

Damage to Your Public Housing Home

You have a responsibility to maintain your home with the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities. It is important your home is not kept in an unreasonably dirty condition.

You need to take care and not damage your home. You must not intentionally or negligently cause or allow other people to cause any damage to your home.

All damage or items that need to be repaired must be reported to the Department.

Why do I need to report damages?

You must report any damages to your home so the Department can assess any repairs needed. This helps the Department keep your public housing premises safe and secure to live in.

When am I responsible for damages?

Damage to your home that is considered your responsibility is:

- Damage that is intentional
- Damage that occurred because you failed to take care to prevent damage (neglect)
- Intentional damage or neglect, which leads to damage, that is caused by you, a household member, a visitor you allowed onto the property or by pets.

Examples of intentional or negligent damage are:

- Punching a hole in the wall or door
- Breaking a window or a door to access your premises because you have no keys
- Breaking the oven door by forcing it shut when full.

If you do not agree that you are responsible for the damages to your home, or have evidence that might show that you are not responsible for the damages, please tell the Department as soon as possible. You may need to provide supporting evidence.

What if damages were caused by a crime?

If your home is damaged because of a crime (for example a break-in), you will need to provide the Department with evidence that you have reported the crime.

The following documents are accepted as evidence:

- A Police Case Summary Report which names the Department as a victim and identifies the offences committed;
- A copy of the police statement;

- Where there is no police presence in a community, statutory declarations from tenants or supporting letters from other Northern Territory Government Departments stating the damage was a result of criminal activity.

You need to report the crime and supply the Department with evidence as soon as possible. This will help the Department assess that the damages are not your fault.

What if damages were caused as a result of domestic and family violence?

The Department will repair damage at no cost to you if you are a victim of an act of violence under the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*.

What if the damage is fair wear and tear?

Fair wear and tear is the gradual deterioration of a property or its fixtures and fittings as a result of reasonable use over time. For example plaster cracking over time, will be repaired by the Department at no cost to you. You should report any damage caused by fair wear and tear to the Department as soon as possible. If you do not report this, any further damage caused may be charged to you.

House swapping?

You must have approval from the Department before swapping houses. This will make sure that you are not charged for damage caused by the previous tenant.

Can I repair the damage myself?

Where you are liable for the damage and it is not considered an emergency repair, you may choose to make the repairs yourself.

If you choose to make the repairs yourself, they must be completed to an acceptable and satisfactory standard.

If the repairs are not completed to an acceptable and satisfactory standard, the Department may redo the repair work and charge you for the costs of repairs.

Can the Department organise repairs on my behalf?

If you are liable for damages, you may ask the Department to arrange the repairs for you, however you will be responsible for the cost of these repairs.

Sometimes, it may be cheaper for you if the Department arranges repairs on your behalf. The Department can help you decide which option is best for you.

Tradespersons will not enter your home without you there. You will need to provide access to your home so the tradespersons can make repairs to things that are broken.

You will also need to tell the Department if problems have not been fixed or are taking a very long time to get fixed.

Where can I find more information?

For further information contact your local Housing office or visit tfhc.nt.gov.au.

Alice Springs (08) 8951 5344

Arafura Region (08) 8995 5122

Greater Darwin (08) 8999 8814

Katherine (08) 8973 8513

Nhulunbuy (08) 8987 0533

Palmerston (08) 8999 4767

Tennant Creek (08) 8962 4497

Maintenance Call Centre 1800 104 076