



INSPECTIONS POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

Regular property inspections are required for reasons of health and safety: early identification of unhygienic conditions and pest infestations, and to ensure fire safety equipment is functioning as required. This policy provides clear guidelines as to how SPCHG conducts inspections for managed properties.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all accommodation managed by SPCHG.

The policy covers the following types of inspections:

- **Prospective renter inspections:** where an applicant for housing is shown the premises prior to an offer for housing being made under s86.1a of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (RTA).
- **Follow up (new renter) home visits:** where premises are inspected after three months from the commencement of a new tenancy under s86.1c of the RTA.
- **Condition Report inspections:** routine inspections that occur once a year under s86.1f of the RTA.
- **Routine inspections of fire safety equipment:** carried out by Homes Victoria contracted fire services contractors.

3. OBJECTIVES

- Inspections will always be respectful of privacy including giving of required notice under the RTA.
- Inspections will be carried out in the shortest time frame possible.
- That SPCHG maintains appropriate safety standards and obligations under the RTA.
- SPCHG will provide clear information to renters on this policy and will ensure this policy is readily available to renters.

4. APPROACH TO INSPECTIONS

Inspections will be undertaken at all SPCHG properties in accordance with the RTA. The RTA gives Residential Rental Providers the right to conduct inspections every six months. These inspections will inform SPCHG on the condition of the premises.

Generally, SPCHG will conduct Condition Inspections every twelve months. The exception is where a renter has previously been found to have unhygienic/very unclean conditions in which case inspections may be undertaken every six months. A renter has a duty under the Act to permit the landlord to conduct such inspections.



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Renters have a duty under the RTA to report all damage, defects, and any relevant property issues to SPCHG for action. This is stipulated in the Residential Rental Agreement and the RTA.

A renter has a duty to permit SPCHG staff exercising a right of entry in accordance with s89 of the RTA. If access is not permitted, SPCHG will issue a Breach of Duty Notice. Should the renter still refuse to comply, SPCHG will apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a Compliance Order.

5. PURPOSE OF ROUTINE INSPECTIONS

All inspections will be conducted by Housing Workers to:

- determine whether any urgent or routine repairs are required,
- ensure properties are being maintained to the standard outlined in the Residential Rental Agreement,
- assess whether damage has been caused by a renter and if so, assess whether this damage was intentional or accidental.

6. NOTICE OF ENTRY

SPCHG will give residents written notice of at least 24 hours, as per the Residential Rental Agreement and the RTA, before an inspection.

The notice will provide the following information:

- The reason for the inspection (i.e. to enable SPCHG to carry out a duty under the RTA, the rental agreement or any other part of the RTA including if SPCHG has reasonable grounds to believe that the renter has failed to comply with their duties under the RTA or the Rental Agreement).
- When entry is required

A notice of entry will be provided by:

- Post, or
- In person to the renter between 8am and 6pm

SPCHG will only arrange to enter the premises between 8am and 6pm on any business day, unless for the purpose of attending to urgent maintenance, such as a water leak.

It is expected that the renter will be present at the date and time agreed.

The notice of inspection will advise renters that a Housing Worker may enter the premises with a duplicate key to undertake the inspection if the renter is not able to be home and if the renter gives permission.

7. TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

Inspections may occur at properties for a variety of reasons. As part of our role as Tenancies Managers we must work within the RTA, to ensure that we can meet our obligations in providing adequate housing for renters. For this to occur effectively, we conduct a variety of inspections at properties:

- Pre / Post Tenancy Inspections
- Follow up inspections



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- Routine/planned/regular inspections:
 - General Property Inspections
 - Inspection to follow up on a breach relating to condition of premises
 - Fire Safety Inspections

Condition Reports are the reports conducted by workers within the housing program to determine the state of a particular unit and / or property. Condition reports seek to identify maintenance concerns, condition of unit and any repairs that need to be conducted.

7.1. PRE / POST TENANCY INSPECTIONS

Vacant Maintenance Checklists are conducted at the end of a rental agreement to identify cleaning and repairs needed for the unit to be at a liveable standard. For an appropriate breakdown on these inspections, please refer to the vacated maintenance policy.

This will be organised by the Property Manager of the specific unit.

7.2. PROSPECTIVE RENTER INSPECTION

Applicants for SPCHG housing will be shown the unit which they are being offered. This inspection is for the prospective renter to inspect the property and make their decision as to whether it is an appropriate place for them to live. Prospective renters should raise any concerns they have with the Housing Worker during this inspection. Prospective renters will only be shown units which are vacant.

7.3. FOLLOW UP INSPECTIONS

Follow up inspections will occur after the first three months of tenancy to ensure that the renter is maintaining the property in accordance with the rental agreement.

This will be organised by the Housing Worker / Property Manager and at least 24 hours notice will be given.

7.4. GENERAL PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

Inspections of the communal areas of a property will occur on a regular basis to ensure that all properties are up to the minimum standard of living and to allow staff to repair any concerns in communal areas. Housing Workers are regularly attending properties for maintenance repairs and will use this period to observe whether general repairs need to be done. These inspections are not to assess an individual unit, but rather to ensure communal areas are up to liveable and appropriate standard.

On occasion, we are required to inspect utility equipment within properties. This can include water, gas and electrical equipment within the unit itself to ensure it is up to standard. These inspections are not of the property itself, or its condition, rather their purpose is to inspect a specific element of the property to ensure it meets safety standards.

7.5. CONDITION INSPECTIONS

Condition inspections will be conducted to assess whether units are being maintained, whether any repairs are in order and the general state of the unit. SPCHG will conduct Condition Inspections on a yearly basis to ensure that all units are well-maintained and there are no issues with squalor, hoarding or vermin.

This will be organised by the Manager, Housing Operations.



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7.6. POST BREACH INSPECTION

Renters may be issued breach notices based on the condition of their property. If such a matter ends up in a hearing at VCAT, staff may be required to conduct a post breach inspection to ensure that the renter is compliant with the order. Staff will ensure they arrange an appropriate time with the renter with 24 hours notice

This will be organised by the Housing Worker / Property Manager, of the breached renter.

7.7. FIRE INSPECTION

Fire inspections occur in accordance with legislation to ensure that the fire systems in place at all our properties are operating appropriately. Fire safety is the responsibility of Homes Victoria. Homes Victoria hire the fire safety contractors.

General fire safety inspections including egress from the property are conducted ONCE OR TWICE per year. Sprinkler and detector inspections are carried out ONCE OR TWICE PER YEAR.

These generally occur once per year, except for properties that do not have a sprinkler system in place. For those properties, fire inspections will be conducted on a quarterly basis to ensure that units are up to safe fire standard.

This will be organised by the Manager, Housing Operations.

To minimise the number of days of disruption to renters, SPCHG will endeavour to conduct its Condition Report inspections on the same day as the fire contractors are in attendance.

7.8. INSPECTIONS OF MAINTENANCE WORK

Where a renter has required maintenance work to the inside of the unit, staff may be required to inspect the quality of the work. 24 hours notice will be given. This will be organised by the Housing Worker / Property Manager, of the specific unit.

7.9 MAINTENANCE WORK WHEN A RENTER CANNOT BE HOME

If maintenance work needs to be undertaken at a time when a renter is not able to be in attendance, this will be done with the renter's permission, and SPCHG will ensure that a Housing Worker will be in attendance.