

# MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS POLICY

*The co-operative's policies relating to property maintenance and repairs are detailed below in extracts from the current version of the Member Manual:*

## Section 4: Asset Management Rights and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Maintenance Procedures

1. SouthEast is responsible for repairs and asset management under its contract with DHS.
  - Members are responsible for maintaining their house in a clean and tidy condition as defined in the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.
  - Maintenance and asset works will be performed meeting Residential Tenancies Act and DHS requirements as a minimum.
  - SouthEast will provide a good standard of asset management to its members.
  - To avoid liability under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, SouthEast will not employ any contractor who does not have their own public liability/personal accident insurance and WorkCover for their employees.

### 4.2 Emergency Maintenance

**Emergency Maintenance** is defined as corrective works that should be undertaken immediately for reasons of health, safety and security. The following items are considered Emergency repairs:

- Serious fire, storm damage, flooding or major roof leak.
- A failure or breakdown to the supply of gas, electricity and water, including a sewerage blockage.
- A breakdown of any appliance used for hot water, cooking and heating.

- Any damage that makes the premises unsafe or unsecured.

In the event of an Emergency repair becoming necessary, the following process should be followed:

During office hours, contact the SouthEast office immediately.

After hours, phone the Emergency Maintenance mobile number immediately.

If the tenant is unable to contact any of the above within one hour, and the problem threatens is one of those listed above, then the tenant may arrange the repairs to be carried out by a tradesperson listed on the “Emergency Contact List” and contact SouthEast as soon as possible.

Tenants are asked to not call out tradespeople for emergency maintenance if the matter can reasonably wait until the next working day for SouthEast to organise. For example, if a toilet is difficult to flush and the property has two toilets and there are no health concerns, or on a mild Sunday evening if a heater malfunctions.

Members should be aware that:

According to the Residential Tenancies Act, if a tenant has taken all reasonable steps to contact the office but has been unsuccessful, he or she may arrange for the emergency repairs up to a limit of \$1,000. However, if a tenant organises repair work for something which is not considered an emergency, the tenant will be held liable to pay for the repair him or herself. Likewise, if the emergency repair is over the value of \$1,000 the tenant may be liable for the amount over \$1,000.

Notwithstanding any of the above, the member who is the authorising individual must inform the Office of all out of hour’s emergency works they have authorized and provide any supporting documentation within 3 working days or the repair bill may not be honoured.

## 4.3 Cyclical Maintenance

**Cyclical Maintenance** is defined as preventative works such as painting and replacement of worn items such as carpets, fencing, guttering, heating and cooking appliances etc. Cyclical maintenance is assessed and done on a needs basis.

If a member requests cyclical works, the SouthEast office will assess the claim and put it on the cyclical works list to be completed at a later date. Alternatively, the tenant will be advised that works are not necessary at this point in time.

Cyclical Works are prioritised and are responded to on a needs basis. Works are undertaken when sufficient funds are available. Where possible, tenants of houses undergoing cyclical maintenance will be consulted on choice of colours within certain limits. Ceilings will be white; walls are to be lighter pastel colours. Carpets are to be durable and a colour that does not highlight stains.

## 4.4 General Maintenance

**General Maintenance** is defined as all maintenance that is not defined as either Emergency or Cyclical and is the result of fair wear and tear.

Members requiring repairs to their house should complete a *Maintenance Request Form* (Appendix 4) and forward it to the SouthEast Office. Alternatively repairs and other works maybe identified during property inspections.

If the works are required, the work will be dispatched.

Tenants must ensure that no damage occurs beyond fair wear and tear. If a tenant does not ensure that care was taken to avoid damaging the property as defined by the Residential Tenancies Act, the tenant may be found liable for any repair costs.

## 4.5 Member Responsibilities

### House & Yard & Guttering

The Tenancy Agreement outlines the tenant's responsibility for the upkeep of lawns and gardens, disposal of rubbish and garden refuse. On an annual basis the gutters will be cleaned at the expense of SouthEast.

## **Member Feed Back**

Members are invited to comment to the SouthEast office about the quality of maintenance work performed on the Maintenance Satisfaction Form. (Appendix 5)

## **Pets**

Tenants have sole responsibility for the welfare and security of their pets. SouthEast is not responsible for any maintenance needs caused by a pet e.g. pet doors and scratches on doors. Members who allow pets or whose pets are required to be inside the house are responsible for steam cleaning carpets annually, which may include replacing underlay and sterilizing and sealing floorboards.

## **Carpet Cleaning**

Steam cleaning of carpets is a tenant responsibility and it is recommended that it is undertaken at least every 3 years.

## **Swimming Pools/Spas**

If a property with a swimming pool or spa becomes vacant, SouthEast will either remove the pool or spa or fill it in.

The member will assume responsibility for complying with all regulations regarding fencing and safety standards.

## **Additions or Fixtures**

A “permanent fixture” is any fixed addition to a house which alters its structure.

- Tenants can only install fixtures, renovate, make structural changes or additions to their house if they obtain written permission from SouthEast prior to undertaking any works.
- Unless the written consent states otherwise, the tenant must return or pay to have the property returned to its original condition upon vacating, except where SouthEast accepts that the property will benefit from retaining any changes.
- Any tenant who arranges works without SouthEast authorisation will be liable for costs involved in reinstating the property to its original condition in accordance with the Tenancy agreement.

## Broken Windows

Tenants making claims on broken windows must file a police incident report that states the tenant or other residents or their guests or associates in the property were not responsible and provide a copy to SouthEast.

## 4.6 Standard Items

### 4.6.1 Items

Apart from what is required under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, SouthEast will provide:

Chain operated Holland blinds to all windows (unless opaque glass)
Dual flush toilet system
Exhaust fans in bathroom and any kitchen, toilet or laundry without a window.
External front and back door lights
External sun blinds on westerly windows for older people's dwellings (over 60 years of age).
Floor covering – carpet and vinyl
Fly screens to all opening windows
Four bedroom houses with two separate living areas are entitled to a second heater.
Hot water service
Insulation in ceiling
Letterbox
Locks, clasps or winders to all windows.
One designated air conditioner for one room in each property
One garden shed with a concrete floor if there is no garage.
Opening windows in all bedrooms
Pelmets in living areas with space heaters
Secure side and rear fences
Security doors to all external doors
Shower and bath
Stove
Television aerials will be installed and repaired.

#### **4.6.2 Floorboards**

Members can request to have carpets removed and have floors sanded and coated in 3 coats of polyurethane or similar product, instead of a carpet or vinyl replacement, where they are able to supply relevant supporting medical information.

Applications will be considered on an individual basis.

#### **4.6.3 Window Covering**

No drapes or curtains will be provided from SouthEast funds.

#### **4.6.4 Servicing of Heating**

- Heaters/air conditioners to be serviced on a programmatic basis.
- Ducted Heating Units, Wall or Console Space heaters – every three years
- Ducted heating ducts – every 5-7 years

#### **4.6.5 Pest Removal**

SouthEast's pest control policy is in line with RTA and DHS standards. Houses must be free from all pests and in a clean state before new tenancies begin.

Possums in ceilings and walls, white ants (termites), bees and wasps are the only pests that will be eradicated during a tenancy at SouthEast's expense.

#### **4.6.6 Replacement of Sub-Standard Items**

Where SouthEast's properties do not match the Department of Human Services' standards, alterations will be implemented over a period of time. For example, the DHS Standards Manual states all bedrooms should have a minimum of 2 double power points. Where this is not the case, SouthEast will install a power point when electrical work is undertaken or as part of a set program.

#### **4.6.7 Non-Standard Items**

Air conditioners – spas – barbecues - dishwashers. One designated air conditioner for one room in each property is a standard item, other air conditioners, spas, barbecues and dishwashers are non-standard items subject to (a) to (e) below.

(a) These items will be repaired and maintained if in an existing property at the commencement of a tenancy and/or were authorised in writing and installed by SouthEast. They will be replaced as long as the tenant remains in the property and replacement of the items is necessary.

(b) People with disabilities, older people and people with certain medical conditions can apply for the items to be installed into their homes where supporting medical documentation is supplied,

(c) With properties without these items, the tenant must seek written authorisation for their installation, and this will be subject to the tenant agreeing in writing to repair and maintain these items. The tenant must use qualified tradespeople for installation and service.

(d) If the tenant vacates the property, the tenant is liable for the cost of removing these items unless SouthEast decides to retain the items in the property

(e) If there is structural alteration as a consequence of installation of any of the above items, then, the tenant is liable to restore the premises to the condition they were in immediately before the installation, renovation or addition or pay the landlord an amount equal to the reasonable cost of restoring the premises to that condition.

#### **4.6.8 Medical Conditions**

If unavailable through another specialist agency, SouthEast will consider supplying the non-standard item. SouthEast will endeavour to meet members' needs. People with disabilities, older people and people with certain medical conditions can apply for non-standard items to be installed into their homes where supporting medical documentation is supplied, preferably by a specialist. In the first instance, SouthEast may arrange for the supply of the non-standard item from another specialist agency.