purchase order for specific works based on quoted values
- arrange a schedule of works based on the urgency of the work, contractor availability and tenant access times
- attempt to minimise disruption to the tenant by completing the work in stages if requested by the tenant, completing the work on certain days or times or providing alternative accommodation for the duration of the major works.
- ensure that the work complies with Australian Standards and the AHO Housing Guidelines and is acceptable to the tenant and the IAC.
- seek tenant feedback on the major repair process including any suggestions for improvement
- review the repair process using indicators such as tenant satisfaction, timeliness and price

## Major Repair Work (cont)

The IAC maintains good working relationships with Sydney Water, Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama City Councils and other utilities so that all required maintenance work is completed on a timely basis.

## COMPLIANCE

*This policy complies with:*
- NSW Housing Act 2001
- NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010

## REFERENCES

*This policy should be read with:*
- **Housing NSW** "During a Tenancy Policy"
- **National Regulatory Code** - 2. Housing Assets, (c) planning and undertaking responsive, cyclical and life-cycle maintenance to maintain property conditions (asset maintenance)