



VACATED MAINTENANCE POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

To provide clear guidelines on the process for preparing vacant units for a new tenancy.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that all units meet SPCHG minimum standards of condition prior to a new tenant moving in.
- To ensure that SPCHG gets good value for money in completing vacated maintenance works.
- To avoid any unnecessary vacant maintenance works ie. to avoid wasteful expenditure.
- To minimize the time taken for units to be identified as vacant.
- To reduce the time taken to complete vacant maintenance.
- To reduce the time taken for new tenants to move into SPCHG properties once vacant maintenance has been completed.
- To ensure that SPCHG has a record of the condition of each unit when a new tenant moves in.
- To ensure that new tenants are aware of how all the building elements in their unit work and their responsibilities in terms of cleaning and maintenance.
- To ensure that new tenants are aware of their responsibilities in looking after their unit and what will happen if they damage the unit on purpose.

3. HOUSING REGISTRAR PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The preferred KPM target for the average number of days “vacant untenable” is less than 21 days. Satisfactory is 21-48 days.

Our tenant profile is at the most complex end of the range in long term community housing. This can lead to unique situations when a flat is vacated. Examples that lead to time-consuming complications include: chronic illness and hospitalisation; going into aged care- a slow and difficult process; hoarding; evictions where the tenant has no other housing options; sudden death, particularly where relatives are not known; abandonment, particularly where significant belongings are left behind. These are all quite common situations in our housing program. It is therefore not expected that we will meet Housing Registrar absolute ‘best-practice’ targets for all vacancies. But it is expected that we will minimise time taken in the vacant maintenance process as far as possible.



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4. PROCEDURES

STEP 1. CONFIRMATION OF VACANCY

A unit/room is “confirmed” to be vacant in the following circumstances.

1. Tenant communicates their intention to Vacate.

In this case the tenant communicates to SPCHG that they have decided to move out of their unit/room. A Vacate Date is then agreed.

2. Eviction

In this case SPCHG completes an eviction process and the tenant is evicted on a certain date. The date of the eviction is the Vacate Date.

3. Tenant Death

In this case the Vacate Date is the date on which the death is confirmed.

4. Abandonment

In this case the tenant does not communicate with SPCHG and SPCHG has to make a determination, based on “reasonable grounds”, that the tenant has “abandoned” the unit/room. SPCHG will make a determination that a unit/room has been “abandoned” on the basis of **all** the following conditions being met.

- At least 2 rent payments missed in a row **and**;
- At least 3 attempts to contact tenant over a 2 week period with no response **and**;
- A letter of notice of inspection sent with 24 hours notice; **and**
- An inspection of the room/unit suggests that the unit/room has been abandoned.eg.
 - Goods removed
 - Mail not received; **and**
- Photos taken of the “abandoned” unit; **and**
- In cases where there is any doubt, or potential for dispute, a VCAT application will be made for “abandonment”. A decision to make a VCAT application will be made by the Manager Housing Operations (MHO).

Once all these conditions have been met the “evidence” will be clearly documented in **CHINTARO**. A final decision to determine that the unit/room has been “abandoned” will be made by the MHO. The Vacate Date will be the date on which this decision is made.

Once the vacancy is confirmed the following actions will be completed.

- The tenancy is ended in **CHINTARO** on the Vacate Date.
- The Room/Unit is recorded in **CHINTARO** as **Vacant for Maintenance** from the Vacate Date.
- 2-3 eligible applicants, in order of priority, are then selected from the **CHINTARO** Waiting List at the Housing team’s weekly Allocations Meeting to fill the vacant room/unit. A Maintenance Work order is sent to the Housing Worker, Maintenance (HWM) for an **Initial Vacant Unit Inspection**.

STEP2. INSPECTION TO ASSESS RUBBISH/TENANT GOODS.

This initial inspection will normally occur within 1-2 days of the Vacate Date and will normally be completed by HWM. In cases where it is not possible for HWM to undertake the inspection it will be undertaken by another Housing Worker .

The first inspection involves an assessment of the amount of rubbish and /or abandoned tenant goods in the room/unit. If there are abandoned tenant goods the SPCHG staff person will take photos of the unit prior to the disposal, removal and storage of tenant goods. The photos will be



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emailed to maintenance@spchg.org.au and stored in the specified folder. Normally SPCHG staff will decide which tenant goods are to be disposed of and which are to be stored. In some cases, however, staff may request an inspection by Consumer Affairs (CAV).

The following RTA rules will apply to the disposal and storage of tenant goods. .

- Any tenant goods can be disposed of if they ;
 - Have no monetary value
 - Are perishable foodstuffs
 - Are dangerous
- Tenant goods are only required to be stored if the total value is estimated to be greater than the total estimated cost of removal and storage. In practice this means a total value estimated at over \$400.
- Stored items are required to be tagged (masking tape) with name of the tenant and date of removal.
- Stored items are required to be kept for 28 days.
- Personal documents are required to be kept for 90 days.
- If any tenant goods are stored SPCHG will attempt to contact the tenant within 7 days of removal and storage. If the tenant cannot be contacted SPCHG must place an advertisement in a Victorian wide newspaper.

The following process for the disposal and storage of tenant goods will be followed. The process will differ depending on how the vacancy arises.

1. Tenant communicating their intention to Vacate.

In this case SPCHG will inform the tenant that all their goods must be removed by the Vacate Date and that any goods left in the unit after that date will be removed by SPCHG. In this case SPCHG will decide which goods to dispose of and which to store. If any goods are stored the tenant will have one opportunity within the 28 day period to pick up the stored items.

2. Eviction

In this case SPCHG will inform the tenant that they have 7 days from the eviction date to make a time with SPCHG to pickup their goods from the unit. Only one access time is provided. Any goods left in the unit after the 7 days will be removed by SPCHG. In this case SPCHG will decide which goods to dispose of and which to store. If any goods are stored the tenant will have one opportunity within the remaining 21 day period to pick up the stored items.

3. Tenant Death

In this case SPCHG will attempt to contact the person's relatives as soon as possible. The person's relatives will have 2 weeks from the date of contact to inspect the unit and remove any of the tenant's goods. After the two weeks SPCHG will store the goods for an additional 28 days and relatives will have an opportunity to pickup from storage. If no relatives can be contacted the tenants goods will be stored for 28 days.

4. Abandonment

Normally all tenant goods will be removed asap after the unit is confirmed to be vacant.



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STEP 3. INSPECTION TO ASSESS VACATED MAINTENANCE WORKS REQUIRED.

This second inspection will occur once all rubbish/ tenant goods have been removed. If there are no significant rubbish items or tenant goods then this Step 3. will be completed at the same time as Step 2.

- The SPCHG staff person will undertake a detailed inspection of the room /unit and will record all required works using the **Inspection Checklist**.
- The completed hardcopy **Inspection Checklist** will be passed onto the Manager Housing Operations (MHO).

STEP 4. VACATED MAINTENANCE WORK ORDER TO RELEVANT TRADES

- Once the Inspection Checklist has been completed the MHO will use the list to generate a Work Order to the relevant Trades contractor from SPCHG's list of approved contractors. The Work Order will include details of all works required.

STEP 5. ORGANISING ACCESS FOB/KEY.

- On sending the Work Order SPCHG will place the required access fob or key in a marked envelope ready for the contractor to pickup.

STEP 6. ESTIMATED HANDOVER DATE (EHD)

- After communicating with the relevant contractors, the MHO will determine an **Estimated Handover Date (EHD)**. Normally the EHD will be within 14 days after the Work Order date.
- Once the **EHD** is established, then SPCHG will contact the 1st priority eligible applicant and provide them with the following information.
 - SPCHG is offering them first option to move into the vacant unit.
 - The details of the type of unit/room that is being offered.
 - An estimate of the date on which the unit/ room will be ready to inspect.
 - What furniture is normally provided and what furniture they will need.
 - The SPCHG House Rules and the SPCHG Pets policy.

If the 1st priority person is not interested then these steps are repeated with the 2nd/3rd eligible applicants.

STEP 7. VACATED MAINTENANCE WORK ORDER – CLEANING (EVE'S)

- Once the EHD has been established, then SPCHG will send a Work Order to Eve's.
- The Work Order for cleaning will include Standard cleaning items for vacated units/rooms plus any extra cleaning items
- The Work Order to Eve's will request Eves to organise cleaning on the day after **EHD**. Eves to acknowledge receipt.
- Eve's will be contacted if the EHD changes.

STEP 8. COMPLETION CONFIRMATION

- The MHO is responsible for ensuring that the relevant trades are co-ordinated.
- Once all works are completed SPCHG will confirm cleaning date with Eve's and provide access fob/key.



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- Once Eve's has completed the cleaning they will notify SPCHG by the next business day.
- Once a **Completion Confirmation** has been received from Eve's then SPCHG will;
 - Contact the eligible applicant and confirm a **New Tenancy Inspection** date and time.
 - Complete a Final Inspection.

STEP 9. FINAL VACATED MAINTENANCE INSPECTION

- The purpose of this final inspection will be to confirm that the unit/room is now ready for tenanting.
- The housing worker completing the inspection will have delegated responsibility to confirm the unit is ready.
- Once this confirmation has been made, the status of the unit/room in **CHINTARO** will be changed to Vacant Tenantable.

STEP 10. NEW TENANCY INSPECTION

This provides an opportunity for the prospective tenant to inspect the vacant unit and confirm acceptance. Once acceptance of the offer has been confirmed then a Sign Up Date is organised. If that tenant rejects the offer, the offer will be made to the next applicant on the list.

STEP 11. NEW TENANCY START

This is the final step and includes the following tasks.

- Formal signup.
- The completion of a Condition Report
- Onsite training on use of appliances etc.
- Advice on what will happen in the case of property damage caused by the tenant.
- A new Tenancy created in **CHINTARO**.



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5. PROCESS TARGET DAYS

Each step in the process will normally be completed within the following time frames.

	STEP	NUMBER OF DAYS
1	Confirmation of Vacancy	0
2	Inspection to assess rubbish/tenant goods	1- 2
3	Inspection to assess vacated maintenance works required.	1 -2
5	Vacated Maintenance Work Orders- relevant trades	0-2
6	Estimate Handover Date	1
7	Vacated Maintenance Work Order – Eve's	5-12
8	Confirmation of Completion	5-12
9	Final Vacated Maintenance Inspection	0-2
10	New Tenancy Inspection	1-7
11	New Tenancy Start.	1-7
TOTAL		15-38