

## Start of Rental Agreement

### Overview

This policy explains how we will start rental agreements.

### Scope

This policy applies to SGCH Homes Victoria and its subsidiaries (**we, our and us**).

### Guiding principles

We will start rental agreements in a way that:

- creates a positive and sustainable relationship with our renter
- makes sure renters are told about their legal rights and responsibilities as a renter and makes them aware of our policies
- makes sure we meet our legal and policy requirements when we enter into a rental agreement
- considers human rights when making decisions.

### Signing the rental agreement

We will explain the residential rental agreement and the rights and responsibilities of the renter to the person before they sign it and will use an interpreter if needed.

After a person signs a residential rental agreement, we will give them a copy of their rental agreement, condition report and a copy of the Renters Guide (published by [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)). We will also provide renters with additional information relevant to their rental agreement, including an emergency contact number for urgent repairs outside business hours and the available methods for rent payment.

Rent will start on the first day of the rental agreement.

### Specialist disability accommodation

Each person signing a Residential Rental Agreement (rental agreement) will have a written copy of their agreement given to them, their person responsible or their trustee. We will keep a copy of the agreement and can provide a copy if requested.

### Supported housing

For some housing programs, it is a condition of the rental agreement that the renter continues to receive support during their rental agreement. Where this is the case, we will explain any support requirements to the renter and their support workers before the rental agreement starts.

### Shared housing

Where unrelated adults are sharing common facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens and laundries, a rental agreement will be signed with each person (or couple) which gives them the right to their bedroom and the right to use common facilities.

### Young people

We will only allow young people who are 16-18 years old to have a rental agreement in their own name, without needing a guarantor or adding any special conditions, if we believe that they will be able to maintain the tenancy on their own and they have an adult present with them during the signing of the rental agreement.

## Length of lease

Generally, when we sign a rental agreement with a renter, the length of the lease will usually be a fixed term of 6 months. The agreement will also include a clause which allows the rental agreement to continue at the end of the 6 months if the rental agreement is not legally ended by either the renter or us.

For some supported housing programs, we will sign a fixed term agreement with the renter and review the rental agreement before the end of the fixed term. We will keep signing fixed term leases until the renter does not need support to maintain their rental agreement and is able to move to independent living or is no longer eligible for the program. Generally, the maximum tenure for supported housing programs is 18 months, unless an extension is approved by the Head Of.

We may also sign a fixed term lease with a renter:

- for specific housing programs
- when approved by a Head Of.

## Rent and service charges

Where the rental agreement refers to 'rent', it is the market rent for the property. Renters who pay a rebated rent, will have the assessment and the review process explained to them in a separate letter. Refer to our Rent policy for more information about rent.

New renters must pay 2 weeks rent and services charges (if applicable) on the day they sign their rental agreement. If a renter cannot pay 2 weeks rent in advance, a Lead (or higher) will decide whether to start a rental agreement. These decisions are made at our discretion and on a case by case basis. If a rental agreement is started without the renter paying 2 weeks rent in advance, we will enter into a repayment agreement with the renter so they do not remain in arrears.

Renters can pay their rent either weekly or fortnightly as long as rent is paid on time. We will not ask a renter to pay more than 2 weeks rent in advance.

## Rough sleepers

If an applicant is a rough sleeper at the time of allocation, we will charge them \$5 per week for the first 4 weeks of their rental agreement to help them to transition from homelessness to stable accommodation.

## Charges for utilities

Refer to our Service Charges policy.

## Ending a rental agreement

Refer to our End of Rental Agreement policy.

## Relevant legislation, regulations or standards

- [\*Residential Tenancies Act 1997 \(Vic\)\*](#)
- [\*Housing Act 1983 \(Vic\): Performance Standard 1 \(Tenant and housing services\)\*](#)
- [\*Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)\*](#)

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## Related documents/resources

- [Consumer Affairs Victoria - Renting information](#)
- Policy: End of Rental Agreement
- Policy: Rent
- Policy: Services Charges

## Policy information

Version:	1
Approved:	May 2025
Reviewed:	May 2025
Review frequency:	24 months
Responsible team/position:	Executive Director, Customers – Services
Transparency and accessibility:	Available on our website