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| Maintenance Manual  Chapter 3: Responsive Maintenance  October 2017 |
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Department of Health

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| 1.0 |  | October 2017 | Incorporation of 'version control table' Accessable format |
| 1.1 | 3.2.14 - Maintenance for properties managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria | October 2018 | Updated guidance regarding the maintenance of Aboriginal Housing Victoria properties |

# 3.1 Responsive Maintenance Policy

## 3.1.1 Introduction

Responsive maintenance is day-to-day maintenance or repair works that are carried out on tenanted or vacant public housing and community-managed properties in response to requests for such works, to restore an item or component to its working condition.

The Director of Housing (the Director) as landlord is responsible for maintaining tenanted properties in good repair. Where repair works result from fair wear and tear, such works are undertaken by the department of Health and Human Services (the department), as per the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA) (s.68).

Responsive building maintenance is carried out for high-rise, medium-density and older persons housing developments, for repairs to common facilities, for example, laundries, boiler services and external lighting.

Responsive maintenance is carried out immediately and completed within 24 hours for urgent works, within seven days for priority works or within 14 days for non-urgent works.

This chapter covers the policy and procedures for:

* the roles of the superintendent’s representatives in carrying out responsive maintenance works
* determining whether the maintenance work will be completed as responsive maintenance or programmed works
* arranging for urgent and non-urgent maintenance works to be completed
* responding to complaints and disputes from contractors and tenants.

Note: The Director as landlord is responsible for responsive maintenance of all public housing properties, including leased properties occupied by public housing tenants. However, replacement of capital expenditure items is generally considered to be the responsibility of the owner/agent. Refer to the [Leased Properties](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual) in the Tenancy Management Manual < https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual>.

## Contractor performance

Contractor performance is monitored by the superintendent’s representative who liaises between the tenant and the head contractor to ensure that all maintenance works are carried out within the conditions of the contract and comply with trade specifications.

## The superintendent’s representative

The position of the superintendent’s representative is held by nominated departmental staff who liaise with the tenant and contractor in carrying out responsive maintenance works, [see Contractor Management.](#_Contractor_management)

The following staff positions are nominated as the superintendent’s representative within the responsive maintenance contracts:

* Housing Manager (HM) or equivalent
* Tenancy and Property manager or equivalent
* Team leader
* Field Services Officer (FSO)
* Housing Services Officer (HSO)
* Housing Call Centre management and staff (HCC)
* Compliance Officer

The superintendent’s representative is responsible for:

* issuing job orders to the head contractor
* issuing variations and additions to job orders
* confirming whether the instructed works are completed satisfactorily
* issuing directions for non-performance and rectification of unsatisfactory works,

as detailed in the Schedule of Rates.

## The superintendent

The superintendent manages the contract between the Director and the head contractor. Issues that cannot be resolved between the head contractor and superintendent’s representative are referred to the superintendent.

## Delegations for responsive maintenance

Maintenance works are approved by nominated staff of the department of Health and Human Services in accordance with their delegated authority in the **Housing Act 1983 (HA)** – Instrument of Delegations.Delegated authorities to order works and goods for public rental properties are listed in Table 3.1 below.

**Delegated authorities for maintenance works and goods**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Department of Health and Human Services staff grade** | **Schedule of rates (SOR) items (maximum)** | **Not on schedule (NOS) items (maximum)** |
| • HSO1-3, FSO, Area Office  • VPS2-3, HCSOU, HCSOQ1-2, Housing Call Centre | $5,000 | $5,000 |
| • VPS4, Area Office  • VPS4-5, Housing Call Centre | $10,000 | $10,000 |
|  VPS5, Area Office | $15,000 | $15,000 |
| • VPS6, Area Office  • Manager, Housing Call Centre | $50,000 | $50,000 |
| • Assistant Directors, Individual and Family Support  • Assistant Directors, Residential Client Services | $100,000 | $100,000 |
| • Area Directors | $500,000 | $500,000 |

Table 3.1

## 

## Budgets for responsive maintenance

The Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for the cost of repairs where the damage is due to fair wear and tear. Responsive maintenance works are assigned the ‘Responsive Maintenance’ Category of Work (CoW) in the Housing Integrated Information Program (HiiP) Repairs system, and are charged to the Responsive maintenance budget.

Maintenance works are assigned to the ‘Insurance’ CoW and are charged against the Insurance budget code when there is an incident report to show that the damage to the property was caused by, say, a storm or accidental fire. In the case of damage caused as a result of a robbery or squatters, a police report is required.

The department may include non-urgent responsive maintenance works in its planned works program, such as asset protection and community facilities. These works are assigned to their respective Categories of Work and charged to the appropriate budget codes.

## Requests for responsive maintenance

When a tenant or their representative requests repairs or maintenance works to be completed on their property, the department assesses the type of work required and the timeframe for completion. Usually this is determined by the nature of the work required.

The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA) (s.3)* defines “urgent repairs”, and states that the landlord must arrange for these works to be completed immediately. The department arranges for all urgent works to be completed within 24 hours.

The department is required to complete non-urgent maintenance works and general repairs within 14 days of being given notice of repair.

Tenants can request the Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) to conduct an investigation if the landlord has not carried out the repairs within 14 days. If CAV have conducted an investigation, the tenant has received an inspection report from the Director of CAV and the work has not commenced, the tenant has 60 days in which to make an application to Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for the repairs to be completed, as per the **RTA (s.74).**

Non-urgent works that are considered to be capital improvements to the property, for example, external painting, are included in future or current programmed works contracts.

Capital improvement works or maintenance works that are scheduled for completion in the future are referred to as programmed works.

## Categories of maintenance work

## Urgent maintenance works

The following repairs are categorised as ‘urgent’ in accordance with the **RTA (s.3(1))**

* a burst water service
* a blocked or broken sewerage system or toilet
* a serious roof leak
* a gas leak
* a dangerous electrical fault
* flooding or serious flood damage
* serious storm or fire damage
* a failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to the rented premises
* a failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance, provided by the landlord, on the rented premises for hot water, cooking, heating or laundering. For example, a total washing machine/dryer failure in communal laundries or a burst hot water service
* an appliance, fitting or fixture provided by the landlord that uses or supplies water that is malfunctioning in a way that results, or will result, in a substantial amount of water being wasted
* a serious fault in a lift (high-rise estates) or staircase in the rented premises
* any fault or damage that makes the rented premises unsafe or insecure. The following works are examples of what must be completed as urgent works due to the health or safety risk posed to the tenant or a household member:
* a faulty or broken smoke alarm
* serious damage to external doors, windows or side gates
* a blocked rubbish chute in a high-rise estate
* a serious fault in external stairs, handrails, ramps, pathways which could result in personal injury
* faulty internal grab rails or shower seats
* public lighting
* lost, stolen or misplaced keys
* any damage of a prescribed class.

Note: There is currently no standard definition for the term ‘prescribed class’. Damage of a prescribed class is determined by VCAT on a case-by-case basis.

Urgent jobs are raised to commence immediately and to be completed within 24 hours. If necessary, the head contractor is contacted directly and requested to attend the property to complete the repairs.

In some circumstances, urgent works cannot be completed within 24 hours, for example, where large-scale sewerage or drainage works are required. If the property requires such works, an assessment is made as to whether the tenant requires alternative housing while the works are being completed.

There are repair works which comprise urgent and non-urgent components. For example, a lock change that needs to be made to a badly-damaged security door is considered urgent. The replacement of the security door is then given priority status.

## Priority maintenance works

Priority works are to be completed within seven calendar days so that the maintenance works do not become urgent repairs.

When determining whether non-urgent maintenance works should be completed as a priority, the department considers whether:

* there would be a significant decrease in the level of the amenity provided to the tenant
* future costly repairs could be required if the maintenance works are delayed.

For example, a partial appliance failure such as one stove hotplate not working is repaired as priority works so that the tenant is not inconvenienced for an extended period.

Alternatively, a breakdown of a washing machine or clothes dryer in a communal laundry where one or more machines can still be used is completed as priority works to ensure that the remaining machines are not placed under stress through overuse.

## Non-urgent maintenance works

The **RTA (s.14)** requires that non-urgent maintenance works or repairs are completed within 14 calendar days from the date the works are requested. Examples of works completed as non-urgent maintenance works include:

* damage to clothes line or hoist
* internal door that cannot be closed
* damage to letter box which does not affect the security of the mail
* damage to floor coverings where the damage is not such that the household’s immediate health or safety is affected
* damage to cupboards.

Non-urgent maintenance works are exempt from the 14-day timeline if the works are listed in the future as programmed works.

## Programmed works

Programmed works are non-urgent works that maintain or improve an amenity, or maintain the expected life of a property. They are carried out in a planned and systematic manner.

Programmed works may include the following:

* internal or external painting
* full or part replacement of floor coverings
* major window, fencing and other carpentry works
* structural works
* roof repairs installation of security doors
* upgrades or repairs to kitchens or bathrooms
* major or full aids, adaptations and disability modifications
* upgrade of public areas and community rooms.

An assessment of a property’s existing condition is made by the local housing office in conjunction with the Property and Assets Branch to develop and prioritise the annual program for programmed maintenance and upgrades, as detailed in the [Property Condition Assessments Chapter](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/maintenance-manual) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/maintenance-manual> in this manual.

## Tenant responsibility maintenance

The department aims to recover costs where repairs to a tenanted or vacant property are necessary as a result of damage or neglect caused during a tenancy, as per the **RTA (s.210, 452).**

Where a property has been placed on a works program managed by Property and Assets Branch, the department may carry out the repair works as part of the programmed maintenance contract.

When the department raises a job order (formerly schedule contracts order) for damage to a property or amenity that is considered to be the responsibility of the tenant, the work is raised as a Maintenance Claim Against the Tenant (MCAT), as outlined in the **Tenant Property Damage Chapter**. The department makes an application to the Victorian Consumer and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to seek an Order for Compensation when the contractor has completed repairs to the property and final costs of the repairs have been established.

Note: For properties which are leased by the Director, the Director acts as landlord to the public and community housing tenant in the property, and as tenant to the owner of the property. The owner of the property can raise claims against the Director for damage caused by public and community housing tenants.

## Aids, adaptations and disability modifications

A tenant or household member can request aids, adaptations or disability modifications where their existing housing presents a health or safety concern for the household member with special needs.

Aids and adaptations fall into three categories:

* Minor – handrails, hand held shower sets, small ramps
* Major – bathroom modifications, works requiring structural permits or Council certification
* Full – paths, ramps, kitchen and/or bathroom upgrades, full wheelchair access, hoists,

Where the health and safety of tenants or household members are placed at serious risk, works are completed as urgent minor modifications.

Major and full modifications, and specialised works that require a structural permit or council certification approval are referred to Property and Assets Branch for approval.

Refer to section *3.3.10* in this chapter for more information on the department’s approval process.

## After-hours urgent maintenance

The department provides an after-hours maintenance service for emergency works. These are specified as urgent maintenance works as defined under the *RTA (s.3).*

## Contractor communication

The aim of communication between the Department of Health and Human Services and the head contractor is to give instruction on maintenance work to be carried out and to resolve any issues on property maintenance.

Contractor communication is used in:

* issuing, changing or cancelling job orders
* carrying out property inspections
* ensuring the satisfactory completion of job orders
* ensuring timely and accurate payments are made to the head contractor.

Communication between housing staff and the head contractor is carried out electronically via the department’s HiiP Repairs system, and covers the following areas of maintenance works:

* Inspect and report (I & R)
* Recall notices
* Superintendent’s site instruction (SSI)
* Issue of and variations to job orders
* Not on schedule (NOS) works
* Job cancellations
* Invoicing and payment.

## Inspect and report (I & R)

An I & R contains information on the condition of an item which is in need of repair, to be used to determine if the item is to be replaced or repaired, or to determine the actual or extent of works required, as detailed in the **SOR.**

All I & Rs on works are to be submitted by the contractor to the department within two working days. If an I & R is requested for an urgent job, for example, a gas leak, the report is to be submitted within 24 hours.

## Recall notices

The defects liability period for completed works by the head contractor is six months and commences on the date that the works are certified, as detailed in the **SOR**.

A recall notice is raised to notify the contractor that works performed are perceived or deemed to be defective or incomplete. It may be issued at any time prior to the expiration of the defects liability period.

The contractor must attend the site and make repairs within the specified timeframe on the recall notice. If no timeframe is specified, the contractor must attend and make repairs within seven days.

Refer to [*Contractor Communication*](#_Contractor_communication) in this chapter for more information on recall notices.

## Superintendent’s site instruction (SSI)

An SSI is issued to the contractor to rectify defective works where a response to a recall notice has not been received or where attendance has not occurred within the specified timeframe in the recall. For example, a leaking tap that has been repaired continues to leak, or the contractor has not attended to a job within the specified timeframe, as detailed in the **SOR**.

Refer to [*Contractor Communication*](#_Contractor_communication) in this chapter for more information on superintendent site instructions.

## Varying a job

Variations to job orders may be initiated by either housing staff on behalf of the tenant or by the contractor within the general scope of the contract, as detailed in the **SOR**.

Where the cost variation to work within the original intent of the job order is no more than $500, the contractor may proceed with the work without obtaining authorisation from the superintendent’s representative.

## Hold points

Hold points are points or stages of the instructed work beyond which the work may not proceed without review and approval by the superintendent’s representative. The contractor must give sufficient notice, as determined by the priority of the job, to the superintendent’s representative of reaching the nominated hold point, as detailed in the **SOR**.

Where the cost variation to the work within the original intent of the job order is estimated to be over $500, the job is put on hold and approval from the superintendent’s representative is recommended.

Note: The authorisation for a variation to a job order (Contractor Authority) can only be given by the local Office/HCC that raises the order.

## Schedule of rates (SOR)

The **SOR** is the Schedule of Rates and trade specifications in the contract between the Director and the head contractor, for maintenance works carried out on public housing and community-managed properties.

Most repair works are covered by the SOR, and jobs for SOR items are raised directly in HiiP Repairs.

## Not on schedule (NOS) works

Works that the contractor may be requested to carry out which are not covered by any of the listed SOR items or other written, negotiated or agreed rate, are referred to as **NOS works**. NOS works can be undertaken by the head contractor or a selected casual contractor.

NOS quotations are required for:

works up to the value of $1,000 - one written itemised quotation from the head contractor or casual contractor

works over $1,000 - a minimum of three written quotations from separate contractors, including the head contractor and an independent cost estimate by the FSO.

Simple Works Tenders On-line is used to create, store, manage and report on all Simple Works tenders and activity. See *3.3.3* of this chapter.

The HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents/HCC Manager has the discretion to refer works to Property and Assets Branch. Such works may include those that require a building permit, and non-urgent and essential works over $3,000 which could be included in a future works program.

## Invoicing and payment

Once a job has been completed satisfactorily, the head contractor sends the invoice electronically to the department for approval and payment in accordance with the terms of payment and schedule of rates.

Refer to the **Contractor Payment Chapter** of this manual for more information on invoicing and payment.

## No access

## The contractor cannot gain access to the property

The contractor is required to make up to two attempts to contact the tenant to carry out the maintenance work on the property. They are required to make prior appointments with the tenant to gain entry to the premises to carry out the work in the works order, as per the SOR.

If the first attempt to gain access to the property is not successful, a contractor calling card is left requesting that the tenant contact the contractor to arrange an alternative date and time. If the contractor’s attempt to gain access fails a second time, the contractor advises the local Office/HCC that raised the job, and the job may be cancelled.

## Contracted maintenance services

The contracted maintenance services provided by the department of Health and Human Services are managed by Contract Management Services, Property and Assets Branch. All requests for contracted maintenance services in public and community managed properties and common areas are managed by the Housing Call Centre.

These services include:

* Cleaning and gardening, mainly in high-rise estates
* Security services, mainly in high-rise estates
* Communal lawns and gardens
* Vacant land maintenance
* Contaminated waste disposal
* Fumigation and pest extermination
* Removal of asbestos
* Tree trimming.

## Landscaping and garden, and vacant land maintenance

Landscaping works are completed for new housing developments and when the department redevelops or upgrades a housing estate. The landscaping forms part of the overall project and is completed by contracted landscape consultants on behalf of Property and Assets Branch.

Garden maintenance is carried out for high-rise, medium-density, older persons housing developments and for properties that are being sold by the department. The department does not provide garden maintenance for separate houses or properties that are part of an owners’ corporation.

Grass maintenance for vacant land owned by the Director is carried out as part of the garden maintenance contract.

## Asbestos

Prior to demolition or major upgrade works, the department undertakes asbestos audits in all properties built before 1987. All asbestos audits are recorded and retained on file.

If asbestos handling and/or removal work is required, the department engages qualified contractors to do the work safely in accordance with regulations and guidelines, as per the **SOR**

Where asbestos is suspected during maintenance works, the contractor notifies the department and may undertake testing. Any asbestos works are conducted in accordance with legislative and statutory regulations and guidelines.

## General pest control

The department carries out limited pest control services for public housing properties. Generally, pest control services are provided to common shared areas, such as common gardens, playgrounds, foyers and communal laundries. For individual properties, the department provides the pest control service as required,

* + as directed by a local authority
  + where an infestation occurs across multiple dwellings
  + where there is an immediate danger to tenants, the public or the property, such as termite or borer infestation, or wasp nests.

Control of pests such as cockroaches, mice, fleas, ants and spiders is the responsibility of the tenant in individual properties.

Note: Eradication works that are arranged by the tenants at their own expense are to be carried out by a licensed pest control agent.

## Termites or borer infestation

Termite or borer extermination is considered urgent maintenance, and is to be carried out immediately by a registered qualified pest or termite control agent.

Termite extermination works are managed by Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch.

Maintenance for lifts and automatic doors

The department contracts out the service of lifts and automatic doors located at high-rise and medium-density older persons housing developments.

The contract to service lifts and automatic doors is managed by Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch.

## Maintenance for high-rise boilers

The department services boilers located at high-rise and medium-density older persons housing developments in the metropolitan area. Boiler services are also provided in walk-up housing developments in the country region.

Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch, is responsible for the management of contracts for boiler plant maintenance services.

Car parking signs

In accordance with the *HA (s.5),* the department can provide car parking areas on estates for residents, emergency vehicles, contractors, residents with disabilities and departmental staff.

The department installs car-parking signs so that all drivers entering the estate are aware of the parking regulations for the area. All standard signs use symbols consistent with local government standards and include the statement: ‘Authorised by the Director of Housing’, as per the [Tenancy Management Manual](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual) < https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual>.

Signs relating to parking restrictions such as an ‘S’ in a circle with a slash through the ‘S’ indicating ‘No Standing at Any Time’, are red on a white background. All other signs are black on a white background. The standard Department of Health and Human Services ‘No Standing’ sign is 450 mm x 600 mm and includes the statement: ‘Department of Health and Human Services Contractor and Emergency Vehicles excepted’.

At the entrances to all estates, a standard ‘Owner Onus’ parking sign, 600 mm x 600 mm, black writing on a white background, is installed stating:

* Departmental estates
* Parking of vehicles on any portion of this estate, including parking areas and carriageways is controlled by the provisions of the HA. Owner onus applies.
* Maximum penalty for infringement $25.00
* Authorised by the Director of Housing.

## Non-standard fixtures and fittings

Non-standard fixtures and fittings are items or amenities which are not part of the rented premises. They may be located internally or externally, such as air-conditioning, light fittings, curtains or a carport. Tenants can apply to have non-standard fixtures or fittings installed in their rented property.

The tenant must obtain the department’s approval in writing before non-standard items can be installed. If approval is given, the tenant is responsible for the installation and maintenance of the items in their public housing property. If additional documentation is required for the works, for example, a Council permit for a pergola, it is the responsibility of the tenant to obtain it at their own expense as per the *RTA (s.64)*.

At the end of the tenancy, the tenant may be required to remove the item. If it is not removed, the department assesses the item to determine if it will be retained.

Any non-standard fixture or item which remains in a property across separate tenancies becomes the property of the Director if not removed. It is the responsibility of the department to maintain the fixture or item. An example of this is a digital TV antenna that has been installed by the department in a multi-storey or new dwelling.

If the property is damaged during the installation or removal of the item, the tenant is responsible for the cost of repairs, as per the *RTA (s.61).*

## Maintenance for properties managed by registered housing agencies

The Department of Health and Human Services is not responsible for the maintenance of long-term properties that are managed by registered housing agencies. Tenants residing in these properties are to report their maintenance issues to their managing agent/landlord.

# Responsive Maintenance Procedures

## 3.2.1 The Housing Call Centre

The department’s Housing Call Centre (HCC) is the primary point of contact for public housing tenants and community housing agencies to report on their maintenance issues. Tel: 131 172. Non-urgent repairs can be reported [on-line](mailto:on-line) via the Housing website or email [callcentre@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:callcentre@dhs.vic.gov.au).

HCC staff is trained to assess the type of responsive maintenance required and to determine whether the job raised in the HiiP Repairs system is an urgent job, a priority job or normal job. The completion date is then determined by the urgency and complexity of the job.

The HCC as the main contact for responsive maintenance, is responsible for:

* responding to calls, emails and on-line requests and complaints about service delivery
* raising and amending job orders
* liaising with the head contractor
* issuing recall notices and superintendent site instructions (SSIs) to ensure the job is completed in accordance with the Schedule of contract
* determining and arranging payments to the head contractor.

## Prior to raising a job order

## Assess the request for maintenance works

Before a job for maintenance works is registered in HiiP Repairs and if the property is not leased by the department, ask the tenant or the person requesting the maintenance works to provide details of the required works, the reason the works are required and if applicable, how the damage occurred.

Assess the works to determine whether they are urgent, priority or non-urgent by asking relevant questions about the problem. For example, if the tenant states that their bathroom tap is dripping, ask whether enough water is dripping to fill a glass in a day or in an hour, and if it is the hot or cold tap.

If the works are not urgent, determine whether they should be completed as minor capital or programmed works to be undertaken by Property and Assets Branch.

## Non-standard fixtures or items

All requests for the installation of non-standard fixtures or items are processed by the local Housing Office or COMAC. The tenant applies for such maintenance works by completing an *Internal/External Works Permit Application Form*. Check that the appropriate documentation has been submitted with the application and it is signed and dated. Arrange for the FSO to conduct an inspection of the property, where necessary. Submit the form and required documentation, such as council permits, to the Tenancy and Property Manager/HM or equivalents/Property and Assets Branch for approval.

If the tenant requests maintenance works on a non-standard fixture, check in HiiP if it was ‘gifted’ to them by the Director at the start of their tenancy. In accepting the ‘gift’, the tenant is the legal owner and it is their responsibility to repair and maintain the item.

Refer to the [Vacant Unit Maintenance](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/maintenance-manual) < https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/maintenance-manual> Chapter in this manual for more information on items ‘gifted’ by the Director.

## Check whether the works have already been arranged or are completed

Prior to raising a new job in HiiP Repairs, check the ‘Job History’ of that property to determine whether the property is leased, and whether the works requested:

* have already been registered
* have been completed
* are covered by the ‘Defects Liability Period’, that is, works which were completed within the last six months.

## Determine the appropriate Type and Category of work

Determine the *Maintenance Category of Work* that describe the works, for example, ‘Building Works’ and ‘General Repairs’, and if the tenant is responsible for the cost of the maintenance works, record this in the ‘MCAT’ box.

For example, if the tenant states that their rotary clothesline is broken, ask them which component of the clothes line requires repair and how the damage occurred. If a tree branch falling onto the clothesline during a storm caused the damage, the department is responsible for the cost of the repairs, and the works are charged to the insurance budget. Record the reason for this action in the Work Instruction/Description field in HiiP Repairs. However, if the damage was caused by children swinging on it, the tenant is responsible for its repair or replacement. The works are charged against the responsive maintenance budget and an MCAT added to the job. Refer to [Tenant property damage](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/maintenance-manual)<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/maintenance-manual> in this manual.

## The works have already been arranged

If the job has been created, check the date the job was registered and the priority status given to the works, that is, urgent, priority or non-urgent maintenance works. If the status is ‘urgent’ and the works have not been completed within the requisite 24-hour period, issue an SSI to the contractor via Contractor Memo in HiiP Repairs, to include:

* details of the works required
* the timelines for the completion of the works.

For public housing maintenance, the HSO/HCC may liaise with the Team leader or FSO of the local Office if further advice is required. Community housing agencies contact COMAC on community housing maintenance issues.

Where there is a contractor’s file in the local Office /HCC, information related to the head contractor or their sub-contractors is maintained in this file.

Advise the tenant of the job timelines in HiiP Repairs for a non-urgent job.

If the tenant provides new information and the works are now assessed as urgent or priority, advise the head contractor immediately, and update the job in HiiP Repairs.

If the contractor does not complete the works within the specified timelines, issue an SSI via contractor memo detailing the works required and the timelines for the completion of the works.

## The works have previously been completed

The contractor is required to correct defects on works for a period of six months following the completion of the works, as per the SOR.

If it is established that the completed works are defective within the defects liability period, send a recall notice to the head contractor in HiiP Repairs advising that the works completed are perceived or deemed to be defective or incomplete, and need to be rectified. The contractor must make repairs within the timeframe specified in the recall. The contractor completes the job in HiiP Repairs when the works are completed.

If the contractor establishes that the work is neither defective nor incomplete and the reason is satisfactory, record the outcome, resolve the recall notice and raise a new job order.

Note: When the contractor has attended a recall, it is to be resolved and not cancelled. If a recall notice is to be cancelled, the reason for the cancellation must be recorded.

If the contractor has attended a recall but the work has not been completed satisfactorily, advise the head contractor in the memo stream.

If the contractor does not attend a recall, issue an SSI directing that the work be carried out immediately, and completed within the specified timeframe.

## The contractor fails to comply with an SSI

If the head contractor does not comply with an SSI by failing to complete or rectify works within the relevant timelines, notify the HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents/HCC Operations Manager. The HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents/HCC Operations Manager uses the monthly meeting with the contractor or convenes a special meeting to resolve the issue. Record as a contractor memo in HiiP Repairs.

If the matter cannot be resolved at this level, the HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents/HCC Operations Manager may refer the matter to the superintendent for further action.

When the contractor satisfactorily completes an SSI, the contractor advises the local Office /HCC via contractor memo in HiiP Repairs.

If satisfied with the response, record the outcome and resolve the SSI in HiiP Repairs.

An unresolved SSI can be reactivated if the local Office /HCC requires further action from the head contractor.

## An inspection of the requested works may be required prior to raising a job

If unsure about the extent or type of works required, the HCC assesses the condition of the property or amenity from the Property Condition Report. If necessary, the HCC raises a pre-inspection in HiiP Repairs for the local Office, detailing the inspection requirements. A pre-inspection report may also be raised to the FSO within a local housing office.

As part of the Job on Assessment and pre-inspection process in HiiP Repairs, the local Office may send a request to the HCC to raise the works order to the head contractor.

Advise the tenant that the property will be inspected within 14 days for non-urgent works, within seven days for priority works, and within 24 hours for urgent works.

Note: Where a home visit is conducted for a maintenance request, this may be incorporated into the [triennial home visit](http://housing.vic.gov.au/publications/manuals/public-housing-policy-and-procedure-manuals/tenancy-management-manual) requirements.

## Advise the tenant

Once the type of works required has been determined and it is known when the responsive maintenance works will be completed, advise the tenant that:

* the contractor will make contact to arrange a suitable day and time to complete the works
* they should ask the contractor for identification prior to allowing them to enter their home
* the contractor will ask them for their signature to verify that they attended the property and completed the works
* their signature does not verify the quality of the work done by the contractor
* they should contact the local Office /HCC if the works are not completed satisfactorily or within the specified timelines
* action will commence for the recovery of costs for repairs or maintenance works that are considered to be their responsibility.

If the property is in an uninhabitable condition, advise the tenant that action will be taken to assist them with acquiring alternate temporary accommodation for the household.

## Raising a job

## The works have not already been arranged

Check the ‘Job History’ in HiiP Repairs to ensure that the address of the property is correct and that a job has not already been registered for the works. Check the Property Notes for any additional information relating to the maintenance request. If a job does not exist for this work, register the job.

Enter the appropriate Type of Work and priority status, and assign the job to the ‘Responsive Maintenance’ Category of Work.

A scheduled item for ‘Labour’ is also available in the SOR where only labour is required to complete the works. For example, it is anticipated that the labour cost of dismantling and removing an unstable pergola from a property is under $1,000. There is no SOR item for dismantling the pergola and there are no material costs. Thus, only labour rates are included on the job order.

Where a generic code is used in a job, it is important that the work required is detailed as free text in the Work instruction/description field, for example, ‘Unable to close left window in lounge’.

Note: Labour rates are applicable for work up to the value of $1,000. Quotes are applicable thereafter.

Assign the correct priority, *Maintenance Category of Work* to the job. When defining a job in HiiP Repairs, enter details of the job requirements in the appropriate fields.

Enter any instructions for access arrangements in the ‘Special Instructions’ field and if appropriate, a contact telephone number for the tenant.

Note: When entering access instructions in HiiP Repairs, private details of the tenant and household must not be provided to the contractor.

Allocate the job to the head contractor in HiiP Repairs.

## Obtaining quotes for NOS works

Not on Schedule (NOS) works

Check the SOR thoroughly or consult the FSO to make sure that there is not an appropriate item to cover the works before using ‘NOS’ in HiiP Repairs, see NOS Works.

* Works estimated to cost up to $1,000 can be actioned using labour rates.
* Works up to $1,000 require one written itemised quotation from the head contractor or casual contractor. Refer to the HSM for approval.
* Works over $1,000 require three written quotations, including the head contractor. Refer the works to the FSO to obtain quotations and to provide a cost estimate.
* Works estimated to cost over $3,000 which are urgent and essential are managed by the regional offices within their delegated authorities.
* Works estimated to cost over $3,000 which are non-urgent and essential, or works which may require a building permit can be referred to Property and Assets Branch for possible inclusion in future programmed works.

## Simple Works

Simple Works are generally 'Not on Schedule' (NOS) works that fall outside the Schedule of rates and are managed by the local Office. Such works can include the replacement of fences and tree removal.

Refer to the [Fencing Chapter](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual> in the Tenancy Management manual for more information on fencing works.

Where the NOS Simple Works job is raised to the head contractor, the full description of the works required must be entered in the Description field in the Defined Item screen in HiiP Repairs.

All NOS Simple Works jobs to a casual contractor are raised by the local Office. A full description of the works required must be included in the Description field. If the NOS works may impact on staff or contractors’ health and safety, the Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalent is required to sign the Safe Work Method statement to give approval for the NOS works.

Print copies of the job order and any attachment/s. Send them by post, fax or email to the casual contractor, or attach them in a Simple Works job allocated to the head contractor.

## Simple Works quotation

Simple Works Tenders On-line is the department’s centralised quotation document creation application for all Simple Works quotes. The FSO uses it to obtain selective competitive quotations for NOS works, and for works of a complex technical nature.

The number of quotations that the FSO obtains is determined by the cost of the works, in accordance with NOS quotation procedures (see *3.3.1*). The FSO may seek quotations for bundled jobs of the same type, for example, to replace fencing for multiple properties.

The FSO enters all quotes received into the Tender/Quotation Summary sheet, then forwards it to the Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalent for approval of the successful contractor.

Once the Tender/Quotation Summary sheet has been endorsed by the Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalent, the FSO awards the contract to the successful contractor via Simple Works On-line and registers a job for NOS works in HiiP Repairs.

Note: The HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents may impose limits below the delegations in managing their budgets.

## Casual contractor quotes

When a casual contractor is requested to provide a quotation for works, the contractor must produce evidence of a current public liability insurance policy prior to being awarded the tender.

The FSO is responsible for checking the public liability policy to ensure the following are included:

* minimum cover of $10,000,000 per claim
* the coverage applies during the duration of the works and warranty periods
* the Principal, that is, the Director of Housing as an interested party.

Additional insurance required by the casual contractor, where applicable, is WorkCover insurance.

## Fire damage

In the case of fire damage, a Report of Fire Incident Form must be completed by the local Housing Office. This form does not supersede or form part of a ministerial briefing note, which may also be required. Nor does it preclude the requirements of the Incident Reporting departmental Instruction.

All information contained within the Report of Fire Incident Form is considered confidential and must not be released to other agencies, organisations or municipalities without the authority of the Director or a delegated representative.

The Fire incident form must be completed and sent immediately to Fire Risk Management, Property and Assets Branch.

Arrange for a FSO to undertake a technical inspection of the fire damage, and raise jobs in HiiP Repairs for ‘make-safe’ works.

## Access to a property

## The contractor cannot gain access to the property

The contractor is required to make up to two attempts to contact and arrange with the tenant to carry out the maintenance work on the property. They are required to make prior appointments by telephone or in person with the tenant to gain entry to the premises to carry out the work in the works order. If their attempts to gain access to the property are not successful, they are to leave contractor calling cards at the property, as per the **SOR**.

If the contractor’s attempt to gain access fails a second time and they return the works order to the local office /HCC Property and Assets Branch that raised the job, ensure that the documents include proof of the two visits made to the premises, such as the appointment details in the contractor calling cards. Cancel the job as required.

## Gaining access for urgent works

If the job refers to maintenance works that may be a health and safety risk if they are not completed, for example, repairs to electrical wiring, works related to water entry or a gas leak, do not cancel the job order, as per the *RTA (s.86(1)(c)).*

In such circumstances, housing staff at the local Office and Property and Assets Branch can enter the property without the tenant’s permission in order to carry out urgent works. Ensure that the correct legal notice is sent to the tenant, as follows:

* prepare and send a 24-hour Notice to Enter Rented Premises to the tenant in accordance with the requirements in the *RTA*
* ensure that the section of the *RTA* to which the notice applies is specified, and provide a description of the urgent work to be carried out
* write the date and time you will enter the property on the notice.

Arrange a time to visit the property with the head contractor or tradesman to ensure they are given access to the property.

Remain with the head contractor or tradesman until the work is completed.

Where a property has been entered, leave notification in a prominent position (where locks are changed, attach the notice to the front door) advising the tenant of the following:

* why the property has been entered
* contact details of the relevant Office and HSO
* a brief description of who entered the property, that is, department staff, contractor, etc
* the date and time the entry occurred
* that the tenant attend the local Office to discuss the entry
* where it was necessary to change locks, that their front door locks have been changed and that they can come to the local Office to pick up their keys during office hours or call the HCC if the local Office is closed.

## The tenant cannot be contacted

In emergency situations, housing staff may enter the property without providing prior notice to the tenant. An example of this is where gas has been detected in a property but the tenant cannot be contacted. Master keys are used where available. Where master keys are not available, arrange for a contractor to obtain entry to the property and for the locks to be changed as a matter of urgency.

A minimum of two HSOs is required when entering a property under these circumstances. They must remain with any contractors who attend the property at all times, and ensure the property is secured once the work is completed.

Notification of entry must be left in a prominent position. See the section above for details to be included in the notice.

## Varying a job

The head contractor has the authority to complete variations to the job order, provided the additional cost is no more than $500 within the original intent of the order.

If the original job order needs to be amended and the cost variation to the original work order is estimated to be more than $500, the job is put on hold and it is recommended that the contractor make a variation request to the local Office /HCC that raised the job, as per the **SOR.**

If the contractor seeks approval for a variation to the original works, check in HiiP Repairs whether the works have been recently completed or invoiced.

Approve the works if:

* the head contractor provides further information about the maintenance requirements that was not previously available
* the works are necessary
* the works were not recently completed or invoiced.

If a variation is approved, an authority number is assigned to the variation and recorded in HiiP Repairs

Register a new job in HiiP Repairs where the variation requested is outside the original intent of the job order.

If the additional works are of a complex technical nature, raise a request in HiiP Repairs for a pre-inspection by a FSO.

Where works need to be completed urgently, request the FSO to provide advice within 24 hours. Alternatively, request an Inspect and Report (I & R) from the head contractor via contractor memo or obtain details of the work to be done from the contractor and raise the job, as per the *SOR.*

For non-urgent works, request a report and recommendation on the additional works from the FSO within the timeframe for that category of work, that is, 14 days for non-urgent works.

## Hold points

The head contractor requests approval for exceeding the work’s hold points to the local Housing Office /HCC. If approval is given, the Office /HCC that raised the job provides the head contractor with a contractor authority number to carry out the works. The details are recorded in HiiP Repairs and included in the job order.

## Disputes with the contractor

Disputes with the contractor are generally received by the local Office /HCC/Property and Assets Branch as a contractor memo in HiiP Repairs, or as a request for a new job via email or fax.

Disputes between the department and contractor may arise where:

* the standard of work completed does not meet SOR specifications
* the contractor has not met the specified timelines
* the contractor has not completed the job adequately
* the works have not been completed to the department’s standards in an investigation undertaken by the Compliance Unit
* there is disagreement over payment, for example, liquidated damages are applied on a job

The contractor is required to provide information to justify the dispute and request for further action. The office/HCC/Property and Assets Branch has 72 hours to respond once information is received.

## The works cannot be completed to departmental specifications

In some circumstances, the contractor cannot complete the works according to the standards specified in the SOR contract and requires the department’s approval to complete works that have exceeded their ‘hold points’. An example of this is where the contractor recommends that a second-hand door be installed instead of a new door, and the cost of the work results in a significant difference in the actual cost and the cost in the SOR contract.

If approval is given, the contractor obtains an authority number from the local Office /HCC/Property and Assets Branch to complete the work and updates the works order.

If the changes to the specifications are of a complex technical nature, the FSO advises whether the changes should be approved.

The head contractor must include the approval details on the job order returned with the invoice for payment.

If the works can be completed without major changes to the intent of the specifications in the contract, then the department’s approval is not required. For example, the contractor uses a different brand of anti-mould solution to the brand specified in the contract.

Regardless of whether approval for specification changes has been given, the contractor completes a Non-conformance Form. The Non-conformance Form is a record for the department and the contractor as to why the works cannot be completed according to the department’s standards and specifications.

The local Housing Office submits a Compliance Investigation Request to the Wayne Hesline Manager Compliance - Property Condition Audit, Property and Asset Services <[Wayne.Hesline@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:Wayne.Hesline@dhhs.vic.gov.au)> if non-compliance of the SOR is suspected.

All non-conformance forms are to be submitted together with the job order for payment. Scan them into HiiP and store copies in the contractor’s file.

## The works are not completed within the specified timelines

If the works cannot be completed within the specified timelines, the head contractor must advise the department the reason, and when they expect the works to be completed, as per the SOR**.**

The head contractor requests a partial completion of the job via contractor memo in HiiP Repairs. Reasons for the request are included in the memo. The local Office advises the tenant of the delay and the reasons for it.

Examples of when further action should not be taken are:

* the contractor has been unable to gain access to the property
* the tenant has requested that the works be completed at a specified later date.

If the head contractor does not have a valid reason for not meeting the timelines, issue an SSI to the head contractor via contractor memo to complete the works within a specified timeline. Advise the tenant of the timelines, as per the SOR.

If the head contractor does not comply with the SSI and continues to have outstanding works exceeding the relevant timelines, the HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents/HCC Operations Manager uses the monthly meetings with contractors or convenes a special meeting to resolve the issue.

If it is determined that there has been a breach of contract, the matter is referred to the superintendent for further action.

## The works are not adequately completed

When the department becomes aware that the head contractor may not have complied with the instructions in the job, raise a request for an inspection by a FSO.

If the work required is urgent, request the FSO to provide advice within 24 hours. For non-urgent works, request a report and recommendation on the works within the timeframe for the appropriate Category of Work.

Discuss the matter with the head contractor and consider whether:

* the instructions in the job were clear
* the head contractor has taken steps to comply with the instructions given in the job
* the head contractor is waiting for parts to be delivered
* qualified trades people were used by the head contractor to complete the works.

If the head contractor did not adequately complete the works, issue an SSI via contractor memo.

In situations where there are multiple reports of non-conformance for the same contractor, notify the HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents/HCC Operations Manager.

If it is determined that there has been a breach of contract, the matter is referred to the superintendent for further action.

## The works are completed

Once the work is completed by the contractor, the HiiP Repairs-generated job order is signed and dated by the tenant as confirmation that the contractor attended the property and completed the works. The head contractor issues anInspection and Test Plan which is a record of the completed works, and may be used in a compliance audit.

The contractor enters the completion date of the work in the Complete Job screen in HiiP Repairs within 14 days of completion. The head contractor then sends an invoice with copies of job orders and documentation attached, to the local Office /HCC for auditing and payment, at weekly or fortnightly intervals, as per the SOR.

## Managing complaints

The Housing Call Centre is the primary point of contact for tenants with complaints regarding service delivery of maintenance issues. Complaints may be made by tenants about contractors or housing staff, or by contractors about tenants.

The HCC responds to telephone complaints, and attempts to resolve the matter where possible. If the matter is complex or requires a site visit, the matter is referred to the local Office.

Complaints may also be referred to the department’s Housing Complaints Management Unit (CMU)

All complaints are dealt with in accordance with [Complaints Policy](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint),< https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint> and complaints documentation is handled within statutory requirements under the *Public Records Act 1973* and privacy legislation.

Note: The tenant may request an advocate to act on their behalf, in lodging the complaint and in presenting their case.

## A tenant makes a complaint about the contractor

Register verbal or written complaints within 24 hours of receipt of the complaints. Record the details of the complainant, complaint and the outcome.

A system-generated letter is sent to the complainant (or their advocate) as acknowledgement of the complaint within three working days of receipt of the complaint. This letter includes the likely duration of the investigation into the complaint and advises the complainant that the department will provide them with a coordinated response.

Where the complaint is first received by the HCC, the HCC may send the complaint to the local Office /COMAC for action. As part of the first-level investigation, local /Property and Assets Branch staff contact the head contractor to discuss the complaint, and request that they investigate the matter and advise the outcome via contractor memo within five working days. Also contact the tenant or community housing agency to resolve the issue through negotiation as far as possible, either at the local Office or at a home visit.

Enter all investigation actions and responses in HiiP. Scan the documents and store copies in HiiP.

The Tenancy and Property manager or equivalent refers the matter to the superintendent, that is, the Manager, Contract Management Services, for the second-level review where necessary. Some serious matters may also be referred to the Property and Assets Contractor/Consultant Review Panel which meets quarterly.

Depending on the seriousness of the complaint, the matter may be further referred to the Director, Property and Assets Branch, for intervention and advice.

Store copies of all documentation and letters relating to the complaint and the report in the central contractor’s file and HiiP Repairs. Send a letter to the tenant advising them of the outcome within 20 working days from the date of lodgement of the complaint. Notify the complainant if more time is required to resolve the matter.

Note: For responses to complaints regarding after-hours maintenance staff, contact Contract Management Services, Property and Assets Branch.

## A public housing tenant makes a complaint about housing staff

The HCC receives the complaint and forwards it to the local Office for action, if the complaint is about local housing staff. The local Office /HCC conducts an investigation at the first-level review. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalent makes an assessment and determination on its outcome in accordance with [Complaints Policy](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint).< https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint>

## A contractor makes a complaint about a public housing tenant

Register the complaint and contact the head contractor to discuss details of the complaint. Also contact the tenant to resolve the issue through negotiation as far as possible, either at the local Office or at a home visit.

Enter all investigation actions and responses in HiiP. Place copies of all documentation in the contractor’s file, and store scanned copies in HiiP.

If the tenant is in breach of their tenancy agreement, initiate appropriate legal action in accordance with the *RTA* and detailed in the [Tenancy Management Manual](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual>.

## Aids, adaptations and disability modifications

A request for aids, adaptations and disability modifications is to be made in an Application for Special Housing Requirements, to be completed by the treating health practitioner detailing the client’s disability. Additional documentation may also be required to support the application.

The information provided must confirm the need and urgency for the aids, adaptations or modifications and detail the type of modifications required.

If there are inconsistencies in advice or information provided by more than one health professional, contact them all to find out the reasons for the variations and to seek agreement of all parties. Ensure that the client has given authorisation for the collaboration of this information.

As part of the ‘Job on Assessment and Pre-inspection’ process in HiiP Repairs, the responsibility for managing these works in HiiP Repairs is with the HCC. The HCC obtains approval from the local Office /Property and Assets Branch prior to allocating works for minor modifications, for example, grab rails and small ramps.

Where the health and safety of tenants or household members are placed at serious risk, works are completed as urgent works.

If the modifications are going to be costly and require technical expertise or consideration of alternative accommodation options, arrange for a FSO to inspect the property.

The FSO completes and submits a Request for Disability Modifications (including Aids and Adaptations Form to the Tenancy and Property Manager/HM or equivalents requesting that urgent works be completed as soon as possible, or that further technical advice be sought regarding suitable upgrades or other options.

If the works do not require technical specifications, for example, installing grab rails, raise a job in HiiP Repairs for the works to be completed. Enter the disability modifications code ‘DMOD’ in the Category of Work field.

Changes or additions to disability modifications for a property are recorded in HiiP Repairs and maintained by the HSO.

Aids, adaptations and disability modifications fall into three categories: ‘minor’, ‘major’ and ‘full’ Modifications.

## Minor modifications

Access and minor modifications are works requested by tenants who require additional amenity provisions to, or in lieu of, those general amenity standards provided by the department. The Application for special housing requirements is to be completed by the treating health practitioner, such as an OT. Additional documentation may also be required with the application. These works can generally be made to any dwelling, irrespective of its suitability for major/full modifications. These modifications may include, but are not limited to:

* handrails and grabrails
* lever type taps and handrails
* thermostatically-controlled mixing valves
* hand-held shower sets
* minor entry ramps (that is, three steps or less)
* slip-resistant flooring
* visual alarm systems for hearing-impaired tenants.

Note: Modifications that require a structural permit, council certification approval or professional design, should not be undertaken as part of local office maintenance activities. These modifications must be referred to Property and Assets Branch by completing a Request for Disability Modifications (including Aids and Adaptations) Form.

## Major modifications

Major modifications such as bathroom modifications and specialised works that require a structural permit or council certification approval must be referred to Property and Assets Branch by completing a Request for Disability Modifications (including Aids and Adaptations) Form.

Property and Assets Branch also requires the following in assessing the request:

* a completed Application for Special Housing Requirements and supported documentation from a treating health practitioner such as an OT’s report
* an FSO report and recommendation for completion of works.

The suitability of the existing property for major/full modifications must be assessed before such modifications are referred to Property and Assets Branch.

## Full modifications

Full modifications include kitchen and/or bathroom upgrades, and major works for ramps and full wheelchair access.

See ‘Major modifications’ for requirements and procedure.

## Supplied items

## Appliances that are To Be Supplied (TBS)

Appliances covered by a contract with a specific manufacturer are referred to as ‘Supplied Items’ and recorded as ‘TBS’ items in HiiP Repairs.

The Construction Practice Unit, Property and Assets Branch, is responsible for arranging and managing the contracts.

Appliances that are listed as TBS items on a work order may include:

* heaters
* hot water services
* stoves
* washing machines and dryers for communal laundries.

A recommendation to replace an appliance is made by the head contractor in an I & R contractor memo stream, which is attached to the job order that the contractor is attending to. The I & R must contain the following:

* the reason for the appliance to be repaired or replaced
* the scheduled item codes for the installation of the appliance
* the supply catalogue number
* the job priority,

as per the SOR.

Register two jobs in HiiP Repairs for the TBS item after approval has been given to install the replacement appliance.

Register the first job for the installation of the TBS item by the head contractor in the Repairs Job screen. The second job is created for the acquisition of the TBS item for warranty and stock replenishment purposes, in the TBS Job screen.

When defining the jobs, enter the appropriate Type and Category of Work, priority and Item codes.

Note: If more than one appliance is required for the property, raise jobs separately unless the TBS items are from the same supplier.

Once the job is allocated, a purchase order is generated from HiiP Repairs and sent to the supplier and head contractor. Place a copy of the purchase order in a central file for purchase orders and store a scanned copy in HiiP.

Note: the Previous Job Number field to ensure that the head contractor’s address for the delivery of the appliance is correct.

Note: Ensure the correct delivery address is recorded in the job order. A purchase order cannot be cancelled once the appliance has been delivered to the head contractor.

## Warranty on TBS items

All TBS appliances have a warranty period during which the manufacturer is responsible for attending to and rectifying any omission of or defect in the appliance. This may result from the design, workmanship and/or materials for which the manufacturer is responsible.

Warranty periods on appliances generally commence from the delivery date. Check the warranty details listed for individual appliances in the Summary of Supply Contracts (TBS catalogue).

If it is confirmed that a faulty appliance is still under the manufacturer’s warranty, contact the appropriate supplier to arrange repairs. Attach a copy of the purchase order with the request to repair the faulty item. Enter the appropriate follow-up and closure actions in HiiP Repairs in Property Notes, making reference to the job number.

Contact Property and Assets Branch if there are any problems relating to warranty on TBS items.

Lock changes

Requests for all locks to be changed are referred to and managed by the local Office. The After-hours Telephone Referral Service for Emergency Maintenance (AHTRSEM) is to be contacted after-hours on the HCC telephone number 131 172. The HCC does not authorise lock changes without prior approval from the local Office or standby officer who is responsible for confirming the identity of the tenant.

If a tenant requests door locks to be changed, confirm that the person requesting the change is the registered tenant. Consider whether they should be responsible for the costs of changing the locks. For example, if the tenant requests lock changes on three occasions in a short period of time, the department charges them for the lock replacement on the third occasion.

Advise the tenant that for security purposes, they will need to provide identification, preferably with a photograph and a signature, before a job for the locks to be changed can be raised. If this is not available, ask the tenant for their signature and check it in HiiP or against file records.

If a tenant's representative requests locks to be changed, advise the representative that the request will not be processed until the tenant has provided authorisation for the representative to make the request and confirmation of the need for the locks to be changed. The representative will also need to provide identification.

Prior to registering a job in HiiP Repairs, establish the following:

* who receives the new keys
* whether they are picked up by the tenant at the housing office or returned by the contractor at the property
* arrangements to pick up keys after business hours, where applicable.

Register the job in HiiP Repairs and give the works an urgent status. Enter the above information in the Access Details field. Contact the contractor immediately and request the works be completed as soon as possible. Advise them of the arrangements to pick up the new keys.

## Maintenance of community-managed properties

These are properties owned by the Director, leased to or managed by community agencies. They house clients who may have complex support needs, or are in rooming houses or disability accommodation.

Local offices are not responsible for arranging maintenance works on properties funded through the following community housing programs:

* Youth Housing Program
* Rooming House Program
* Group Housing Program
* Crisis Housing Program
* Rental Housing Co-operatives.

Property and Assets Branch, is responsible for maintenance of properties funded through these programs throughout Victoria.

Tenants of community-managed properties contact their community management agency for maintenance during normal working hours.

Requests for responsive maintenance from the community management agency are made to the Housing Call Centre for action. Tel: 131 172.

## Maintenance for properties managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria

Maintenance of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) properties is managed in full by the Aboriginal Housing Board of Victoria (AHBV). Any maintenance requests should be referred to the AHV Call Centre on (03) 9403 2100 or to the [AHV maintenance request e-mail address](mailto:AHV%20maintenance%20request%20e-mail%20address) <[maintenance@ahvic.org.au](mailto:maintenance@ahvic.org.au)>.

## After-hours Telephone Referral Service for Emergency Maintenance (AHTRSEM)

The After-Hours Telephone Referral Service for Emergency Maintenance (AHTRSEM) records and assesses the urgency of maintenance requests received. The service operates on the following basis:

* an after-hours service available between 4.30 pm and   
  8.30 am Monday to Friday
* during weekends, public holidays and local holidays, and for shutdowns caused by industrial disputes.

The HCC telephone number 131 172 is the after-hours contact number.

The AHTRSEM determines if urgent maintenance or repair works are needed and they are authorised to issue job numbers on behalf of the department.

Urgent maintenance works requiring immediate action include:

* all requests for maintenance in Shared Supported Accommodation (SSAs)
* faulty smoke detectors
* any fault or damage that makes the rented premises unsafe or insecure, e.g. serious damage to external doors and windows
* a failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance, provided by the landlord, on the rented premises for hot water, cooking, heating and lighting
* a burst water service
* a blocked or broken sewerage system or toilet
* a gas leak
* a dangerous electrical fault
* flooding.

Maintenance works which are referred to the department’s standby officer include:

* requests for access or repairs from outside agencies, for example, the police
* fire damage
* lock changes and faulty locks
* storm damage.

If the AHTRSEM determines that urgent works are needed immediately, they contact the head contractor who is expected to respond to the call within 30 minutes. If they are unable to do so, or the contractor does not respond within two hours of being contacted, the AHTRSEM contacts the department’s standby officer for further instructions, as per the **SOR**.

If the AHTRSEM determines that the request is not urgent, they advise the tenant that a job will be logged for action the next working day.

The standby officer is rostered on call overnight and at weekends. They may be contacted by the AHTRSEM if the emergency contractor cannot be contacted, or to determine the extent of works required and whether to proceed with the works.

The standby officer is also contacted to provide approval and/or access to a tenant's property using a master key, where applicable, when a lock is to be changed or keys have been misplaced.

In both instances, the standby officer assesses if there is a health or safety risk to the tenant or a household member before approving a lock change or using a master key to provide access.

The AHTRSEM sends a HCC After-hours Report of the previous night’s calls to the HCC. The after-hours call-out sheet details all maintenance requests made to the AHTRSEM, and whether the head contractor attended the maintenance calls.

The HCC is responsible for checking the after-hours sheet, and for raising jobs for urgent and non-urgent works as required. Urgent jobs raised should include the after-hours call-out fee. The call-out fee is included in the **SOR**.

## Maintenance services managed by Contract Management Services

Contract Management Services (CMS), Property and Assets Branch manage a range of term contracts that cover property maintenance, security, gardening, cleaning and grounds maintenance for high-rise and older persons’ estates. Tel: (03) 9096 5465. Email: [Contract Management Services](mailto:ContractManagement%20Services@dhs.vic.gov.au) < ContractManagement Services@dhs.vic.gov.au>.

Contracted services include:

* gardening and vacant land maintenance
* security
* cleaning
* tree trimming and removal
* fumigation or pest control
* detection and removal of asbestos.

All requests for maintenance works managed by CMS are to be made to the Housing Call Centre on Tel: 131 172.

## Landscaping, garden and vacant land maintenance

Gardening services are carried out on common areas in high-rise and some smaller estates. The contracts require that only common areas be maintained to the specified requirements.

Grass maintenance for Director owned vacant land is carried out as part of the garden maintenance contract.

## Security and cleaning

Refer all security and cleaning contract matters to CMS. If required, they are addressed at the bi-monthly meetings held between CMS and the cleaning contractor of high-rise estates.

## A tenant requests the department to trim or remove a tree

If a tenant requests that a tree be removed or trimmed, assess the extent of the damage. If necessary, refer the request to the FSO who will decide whether to consult with the Asset Protection Unit, Property and Assets Branch to determine whether the tree is a health and safety risk.

Consideration is given to one or more of the following:

* the tree is in danger of falling on a house or a public thoroughfare
* it is too close to power lines
* the roots of the tree are causing problems with drainage pipes
* the structural integrity of the property is affected.

If the tree is of a significant age, the department contacts the local council to check whether:

* A council permit is required to remove or trim the trees.
* The tree is listed on the Significant Tree Register. If the tree is on the Significant Tree Register, a tree surgeon is arranged to inspect the tree and provide written recommendations for the care of the tree.

If the tree is not of a significant age and the assessment is that it must be trimmed or removed, the FSO arranges a quote for the work in Simple Works On-line.

If the request is made to the HCC, it is referred to the local Office for action. However, if the tree or a branch has fallen and is due to, say, a storm, the HCC raises a job to the head contractor.

## Fumigation or pest extermination

Ask the tenant why the property needs to be **fumigated** and what type of pest needs to be removed, for example, wasps, termites or bees.

Works of this type are generally only carried out where there is a risk to health and safety, or in estate-style properties, such as high-rise estates.

Where the tenant contacts the HCC to request fumigation or extermination works in multi-dwelling complexes, the HCC refers these requests to the local housing office via a pre-inspection in HiiP Repairs.

## Asbestos

If the presence of asbestos is suspected in a tenant’s home, send a request to the FSO to investigate the matter. Ensure that the tenant is advised, and is informed of asbestos management. The General Specification contained within the SOR outlines the head contractor’s duties in relation to the management of asbestos products, one of which is to immediately notify the local Office of any potential asbestos risks.

If an asbestos audit has been undertaken on the property, provide the head contractor with a copy of the audit prior to the commencement of works.

## Maintenance services managed by Engineering Services

Engineering Services Property and Assets Branch, manage the delivery of emergency and preventative maintenance services and capital upgrade programs in high-rise and walk-up estates.

Maintenance services include:

* lifts and automatic doors
* boiler plants
* fire protection equipment
* spalling works
* sewer repairs
* public lighting.

All requests for maintenance works managed by Engineering Services are to be made to the Housing Call Centre. Tel: 131 172

## Maintenance services for lifts and automatic doors

The Sinclair Knight Merz Group located at 452 Flinders Street, Melbourne 3000, are responsible for lift maintenance and automatic door services. Tel: 1800 066 088.

Refer contractual matters on lifts and automatic doors to Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch. Tel: (03) 9096 5475.

## Maintenance services for boilers

Boiler plants are connected to an automatic monitoring system linked to Engineering Services, Property Management Group, Property and Assets Branch.

If the boiler plant shuts down or the general plumbing contractor requests a shutdown to complete repairs on the hot water system, contact Engineering Services who will arrange for the boiler service maintenance contractor to attend.

Advise the tenants of the date and time the water will be unavailable, and that they are to ensure all taps are turned off during this period.

## Maintenance services for fire protection equipment

If necessary, arrange access to the property by sending a *24-hour Notice to Enter Rented Premises* to tenants by registered post in accordance with the requirements under the RTA (s.88).

If a tenant reports that the fire protection equipment has been damaged, ask them for more information on the cause of the damage and determine if it is tenant responsibility. If the damage was caused by a tenant, raise a job as an MCAT against them, with advice from Engineering Services.

Refer public housing matters on fire protection equipment to Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch.

COMAC manages the maintenance of fire protection equipment in community housing properties.

## Spalling works and concrete housing

The department used pre-cast building techniques for constructing houses and flats in the post war years. The concrete panels are made of lightweight coarse aggregate and normal density sand, the concrete density being approximately two-thirds that of dense aggregate concrete that is made today.

The concrete is porous and permeable permitting the entry of water, oxygen, carbon dioxide and other aggressive gases. The continuous wetting and drying process over time leads to corrosion of the steel reinforcement. The build-up of the corrosion product (rust) eventually results in the concrete cracking and ‘spalling’, that is, the breaking up of concrete.

When extensive spalling is detected, the local Office contacts Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch. The HCC refers matters on spalling works to the local Office.

Engineering Services prepares a report on:

* the cause and extent of the cracking or spalling
* the feasibility and cost of repair.

The information in the report is used by the Tenancy and Property manager or equivalent when assessing long-term housing needs and the costs for maintaining such stock in line with the regional stock management plan.

Where a decision is made to maintain the stock, the repair works are arranged and supervised by Engineering Services.

Because of the risk to health and safety, a specialist contractor carries out façade ‘make-safes’ to high-rise buildings. Loose and semi-loose concrete is removed, and major repair works to high-rise buildings are prioritised in consultation with Property and Assets Branch.

## Sewer repairs

In accordance the RTA (s.3), a blocked or broken sewer service is defined as urgent works. If a tenant reports that they have a blocked sewer, check the job history to determine whether previous sewer repairs have been completed at the property.

Create a job in HiiP Repairs to clear the blockage. Request an I & R on the pipes, if required, as free text in the job.

If the head contractor advises that some replacement works are required, request the FSO to investigate the matter and arrange for the appropriate works to be completed.

Where there is a recurrent issue on an estate, refer the matter to Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch.

## Electrical equipment in common areas

The department is responsible for maintaining electrical equipment in common areas of public housing estates and blocks, for example, public lighting in corridors and playgrounds.

Report matters on public lighting, such as vandalism, to Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch.

## Termites

If a tenant advises the local Office /HCC that they suspect they have a problem with termites, raise a request for the FSO to inspect the property

Once the presence of termites has been confirmed, the FSO completes and sends a *Request for Termite Eradication and Building Rectification Form* to Engineering Services, Property and Assets Branch.

Note: Where there is a dispute over pest extermination of a property, arrange to inspect the property and seek approval from the HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents if extermination works are required.

## Car parking signage

To order new parking signs, contact the contractor and request a quote for the total cost of supplying the parking signs. Create a NOS job detailing the size, colour and type of sign required. Request the signs be delivered to the local Office, as detailed in the [Tenancy Management Manual](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/tenancy-management-manual>.

Once the signs are delivered, request a quote from the head contractor for the total costs for installing the parking signs. Create a job in HiiP Repairs, input ‘Labour Rates’ for the head contractor to install the signs on the estate, ensuring that details of the location for the signs are entered in the Description field in the Register and Define screen.

## Programmed works

## Portfolio Management Group

The Portfolio Management Group, Property and Assets Branch, in consultation with key regional staff, use data from property condition assessments and other needs-based data to develop and prioritise the annual program for programmed maintenance and upgrades. See [Property Condition Assessments](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/maintenance-manual) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/maintenance-manual>.

Properties identified as needing maintenance of a structural nature are referred to the Portfolio Management Group by the FSO in the local Office Property and Assets Branch. The Portfolio Management Group may request an assessment to be carried out by Engineering Services, see Request for Building Movement Investigation.

The local Office may also request Property and Assets Branch to conduct an investigation into building movement in a property, or to assess whether a property should be added to or removed from a current maintenance or upgrade program, see Request for Program Amendment.

## Engineering Services

The report on the condition of a property from Engineering Services may include the following information:

* costs of structural works
* description of architectural or upgrade works required.

The local office and Property and Assets Branch use this information to plan the programmed works to be carried out in the future.

# Appendices

## Contractor Management

The superintendent’s representative

The role of the superintendent’s representative includes:

* responding to tenants’ requests for maintenance
* creating job orders for work in HiiP Repairs
* making job variations for additional or amended work
* issuing directions to the head contractor for non-performance and rectification of unsatisfactory work
* ensuring that instructed works are completed satisfactorily and as scheduled
* determining and arranging payment to the head contractor,

as per the SOR.

Housing staff in the local Office, HCC and Property and Assets Branch in their capacity as the superintendent’s representative public housing maintenance issues are responsible for the following:

* Manage contractor performance through regular meetings with the head contractor, monitoring of overdue job orders and appropriate use of SSIs and recall notices.
* Negotiate the resolution of SSIs. The HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents/Property and Assets Branch/HCC Operations Manager is responsible for negotiating a resolution at a local level and uses the monthly meetings with contractors or convenes a special meeting to resolve the issue.
* If serious matters remain unresolved, the HCC refers the matter to the local Office /Property and Assets Branch. If the matter is still unresolved at this level, the HM/Tenancy and Property Manager or equivalents/Property and Assets Branch refers the matter to the superintendent, that is, the Manager, Contract Management Services.
* Complete the quarterly contractor performance review and submit to the superintendent prior to the quarterly meeting of the Contractor/Consultant Review Panel with the head contractor.

In addition to the above roles, the HCC submits ongoing reports to regions and contractors in relation to the results of customer satisfaction surveys and provides input into the regions’ quarterly contractor performance reviews.

The above issues which apply to community managed accommodation maintenance are discussed and negotiated between Property and Assets Branch management and the contractors at regular meetings held three times a year.

## The superintendent

The role of the superintendent is to:

* negotiate and manage the contract between the head contractor and the Director as agent to the Director
* manage contractor performance if there is no resolution of an issue between the head contractor and the superintendent’s representative
* provide input into the quarterly contractor performance reviews and advises the principal’s representative of the outcome once the issue is resolved.

## Contractor Communication

## Contractor memo function in HiiP Repairs

Communication between the housing staff and the head contractor is via the contractor memo function in HiiP Repairs, to resolve any issues on property maintenance, as per the **SOR**.

This function is utilised in:

* Cancelling works orders and recording partially-completed works.  
  The reason for cancellation or partial completion of the work order is to be given together with an update of the status of the works.
* Requesting I & Rs  
  I & Rs must contain all relevant information, including the TBS catalogue ID, if applicable, to enable a decision to be made to either repair or replace the item.
* Responding to recall notices and SSIs  
  SSIs and recall notices are to include all relevant information, including requests for new job orders.

The head contractor responds to the local Office /HCC/Property and Assets Branch via contractor memo in HiiP Repairs. It is the responsibility of Housing staff to check the memo inbox and to take the appropriate action.

## Inspect and Report (I & R)

An I & R is prepared by the contractor and contains information on the condition of an item which is in need of repair, to be used to determine if the item is to be replaced or repaired, as per the **SOR**.

All I & Rs on works are to be submitted by the contractor to the local Office /HCC/Property and Assets Branch within two working days. If an urgent I & R is requested, the report is to be submitted within 24 hours.

The report is to include a costing based on SOR items and/or a NOS fixed quote for any works that are not covered by the schedule. I & Rs that relate to appliances must also contain information relating to the type of appliance, model and approximate age of the current appliance.

Where the department requires two I & Rs by the one trade, at the same address, on a single order, the contractor will be paid for a single I & R only. An example of this is where a vacant unit I & R is requested on the gas stove, and an I & R on the gas heater, at the one address. Both reports are to be returned to the department with complete details and time frames as specified.

## Recall notice

The defects liability period for completed works by the head contractor is six months and commences on the date that the works are completed. This is the date entered in the works invoice at certification to indicate the commencement of the defects liability period, as per the **SOR**.

A recall notice is raised to notify the contractor that works performed are perceived or deemed to be defective or incomplete. The Manager, Contract Management Services, as the superintendent may issue a direction to the contractor to rectify an omission or defect at any time prior to the expiration of the defects liability period. The direction issued is to include:

* details on the omission or defect
* the date by which the contractor is to rectify it.

## Superintendent’s site instruction (SSI)

An SSI is issued to the head contractor by the local Office /HCC/Property and Assets Branch as representatives of the superintendent where a response to a recall notice has not been received or where attendance has not occurred within the specified timeframe in the recall, as per the **SOR**.

The HSO/HCC may liaise with the FSO or Team leader/HCC Team Manager if further advice is required in issuing the instruction.

The contractor advises the local Office /HCC/Property and Assets Branch when the works are completed via contractor memo.

If satisfied with the response, the outcome is recorded and the SSI is resolved.

## Varying a job and Hold points

Where the cost variation to work within the original intent of the job order is up to $500, authority from the superintendent’s representative is not required by the head contractor for the work to proceed, as per the **SOR**.

Where the cost variation to work within the original intent of the job order is estimated to be over $500, the work is put on hold and approval from the superintendent’s representative is recommended.

Hold points are points beyond which the work may not proceed without review and release by the superintendent’s representative, as per the **SOR**.

For example, where the original intent of the work can be completed but the additional cost of the works exceeds $500, the work is put on hold and approval for the additional work is recommended.

The contractor must give sufficient notice, as determined by the priority of the job, to the superintendent’s representative of reaching the nominated hold point for each stage of the work as identified in the specification.

The contractor requires approval to exceed the hold points. If approval is given, the contractor obtains a contractor authority number from the local Office /HCC/Property and Assets Branch to complete these works. The details are recorded in HiiP Repairs, on the contractor’s Inspection and Test Plan (ITP), and included in the invoice for payment.

Note: The authorisation for variation (Contractor authority number) can only be given by the local Office/HCC/Property and Assets Branch that raises the job order.

## Maintenance Category of Work

| HiiP Code | HiiP Category of Work |
| --- | --- |
| ABND | Abandoned Goods |
| APRO | Asset Protection |
| BSMH | Building Services Maintenance- Heating |
| BSML | Building Services Maintenance - Laundry |
| BSMM | Building Services Maintenance – Miscellaneous |
| BSPT | Public Lighting and Telephone Equipment |
| CFHZ | Clearing Fire Hazards |
| CLEA | Cleaning |
| CLGD | Cleaning and Gardening |
| DMOD | Disability Modifications |
| GARD | Garden Maintenance |
| INSR | Insurance |
| INWK | Invoiceable Works |
| MCAP | Minor Capital Works |
| MCDW | Minor Capital Discretionary Works |
| MDEM | Minor Demolitions |
| MSRA | Miscellaneous Charges Rental Account ( Fire Extinguisher) |
| NRBR | Neighbourhood renewal – Barwon Region |
| NSIM | Non-Stock Improvement- Miscellaneous expenses |
| PBAY | Operating Costs- Parking Bays |
| PRHR | Programed Maintenance – High Rise |
| PROG | Programed Maintenance |
| RELD | Liquidated Damages Reimbursement |
| RESP | Responsive Maintenance |
| RMGC | Responsive maintenance – gas crisis |
| SDSE | Stock Improvement scheme – Direct Selling expenses |
| SHOS | SHOS Conversions |
| SPOT | Spot Purchase Upgrade- RGS |
| SPUS | Spot Purchase Upgrade – Supported Singles |
| SPUP | Spot Purchase- Psychiatric and Aged Care |
| VACU | Vacant Units Maintenance |
| VALD | Liquidated Damages Application Vandalism |
| FRMT | Fire Risk management - CRU |
| CDMG | Client Damage- CRU |

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