

Getting Repairs in NSW Public Housing

How to make sure needed repairs and maintenance in your home get done

There are different response times for different repairs, with priority for urgent safety issues. Your landlord is the Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ Housing) but they don't deal with repairs. The Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) owns the property and manages the repairs.

❑ Step 1: Report

Repairs won't get done if you have not reported the problems! Report to the **Housing Contact Centre**, telephone 1800 422 322, or online at http://www.interfinder.net/cgi-bin/hnsw_ift_index.pl. Record the date, the problem, reference number and timeframe.

If the problem is **urgent** (e.g. gas leak, burst water pipe, electrical fault, stove not working) and it's not been fixed quickly, you may be able to organise repairs and be reimbursed for the costs – check with Redfern Tenants Advice Service (details below).

LAHC won't pay to repair damage caused by tenants or guests. They are not required to do renovations like new paint or carpet unless it fits with their standard guidelines.

DCJ Housing officers may need to approve special work like disability modifications (they pay) or changes like curtains or cupboards attached to the walls that you want (you pay). Things like mould, cockroaches and rats are more complex as it depends on the specific situation.

❑ Step 2: Follow up

If repairs are not done, call the Housing Contact Centre with the job reference number to find out what is happening. Make a note about the call and keep receipts of any extra costs you've had because the repairs were not done.

Some work especially big jobs that cost a lot may be put on a list for the future. Ask the Contact Centre if the work is on the '**planned works**' list.

❑ Step 3: Apply to NCAT

If your repairs are still not done after following up, you can apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) for repairs, compensation or reduced rent when repairs have not been done. NCAT is an informal court where you need to give evidence about what is broken and how it affected you. You don't need a lawyer, but advice from Redfern Tenants Advice Service about NCAT can help.

❑ Step 4: Escalate

If the repairs are serious and risk safety or health and have not been fixed, your State MP can raise them with their MP liaison officers. This may help where something has gone wrong. You can also complain to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services but replies can take 8 weeks.

❑ Step 5: Enforce

If Housing NSW does not comply with NCAT orders, you can ask NCAT to 'relist' your case for review. The Office of Fair Trading can investigate landlords for failing to comply with NCAT orders. Ask the Tenants Advice Service if this option will help you.

Contact

For support and a copy of Redfern Legal Centre's "Repair Kit" for social housing tenants, call the Redfern **Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service, 9698 5975**.

