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Overview

Purpose

Who does this apply to?

This policy applies to All Salvation Army Housing Employees (SAH & SAHV), contractors, board members and volunteers.

Effective date

29/07/2020

Policy Statement

Inspections

1. Salvation Army Housing (SAH) will carry out various types of inspections to comply with its responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA).
2. For further information about these inspections refer to Appendix A.
3. Inspections will be carried out:
 - giving tenants the required notice;
 - according to procedures set out in the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA); and
 - only for the purposes allowed under the RTA or to comply with other obligations set out below (and explained in more detail in Appendix: A).
4. Standard Housing Inspections
 - Introduction or Ongoing Inspections: upon commencement of a tenancy (usually at lease sign-up)
 - Routine Inspection (typically 3 or 6 monthly in line with the RTA for residential properties, while its more frequently for Rooming Houses).
 - Other Tenanted Inspection: e.g. if a complaint has been made about the condition of the property or the tenant has requested an improvement.
 - Exit Inspections: on tenant leaving a property.
 - Vacant Tenanted Inspection: i.e. when vacant property is ready for re-let.
5. Standard Asset Inspections
 - Owners Inspection (where SAH is not the owner)
 - Valuation Inspection (to value the property)
 - Smoke detector checks
 - Essential Safety Measures Inspection (fire inspections)
 - Major Repairs or Refurbishment Inspections (to assess major repairs and/or refurbishments)
 - Asset Assessment Inspection (to determine property maintenance requirements –generally on a 3-year cycle)

For further information about these inspections, refer to Appendix A.
6. Where possible, inspections will be combined to ensure tenants have quiet enjoyment of the premises.

Inspection Times

1. Inspection Times will typically be in normal office hours (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).
2. Sometimes there is a requirement for them to be conducted outside of these times and can be any day (except a public holiday) between the hours of 8am and 6pm (excludes Sunday).

Tenant Responsibilities

1. A tenant is legally required to provide access to the premises when the appropriate notice has been provided.
2. Failure to do so is a breach of the tenancy agreement and could lead to tribunal action.
3. If access is not permitted, SAH may issue a Breach of Duty Notice and if necessary, apply to the following for a Compliance Order:
 - Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)
 - NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)
 - Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT)
 - South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT)
 - Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TCAT)
 - State Administrative Tribunal of Western Australia (SAT)
 - Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT)

4. It is preferable that the tenant or their representative will be present at the date and time agreed.
5. However, if the tenant is not home, access will be gained using a master key or a locksmith will be engaged if required.
6. If the tenant has a Support Worker, that Support Worker may be invited to attend the inspection.

Inspection Notice

1. For an inspection initiated by SAH, notice will be given in writing in line with the RTA. An inspection can also be undertaken by arrangement if requested by a tenant.
2. SAH can conduct an inspection at any time by agreement with the tenant. Entry to the property will be in line with the RTA.
3. Notice of Inspection will be sent to the tenant by SAH in writing (including email if applicable) outlining details of the inspection.
4. Typically, a notice will be issued at least seven (7) days (allowing for delivery method) before an inspection is due to occur.
5. In some urgent cases notice maybe given 24 hours' in advance (allowing for delivery method).
6. Specific timeframes are set out in the RTA.
7. When an inspection is arranged the tenant must always be provided with:
 - reason for the inspection
 - date of inspection
 - time of inspection (this may be a time range)
 - landlord details
 - who will attend (subject to change)
 - contact person and their details
 - areas where access will be required
 - advise that if a tenant (or nominated representative) is not available, access will be gained with the use of a master key or locksmith.

Owner Asset Inspections

1. This is where the property is not owned by SAH, and the owner wishes to conduct an inspection. These inspections will be undertaken within the relevant tenancy agreement and will always be done with relevant notice provided.
2. This is where the property has a domestic smoke detector that requires annual testing and/or battery change.

Essential Safety Measures (ESM) Inspection

1. These inspections are typically called Fire Inspections.
2. These are required where a building has multiple units or tenancies and would typically be triggered by the inclusion of any of the following items listed below and commonly detailed on the Certificate of Occupancy;
 - active fire monitoring (smoke or heat detectors etc.)
 - shared ventilation system(s) (smoke extraction, heating, cooling, air movement etc.)
 - personal fire suppression equipment (fire extinguisher(s) etc.)
3. This inspection is conducted by specialist contractors as prescribed with test and service protocols.
4. On occasion depending on the inspection type or results of system test(s) access into a tenable area may be required to complete a visual or manual inspection or service/repair.

Major Repairs or Refurbishment Inspection(s)

1. Where a major repair or refurbishment is being considered or delivered, inspections must be conducted by suitably qualified person(s) to support the following activities:

- assess and scope work(s)
 - manage, monitor and inspect work(s)
2. The purpose of these inspections is to ensure that when considering and conducting significant work(s), that it is done in such a way to minimise tenant disruption and maximise value for money.
 3. Where practicable, work(s) will be scoped and delivered to support these outcomes will be prioritised for completion while the property is unoccupied.

Asset Assessment Inspection

1. All properties that have a property maintenance liability will have a minimum inspection cycle of three (3) years and will be done by a suitably qualified person.
2. The purpose of this inspection is to periodically measure and monitor asset lifecycle performance and the elements that contribute to it.
4. This is done by providing baseline data to support analytical decision making in the short, medium and long-term across the property portfolio particularly in the following areas;
 - responsive maintenance
 - cyclical maintenance
 - preventative maintenance
 - procurement performance (ad-hoc and contract)
 - property acquisition, disposal and/or redevelopment opportunities.

Appendix A

Housing Inspections

Introduction/Ingoing Inspection

1. These are conducted at the start of a tenancy, prior to or at lease signup or during the first three months of tenure so that the tenant can be provided an ingoing condition report with their tenancy paperwork. Specific timeframes are as per RTAs.
2. The ongoing inspection and condition report detail the condition of the property and any furniture on commencement of the tenancy. The report is provided to the tenant who must review the report and return to the tenancy worker within 7 days (3 days in Tasmania) agreeing to the comments and condition or providing additional comments. Tenants who provide additional comments are advised to keep photos of any discrepancies in the report.

Routine Inspection

1. All properties will be inspected between (3) three to six (6) months from the start of a tenancy. They will repeat on a 3 or 6 monthly cycle (as per RTA) and will not exceed 4 in a calendar year.
2. During this inspection Housing Workers will check off the Property Condition Report and detail any responsive works required on the property.
3. Housing Workers will also check the condition of completed and on-going maintenance works (responsive, contracted garden contractors etc.) where applicable.
4. They will also seek feedback from the tenant(s) residing at the property on contractor performance.

Other Tenanted Inspection

1. It may be necessary to inspect a property for other reasons – e.g. if a complaint has been made about the condition of the property.

Exit Inspection

1. Where possible a Pre-exit Inspection will be carried out prior to the property being vacated.
2. Otherwise, all properties are inspected upon vacancy and property status becoming Vacant Untenable (VUT). At this time, Housing Workers will ascertain:
 - Whether there are goods left behind that need to be processed;
 - If the property is in the same condition as per the Property Condition Report less fair wear and tear;
 - If chattels (white goods, furniture, small goods etc.) listed on the Property Condition Report are still present;
 - If locks need to be changed and/or keys replaced;
 - If monies owed to the tenant including Bond can be released based on the outcomes of 'a', 'b', 'c' or 'd' above;
 - Any responsive maintenance that may be required and if it needs to be undertaken before re-tenanting property; and
 - Any chattels (white goods, furniture, small goods etc.) that may be required – only when applicable.

Vacant Tenatable Inspection

1. Inspections will be undertaken prior to a property status being changed to Vacant Tenatable (VT) and a sign-up arranged. The purpose is to ensure a property is in good condition and tenatable which will include any items identified in the Exit Inspection.

Asset Inspections

1. Owners Inspection
 - This is where the property is not owned by SAH and the owner wishes to conduct an inspection. These inspections will be undertaken within the relevant tenancy agreement and will always be done with relevant notice provided.
2. Valuation Inspection
 - This is where the property has a complete inspection for the purposes of ascertaining its monetary value. These can only be conducted once per calendar year.
3. Smoke Detector Inspection
 - This is where the property has a domestic smoke detector that requires annual testing and/or battery change.

Essential Safety Measures (ESM) Inspection

1. These inspections are typically called Fire Inspections.
2. These are required where a building has multiple units or tenancies and would typically be triggered by the inclusion of any of the following items listed below and commonly detailed on the Certificate of Occupancy;
 - active fire monitoring (smoke or heat detectors etc.)
 - active fire suppression or firefighting systems (sprinklers, wet risers etc.)
 - critical passive fire and smoke control systems (fire doors, smoke seals etc.)
 - shared ventilation system(s) (smoke extraction, heating, cooling, air movement etc.)
 - Personal fire suppression equipment (fire extinguisher(s) etc.)
4. This inspection is conducted by specialist contractors as prescribed with test and service protocols. On occasion depending on the inspection type or results of system test(s) access into a tenatable area may be required to complete a visual or manual inspection or service/repair.

Major Repairs or Refurbishment Inspection(s)

1. Where a major repair or refurbishment is being considered or delivered, inspections must be conducted by suitably qualified person(s) to support the following activities:

- Assess and scope work(s),
 - Quote/price work(s),
 - Carryout work(s),
 - Manage, monitor and inspect work(s).
2. The purpose of these inspections is to ensure that when considering and conducting significant work(s), that it is done in such a way to minimize tenant disruption and maximise value for money. Where practicable, work(s) will be scoped and delivered to support these outcomes will be prioritised for completion while the property is unoccupied.

Asset Assessment Inspection

1. All properties that have a property maintenance liability will have a minimum inspection cycle of three (3) years and will be done by a suitably qualified person.
2. Specific inspection frequency will be dependent on current information known about the property and its condition.
3. Where practicable these inspections will be included with another type of inspection.
4. The purpose of this inspection is to periodically measure and monitor asset lifecycle performance and the elements that contribute to it.
5. This is done by providing baseline data to support analytical decision making in the short, medium and long-term across the property portfolio particularly in the following areas:
 - Responsive Maintenance.
 - Cyclical Maintenance.
 - Planned Maintenance.
 - component upgrades or replacement.
 - property refurbishment (in part or full).
 - procurement performance (ad-hoc and contract); and
 - Property Acquisition, Disposal and/or Redevelopment Opportunities.

Related Documents and References

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Related Policy Documents | Starting a Tenancy Ending a Tenancy<Insert related TSA policies, procedures and/or supporting documents> |
| Related Procedure Documents | Outreach Safety Procedure Abandonment Procedure and Squatters / Illegal Occupants Procedure |
| Related Supporting Documents | Exit Inspection Rooming House Inspection Information Sheet Access Notice Access to Rooming House Notice – VIC Breach of Duty Notice Rooming House Inspection Checklist Property Inspection Feedback Letter Condition report – Residential rental agreement Condition Report - Guidance for Renters - VIC Condition Report - THM – VIC Condition Report Cover - THM – VIC Condition Report - RH – VIC Housing Review Form Housing Review Meeting Formal Breach Notice Template |

Related Legislation Residential Tenancies Act 1997
Residential Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006<Insert relevant legislation and/or regulations>

Other Relevant Documents /Resources <Insert relevant websites and/or links not identified above>

Definitions

Definitions are located in the [Glossary of Terms and Definitions \(Salvos Dictionary\)](#).

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) | The Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (the Act) is the law that governs renting. It provides a balanced framework that gives tenants strong protections, so they feel secure in their homes, while respecting the legitimate rights and interests of landlords in their property. |
| Compliance Order | |
| Vacant Untenable (VUT) | |
| Vacant Tenantable (VT) | |
| Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) | Victorian Residential Tenancies Tribunal. A legal institution set up to administer a number of Acts. For residential tenancies, the Tribunal administers the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. The Residential Tenancies List of VCAT hears and determines residential tenancy matters. |
| NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) | The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) is an independent body which deals with certain kinds of disputes between landlords and tenants. It is not a formal court, but its decisions are legally binding. The people who hear cases at the Tribunal are called Tribunal Members. |
| Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) | The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) is an independent, accessible tribunal that efficiently resolves disputes and makes decisions on a range of matters. |
| South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) | The South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) is an independent body which helps South Australians to resolve issues within civil and administrative law, either through agreement at a conference or mediation, or through a decision at a hearing. |
| Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT) | The Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal is a state-wide, specialist Tribunal that provides Tasmanians with fair and efficient dispute resolution services across a broad range of areas of the law. |
| State Administrative Tribunal of Western Australia (SAT) | The State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) has the power to review administrative decisions made by Western Australian government agencies in a wide range of matters. SAT's functions and powers were established by the State Administrative Tribunal Act 2004. |
| Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) | NTCAT is the Northern Territory's main forum for resolving smaller legal disputes, reconsidering government decisions and helping ensure that certain important human rights are respected. |

Document Control Information

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