

## Alterations to properties

### Overview

This policy explains what alterations are, how renters can apply for permission to alter their property and how we manage requests for alterations.

### Scope

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

This policy does not cover modifications. Modifications are changes that we make to a property because an applicant, renter or household member has an identified need which means their current property is no longer suitable. Refer to our Modifications Policy for more information.

### Definitions

#### Alterations

Alterations are works and improvements to a property that are done by a renter at their expense.

### Types of alterations

The following are some examples of alterations:

- Internal or external structural changes
- Painting
- Cable/pay television, satellite dishes and antennas
- Ducted air conditioning
- Air conditioners, heaters and other fixed appliances
- Security shutters and screens on windows and doors inside and outside the property
- Built-in cupboards and wardrobes
- Carpet, floor and wall tiles
- Floor coverings including timber boarding and vinyl tiles/sheeting
- Pergolas, fences, gazebos
- Kitchen and bathroom renovations and alterations including taps, switches and lighting
- Sheds
- Picture hooks
- Window blinds and curtains
- Skylights
- Landscaping
- Carports, garages, driveways and paving
- Rainwater tanks
- Built in appliances that involve modifications or adjustments to the property and/or its fixtures
- Light fittings

- Security alarm systems
- Security cameras
- Reconfiguration of rooms and property layouts.

## Requesting permission to make alterations

Renters who want to make any alterations to their property must ask us for approval before any work commences. Renters can ask for approval by completing an Alterations Request and submitting any supporting documentation, quotes, drawings and photographs.

Renters may install a few picture hooks and make minor changes to gardens without getting approval from us. Renters must not drill into tiled areas in bathrooms without permission because this may compromise the waterproofing.

For safety reasons, we do not allow our renters to have or install swimming pools, ponds etc. (deeper than 30 centimetres) in our properties.

### Assessing requests to make alterations

We will respond to all Alterations Requests within 21 calendar days. If there is a reason why a decision cannot be made within 21 calendar days, we will advise the renter of the reasons for the delay and the expected timeframe for us to make a decision.

When assessing requests, we will consider the following factors:

- Safety of our renter and their household
- Suitability of the property
- Whether we own, lease or manage the property
- Any program, contractual, regulatory or environmental standards, restrictions or rules that apply to the property (for example, renters may not be allowed to install air conditioning or heating at the premises)
- Whether the renter has, or can get, the necessary approvals from the relevant local council, owners corporation and the owner of the property (if applicable)
- Whether the works will meet all relevant standards
- Whether the alterations can be satisfactorily removed at the end of the rental agreement
- Whether the contractor that will be engaged by the renter has all relevant insurances and has provided relevant safe working method statements in accordance with current work health and safety requirements
- The human rights of the individual and household
- Any relevant privacy issues.

Once a decision has been made, we will advise the renter of the outcome in writing. If we decline a renter's request, the letter will also advise the renter of their right to appeal in line with our Appeals, Complaints and Feedback Policy.

Decisions regarding installation of security cameras will be made on a case-by-case basis and will take into consideration the privacy of neighbours and any other relevant factors. We may approve an application from a renter to install security cameras if:

- The security camera will be installed on the renter's property
- The camera will not face a neighbouring property or any common areas
- The camera will not be in breach of any relevant laws or regulations.

We may also approve installation of security cameras if there are legitimate concerns for personal safety and these concerns can be substantiated (e.g. domestic and family violence, harassment), or on advice from the Police.

The number of cameras approved will depend on the size and type of property.

### Conditions for approval

Before we approve a request for alterations, the renter must agree to being responsible for:

- Any costs associated with the alteration, including:
  - The cost of subscribing to any required services e.g. pay television
  - The cost of installation, connection, disconnection and ongoing maintenance relating to the alteration
- Repairing any damage that is caused to the property because of the alteration
- Compliance and any ongoing compliance requirements
- Removing any alterations when they move out and restoring any damage caused to the property from removal of the alteration
- Paying for the costs of our contractors to remove any alterations and return the property to its pre-altered state, fair wear and tear excepted.

### Unauthorised alterations

If the renter has altered the property without our approval, we will ask them to submit an Alterations Request or remove the alteration and return the property to its original state.

If an Alterations Request is submitted, we will then assess the request as normal and advise the renter of the outcome.

If we refuse their alterations request, we will give the renter a reasonable amount of time to remove the alteration and fix any damage caused. If the renter does not remove the alteration and fix the damage caused, we will apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to have the matter resolved.

If a swimming pool, pond etc. (deeper than 30 centimetres) has been installed, we will immediately ask the renter to remove it. If the renter doesn't remove the swimming pool, pond etc. within the timeframe given, we will apply to VCAT for an order to have it removed.

### Relevant legislation, regulations or standards

- [Residential Tenancies Act 1997 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Housing Act 1983 \(Vic\): Performance Standard 2 \(Housing Assets\)](#)
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)

### Related documents/resources

- [Policy: Modifications](#)
- [Policy: Appeals, Complaints and Feedback](#)
- Form: Alterations Request

### Policy information

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<b>Review frequency:</b>	24 months
<b>Responsible team/position:</b>	Executive Director, Customers - Services
<b>Transparency and accessibility</b>	Available on our website