

VINCENTCARE COMMUNITY HOUSING

Name:	Alterations and Disability Modifications (public facing policy)
Approved by:	Policy Authorisation Committee
Date effective:	April 2022
Due to be reviewed:	April 2025

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This policy outlines VincentCare Community Housing's (VCCH) position with regard to property alterations and disability modification requests.

VincentCare Victoria operates a diverse range of accommodation and support services for people experiencing disadvantage, and is committed to applying an appropriate duty of care to all people in contact with VincentCare services. This includes protecting people's personal and cultural safety regardless of ability, cultural background, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion.

SCOPE

This policy applies to properties owned or managed by VCCH.

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'renter' is inclusive of the terms 'resident' and 'client'.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed every three years. It will be modified or replaced whenever VCCH becomes aware that this policy no longer complies with the requirements of the organisation.

SECTION 2 – POLICY STATEMENT

Any requests received relating to changes to a property and requiring residential rental provider's permission will be assessed and delivered in accordance with legislative and VCCH standards.

1 Guiding Principles/Approach

In accordance with the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (RTA) there are some changes renters can make in a property without the residential rental provider's permission:

- picture hooks or screws for wall mounts, shelves or brackets on surfaces other than brick walls,
- wall anchoring devices on surfaces other than brick walls to secure items of furniture,
- LED light globes which do not require new light fittings,
- low flow shower heads if the original shower head is kept,
- blind or cord anchors,
- hardware mounted child safety gates on walls other than brick walls,
- security lights, alarm systems or security cameras that:
 - do not impact on the privacy of neighbours,
 - can easily be removed from the rented premises, and
 - are not hardwired to the rented premises.
- non-permanent window film for insulation, reduced heat transfer or privacy,
- a wireless doorbell,
- replacement curtains if the original curtains are retained by the renter,
- adhesive child safety locks on drawers and doors,
- pressure mounted child safety gates,
- a lock on a letterbox.

However, renters are encouraged to check with their Tenancy and Property Worker before making any changes to a property to ensure the proposed change is allowed.

Requests can be made directly or through a nominated agent or advocate (e.g. support worker or family member).

VCCH will consult with the renter, or their nominated agent, to assess and consider requests in the context of the following:

- compliance with any relevant building regulations and guidelines
- conditions and standards set down by relevant statutory authority (i.e. local council)
- renter's acceptance of responsibility and conditions
- cost and extent of the works required
- future use of the property
- RTA requirements
- Availability of alternative properties that would meet the renter's needs

2 Responsibilities and Conditions

An alteration to a VCCH property without written permission breaches the Residential Tenancy Act. VCCH can take action at the Victorian Administrative Appeals Tribunal (VCAT), to request that the renter remove any unauthorised alteration, make good any damage caused by the removal of the alteration, or to terminate the tenancy.

Renters will be required to agree to meet the cost for all approved renter requested changes.

2.1 Completed alterations must:

- match the current design as far as possible (both internal and external)
- not impact on any entry or exit
- not impact on adjoining neighbours

- not impact the structural integrity or asset standard of the property
- be consistent with the nature of the property
- not change the current property configuration.

- 2.2 Applications for alterations will be declined if the proposed alteration:
- cannot be maintained or removed easily
 - involves major internal or any external painting
 - is prohibited under any law or fails to comply with any caveats or covenants.

- 2.3 End of tenancy
At the termination of the tenancy, the renter must:
- Remove the alteration and make good any damage caused by the removal, unless provided with a written authority for the alteration to remain. (Failure to remove the alteration when requested may result in charges under regulatory provisions.)
 - If written authority is provided that the alteration can remain in the property, it then becomes the property of VCCH

3 Communication

VCCH will provide clear information to renters on this policy, and will inform renters of their rights and obligations in relation to alterations and disability modifications.

SECTION 3 – PROCEDURES

Any procedures established by VCCH in relation to Renter damage to properties will ensure compliance with this policy.

SECTION 4 – GOVERNANCE

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

This policy implements the obligations of VincentCare Community Housing under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- [Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS](#)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act **2013**

SECTION 5 – GOVERNANCE

RESPONSIBILITY

Process Owner	EGM Client Services
Content Holder/s	State Manager Housing
Recommending body	Quality Committee
Endorsed by	Quality Committee

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Effective Date	Author	Change
1	May 2019	General Manager Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a new policy for publication on VincentCare's website

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This policy is a compliance requirement for registered agency participation in the Victorian Housing Register (VHR)
2	April 2022	Manager Tenancy and Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RTA Compliance Procedures removed from Policy