

Policy name	Managing Uninhabitable Properties
Policy date	February 2026
Authorisation	Executive Housing & Property
Policy owner	Executive General Manager, Housing Operations
Policy type	Mission Australia Housing Operational Policy
Policy setting	

1 Purpose

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This policy provides guidance to staff responsible for managing **uninhabitable properties**.
- 1.1.2 This policy provides guidance to staff responsible for managing tenants of properties which have become uninhabitable.
- 1.1.3 This policy outlines requirements for tenants where their property is deemed uninhabitable.
- 1.1.4 This policy applies where the condition of a property poses significant health and safety risks for a tenant or reputational risks for Mission Australia Housing (MAH).
- 1.1.5 This policy does not apply to circumstances of minor property damage, or properties with damage that is contained to a specific area, and which may still be habitable.

1.2 Coverage

- 1.2.1 This document is a national policy and covers Mission Australia Housing (MAH), and its entities. All references to Mission Australia Housing, MAH and Housing means MAH and its entities unless specifically stated otherwise.
- 1.2.2 This policy applies to all forms of housing provided by MAH including social, affordable, and transitional housing.
- 1.2.3 This policy applies to housing provided by MAH in the jurisdictions of New South Wales (NSW), Tasmania (TAS), Victoria (VIC), Queensland (QLD), Western Australia (WA) and the Northern Territory (NT). Where jurisdiction-based variations exist in policies and procedures, these will be identified in the document.

1.3 Information on procedures and other related policies

- 1.3.1 This policy focuses on why certain things need to be done. It is supported by procedures that provide more detail on what to do and the steps involved in managing uninhabitable properties.
- 1.3.2 This policy is one of several interlinked policies that support MAH's delivery of housing services. To assist you, these are identified where relevant in this policy and the supporting procedures.

2 Scope

2.1 Parts of Mission Australia that this policy covers

- 2.1.1 This policy applies to staff responsible for managing tenants and properties of MAH.
- 2.1.2 This policy also applies to agents of MAH, such as maintenance contractors responsible for managing uninhabitable properties.

2.2 Definitions

- 2.2.1 Key terms used in this policy are defined in the following table.

Term	Definition
Agent	Any third party who carries out functions on behalf of MAH or a tenant of MAH. Agents include but are not limited to contractors, advocates, and other tenants.
Significant Incident	An event which causes a property to become uninhabitable.
Tenant	Under state-based residential tenancy and rooming accommodation legislation, a tenant is a person who has entered explicitly into a lease agreement. The term is used more broadly in this policy to refer to tenants and residents under rooming accommodation agreements, unless explicitly distinguished.
Uninhabitable Property	A property which has become unliveable due to any number of causes, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural disasters • Fire/arson • Asbestos or other chemical contaminations • Extensive deliberate or negligent property damage. • Hoarding and Squalor • Significant Health & Safety Risk • Tenant death inside property

3 Policy

3.1 Guiding principles

- 3.1.1 Staff are required to report significant property incidents in accordance with the requirements of MAH, the Mission Australia Group, and in compliance with external contractual obligations where applicable.
- 3.1.2 The safety of tenants, staff, contractors, and the community are promoted through the property and tenancy management processes of MAH.
- 3.1.3 Where a property is deemed uninhabitable, tenants are assisted in accessing an alternative MAH property wherever appropriate and possible.
- 3.1.4 Tenants are assisted in accessing support and assistance wherever required.

3.2 Reporting requirements

- 3.2.1 Staff will notify all serious incidents involving properties of MAH to MAH as per the **Identifying, Managing and Reporting on Incidents and Risk Policy**. Staff must report these incidents as soon as they become aware of them.
- 3.2.2 Where required, State Managers will report any serious incidents involving properties to their state-based housing authority or to the relevant property owner.
- 3.2.3 Staff must refer any external requests for information relating to properties or tenants of MAH to a Senior Manager.

3.3 Responsibility for deeming a property uninhabitable

- 3.3.1 Asset Managers, or staff with asset management responsibilities, will be responsible for working in collaboration with Housing Officers, tenants, community partners including government authorities and maintenance contractors, to determine whether a property is uninhabitable.
- 3.3.2 The Asset Team will establish the work required to bring the property back up to standard and liaise with contractors for the completion of work.
- 3.3.3 The Asset Team will liaise with Insurance for any insurance claims.
- 3.3.4 All photos and documentation must be saved in the IT system.
- 3.3.5 Regional Assets Managers will inspect the work once it is complete and approve that the property is now habitable.

3.4 Risk management

- 3.4.1 Staff and tenants must not enter a property where they have received advice from an authorised third party against entering a property (including third party insurance providers, emergency service personnel, other government authorities).
- 3.4.2 Tenants will not be permitted to remain living in a property that has been deemed uninhabitable, and MAH will be required to determine an appropriate course of action as per **3.6.1** and **3.6.2**.
- 3.4.3 Properties that have been deemed uninhabitable will remain vacant, and access to them will be restricted until MAH is assured of the suitability and safety of these properties

3.5 Recovering tenant belongings

- 3.5.1 MAH will, where possible, assist tenants to retrieve their personal belongings from properties that have been deemed uninhabitable, subject to authorised third-party advice and/or assistance.
- 3.5.2 MAH will work with contractors and other third parties to, wherever possible, secure and store any tenant belongings.

3.6 Tenant transfer

- 3.6.1 The Team Leaders and Regional Managers of MAH are responsible for determining whether to transfer tenants to an alternative property where their property is deemed uninhabitable as per the **Transfers and Other Changes to Tenancy Policy**.
- 3.6.2 Where a property has been deemed uninhabitable, the Team Leaders and Regional Managers reserves the right to end the tenancy if:
- Tenants are identified to have intentionally or negligently caused a serious incident, including a fire at their property. If a Tenant has caused a fire at their property, approval is required from the State Manager before the Tenants are considered for re-housing.
 - Tenants have seriously or repeatedly breached their agreement for housing as per the **Ending Tenancies Policy**; or
 - There is no alternative housing stock that meets the needs of the tenant.

3.7 Short-term accommodation

- 3.7.1 The State Manager, Housing Services can agree to rehouse the tenants in short-term accommodation if required. This might be in the following instances:
- It will take less than two weeks to complete the work to the property to bring it back to a habitable standard.
 - Whilst alternative accommodation is being sought for the tenant.

3.8 Support

- 3.8.1 Staff will refer tenants to appropriate support services as per the **Working with Support Services Policy**.
- 3.8.2 Staff will support tenants to relocate and assist them in managing any requirements associated with their relocation wherever required.

3.9 Record Keeping

- 3.9.1 Staff will store information relating to property incidents, remediation and development actions.
- 3.9.2 Staff will store information relating to tenants of properties of MAH in the tenancy management system.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Housing staff, including Housing Officers and Client Service Officers, are responsible for:

- Referring tenants to relevant support agencies where required.
- Assisting Asset Managers and/or Team Leaders to develop and implement risk management plans where required.
- Keeping any evidence relating to tenants in the tenancy management system.
- Recommending improvements to this policy and procedure.

4.2 Team Leaders/Regional Manager responsible for:

- Attending the site of a significant property incident where required.
- Reporting incidents involving properties and tenants of MAH wherever required.
- Working with community partners to manage risk where required.
- Performing property handovers in lieu of Asset Managers where required.
- Incorporating this policy and procedure into staff inductions and training.
- Ensuring staff are aware of and have access to this policy and procedure.
- Escalating feedback about this policy and procedure to the policy owner and/or policy developer
- Receiving reports of serious incidents involving properties of MAH.
- Approving to transfer tenants where required in accordance with the **Transfer Policy**.

4.3 Regional Assets Manager is responsible for:

- Deeming if a property is uninhabitable
- Arranging for the completion of work to bring the property back to a habitable standard.
- To develop and implement risk management plans where required.
- Keeping any evidence relating to the property in the property management system
- Recommending improvements to this policy and procedure.

4.4 The Operations and State Management Team is responsible for:

- Authorising changes made to this policy and procedure.
- Ensuring MAH complies with this policy and procedure.