

Goods Left Behind Policy



Owner:	Tamara Leishman
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Endorsed by:	Kate Ogilvie
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1. Purpose

This policy outlines how Women's Housing Ltd (WHL) manages goods left behind in properties after a tenancy has ended.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all properties managed by WHL. Any items left at a property or in the common areas of a property after the tenancy has ended are classed as 'goods left behind.' Goods that are stored in a common area without consent are also handled in line with this policy.

3. Policy statement

Renters have an obligation under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) to leave their property in a reasonably clean condition at the end of the tenancy. The property should be in the same condition as when the renter moved in, except for fair wear and tear. This includes removing all belongings and rubbish.

WHL aims to avoid the need to handle goods left behind wherever possible by ensuring that all renters are aware of their duty to remove all items from the property at the end of their tenancy so that the property can be re-let to an eligible housing applicant as soon as possible.

Where goods are left behind, WHL aims to alert the previous renter so that they can collect their goods as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Where goods must be stored or disposed of, WHL will do so in line with all relevant requirements under the RTA.

4. Inspecting goods left behind

Tenancy Officers will inspect vacated properties within 24 hours of receipt of keys or VCAT declaration of abandonment. If there are goods left behind, Tenancy Officers will use take a non-stop video of the property to document any remaining items.

Illicit goods will be reported to the police. All goods will then be handled in accordance with section 5 of this policy

5. Managing goods left behind

Goods left behind will be stored and disposed of in line with the following:

Items	Storage and Disposal	Costs
Goods of monetary value / goods that can be sold (including abandoned vehicles)	All reasonable steps will be made to inform the renter via the Consumer Affairs Prescribed Form. The goods will then be stored for 14 days before being disposed of.	The former renter may incur a fee if the goods prevent the property from being re-let to another renter
Personal documents	All reasonable steps will be made to inform the renter via the Consumer Affairs Prescribed Form. The goods will be stored for 90 days before being disposed of.	The former renter may incur a fee for the reasonable costs relating to the notification, removal and storage of the documents
Prescribed items (urns containing human remains, specialised medical devices, medals and trophies)	All reasonable steps will be made to inform the renter via the Consumer Affairs Prescribed Form. The goods will then be stored for 14 days before being disposed of.	The former renter may incur a fee if the goods prevent the property from being re-let to another renter
Goods of no monetary value not listed above	The goods will be immediately disposed of	The former renter may incur a fee for the removal and disposal of the goods
Abandoned pets	Local council will be contacted to pick up the pet	Former renter to liaise with local council regarding any fees

In circumstances of personal or financial hardship and where the leaving of goods at the property was beyond the control of the former renter, WHL will consider all relevant circumstance and may waive the fees that would normally be incurred. WHL will especially consider family violence implications and a cultural safety lens when determining this point.

6. Notification

WHL utilise the Consumer Affairs Victoria Prescribed Form to notify former renters of goods left behind after they have vacated. WHL will use the forwarding address and/or email address that the former renter has provided to make this notification. WHL will also attempt to contact support workers, next of kin and emergency contacts where consent has been required.

WHL may contact renters via telephone calls, SMS and/or email during this process.

7. Goods left in common areas

Goods must not be left in common areas without the consent of WHL and this is a breach of the Residential Rental Agreement. WHL will attempt to contact the owner where possible and may issue a Breach Notice if the behaviour is ongoing. This may result in further VCAT action permitting disposal of the goods.

8. Relevant legislation

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)

9. Related policies

- Inspection Policy
- Managing Hoarding & Squalor Policy
- Transfer Policy
- Renter Charges Policy

10. Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or when changes to best practice, regulatory requirements or legislation occurs.