

Affordable Housing: Additional Tenant Charges

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Related policies and documents	Bond Policy, Rent Charges		

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, tenants and applicants of Amélie Housing in affordable housing properties and programs.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Amélie Housing to:

- Keep all properties to a standard that is clean, safe and functional
- Manage properties to meet landlord obligations under tenancy legislation in each state and territory
- Manage and maintain properties to meet the requirements of FaCS NSW Housing Asset Management Standards and other building codes
- Keep tenants up to date and informed about any additional charges they may receive due to property damage or repairs and charges due to negligence, for which the tenant or household member is responsible
- Provide evidence to tenants of additional charges and how to dispute or accept the charge
- Provide tenants with access to financial services to support capacity to repay any debts resulting from tenant charges, without going into Rental Arrears
- Maintain a policy of fair wear and tear during and at the end of the tenancy when assessing tenant charges

Compliance

This policy assists Amélie Housing to comply with:

Compliance Document	Section/Number	Area
National Community Housing Standards	1.2 3.1	Tenancy Management – establishing and maintaining tenancies Tenant Rights
	2.2	Responsive Maintenance and Repairs
National Regulatory Code Evidence Guidelines	1c	Tenancy and Housing services – Setting and meeting housing standards
	2b	Housing Assets -setting and meeting relevant property standards

Tenant Charges

Amélie Housing will assess, manage and follow up additional tenant charges in a manner that is fair, transparent and in accordance with evidence provided, such as property condition reports and tradespersons repairs.

Amélie Housing supports tenants and household members to take responsibility for their obligations under the Residential Tenancy Act for their state and territory. This means any tenant damage requiring repairs should be reported as soon as it occurs.

This helps Amélie Housing ensure that properties are repaired and maintained to a quality standard.

Where tenants or household members are responsible for the cost of repairs this is called an additional tenant charge.

Managing additional tenant charges

Reducing additional tenant charges for tenants means understanding the responsibilities of Amélie Housing and tenants, visitors to tenants and additional household occupants.

Amélie Housing will:

- Ensure costs of tenant charges are explained to the tenant
- Ensure costs of repairs are charged to the tenant and costs are recovered
- Provide evidence supporting the tenant charge, including photographs, condition reports, tradesperson quotes and invoices

Tenants will:

- Report any damage caused by themselves, visitors or additional household occupants
- Request locksmith services due to lockouts
- Report any damage arising from alleged criminal conduct, e.g. break ins, vandalism to the Police in their state or territory
- Provide Amélie Housing with an Event Number or police report of any alleged criminal activity resulting in damage

Additional tenant charges

The following are examples of negligence and damage that fit the criteria for tenant charges. This list is not extensive and is used as a guide. Each case of alleged tenant damage or negligence beyond fair wear and tear will be assessed on the evidence provided.

- Broken or cracked windows
- holes in walls
- broken cupboards
- carpet damage, including cigarette burns, iron burns or any damage beyond fair wear and tear
- failure to return keys
- damaged or broken locks
- damaged doors – internal and external
- damage to bathroom fixtures (toilets, hand basins, shower fixtures)
- sewer chokes due to putting non-flushable items in the toilet -e.g. nappies, toys, sanitary items
- removal of items left at the end of the tenancy – including appliances, personal effects, large items in yards and furniture
- Tradesperson appointments where access is refused and or the tenant is not home or available to allow access, causing delays to required repairs or planned maintenance
- additional cleaning to bring the property to a reasonable standard at the end of tenancy

Notifying Tenants of Additional Charges

Tenants will be notified by phone and in writing of additional tenant charges. They will be given access to:

- The evidence supporting the tenant charge
- How to accept and pay the charge
- How to appeal the charge if they do not agree

Emergency service access

Tenants will not be charged for damage to properties caused by access assessed as necessary in an emergency, e.g. Ambulance or Police access requiring forced entry.

Property damage caused by domestic violence

Amélie Housing will assess the causes and responsibility of property damage where a tenant discloses they have experienced domestic and family violence during their tenancy.

In cases where a tenant requests removal of a violent partner through relevant legal channels, the tenant residing in the property who has experienced violence will not be responsible for damage caused by violence.

Amélie Housing will work with the tenant and engage with specialist support services to ensure the tenant is not disadvantaged financially for damage caused by a partner no longer residing in the property. In addition, Amélie Housing requires that any damage to property arising from alleged criminal conduct, e.g. domestic and family violence is reported to police in each state or territory. Evidence such as an event number or police report of any alleged criminal activity resulting in damage will need to be provided.

Complaints and Appeals

If a tenant is not satisfied with a service provided by Amélie Housing or does not agree with a decision it has made, they can ask for a formal review. To do this, the tenant can complete a **review of decision** form.

Details on how to make a complaint, provide feedback or lodge an appeal are found in Amélie Housing Complaints and Appeals policy.

Additional Information for NSW Tenants

If a tenant is unhappy with the outcome of an appeal to Amélie Housing, they can lodge an appeal Housing Appeals Committee. The Housing Appeals Committee is an independent agency that reviews certain decisions made by staff of Community Housing organisations and Housing NSW. For information on the Housing Appeals Committee call 1800 629 794 or go to www.hac.nsw.gov.au.