

Government Employee Housing Tenant Welcome Pack

Northern Territory Government Employee Housing Office



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Acronyms	Full form
DIPL	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
GEH	Government Employee Housing
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTGEHO	Northern Territory Government Employee Housing Office
PCR	Property Condition Report

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1. Background

Government Employee Housing (GEH) is the provision and management of a service through the Northern Territory Government Employee Housing Office (NTGEHO) that provides accommodation for eligible Northern Territory Government (NTG) employees in remote locations.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (Housing) is the legal entity charged with the functions of providing residential accommodation and the power to maintain, manage, control and let premises through the *Housing Act 1982*.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Landlord's responsibilities include:

- ensuring the premises comply with the health and safety standards;
- ensuring that the dwelling is habitable and reasonably clean at allocation;
- ensuring that the dwelling is kept in reasonable repair; and
- payment of council rates and sewerage charges.

Your (the Tenant's) responsibilities include:

- prompt reporting of any repairs needed to the premises;
- repairing damages caused by you, your guests or your pets;
- using the premises for your own residential purposes only;
- keeping the premises in a neat and tidy condition, including maintaining the garden, mowing and watering the lawn;
- keeping only registered and roadworthy motor vehicles on the premise;
- keeping the premises secure;
- obtaining written permission before making any alterations or additions to the premises;
- advising NTGEHO when the premises will be vacant for more than 30 days;
- paying the electricity, gas, internet, pay television and telephone bills (as agreed with your employing agency);
- replacing electrical light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters when needed;
- take all reasonable actions to keep the dwelling free of pests such as mice, rats, fleas, ticks and cockroaches;
- replacing lost keys and damaged locks and notifying NTGEHO if locks have been changed;
- keeping all surfaces clean of dirt, dust, grime, grease, marks, mould, vegetation, glue and tape;
- keeping air-conditioning filters clean;
- test and clean each smoke alarm in the premises at intervals of not more than 12 months
- being conscious of the importance of conserving power and water;
- complying with any legislation, by-law and requirements to living in your remote locality; and
- complying with the Code of Conduct for the Northern Territory Public Sector which applies to all public service officers.

3. Direct Tenancy Agreement

Upon being allocated a GEH, you will be required to enter into a tenancy agreement with CEO (Housing) as the landlord.

CEO (Housing) means Chief Executive Officer (Housing), a legal entity established under the *Housing Act 1982* (NT) including its successors and permitted assigns and where context permits includes employees, agents and sub-contractors of CEO (Housing), including NTGEHO.

The tenancy agreement is a written agreement between the landlord and tenant in relation to the residential premises which outlines the terms of the tenancy, otherwise known as a lease.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand and meet the terms in the tenancy agreement. If you have any questions, please contact your regional GEH Tenancy Officers.

3.1. Rent

Rent is referenced in the tenancy agreement which needs to be compliant with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999*. However, you are not required to pay rent to CEO (Housing) as it will be paid by your employing agency as a condition of your employment entitlement.

If you are required to pay rent for your GEH dwelling, this will be an arrangement between you and your employing agency.

3.2. Bond

The current GEH policy states that bond does not apply to GEH tenants. As such the bond clauses in the tenancy agreement do not apply and will not, until such time that a bond is introduced at some future point.

3.3. Premises

The premises refers to the residential accommodation to which a tenancy agreement relates. The address of the premises is included in Item 4 of the Tenancy Agreement and where relevant, includes a plan of the premises at Schedule 4.

4. Property Condition Report

A property condition report (PCR) means a report about the condition of GEH that is made:

- entirely in writing; or
- partly in writing and partly by using images.

It is your responsibility at commencement of the new tenancy agreement to review the PCR against the condition of the property. Within **five (5) business days** after receiving the PCR you are required to:

- accept the report by signing and returning it the NTEGEHO regional officers if you agree with the condition on the report; or
- mark the modifications on the report, initial the modifications, take a picture of the item in the dwelling that relates to the modification in the report and return the PCR to the regional GEH Tenancy Officers.

If the PCR is not returned to the regional GEH Tenancy Officers within the five business day, the PCR is considered as having been accepted by you.

The PCR is your guide as to the level of condition the dwelling is to be returned in at the end of the tenancy agreement excluding any fair wear and tear.

5. Moving in

When moving into your government employee residence it is suggested that you:

- check your personal belongings are insured and that your insurance company is notified of your new address; and
- report any faults as soon as possible to the regional GEH Tenancy Officers.

6. Utilities

As the tenant, you are responsible for paying all electricity, gas, pay television, internet and telephone bills unless you have a prior agreement with your employing agency. When moving into a new dwelling it is the Tenant's responsibility to have utilities connected and meters read.

6.1. Electricity

You are responsible for all electricity consumption at you GEH. This includes arranging for the connection/disconnection of electricity in your name or liaising with your employing agency to do the connection/disconnection of electricity.

With some enterprise bargaining agreements you may be entitled to an electricity subsidy. It is recommended that you enquire with your employing agency for further information.

6.2. Gas

If the property uses bottled gas, it is important to note that the gas bottles are owned by the owner of the property. Do not have the bottles removed unless there are replacements provided. It is the Tenant's responsibility for arranging and paying for the refill of gas bottles as required.

6.3. Telephone/internet/pay television

Tenants are responsible for having the telephone/internet service connected. With some enterprise bargaining agreements you may be entitled to payments to offset some of these costs. It is recommended to enquire with your employing agency for further information.

6.4. Water

Tenants are only responsible for paying for excess water consumption as outlined in the tenancy agreement. You will be notified by NTGEHO if there is an invoice to pay.

It is expected that you set a good example of water consumption in locations where there is water stress.

7. Furniture

If furniture is provided by your employing agency, you are responsible for the cleaning and care of the furniture. You are also responsible for reporting any damage as soon as it occurs.

In your tenancy agreement, furniture provided by your employing agency is included in the 'Additional Property' definition and as such you can be held accountable for any damage.

Please refer to your employing agency's policy for further information about furniture in GEH.

8. Repairs and maintenance

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) manage repairs and maintenance for government-owned buildings, including GEH. Any repairs, which you consider are not your responsibility, should be reported as soon as possible to DIPL for Government-owned GEH or your regional GEH Tenancy Officer for private head lease dwellings.

When reporting maintenance problems please provide:

- your name;
- address;
- lot number;
- contact telephone number;
- a detailed description of the nature and location of the repairs required; and
- photos of the maintenance issue to identify the issue and expedite repairs.

To submit a request for repairs or maintenance, email the DIPL office for your region. Include photos of the maintenance issue.

Table 1 | Regional DIPL office contacts for reporting repairs and maintenance for Government-owned GEH

Region	Contact
Arnhem (Nhulunbuy only)	DIPL.NhulunbuyHousingMaintenance@nt.gov.au
Arnhem (everywhere except Nhulunbuy)	AMOWorkRequest.DIPL@nt.gov.au
Barkly	BarklyRemoteAssets.DIPL@nt.gov.au
Big Rivers	GEHMaintenanceBigRivers.DIPL@nt.gov.au
Central Australia	RepairsMaintenanceAliceSprings.DIPL@nt.gov.au
Greater Darwin	PropertyManagerPalmerston.DIPL@nt.gov.au
Top End (previously known as Arafura)	ArafuraRegion.Housing@nt.gov.au

Please note furniture, soft furnishings and appliances provided by your employing agency are the responsibility of your employing agency. If these items require repairs or replacing, contact your employing agency.

8.1. Emergency repairs

Emergency repairs is when:

- your immediate health, safety or security is at risk or
- damage to the property is likely – such as sewerage, flooding, exposed electrical wiring

Take all actions needed to ensure your safety and reduce damage or loss to the property.

For emergency after-hours assistance call 1800 104 076.

It is recommended to notify DIPL for Government-owned GEH or your regional GEH Tenancy Officer for private head lease dwellings in writing that emergency repairs are required. Even if you initially reported the issue over the phone or notified a person in the community, you should follow that report up with a written notification of the issue.

As you can be held responsible for costs if the damage becomes worse or be held accountable for excess water if the repair was not reported when it was initially noticed.

Repairs that are considered emergency repairs include work needed to repair:

- a water service that provides water to the premises that has burst; or
- a blocked or broken lavatory system on the premises; or
- a serious roof leak; or
- a gas leak; or
- a dangerous electrical fault; or
- flooding or serious flood damage; or
- serious storm, fire or impact damage; or
- a failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to the premises; or
- a failure or breakdown of an essential service or appliance on premises for water or cooking; or
- a fault or damage that makes premises unsafe or insecure; or
- a fault or damage likely to injure a person, damage property or unduly inconvenience a resident of premises; or
- a serious fault in a staircase or lift or other area of premises that unduly inconveniences a resident in gaining access to or using the premises.

8.2. Tenant responsibility for repairs

You are responsible for damages caused either accidentally or deliberately by you, your family and/or visitors. During your tenancy routine inspections will be undertaken a minimum of three months apart by regional GEH Tenancy Officers. Any damages or repairs found during the inspection/s, deemed to be your responsibility, will be your responsibility to pay and Government will recover these costs from you.

In some remote locations, as there is limited or no options available to engage contractors to undertake repairs that are deemed your responsibility, there may be an option available for DIPL to undertake the work. These costs will remain your responsibility to pay and you may be able to pay the DIPL contractor direct or an invoice will be issued to you to pay from Government. To implement this arrangement, contact your regional GEH Tenancy Officer.

9. Looking after your yard

You must look after the yard:

- Keep the grass short and mow it regularly. Pull out weeds and put them in the bin
- Only plant bushes, flowers or shrubs that you can take care of and water your garden and plants in the evening
- Keep plants, timber or firewood two (2) metres from the house to help stop white ant damage
- Make sure people don't climb or cut holes in the fences.

10. Vacant GEH

If you leave the community for the weekend, or for a longer period, make the dwelling safe and secure by remembering to:

- close all curtains
- lock all doors and gates
- lock both security screen and main wooden doors
- don't leave valuables onsite (including alcohol)
- don't leave air conditioners running

During wet season leave windows that are sheltered and have security screens open slightly and leave ceiling fans on. If leaving for a few weeks, empty the fridge of all food in case of power failure (especially wet season).

11. Leaving GEH

11.1. Termination of Tenancy Agreement

You must give at least two weeks' written notice to both the NTGEHO and your employing agency if you are going to vacate a GEH dwelling.

11.2. GEH dwelling to be left in a reasonable condition

When you move out you should leave the property reasonably clean and in a reasonable state of repair, allowing for fair wear and tear.

Fair wear and tear means the deterioration that occurs over time with the use of the dwelling even through the dwelling received reasonable care and maintenance. Deterioration can be caused by exposure, time or just by ordinary use.

You are accountable for negligent, irresponsible or intentional actions that cause damage to the dwelling. This includes returning your dwelling in need of repair that wasn't reported prior to the outgoing inspection having been completed. Given it is your responsibility to report repairs as soon as this arises, you may be liable for the costs of repairs as at the end of the tenancy agreement if you failed to report the repairs as they happened.

11.3. Outgoing property condition inspection

An outgoing inspection will be conducted by the regional GEH tenancy officer after you return your keys.

You may be liable to pay for additional costs if:

- there is damage
- keys or locks need replacing or changing
- your house needs more cleaning.

12. More information

You can now access more information about GEH on NTG Central. The GEH pages on NTG Central have been refreshed and streamlined to help you throughout your journey of living in a GEH property.

If in doubt, you can always contact your regional GEH Tenancy Officer for assistance.

13. Fact sheets

Scan the QR code on the right to find links to the following fact sheets:

- Looking after your house
- Being a good neighbour
- Repairs and maintenance
- Vacant property maintenance
- Water use in public housing
- Preparing for an inspection
- Fire safety and smoke alarms
- Get ready for bushfire season
- Keeping animals
- Alterations and additions
- Damages to public housing caused by crime
- Damage to your public housing home
- Broken power meters in remote communities
- Asbestos information for public housing tenants
- Information for people affected by antisocial behaviour
- Making a complaint to the Department.



14. Forms

Scan the QR code on the right to find links to the following forms:

- Additional household members
- Excess water charge dispute form
- Intention to keep a pet
- Alterations to a rental property
- Application for additional safety features
- NT Government employee payroll deduction
- Housing complaint form.

