

Emergency Accommodation Policy



Owner:	Tamara Leishman
Version:	1
Endorsed by:	Kate Ogilvie
Issue date:	29 May 2024
Review date:	29 May 2026

1. Purpose

This policy details how WHL will manage situations where renters may need to leave their property temporarily due to an emergency and access temporary accommodation. Reasons for needing emergency accommodation may include:

- A fire, flood or other disaster rendering the property temporary untenable
- A serious building defect that renders the property uninhabitable for a period of time

NOTE: If a renter requires emergency accommodation due to a serious family violence risk, WHL can refer the renter to a specialist family violence support service who can assist with this.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all renters in properties owned or managed by WHL.

3. Policy statement

- There may be occasions where a renter needs to temporarily leave their property because the property is uninhabitable or unsafe due to structural or other issues
- WHL will support renters into temporary accommodation when this occurs and may be able to assist with the cost of the accommodation, depending on the situation
- WHL will work closely with any relevant support services to assist renters with this transition
- WHL will endeavour to find accommodation that is suitable and appropriate for the renter, but their immediate safety will be the first priority

4. Identifying if emergency accommodation is required

- Renters who need to report serious property damage should contact the WHL Maintenance Line by calling 9412 6868 and selecting option '1' to speak with the Asset Team
- WHL may direct a renter that they need to be moved into temporary accommodation if they believe it is necessary after responding to a maintenance request
- WHL will assess the situation, which may include contacting its insurance provider if relevant
- WHL may need to liaise with the insurer and/or their authorised tradespeople to understand the extent of repair works required

5. Securing emergency accommodation

- WHL will book emergency accommodation on behalf of the renter if required

- WHL will consider the location of the accommodation and its proximity to the renter's work, school, support systems, families, community, etc.
- WHL will consider the size of the property, the ability to house pets and the availability of the property for extended stays if required.
- WHL will try to secure accommodation that meets these needs, but this may not always be possible, especially in peak periods or busy areas
- If the renter is removed from the premises due to antisocial behaviour pertaining to themselves or their visitors, WHL may not source alternative accommodation on their behalf

6. Moving into emergency accommodation

- WHL will work closely with relevant supports who can assist renters with securing funding and/or assistance to move into temporary accommodation
- The level of support needed may depend on the length of time required and whether the renter may require assistance due to age, disability or other factors

7. Communication

- WHL will keep the renter informed of the timeline for the property
- WHL will contact the renter on a weekly basis to touch base with the renter, discuss the accommodation requirements and timelines and identify if further support is needed
- WHL will provide the renter with as much notice as possible before they will return to the property
- Sometimes there are delays due to the involvement of insurance companies in assessing and repairing damage, and WHL will be as transparent as possible with the renter about this

8. Returning to the property

- Renters can return to the property upon the discretion of WHL and/or any insurers who have deemed the property safe and habitable
- If renters are unsatisfied with the level of repair, this can be raised with their Asset Officer who can investigate any issues

9. Rental payments

- Tenancy Officers will advise renters about whether or not they are required to pay rent during this period.

10. Transitional Housing Properties

- If a Transitional Housing Property becomes unsafe and/or uninhabitable for a period of time, WHL will liaise with the DFFH about the next steps.
- Rectification works and alternative accommodation will be processed through the DFFH

11. Relevant legislation and documents

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)

- WHL Rental Hardship & Temporary Absence Policy
- WHL Complaints and Appeals Policy