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| Vacant Unit Maintenance Operational Guidelines |
| June 2025 |
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# Revision history

| **Version** | **Amended section** | **Effective** | **Details** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chapter 2: Vacant Unit Maintenance** | | | |
| 1.0 |  | November 2017 | Incorporation of version control table  Accessible format |
| 1.2 | Mandatory works for vacant properties | April 2018 | Amended to reflect that gas appliances are serviced as part of mandatory works |
| **Vacant Unit Guide** | | | |
| 1.0 | First publication | 29 March 2021 | * Date of issue. |
| 2.0 | Revised | 7 July 2023 | * Moved to DFFH template. * The option for Head contractors to scope vacant works has been removed. * Further information provided about raising Residential Tenancies Act safety checks |
| **Vacant Unit Maintenance Operational Guidelines** | | | |
| 1.0 | First publication | December 2024 | * Combined *Chapter 2: Vacant unit maintenance v1.2* and *Vacant unit guide v2.0* into a single comprehensive guideline.   Updates from previous versions:   * Removal of guidance that standard vacant unit works include safety and compliance checks. * New sections have been introduced to provide updated and comprehensive guidance on vacant unit maintenance. |
| 1.2 | 4.1 Reletting restrictions | June 2025 | * Expanded guidance on the management and application of reletting restrictions, including detailed oversight and approval procedures. * Integrated standalone section 6.5 Upgrade Referral Requests into the reordered Reletting Restrictions section, which has been moved from section 4.1 to section 5. |

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# Overview

Vacant unit maintenance refers to the routine tasks and checks performed to ensure a rental property is clean, safe, functional, and ready for a new renter after the previous renter has moved out. This process helps maintain the property’s condition, address any wear and tear, and comply with legal standards before re-letting. The key objectives are to:

* **Maintain property standards:** Ensure the property remains in a suitable and compliant condition while unoccupied.
* **Ensure readiness:** Prepare the unit to meet the functional and safety needs of the next renter.
* **Ensure legal compliance:** Ensure the unit adheres to all safety, health, and minimum rental standards.

# Occupational health and safety

When conducting vacant unit maintenance inspections, staff must take all necessary precautions to ensure their safety and minimise exposure to potential hazards. It is essential to assess the property for any risks before entering, and staff should follow correct procedures when conditions are unsafe. Staff should remain in the property only for the duration necessary to carry out the inspection and avoid any actions that could compromise their safety.

Staff should always knock and announce their entry before entering a vacant property. This ensures that anyone inside, whether authorised or not, is aware of the staff's arrival and can take appropriate actions. Announcing their presence also allows staff to assess the environment and identify any risks before fully entering the property, such as dangerous animals or unsecured personal belongings. By doing so, staff can avoid unexpected situations and ensure a safer inspection process.

Staff should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including sturdy footwear, shoe covers, gloves, masks, and eye protection, where necessary. The use of PPE helps reduce exposure to contaminants and ensures safety while carrying out the inspection.

## Before entering or proceeding with a vacant unit inspection

Staff should not enter or proceed with the vacant unit inspection if:

* **Illegal occupants are present in the property**: If illegal occupants are identified, staff should follow appropriate reporting procedures and not proceed with the inspection until the situation is resolved.
* **Unsafe conditions are observed:** such as unstable flooring, severe structural damage, or the presence of hazardous materials like asbestos. If the property poses any immediate threat to health or safety, the inspection should not proceed.
* **Cluttered or obstructed pathways make it unsafe to move around:** Staff should not walk on top of belongings or through congested areas, as it increases the risk of injury or damage.
* **There are signs of contamination:** For example, illegal drugs are found, such as methamphetamine pipes or other drug paraphernalia, or evidence of pests etc. Refer to [Section 3.2 Properties presenting a risk of contamination](#_Properties_presenting_a) for more information.

Staff should only remain in the property for the duration necessary to complete the inspection. Prolonged exposure to unsafe conditions or unfamiliar hazards should be avoided.

## Properties presenting a risk of contamination

If a vacant property is assessed to be at risk of contamination based on prior information or observations made during the vacant unit inspection (e.g., evidence of illegal drug use, pest infestations, excessive needles, rubbish, or mould), the external locks must be changed by the head contractor, and the key should be securely stored, such as in a lockbox at the property or the local office. No further vacant works should proceed until the local office has completed the necessary procedures, including any testing or remediation actions as required.

For example:

* **Asbestos:** If asbestos-containing materials are suspected or identified, staff must follow all relevant safety protocols. Asbestos must not be disturbed, and the property should be referred to specialist contractors for a thorough assessment and safe remediation.
* **Pest infestations:** If signs of pests, such as rodents or insects, are found, staff should immediately arrange for professional pest control services to eliminate the infestation before any further work can be carried out.
* **Mould:** Mould is a serious health hazard. If mould is detected, its extent should be assessed, and professional remediation services should be engaged to safely remove it before any other vacant works can proceed.
* **Needles or drug paraphernalia:** If syringes, or other drug-related items are discovered, staff must not touch or handle them. They should report the issue immediately, and biohazard disposal services must be called to safely remove these hazardous items.
* **Rubbish and debris**: In the case of excessive rubbish or waste accumulation, staff should arrange for professional cleaning or waste removal services to safely clear the property before continuing with any maintenance works.

For specific guidance on managing methamphetamine contamination in vacant public housing properties, please refer to the interim guidelines available on the Public Housing Resources SharePoint.

## Don'ts during inspections

During inspections, staff should avoid the following actions to prioritise safety:

* **Avoid placing personal items:** Do not place personal items, such as folders, handbags, car keys, on furniture, fixtures, or surfaces to prevent contamination from dust, allergens, or other potential hazards in the property.
* **Refrain from touching surfaces without gloves**: Do not touch surfaces or objects without gloves to minimise exposure to contaminants that may be present.

By maintaining vigilance, following health and safety procedures, and adhering to the above guidelines, staff can ensure vacant unit inspections are carried out efficiently and safely.

## Do's during inspections

To ensure thorough and effective inspections, staff should:

* **Use the vacant unit checks guide:** Refer to [Section 9 Guide to Vacant Unit Checks](#_Guide_to_Vacant) to ensure that minimal rental standards are assessed and met during inspections.
* **Utilise printed room identifiers:** Use printed room identifiers when taking photos to clearly correlate each image with the corresponding part of the property.
* **Document findings thoroughly:** Record all observations and findings in detail to maintain a comprehensive inspection report.

# Target timeframes for vacant unit maintenance

Vacant unit maintenance is a key performance indicator (KPI), tracking the efficiency of the process. Offers to new renters are typically made during this period, ensuring the unit is ready for occupation once maintenance is completed.

The target timeframe for raising vacant unit maintenance is within **two working days of tenancy termination**, in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (RTA), or after VCAT determines a property was abandoned. After the vacant works are scoped and raised in HiiP Repairs, the Head contractor has **14 calendar days to finalise the works**.

## Contractor extension requests

Timely completion of vacant unit works is essential to minimising vacancy periods and ensuring homes are made available for renters as soon as possible. Contractors may request extensions on returning the vacant unit. Staff must carefully assess these requests to mitigate impacts on operations and ensure accountability, including the application of **liquidated damages** where appropriate.

### Impacts of delays and liquidated damages

Delays in maintenance and turnaround times for vacant units can have significant impacts on both operational efficiency and overall housing availability. The following points outline some impacts of these delays, highlighting the importance of timely completion and the role of liquidated damages in holding contractors accountable:

* **Extended Vacancy Periods:** Delays in completing works result in longer periods where units remain unoccupied, impacting housing availability and increasing vacancy costs.
* **Service Delivery Disruptions**: Delays can affect renters waiting for housing, creating reputational risks and additional pressure on housing services.
* **Accountability Issues:** Poor contractor performance, if unaddressed, can lead to ongoing inefficiencies and reduced trust in contractor reliability.
* **Liquidated Damages:** Liquidated damages are a tool to hold contractors accountable for delays and recover costs incurred due to missed deadlines. They can be applied in the following scenarios:
  + **Non-compliance with Contractual Timelines:** If the contractor fails to meet agreed completion dates without valid justification, liquidated damages may be imposed as outlined in the contract.
  + **Recovering Financial Losses:** Damages compensate for costs such as lost rent, interim housing, or administrative expenses caused by delays.
  + **Incentivising Timely Completion:** The risk of liquidated damages encourages contractors to prioritise timely delivery and manage resources effectively.
  + **Important Note:** Liquidated damages must be applied in accordance with contract terms and after assessing the validity of extension requests.

## Considerations for approving extension requests

In deciding whether to approve extension requests, staff must consider the following factors, noting that all extension requests must be approved by Team Managers or their equivalents:

* **Review Supporting Evidence:** Ensure all extension requests are backed by detailed explanations, including photographs, reports, or external assessments where applicable.
* **Consult Relevant Staff:** Engage with internal teams, such as Field Services Officers, to assess the legitimacy of the request.
* **Evaluate the Need for Liquidated Damages**: If delays are unjustified, consider the financial impacts and determine whether liquidated damages should be applied per contract terms.
* **Document Decisions**: Record the rationale for accepting or rejecting an extension in HiiP Repairs to ensure transparency and consistency in decision-making.

# Reletting restrictions

A reletting restriction is applied to a vacant property in HiiP to prevent it from being offered to new renters. When applied, the property is flagged as unavailable for reletting (vacant untenantable). They are often applied when there are issues that need to be addressed before the property can be re-let, such as:

* Goods left behind
* Illegal occupants
* Extensive maintenance works required
* Strategic decisions regarding the property.

Applying reletting restrictions ensures that properties are flagged appropriately. This process:

* Facilitates accurate reporting on asset utilisation
* Provides visibility into the reasons behind extended vacancies
* Helps prioritise property management actions to reduce vacancy periods.

While most reletting restrictions are managed locally, the Asset Management (central office) team also apply reletting restrictions to support:

* Capital planning
* Property strategy
* Compliance works.

For more information on central office involvement in reletting restriction management, including oversight and approval, refer to [Section 5.2 Asset Management oversight and approval.](#_Asset_Management_oversight)

For a complete list of reletting restriction types and associated delegates, refer to the Reletting Restriction Matrix available on the Public Housing Resources SharePoint, located on the Vacants page <https://dhhsvicgovau.sharepoint.com/sites/Publichousingresources/SitePages/vacants.aspx>.

## General manager oversight

Team Managers, Client Support and Housing Services (CSHS) Managers, or their equivalents, are responsible for regularly overseeing the application and use of reletting restrictions to ensure:

* Accountability
* Efficiency
* Achievement of KPI targets.

The frequency of oversight should range from daily to weekly, depending on the volume of property vacancies at the local office. Oversight activities include:

* Tracking approval requests, expiry dates, and extension requests
* Reviewing reletting restrictions to ensure they remain appropriate and effectively utilised
* Removing reletting restrictions when properties are ready to be re-let.

### HiiP tenancy task list

HiiPs tenancy task list automates and manages housing processes by directing tasks through defined workflows. It streamlines operations like property information handling by integrating data and assigning tasks to staff. This function:

* Supports role-based access, and
* Facilitates timely notifications and approvals, with escalations appearing in the tenancy task list for staff action.

The task list supports reletting restriction management by automatically sending email notifications to the local office’s general mailbox when a reletting restriction is:

* Closed off in HiiP
  + (End-dating does not close a reletting restriction)
* Withdrawn (cancelled)
* Rejected by Asset Management
* Approaching expiry (five days prior).

Staff responsible for managing office emails must promptly forward them to authorised delegates to ensure timely action.

## Asset Management oversight and approval

When a property is referred to Asset Management for action, it may remain vacant for an extended period due to the nature of the works or decisions involved. The typical vacancy durations are:

* **30 days:** Usually applies to:
  + New constructions that have reached approximately 75% completion
  + Recently acquired properties, and
  + Properties under review by Asset Management
* **60 days:** For relocation projects managed centrally.
* **90 days:** When handover of new construction properties is delayed due to postponed service connections.
* **185 days:** For properties:
  + Requiring major works
  + Earmarked for future redevelopment, or
  + Inclusion in the sale pipeline.
* **365 days:** For properties undergoing fire rectification works.
* **No fixed end date:** For properties:
  + Approved for redevelopment or sale, or
  + Undergoing major upgrades such as full restoration after fire damage

Given Asset Management’s role in overseeing and managing property assets, certain reletting restrictions require their review before implementation. If a referral is accepted by Asset Management, the reletting restriction may be applied. However, the local office retains responsibility for vacancy management tasks, including:

* Securing the property in the event of any incidents
* Maintaining the grounds, including grass cutting, and
* Taking appropriate action against illegal occupants, if necessary.

The table below provides an overview of the categories of local office requests that may be escalated to Asset Management, including relevant examples and the corresponding Our Service referral forms.

Table 1: Reletting restrictions requiring Asset Management oversight and approval

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Referral reason | Detail/Example | Our Service referral form |
| **Disposal (redevelop or divest)** | Redevelop: improve or rebuild; Divest: sell or dispose of:   * Low-rise assets * Specialist accommodation assets (dwellings or accommodation owned and/or managed by Homes Victoria, including rooming houses, transitional housing, crisis accommodation) * High-rise assets. | [Disposal Referral Request](https://ourservice.support.vic.gov.au/ourservice?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=edc96f261b2e6510af5d98ef0d4bcbf9&sysparm_category=dfeb09fe1bc52110af5d98ef0d4bcb79) <https://ourservice.support.vic.gov.au/ourservice?id=sc\_cat\_item&sys\_id=edc96f261b2e6510af5d98ef0d4bcbf9&sysparm\_category=dfeb09fe1bc52110af5d98ef0d4bcb79> |
| **Properties requiring major works** | Properties requiring major works due to:   * Fire damage * Renter damage * Flood damage * Early degradation * Major mobility modifications * Structural building issues * Termite damage | [Upgrade Referral Request](https://ourservice.support.vic.gov.au/ourservice?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=5bfb744adb6a2110ddf5bc56f39619b1&sysparm_category=dfeb09fe1bc52110af5d98ef0d4bcb79) <https://ourservice.support.vic.gov.au/ourservice?id=sc\_cat\_item&sys\_id=5bfb744adb6a2110ddf5bc56f39619b1&sysparm\_category=dfeb09fe1bc52110af5d98ef0d4bcb79> |
| Properties requiring product type change | * Properties needing a change in product type. | [Change to Asset Request](https://ourservice.support.vic.gov.au/ourservice?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=53537c77db52e150ddf5bc56f396199f&sysparm_category=dfeb09fe1bc52110af5d98ef0d4bcb79) <https://ourservice.support.vic.gov.au/ourservice?id=sc\_cat\_item&sys\_id=53537c77db52e150ddf5bc56f396199f&sysparm\_category=dfeb09fe1bc52110af5d98ef0d4bcb79> |

For more information on these referral reasons and associated reletting restriction types, refer to the Reletting Restriction Matrix available on the Public Housing Resources SharePoint.

## Raising a reletting restriction for review and approval

When properties require substantial interventions beyond the scope of routine maintenance or local office capacity, staff and mangers should determine if Asset Management’s involvement is required to ensure appropriate escalation.

Before raising and escalating a reletting restriction and an OurService referral, including product type changes, staff must first initiate the necessary vacant unit works, which include:

* Changing all locks and securing keys in a key safe at the property
* Removing all rubbish and personal goods from internal and external areas, including sheds
* Raising work orders for a basic clean based on the property’s condition
* Completing a basic clean as required
* If methamphetamine contamination is suspected, providing an Occupational Hygienist report and remediation quotation.
* Providing a cost estimate for the vacant unit works, referencing the Schedule of Rates where applicable.

Staff must also compile comprehensive information for a thorough and well-documented referral, including:

* Detailed notes explaining the reason for the reletting restriction, including assessments or decisions made
* Field Service Officer reports assessing the property’s condition
* Council Emergency Orders, particularly for fire-damaged properties, if applicable
* Methamphetamine remediation reports and associated cost estimates, where relevant
* Photographs (internal and external) clearly illustrating the issues prompting referral
* Any other relevant reports or documentation related to the property’s condition
* A completed vacancy checklist confirming the status and condition of the property.

Once the above has been completed, staff must simultaneously:

* **Apply and escalate the reletting restriction in HiiP:** Promptly apply and escalate:
  + The relevant reletting restriction within 24 to 48 hours of identifying the need for Asset Management intervention.
  + Include the OurService reference number in the comments for accurate tracking and follow-up.
* **Initiate an Our Service referral:** Submit a referral through the OurService Catalogue under Housing Services, selecting the appropriate request type based on the situation.
* **Submit for review and approval to the CSHS Manager:** Forward the reletting restriction and referral via HiiP and Our Service workflows, to the CSHS Manager for review and approval.

## CSHS Manager oversight and approval of referrals to Asset Management

Before approving a referral to Asset Management, CSHS Managers must first determine if works can be completed locally. This includes confirming that:

* Repair costs are below $30,000
* Repairs are minor and within the cost limit
* Supporting documentation such as Field Service reports, cost estimates, and risk assessments confirm the work is feasible locally.
* Local capacity exists, with teams and contractors available who have the resources and expertise to complete the work safely and effectively.

If these conditions are met, the referral should not be approved and the work managed locally.

When it is determined that local office management is not feasible, for example, when costs exceed $30,000, the CSHS Manager must:

* Confirm the correct reletting restriction has been applied with appropriate notes.
* Ensure all relevant information is included in the Our Service referral.
* Confirm that all required supporting documents are attached, as specified in [Section 5.3 Raising a reletting restriction for review and approval.](#_Raising_a_reletting_1)

# Goods left behind

Goods left behind by a previous renter, such as white goods, furniture, personal documents, and dangerous items, may be retained by the local office. Staff should follow the guidelines outlined in the Abandoned Properties and Goods Operational Guidelines available at <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/> to ensure proper handling and management of these items.

# Vacant unit work

## Mandatory lock changes

Changing the locks is a mandatory requirement for every vacant unit to ensure the property's security and safety. This practice is not only a best practice but also a regulatory requirement aimed at protecting **renter** safety. The following table outlines the SOR codes associated with the mandatory lock change work:

Table 2: Mandatory changing of locks SOR codes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Location | SOR code | Description |
| Front Door | GH055 | Re-pin 1 x cylinder & supply 2 keys alike (for all external doors) |
| Other Doors | GH056 | Re-pin cylinders to other doors |

## RTA Safety checks

RTA Safety checks are not a legislated requirement for vacant unit works. However, as part of the vacant unit inspection, staff must check for:

* The operational functionality for all:
  + Appliances, safety devices, and energy supply systems, such as:
  + Smoke alarms
  + Cooking appliances
  + Exhaust fans
  + Lights/general power outlets
  + Taps or hot water service (eg for the delivery of hot water).

If any damage or tampering is identified during the inspection, staff must arrange responsive maintenance to address the specific issue. Responsive maintenance in this context refers to repairs or replacements required to ensure appliances, safety devices, or energy systems are functioning correctly. It does not involve raising full safety checks as part of the vacant unit works, even when damage is identified.

Inspection and Test Reports (ITRs) for Gas and Electrical Safety Checks are obtained as part of scheduled or legislated safety check programs, separate from vacant unit works. Noting, while safety checks are not required during vacant unit works, staff must retain ITRs to comply with the Residential Tenancy Regulations 2021, as new renters may request a copy of these reports.

## Standard work

Standard vacant unit works generally include tasks such as:

* Cleaning
* Adjusting and tightening all screens on doors, cupboards, hinges, and fittings and
* Cleaning spouting and downpipes.

However, before staff raise these works, they should assess whether these types of standard works are necessary. For instance, while cleaning is generally regarded as standard vacant unit work, a visual inspection may reveal that not every room requires cleaning.

Common SOR cleaning codes staff may consider raising as part of their standard vacant unit works include:

Table 3: Common SOR codes and descriptions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Location | SOR code | Description |
| Multiple locations | CR070 | Clean wipe & vacuum all surfaces |
| CR155 | Clean carpet by vacuuming- Rate per unit |
| GA205 | Check adjust and tighten all screws to all doors, cupboard doors, handles and fittings etc |
| CR202 | Remove contact from walls and cupboards only if required |
| GA205 | Check and tighten all screws to all cupboards |
| CR158 | Steam clean carpets - per room (more than 1 room) |
| - | CR157 | Steam clean carpet - 1 room only |
| Kitchen | CR175 | Clean stove |
| CR188 | Clean kitchen complete - does not include floor |
| CR250 | Clean and scrub floors |
| CR195 | Clean exhaust fan only - not to be used w/cleaning |
| Laundry | CR210 | Clean linen laundry landing cupboards and built in robe |
| CR211 | Clean laundry fixtures complete -including exhaust fan |
| CR212 | Wash laundry complete- ceiling/walls etc |
| Bathroom | CR220 | Clean bathroom complete- include floor |
| Toilet | CR230 | Wash and scrub toilet complete including exhaust fan and floor |
| Hall | CR262 | Wash hall |
| Lounge | CR252 | Wash lounge and family room |
| Bedrooms | CR256 | Wash bedroom |
| External | RS270 | Clean out spouting |
| RS260 | Clean down pipe |

## Additional work

When addressing additional maintenance needs, staff should consider:

* **Repair over replacement:** Prioritise repairing items whenever feasible, rather than opting for full replacements.
* **Minimal aesthetic work:** Limit maintenance efforts to the absolute minimum necessary for aesthetic improvements. Focus on essential repairs that enhance the property's appearance without excessive expenditure.
* **Targeted floor covering replacement:** If the carpet or vinyl flooring in a room is damaged or marked beyond acceptable levels, replace only the affected area rather than the entire room's flooring.
* **Selective wall repair:** For walls with damage or marks that cannot be cleaned, patch and repaint only the specific wall in need of attention, rather than repainting the entire room.
* **Standardised door handle installation**: If internal door handles do not match the current departmental standard and one door is missing a handle, install a new handle that aligns with the standard on that specific door only.
* **Odour management in carpets:** If strong and persistent smells remain in the carpet after steam cleaning, isolate the affected rooms and assess which sections of carpet require replacement.

# Vacant unit handback inspections

As the property nears completion, the contractor will schedule a date and time for a vacant unit inspection. Staff are responsible for conducting a thorough inspection of the vacant unit alongside the contractor, reviewing all raised repair items. This includes cross-checking that all works have been completed to a satisfactory standard before accepting the unit as ready for reletting.

Expectations for staff during hand back inspections include:

* **Thorough review:** Inspect all areas of the unit to ensure repairs align with what was agreed upon in the scope of works. Pay attention to common issues like:
  + Cleaning,
  + Safety features
  + Compliance with minimum rental standards
  + Quality of work.

This includes checking for functionality (e.g., working plumbing, locks, and appliances).

Staff must not accept a hand-back of the property if works remain incomplete or do not meet required standards. Clearly document any outstanding or unsatisfactory work and communicate this to the contractor for rectification.

# Move in Tenancy Condition Reports

Move-in Tenancy Condition Reports are a mandatory requirement in the sign-up process, as stipulated by the RTA. These reports must be completed by staff during the vacant unit handback or prior to reletting a property. They ensure accurate documentation of the property's condition and help establish its state at the time of occupancy.

For more information, please refer to the Tenancy Condition Reports Operational Guideline available at <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/tenancy-condition-reports-operational-guidelines-word>.

# Guide to Vacant Unit Checks

To uphold the integrity of rental properties and ensure compliance with minimum rental standards, this guide aims to provide actionable guidance for staff undertaking inspections, in alignment with Section 68 of the RTA. During vacant unit inspections, staff should conduct **visual checks** to confirm that all requirements are met. If staff are unable to visually verify compliance, they should seek further guidance from relevant local office staff, such as Field Services Officers.

**\*Note:** All rental properties must meet 14 categories of minimum rental standards, and rental providers are responsible for ensuring compliance with these standards on or before the day a renter moves in.

## Minimum rental standards

Table 4: Minimum rental standard requirements

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Property Address |  | | |
| Category | Requirement | Met | Not Met |
| Bathrooms | The bathroom must have a:   * washbasin * shower or bath, and * all must have a reasonable supply of hot and cold water.   Showers must have a shower head with a 3-star water efficiency rating. If this is not possible due to the property’s age, a 1- or 2-star rating is acceptable. |  |  |
| Electrical safety | Rental properties must have:   * modern switchboards with circuit breakers and * electrical safety switches, known as Residual Current Devices (RCDs), installed.   **Note:** This requirement is already addressed by the RTA safety check, which has either been completed or is scheduled for completion soon.  As part of the vacant unit work, staff only need to visually inspect appliances such as ovens, stoves, hot plates, heating and cooling systems, hot water services, exhaust fans, lights, and general power outlets to confirm they are operational and functional. |  |  |
| Heating | All rental properties are required to have a fixed heater (not portable) in good working order located in the main living area. For rental agreements entered into on or after 29 March 2023, this heater must be energy efficient. If an existing fixed heater is not energy-efficient, the rental provider is responsible for upgrading it.  An energy efficient fixed heater must be one of the following:   * a non-ducted air conditioner or heat pump with a 2 star or above energy rating * a gas space heater with a 2 star or above energy rating * a ducted heating or hydronic heating system with an outlet in the main living area |  |  |
| Kitchen | The property must have a:   * **kitchen** with a **dedicated** **cooking** and **food** **preparation** **area** * **sink** connected to **hot** and **cold** **water**, and * **stovetop** with two or more burners.   If an **oven** is present, it must be in good working order.  These requirements do not apply if the property is listed in the [heritage register at Heritage Council Victoria](https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/protecting-our-heritage/heritage-protection-process/victorian-heritage-register) <https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/protecting-our-heritage/heritage-protection-process/victorian-heritage-register> and has an approved exemption from the standard. |  |  |
| Laundry | If the property has a laundry, it must be connected to a reasonable supply of hot and cold water. |  |  |
| Lighting | Inside rooms, corridors and hallways must have access to light to make the areas functional. During the day, natural light can include light borrowed from an adjoining room. At night, renters should have access to artificial light.  These requirements do not apply if the property is listed in the [heritage register at Heritage Council Victoria](https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/protecting-our-heritage/heritage-protection-process/victorian-heritage-register) <https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/protecting-our-heritage/heritage-protection-process/victorian-heritage-register> and has an approved exemption from the standard. |  |  |
| Locks | The property’s external entry doors must have functioning deadlocks (a ‘deadlock’ is defined as a deadlatch with at least one cylinder) or be fitted with locks that can be unlocked with a key from the outside but can be unlocked without one from the inside.  The only cases where a deadlock doesn’t have to be fitted to a door are when:   * a door cannot be secured with a deadlock - for example, because of its position * it is a screen door in the same door frame as an external door * a different type of lock or device is required under another Act or law * the door is not accessible because there is another type of security barrier. For example, a locked door to an apartment building, or a locked gate * the property is registered under the Heritage Act 2017 and has an approved exemption from the standard.   Read more about [locks and security](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/repairs-alterations-safety-and-pets/keeping-the-property-safe/locks-and-security) on the Consumer Affairs Victoria website at <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/repairs-alterations-safety-and-pets/keeping-the-property-safe/locks-and-security>. |  |  |
| Mould and damp | All rooms must be free from mould and damp caused by or related to the building structure. |  |  |
| Structural soundness | The property must be structurally sound and weatherproof. |  |  |
| Toilets | The toilet must be in good working order and connected to a sewage system, wastewater treatment system, or approved local council system. |  |  |
| Ventilation | Rental properties must have adequate ventilation in all habitable rooms, including the bathroom, shower, toilet, and laundry, meeting the requirements of the [Building Code of Australia](https://www.abcb.gov.au/resources)<https://www.abcb.gov.au/resources> |  |  |
| Vermin-proof bins | Rental providers must supply a rubbish and recycling bin that is vermin-proof and meets council collection standards. |  |  |
| Window coverings | Windows in rooms likely to be used as bedrooms or living areas must be fitted with curtains or blinds that can be closed, block light and provide privacy and made safer with a curtain and blind safety kit. |  |  |
| Windows | All external windows capable of opening must have a functioning latch to secure the windows and allow them to be left open or closed. |  |  |

## Other vacant unit checks

Table 5: Other vacant unit checks to ensure the property is well maintained and complies with minimum rental standards

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Item | Description | Met | Not Met |
| External doors | Security screen doors | All external doors must have a security screen door. |  |  |
| General | Lights | All lights must be functioning properly. |  |  |
| Exposed wiring | There must not be any exposed wiring. |  |  |
| Appliances | All appliances must power on and function correctly without issues. Check for unusual noises or odours and inspect for visible damage to appliance exteriors. |  |  |
| Hot water system | There must not be any leaks from the water heater. Check for pooling or dripping. Confirm hot water is available at all taps and that it maintains consistent temperature. |  |  |
| Smoke alarms | Smoke alarms must be fitted and operational. |  |  |
| Carbon monoxide alarms | Verify carbon monoxide alarms are fitted (if applicable) and operational. |  |  |
| Telephone line and NBN connection | Verify that a telephone line is connected (if applicable). Ensure National Broadband Network (NBN) is connected where required. |  |  |
| Signs of mould/dampness | Check for visible signs of mould or damp caused by structural issues. Look for water penetration signs in ceilings, walls, floors, coverings, and cupboards. |  |  |
| Non-standard modifications safety | Check for any non-standard modifications or fixtures for safety/legal compliance. |  |  |
| Asbestos inspection | Inspect for obvious cracked/damaged asbestos materials. Ensure safety protocols are followed if found. |  |  |
| Structural integrity | Inspect walls/floors for noticeable slope or cracks/gaps greater than 10mm wide. Ensure overall structural integrity is sound. |  |  |
| Pest infestation | Inspect for visible signs of pest infestation or biological hazards. Take necessary pest control measures if needed. Look for termite damage or significant rot/decay in building timbers. |  |  |
| Floors/walkways | Floor coverings safety | All floor coverings must be free from trip hazards. |  |  |
| Kitchen/bathroom/utility area | Taps functionality | Check all taps operate smoothly without dripping. Check for consistent water pressure from all fixtures. |  |  |
| Kitchen | Kitchen cupboards/drawers functionality | Check that all kitchen cupboards and drawers open/close easily and have handles. |  |  |
| Rooms | Internal doors with hardware | Check all rooms have doors equipped with door hardware, but internal doors should not have locks or latches. |  |  |
| Flywire screens | Check at least one window in each room has flywire fitted and in good repair. |  |  |
| Bathroom | Bathroom cupboards/drawers functionality | Check bathroom cupboards and drawers open/close without difficulty and have handles. |  |  |
| Yard/exterior | Functional letterbox and clothesline/shed | Confirm property has a functional letterbox, clothesline, and garden shed/storage locker if applicable. |  |  |
| Tree proximity to external walls | Ensure no trees are within 1 meter of external brick walls; check for trees/shrubs impeding access or impacting structures. |  |  |
| Swimming pools | Confirm no swimming pools or external spas are present. |  |  |