

Accessible Properties Tenants Handbook

Please keep this booklet somewhere safe.



Call us on 0800 862 769



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1. WELCOME

Welcome to your new home. This guide will give you the information you need to help you to settle in. If you have any questions, please contact your Tenancy Manager. Helpful contact details are on the back of this booklet.

2. ABOUT ACCESSIBLE PROPERTIES

Accessible Properties are experts in public housing and have been providing and managing homes for 65 years. We are a charitable, non-government organisation and a Registered Community Housing Provider.

We manage properties that meet the needs of property owners and tenants in the community housing sector. Our portfolio includes more than 2700 properties around the country.

We are a trusted community housing provider, owning more than 1650 homes that are made available for affordable rental by people with social support needs. This includes more than 1100 homes in Tauranga and 350 homes in Hamilton.

We also manage IHC's 1100 properties throughout New Zealand, from Kaitiaki to Invercargill. We are specialists in the disability sector and understand the specific needs of our clients.

If you would like this booklet provided to you in Te Reo Māori, please call us on 0800 862 769.

If you would like to speak to someone about this booklet in any other language, please talk to your Tenancy Manager about the Language Line telephone interpreting service.

3. YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT

You will be asked to sign a Tenancy Agreement before you move into your new home. This is the agreement between you (the tenant) and Accessible Properties (the landlord) and is signed by both parties.

The agreement will be written up by Accessible Properties.

Landlord: Accessible Properties NZ Ltd

Tenant: Person(s) occupying the house

Address: Property address

4. MOVING INTO YOUR HOME

Please make sure you have carried out the following steps when you move into your new home.

Check your keys

Check the keys to the house are working properly. You will be provided keys to the house, and there may also be keys for the windows and/or a key for the letterbox. It is important to check the keys are working, as if you later report broken or missing keys, you may be charged a replacement fee.

Change your address

Let organisations such as your bank, power company and New Zealand Post know that you are moving house. New Zealand Post can redirect your mail to your new house for a fee.

Tell us your contact details

Once your new contact details, such as your landline or mobile phone number, are available, please call your Tenancy Manager or email these details to us at info@accessibleproperties.co.nz

Organise phone and power connection

As a landlord we will ensure your home has access to electricity, gas, telephone and internet but you will need to make sure they are connected in your name, to the provider of your choice. Please ensure these services are registered from your tenancy start date. The time it takes to register may vary depending on the company so please contact your provider as soon as you can. If you are moving in to a newly built home, we will make sure your phone and power are connected to the grid.

Organise recycling bins or bags

You will need to contact your local council to arrange for them to provide you with a recycling bin and/or bags.

Water meter

Your property may have a water meter. If so, Accessible Properties will pay the fixed charges for supply and you will pay for the amount of water you use. If you have any questions about water charges, please contact your Tenancy Manager.

Contents and tenants insurance

Accessible Properties encourages you to take out contents or renters insurance to insure your belongings. Your possessions are not covered by Accessible Properties' insurance if your goods are damaged or destroyed by circumstances affecting the property.

5. PETS

If you would like to have a pet you will need to seek written approval from Accessible Properties. Your Tenancy Manager can provide you with a permission form. Approval for keeping pets will only be granted when the home and surroundings are suitable and you commit to meeting responsibilities of care, registration and lack of disruption to your neighbours. Animal types that are likely to be disruptive and aggressive will not be allowed and we can provide you with a list of these if you're unsure.

6. YOUR SECURITY OF TENANCY

Accessible Properties will do our best to provide you a secure tenancy for as long as you need it, and as long as you continue to meet your responsibilities as a tenant as per your tenancy agreement.

Housing provided by Accessible Properties may change with time to meet the needs of all our public housing tenants and to provide improved accommodation. If these changes mean that your home is not available for your ongoing tenancy then we will provide you with an appropriate replacement home that meets your needs. Also, if your home becomes unsuitable for any changed circumstances (for example your family/whānau has grown or moved on, or you need a home suitable for reduced mobility) we may offer a replacement home that better suits your needs.

If you believe your home or its location no longer suits your purposes, please talk to your Tenancy Manager about housing transfer options.



7. PAYING YOUR BOND AND RENT

Bond

You are required to pay a bond of up to four weeks rent at the beginning of your tenancy. Accessible Properties will lodge your bond payment with government's Tenancy Services, who will then contact you with a lodgment number to confirm they have received it.

Rent

Your rent must be paid weekly/fortnightly in advance, or whatever you have agreed with your Tenancy Manager.

Please pay your rent on time. You will receive an automatic payment or direct debit form when you sign the tenancy agreement. Please set up this automatic payment with your bank or, if your rent is coming directly from your benefit payment, take the tenancy agreement or letter about a rent increase to the Ministry of Social Development and Work and Income.

If at any stage you cannot pay your rent and are having difficulties please call your Tenancy Manager immediately. They are here to help you.



What happens if I don't pay my rent?

It's really important that you pay your rent on time and don't get into debt as this can quickly spiral out of control. Please contact us if you have problems paying your rent. We may be able to refer you to a budgeting service to help you set up repayments so you can pay the debt over time.

If you get behind with your rent payments, we will contact you to discuss the debt and work with you to come up with a plan on how you can pay off the debt.

Changes to rent

If you are not eligible for Income-Related Rent (see Section 8), your rent is reviewed and set annually by Accessible Properties.

You will receive a letter telling you of any change to your rent at least 60 days before that change happens.

Accommodation Supplement

Depending on your household income, the Accommodation Supplement (AS) may subsidise your rent. Contact Work and Income to find out whether you are eligible for the Accommodation Supplement. Remember, it is your responsibility to inform Work and Income and your Tenancy Manager if your household income changes.

8. OBLIGATIONS TO THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

If you pay Income-Related Rent (IRR), you will also be a client of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). For IRR there are certain obligations you need to meet and these are described on the Ministry's website. If applicable, some key aspects (Eligibility, Change in Circumstances, Transfers and Changes to Rent) are summarized below for your information.

Eligibility for Public Housing Support

MSD will review most tenants' need for public housing support every three years, or if you have a significant change of circumstances. This is to ensure you still have a need to live in public housing, and if so, that the type of housing still meets your needs. Tenants who are 75 years and older or those who live in a property modified for their needs (for example wheelchair access) will not have their tenancy reviewed.

Contact MSD on 0800 673 468 or talk to your MSD Case Manager if you would like more information.

Change in Circumstances

You need to let MSD know if there is a change to your, your partner's or your family's circumstances as this may affect:

- how much rent you pay
- your continued eligibility for public housing, or
- the type of housing you are living in

Changes may include things like a new job, changes to income, ending or starting a relationship, or people moving into or out of your home.

Talk to MSD or your Tenancy Manager if you are unsure. They will support you through the process.

Transferring to another property

There are some situations where it may be better for you to move to another home.

If you can afford to rent in the private market MSD will work with you to find a suitable option, though your Accessible Properties Tenancy Manager is also happy to help. It's important that public housing is available for the people with the greatest need.

If you want to transfer outside of your current region, you will need to contact MSD. You can phone them free on 0800 673 468 or visit housing.msd.govt.nz/

If you're unsure, please talk to your Tenancy Manager.

Changes to rent

MSD will review your IRR at least once a year. Changes in your income or circumstances may affect the amount of rent you need to pay.

MSD will write to you and let you know when they have completed this review. They will then advise us (Accessible Properties) who will send you a letter confirming whether there is a rent change and, if so, the date that will happen.

If you don't agree with the decision made about your rent, you can call MSD on 0800 673 468 to talk about your concerns.

9. ROUTINE INSPECTIONS

Your Tenancy Manager will work with you to complete a property inspection report when you move in. This describes the condition of your home at the start of your tenancy, such as any marks on the walls or any damage to the walls or property. This report needs to be completed by you and the landlord and signed by both parties. By signing this inspection report you agree to the state of your home when you move in.

Your Tenancy Manager will inspect your home during your tenancy and will work with you to arrange a time and date for an appointment that suits you. At the inspection your Tenancy Manager will check that your home is in good condition and will identify any repairs that are needed. Let your Tenancy Manager know if your home needs any repairs or maintenance.

The inspection may also involve the Tenancy Manager taking photos of any repairs required and photos of the grounds.

As explained in Section 10 of this booklet, your Tenancy Manager may test your home for methamphetamine contamination during property inspections.

New homes

If your home is new, a builder's maintenance warranty may apply. If this is the case, we will let you know when you move in. Please tell your Tenancy Manager about any maintenance issues that are not identified on the property inspection report.

Your Tenancy Manager will inspect your home when the warranty period is due to expire. They will ask you for your list of any defects and repairs.



10. TAKING CARE OF YOUR HOME

Decorating and improvements

If you would like to carry out any decorating work or improvements to your home please make a request to your Tenancy Manager in writing in advance. This includes removing or installing any fixtures or fittings. No work is to be undertaken unless written approval is received from Accessible Properties.

Temporary Accommodation

You must seek written approval from Accessible Properties if your home is to be used by boarders or for temporary accommodation of others (other than for occasional visitors). This includes use of a caravan, mobile home or other portable accommodation on the site.

Carpets

When stains appear, remove them immediately. If the stain remains or you damage the carpet in any other way please, contact your Tenancy Manager.

Pest control

Accessible Properties will ensure the property is free of vermin and pests at the start of a new tenancy. It's important to do your best to ensure your home stays vermin and pest-free. If for any reason you are unable to maintain this, please contact your Tenancy Manager so we can help you sort this out.

Misplaced keys

If you misplace your keys during business hours, please contact your Tenancy Manager. We will arrange a new set to be cut at your own cost.

If you misplace your keys after-hours, please call 0800 223 359 and assistance will be organised to help you gain entry to your home. You will be responsible for paying the costs associated with this.

Water leaks

Please report water leaks from taps, the toilet or hot water system as soon as possible to your Tenancy Manager. If you think the leak is serious enough to be an emergency repair, please call the Accessible Properties office after-hours on 0800 223 359.

Smoke alarms

It is a requirement under the Residential Tenancies Act that all Accessible Properties homes have fitted, working smoke alarms at all times. All our homes are fitted with smoke alarms with 10-year lifespans. If you believe the smoke alarm(s) in your home are not working, please call your Tenancy Manager immediately. You must not disconnect or remove smoke alarms.

Property damage

If property damage occurs, you must tell your Tenancy Manager immediately. If it happens on a weekend or public holiday, you must tell your Tenancy Manager on the next business day.

Drug Contamination

You must not smoke, manufacture or use illicit drugs such as methamphetamine ("P") in your home. At the start of your tenancy, your home will be tested to ensure that it is not unsafely contaminated prior to your occupancy. Your home will be tested during your tenancy and at termination of your tenancy, to ensure contamination has not occurred during your tenancy and to verify your home remains safe to occupy.

If you or your visitors have caused contamination through illegal drug use, you will be held financially responsible and your tenancy may be terminated. Please be aware that the costs of remediation of a contaminated home can be very high and drug residues remain for a long time and can cause health problems for occupants, particularly children.

If you want support to help you quit an addiction please contact your Tenancy Manager. This is confidential and they can assist you by linking you to any available services for this.

Car Parking

Please ensure your cars and other vehicles, as well as visitors' cars and trailers, are parked on paved areas provided, and not on lawns or gardens. Please keep all access routes for neighbouring properties clear.

11. CLEANING GUIDE

Please keep your home clean. The following acts as a cleaning guide for you, and will also be used by your Tenancy Manager to evaluate your home's cleanliness whenever it is inspected:

Bathroom

- Clean the shower, including the drain. Spray the drain with anti-mould solution
- If the sealant around shower or bath edges is getting black, spray it with an anti-mould solution. Should mould become an ongoing issue, please contact your Tenancy Manager
- Remove mould from walls and ceilings
- Remove dust from vents and fans
- Clean vanity, toilet, benches, cabinets and floor surfaces

Kitchen

- Clean the stove, including the back and sides of the stove, the elements and the oven
- Clean the bench and floor
- Remove marks from the ceiling, walls and cupboard doors

Laundry

- Clean the laundry tub
- Remove dust from vents or fans
- Clean the walls and ceiling to remove dirt and dust

Floors

- Mop the floors and remove any marks
- Scrub the grout between tiles to remove mould and dirt

Grounds

- Mow the grass
- Clear the garden of weeds
- Remove rubbish

General

- Clean the light shades/fittings
- Spot clean marks on walls, ceilings and curtains
- Remove cobwebs
- Clean cupboards inside and out
- Wipe window sills and frames
- Wipe lower skirting boards between walls and floor

12. GENERAL MAINTENANCE REQUESTS

All general maintenance requests must be reported to your Tenancy Manager as soon as possible. They will organise for Accessible Properties' contractors to carry out the maintenance.

Please do not contact our contractors directly to report maintenance, or contact other contractors to carry out the work. Accessible Properties will not be held responsible for payment to any other contractors arranged by the tenant without prior approval.

You are responsible for:

- Replacing/repairing any items damaged by residents or visitors
- Keeping your home clean and free of mould and vermin. Sometimes there may be problems outside your control, so please let us know as soon as possible, so we can help you address these
- Replacing light bulbs
- Keeping the lawns and garden tidy
- Regularly disposing of rubbish

Accessible Properties is responsible for:

- Ovens
- Electrical fittings – light fittings and power points
- Secure external doors and windows
- Watertight walls and roof
- Heat pumps (maintenance)
- Fire alarms/smoke detectors
- Plumbing – taps, basins, sinks, showers, hot water cylinders and toilets
- Cutting and trimming trees
- Removing debris from roof gutters and stormwater sumps

13. AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS

If emergency maintenance is required after-hours you can contact Accessible Properties on 0800 862 769.

If you are not sure whether a maintenance issue is an emergency, you should still ring. The on-call staff member will be able to help you work out whether issue is an emergency or a general repair.

Emergency repairs include anything that remedies loss of electricity, gas or water supply to your home, or could cause injury to you or major damage to your home.

Examples include:

- Fault or damage that makes premises unsafe or insecure (i.e. door lock)
- Fire/flood/disaster
- Gas leak
- Burst water pipe
- Power cut
- Electrical sparks/shocks
- Blocked or broken toilet, if a second toilet is not available
- Broken window or glass
- Major roof leak

If the maintenance you request is deemed to be an emergency, a contractor will attend to this within 4 hours of your call. It's important someone is able to be at home when the contractor arrives to complete the repairs. You can either provide the contact number for yourself or an available house member, or stay at your home until the contractor arrives. If the contractor arrives at your home to fix the problem and no one is there to allow him/her access, the cost of the call-out fee may be charged to you.

If you require maintenance done after-hours and it is not deemed to be an emergency, the call-out fee may be charged to you.

14. NEIGHBOURLY CONSIDERATIONS

Noise/disruption

Please be a courteous neighbour and try to not disturb your neighbours with any form of loud noise, including loud music. You should take particular care if you live in a unit or an apartment. You are also responsible for making sure visitors to your property are equally courteous and do not disturb your neighbours.

Strata title/body corporate properties

If you are renting a strata-title/body corporate (shared area) property, including a unit, apartment, townhouse or duplex, you need to follow the by-laws of the building complex and any areas of common property or exclusive use. Your Tenancy Manager will supply you with the body corporate rules and regulations along with your tenancy agreement.

It is important that you only use the parking bays that have been assigned to you and your visitors. In some cases visitors are not allowed to park on the property.

There will be a common area within the strata-title/body corporate property that can be enjoyed by all residents of the shared property. It is important that you follow the common area rules:

- No sheds or outside structures are to be erected without the prior approval of the landlord
- No child under your control can be permitted to play in areas that could be dangerous to children
- You cannot obstruct any person's legitimate and lawful use of the areas
- You cannot use any part of the common area to plant/maintain your own garden or vegetable patch



15. MOVING OUT

If you decide to move out, it's important you give Accessible Properties 21 days notice in writing. This letter must include the address of the property and the date you plan to leave. Please make sure you sign the letter.

Getting your bond back

You will need to complete these steps before your bond will be returned to you:

1. Pay the rent in full up until the day you move out. Please note that you must not withhold rent at the end of your tenancy with the intention that this is to be deducted from the bond.
2. Clean the property. Your bond will not be returned until the property has passed the final inspection.
3. Return all keys to Accessible Properties. This includes all keys given to you at the start of your tenancy, as well as any extra copies you have created during your tenancy period.

Cleaning

Your Tenancy Manager will advise you of what is required. Please leave the property clean and tidy, otherwise you may have to pay the extra costs if cleaning is not done to a reasonable standard. This will also delay the return of the bond.

Carpet cleaning

Please ensure that carpets are clean. Please note that cheap do-it-yourself carpet cleaning machines are generally not able to get carpets properly clean. If Accessible Properties needs to hire a professional carpet cleaner, you may be responsible for the costs.

Final inspection

The final inspection will be carried out once the property has been fully cleaned and vacated and the keys have been returned. If a final inspection appointment has been made and you are aware that you will not be ready for the inspection, please call us as soon as possible to reschedule.



16. PRIVACY STATEMENT

Accessible Properties will keep all the information you provide secure in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993. This means we will not share this information with other agencies, including IHC New Zealand and IDEA Services, unless you give us permission. You have the right to access and correct any personal information held about you by Accessible Properties.

If you receive an Income-Related Rent (IRR), Accessible Properties and MSD will exchange information about you so we can provide you with your correct rate of IRR and the most appropriate type of housing.

17. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

We'd love to hear about what you think we are doing well. But we also want to hear if there is something that is not working for you. If you wish to make a complaint to Accessible Properties, please talk to your Tenancy Manager. You can also write a letter of complaint and email it to info@accessibleproperties.co.nz (please mark 'complaint' in the subject line), or send it to:

Manager – Tenancy Services
Accessible Properties New Zealand Ltd
PO Box 1974
Wellington 6010

You can ask a friend or somebody else to support you when making a complaint.

Accessible Properties will respond to any complaint within 10 working days.

If there are aspects of our service that you are particularly happy about, please let us know those too.

Alternative advocacy services

Your rights as a tenant are protected by law under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986. If you have a complaint about Accessible Properties you can talk to government's Tenancy Services. More information can be found at tenancy.govt.nz.

You can also call Tenancy Services for more information on your bond and tenancy. Call 0800 73 76 66 for bond information, and 0800 83 62 62 for tenancy advice. All calls to Tenancy Services are treated as confidential.

18. IF YOU NEED HELP

There are times when you may need help for things like budgeting, or legal advice. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau is the best place to call.

0800 FOR CAB
0800 367 222

If you have a support worker, you can also talk to them about any problems you may have.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Your Tenancy Manager will work with you to fill this out:

Tenancy Manager:

Phone number:

Email:

Your Support agency (if any):

Phone:

E-mail:

Your nearest school, play centre or kindergarten (as appropriate):

Name and Address:

.....

Your nearest medical centre or doctors surgery:

Name and Address:

.....

Your nearest Civil Defence (CD) centre:

Address:

.....

Your nearest community centre or church (as appropriate):

Name and Address:

.....

Any other important services:

Name and Address:

.....



Accessible Properties

Accessible Properties
PO Box 1974,
Wellington 6010

info@accessibleproperties.co.nz

0800 862 769

National Office

Level 5, I Centre,
50 Manners Street,
Wellington 6011

Tauranga Office

141 Cameron Road,
Tauranga 3110

Hamilton Office

Map Building, 14 Knox Street,
Hamilton 3204

Christchurch Office

Level 0, 14 Birmingham Drive,
Christchurch 8024

accessibleproperties.co.nz