

Background

Renters who have previously experienced family violence, theft or other distressing incidents may wish to install cameras to further their sense of safety at home. Security cameras are becoming increasingly common on residential properties as technology progresses.

Installing Security Cameras

Usually, renters are allowed to install security cameras, but there are some exceptions.

- Firstly, if there is an Owner's Corporation at the premises, permission must be sought from them before any cameras are installed. This is especially important if cameras are installed on or facing common property.
- Secondly, cameras that are not hardwired into the property do not require permission from the rental provider. However, any cameras that will become permanent fixtures or require internal wiring must be approved by the rental provider. This approval might be subject to conditions, such as the renter agreeing to remove the camera and restore the property when they vacate.

If you are considering installing cameras at your property, reach out to your Tenancy Officer who can provide some advice about this. Ensuring it is done legally from the beginning will avoid any issues in the future.

Security Cameras and Privacy

Privacy is a key consideration when installing security cameras. The law is still developing in this area, but generally states that:

- Cameras must not impact the privacy of neighbours
- Cameras must not observe any private spaces, such as inside another person's home
- Cameras can capture footage where others would likely observe a person, or outside of a building

These concepts are from the Consumer Affairs Victoria guidelines and the Surveillance Devices Act 1999 (Vic).

This means that cameras facing common areas such as walkways, foyers and carparks are generally not restricted. However, if a camera points directly into someone's window or door, this will impact privacy.

Concerns and Complaints

If you have concerns that another WHL renter is not complying with these laws, please contact your Tenancy Officer to discuss this.

WHL are committed to upholding the rights of renters to lawfully install cameras alongside other renters' rights to privacy. If a complaint has been made about your security cameras, WHL may ask to see the scope of the cameras to assess the complaint. If there is a legitimate basis for complaint, WHL will issue a Breach Notice and bring the matter before VCAT for determining.

If your neighbour is not a WHL renter, contact your local council for further advice.

This is not legal advice and is for guidance purposes only. WHL encourages renters to contact Tenants Victoria on 9416 2577 or Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 558 131 for further advice.