

Sample Inspections Policy

Foreword

This document is an example of an inspections policy. It is not a definitive example of good practice, but one of many ways an organisation may choose to conduct inspections. If you choose to use this document as a template, it will need to be edited to best reflect your organisation's procedures.

Purpose

The purpose of the inspections policy is to ensure that property is being maintained in accordance with [Organisation] standards, identify any tenancy problems or concerns, identify any capital repairs necessary for the asset's health, and to minimize or prevent damage from occurring.

Scope

This policy applies to all units managed by [Organisation] and includes:

- Giving notice of inspections;
- Entry without notice;
- Tenancy inspections;
- Property inspections;
- Frequency of inspections.

Definitions

Tenant – The holder of a residential tenancy agreement with [Organisation]

Tenancy Manager - A person or organisation employed or contracted by [Organisation] to carry out management of their tenancies.

Policy Statement

[Organisation] will carry out regular inspections of all properties. This is to ensure:

- The property is maintained in a good condition;
- The condition of the asset is protected;
- Check on Tenant welfare;
- To ensure that the tenant is continuing to independently maintain their tenancy; and
- Identify any issues or potential breaches of the tenancy agreement.

In carrying out inspections, [Organisation] will respect tenants' rights to quiet enjoyment as required by section 38 of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 (RTA). Staff will show respect for Tenants' dignity, privacy and protect the health and safety of staff undertaking inspections.

Procedure and Guidance

Giving Notice of Inspections

In arranging inspections, [Organisation] will comply with section 48 of the RTA. The Tenant will be contacted either by phone, email, text message, letter, or by home visit to arrange a suitable time for inspection. [Organisation] must give tenants at least 48 hours' notice before an inspection. Notice cannot be given more than 14 days before the inspection. Inspections must take place between 8am and 7pm and inspections can only be undertaken once in any four-week period.

Tenancy Managers will carry out a health and safety check before an inspection. The Tenant's file will be reviewed for risks such as dogs or incidents that may have occurred during previous inspections. Appropriate precautions will then be taken.

Entry Without Notice

If the Tenancy Manager has immediate welfare and safety concerns for a Tenant they may enter a unit without notice. For example, a Tenancy Manager may receive a call from concerned neighbours about the Tenant's welfare. Whenever entering a unit without notice, the Tenancy Manager will be accompanied by another staff member, contractor, or neighbour.

Completing an Inspection

The inspection will comprise two parts: inspecting the property and inspecting the Tenancy.

Property Inspection

The Tenancy Manager will use the Property Inspection Form to carry out a visual inspection to check the condition of the property and elements of the property (kitchen, bathroom etc.) The completed Property Inspection Form is to be retained on the property file. Any defects noted should be recorded and photographed. Care should be taken when photographing inside the property to maintain the privacy of the resident. If you are taking any photos during an inspection, be careful not to include the tenant's belongings if this is possible. Any photographs and related work orders produced should be attached to the Property File. Property Inspections should check the following elements:

- That the property is in a state of repair that complies with all applicable laws and organisational standards;
- That all smoke alarms in the property are tested to ensure they are in good working order.
- Ascertain all visible and notified defects (including damage);

Work orders are to be placed to repair any defects or damage. See **Responsive Repairs Policy** and **Tenant Damages and Rechargeable Repairs Policy**.

Tenancy Inspection

Prior to the Tenancy Inspection the Tenancy Manager should check the tenant's rent account and tenancy file to identify any issues relating to the tenancy, e.g. rent arrears, complaints against the tenant, requests for repairs.

The Tenancy Manager will discuss any issues identified prior to the tenancy inspection with the Tenant, and agree actions that the tenant or [Organisation] will take to remedy the issues. If there are no outstanding issues the Tenancy Manager should have a discussion with the tenant about how the tenancy is going, and if the tenant is experiencing any problems. Any issues identified during the inspection must be followed up. For example:

- Breaches in conditions of the tenancy agreement or any tenant damage should be discussed with the Tenant, recorded on the Tenancy File and, where appropriate, followed up by a 14-day 'Notice to Remedy';
- Any suspicion of housing fraud or physical abuse detected should be discussed with the [Organisation Manager], and a plan developed – including where appropriate further investigation and notification to a third party (e.g. MSD, Police).

Frequency of Inspections

Initial inspection – An initial inspection of the property and signing of the property condition report will be carried out at the start of the tenancy as specified in the **New Tenants Policy**.

3 Month Periodic inspections – A minimum of one periodic inspection will be completed every 3 months. Quarterly inspections are the necessary frequency to meet standard landlord insurance requirements. This inspection will relate to both the condition of the property, the conduct of the Tenancy and the welfare of the Tenant. The tenancy inspection will be used to review the Tenant's circumstances and discuss whether their housing needs are still being adequately and appropriately addressed by the home. If additional support needs are identified the Tenancy Manager will discuss options for referral to appropriate support agencies.

In some situations, [Organisation] may conduct inspections at higher frequency than 3 monthly. This will occur when there has been an identified increased risk to either the Tenant or the property that warrants more intensive supervision. These needs will sometimes be identified at the beginning of the tenancy and may be included in the tenancy agreement – see **New Tenants Policy**.

If the Tenancy Manager suspects illegal activities are being conducted at the property while conducting a tenancy the **Antisocial Behaviour Policy** will be consulted. [Organisation] has the right to carry out non-invasive methamphetamine contamination testing having served the necessary notice period. Tenants will be made aware of [Organisation]'s policy around methamphetamine at the onset of the tenancy -See **Methamphetamine Contamination Policy** and **New Tenants Policy**.

End of Tenancy Inspections – An inspection will be conducted after a Tenant has given notice – ideally on the day that the Tenant vacates the property. This inspection will be conducted by the Tenancy Manager and will allow a comparison of the condition of the property with the Property Condition Report completed at the sign-up of the tenancy and record any damage or outstanding repairs. Photographs will be taken and added to the Tenant's file. This will inform [Organisation]'s decisions regarding whether to return the Bond in full and will help in planning for any catch-up repairs prior to the next tenant viewing the property. This inspection will include a routine swab test for the presence of Methamphetamine – refer **Methamphetamine Contamination Policy**.

If a property is abandoned the Tenancy Manager will complete an inspection and make a record of the condition of the property, and keep a record of any abandoned items or chattels in accordance with Section 62 of the Residential Tenancies Act. See **Absent Tenants, Abandoned Tenancies and Disposal of Goods Policy**.

Unsuccessful Inspections – If contact with the Tenant cannot be made or access is not granted by the Tenant, [Organisation] will:

- Follow up with another contact or if appropriate hand-deliver a notice notifying the tenant of the time and date of the inspection;
- If the Tenant still does not make contact or refuses access, [Organisation] will seek an order from the Tenancy Tribunal to enter the property for the purpose of carrying out an inspection.

Relevant legislation/regulatory compliance

- Residential Tenancies Act 1986;
- The Privacy Act 1993.

Related Policies/Procedures

- Methamphetamine Contamination Policy;
- Complaints and Appeals Policy;
- Absent Tenants, Abandoned Tenancies and Disposal of Goods Policy;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy;
- New Tenants Policy;
- Responsive Repairs Policy;
- Tenant Damages and Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

Version Control

Version	Effective Date	Policy Reviewer	Policy Owner	Review Date
V1	01/01/2018			01/01/2019
V2	14/06/2019	CG		14/06/2020