

Alterations and Disability Modifications Policy

Policy Description

SouthEast Housing Co-operative's policies relating to alterations and disability modifications are detailed below in extracts from the current version of the Member Manual.

Scope

This policy applies to all renters and properties managed by SouthEast Housing Co-operative under all relevant programs.

Definitions

NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
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Relevant policy statements and/or principles

Liveability Property Modifications

SouthEast Housing Co-operative is committed to enhancing the liveability conditions for its members as their needs change over time as SouthEast Housing Co-operative is committed to supporting independent living by members in properties owned and managed by SouthEast Housing Co-operative.

The SouthEast Housing Co-operative philosophy is to provide secure housing for members, if at all practicable and within the budget allocation. If a household includes a physically disabled child or adult, then in some instances an agreement could be reached regarding the provision of disability modifications. SouthEast Housing Co-operative, however, is not responsible for picking-up the cost of disability modifications.

This commitment is subject to the following:

- SouthEast Housing Co-operative is primarily a housing co-operative. Under the Residential Tenancies Act, SouthEast Housing Co-operative is not obliged to provide property modifications because of new and/or emerging disability needs of members.
- There being a liveability allocation in the budget.

Minor modifications which SouthEast Housing Co-operative will permit subject to budget allocation:

- grab rails; handrails; handheld shower sets; fold-down shower sets;
- re-location/replacement of door handles and locks;
- lever or capstand handled taps;
- thermostatically controlled hot water system to bathroom only;
- slip-resistant vinyl in all wet areas;

- hard-surfaced, slip-resistant external pathways with unobstructed width of 1 metre;
- additional heating and/or air-conditioning;
- wheelchair re-charging facilities;
- strobe smoke alarms and doorbell;
- installation of ramp (2 steps or less);

Major modifications which SouthEast Housing Co-operative is unlikely to permit unless there is a scheduled major upgrade:

- bathroom/toilet modifications/alterations which may include:
 - replacement of bath with stepless shower;
 - lowering of hand basin, benches and shelves;
 - replacement and relocation of toilet bowl and cistern;
 - structural reinforcement in bathroom to allow for installation of hoist;
- kitchen modifications/alterations which may include:
 - lowering of all benches, cupboards, shelves; sink;
 - replacement and relocation of stove
- laundry modifications/alterations which may include lowering of trough, shelving and benches;
- door widening; refitting/replacement of doors and substantial ramping (3 or more steps)

Disability modifications cannot occur without the written approval of SouthEast Housing Co-operative.

Procedures

The renter/member is responsible for obtaining an appropriate specialist assessment of the property, but in the case of a minor modification e.g. not structural, a written recommendation from a specialist medical practitioner may be sufficient.

With the assistance of the appropriate specialist the renter/member should seek funding from appropriate authorities e.g. NDIS; Veteran Affairs; the local council/shire; Vision Australia; home & community services or other agencies; child funding packages, Human Services; etc.

Before the next step is taken, agreement needs to be reached between SouthEast Housing Co-operative, the renter/member, the appropriate specialist and the funding body/bodies to determine what needs to be done and who will be financially responsible. SouthEast Housing Co-operative may not have funds available, and funds provided will be subject to the SouthEast Housing Co-operative budget. SouthEast Housing Co-operative can only provide funding within the limits of its budget.

SouthEast Housing Co-operative may recommend that the renter/member consider options for relocating to a more appropriate house/unit.

Standard Requirements

SouthEast Housing Co-operative will comply with the rental minimum standards as set out in the Residential Tenancies Act (1997). For a complete list of minimum standards please refer to the Consumer Affairs Victoria web site at –

<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/changes-to-renting-laws/resources-for-practitioners/fact-sheet-26-rental-minimum-standards>

Additionally, all new properties developed and/or built by or for SouthEast Housing Co-operative will be based on the following standard requirements:

- Reinforced wall framing in bathrooms to allow future installation of grab rails. Additional noggins to be installed 900mm above FFL around WC and shower.
- Shower door frame to have no bottom rail (threshold less than 5mm in height or beveled edges) and adjustable/detachable handheld shower rose.
- Internal doorways on the entrance level having a minimum clear opening of 820mm (i.e. an 870mm door leaf for hinged doors, also check sliding doors) and minimum corridors of 1000mm or wider clear of fixtures.
- A power point within 300mm of the front of the bench which is adjacent to the cook top.
- Door handles to be lever style and tap hardware to be lever or flick mixer style.
- Light switches to be located near doorways at a height between 900mm and 1100mm.

Related Legislation, SEHC Documents and Other Documents

Legislation / Standards:	Residential Tenancies Act 1997
Organisational Documents:	Transfer ex Member Manual

Policy Management

Policy owner (role title):	Board
Role responsible for implementing:	Board and CEO
Review arrangements:	Every 3 years via internal review
Next Review Date:	25 June 2027

Document History

Date	Controlled Version Number	Author	Approved by	Comment
24 June 2022	1.	S. Morrissey (CEO)	Board	Board approved version migrated for display on SEHC website
25 June 2024	2.	S. Morrissey (CEO)	Board	