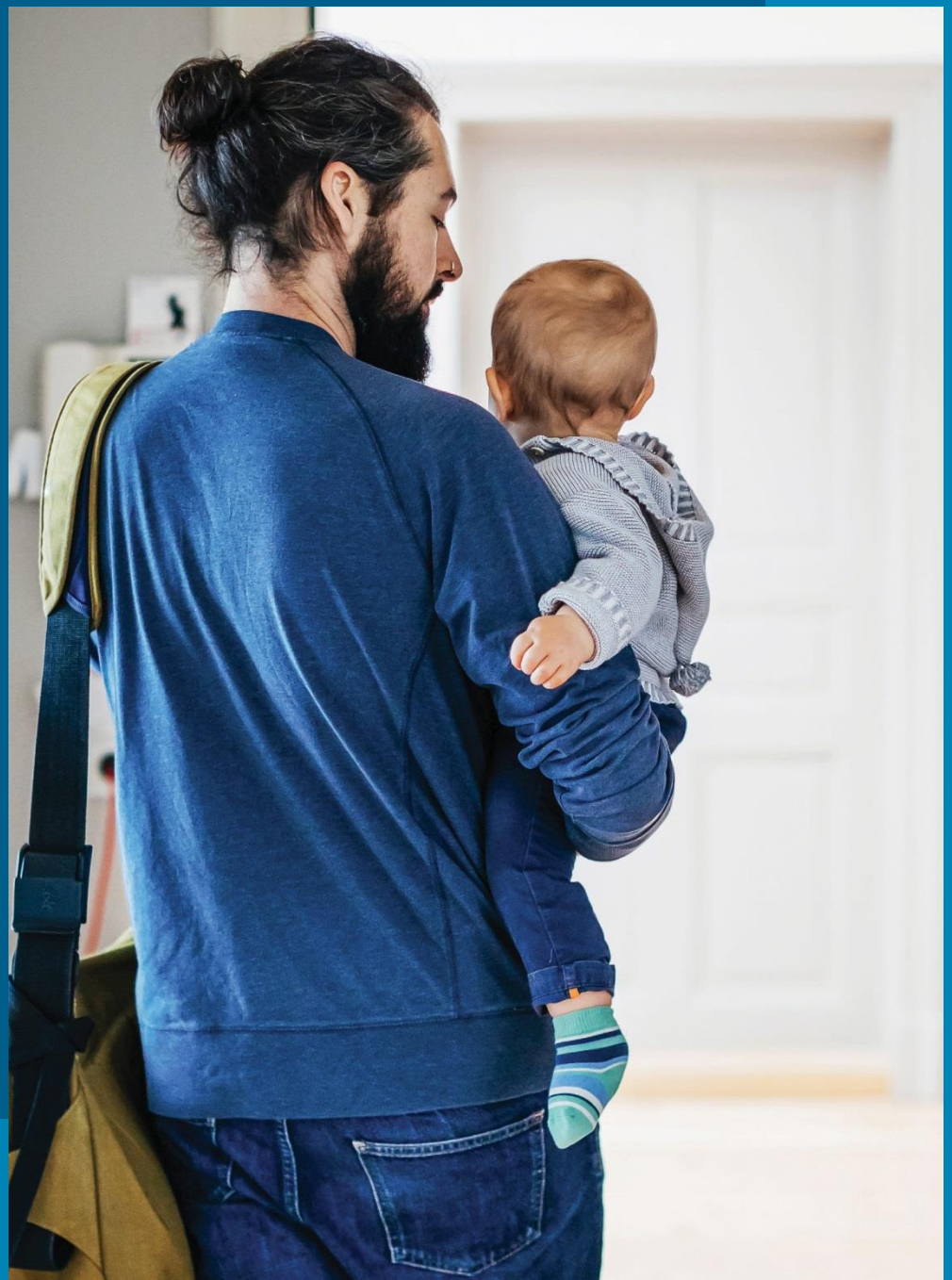




Salvation Army
HOUSING
Victoria

Tenancy Information Booklet





SAHV is committed to the principles of social justice and aims to ensure that every individual is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their ability, cultural background, ethnicity, gender identify, sexual orientation or religion.

Important details

SAHV Office Locations

Territorial Headquarters (THQ)

Email: sahvic.info@salvationarmy.org.au

- **Glen Waverley Office**
95-99 Railway Road Blackburn VIC 3130

South East Region

Email: sahvsoutheast@salvationarmy.org.au

- **Glen Waverley Office**
95-99 Railway Road Blackburn VIC 3130
- **Leongatha Office**
2 Long Street, Leongatha VIC 3953

Central Region

Email: sahvcentral@salvationarmy.org.au

- **Sunshine Office**
34 Devonshire Rd, Sunshine VIC 3020
- **Shepparton Office**
27 Wyndham St, Shepparton VIC 3630

West Region

Email: sahvwest@salvationarmy.org.au

- **Geelong Office**
2A Settlement Road, Belmont VIC 3216
- **Warrnambool Office**
70 Henna Street, Warrnambool VIC 3280
- **Portland Office**
33 Henty Street, Portland VIC 3305

Your property details

Your Housing Worker

SAHV Bank Details

Bank _____

Name _____

BSB _____ ACC _____

Your reference number _____

After Hours Maintenance 13 11 72

Emergency Contacts



Ambulance 000

Fire Services 000

Police (emergency) 000

Water and Sewer _____

Electrical _____

Gas _____

November 2019

The photographs in this publication are for illustrative purposes only. The models are not associated with this program or The Salvation Army Australia.



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Transitional housing

Welcome to our transitional housing program.

This booklet is part of an information kit that tells you about how we manage transitional housing and the services we provide. The booklet also contains your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. At Salvation Army Housing (Victoria), we manage this property in accordance with the provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act, 1997* — the requirements of its contract with the Director of Housing and our policies and procedures.

The property you will be moving into is provided only on a short-term basis. Whilst housed here, you are required to look for longer-term housing.

One of our Housing Workers has been allocated to you as your point of contact. You should get in touch with them for any tenancy related assistance, including reporting maintenance, lost keys, rental matters and disputes with neighbours. Contact details for after-hours maintenance or emergencies are listed on page 10.

Please note: this booklet is a guide only. For more information, please contact your Housing Worker and Support Worker.

We hope you have a pleasant and comfortable stay, and a successful outcome can be achieved for your move to long-term housing.

Translation services



If English is not your first language or you have a hearing impairment, we can arrange a translator to attend your appointments. Please discuss this with your Support Worker if you require these services.

Tenant rights and responsibilities

As a tenant of our housing service, you have the right to:

- Feel safe
- Be free from discrimination
- Have your culture respected
- Respect, dignity and privacy
- Make choices that will impact your future
- Participate in the decision-making process with organisations providing services to you
- Provide feedback on the services you receive
- Make a complaint or appeal a decision you do not agree with and receive an answer that you understand.

As a tenant of our housing service, you have the responsibility to:

- Respect the rights of others to feel safe
- Respect the cultural backgrounds and privacy of others
- Treat others with respect and dignity
- Accept responsibility for your actions and decisions
- Work co-operatively with those who are providing programs or services to you.

We do not condone or tolerate threats, physical assault, intimidation, harassment, deliberate or reckless damage to premises, racial vilification, or any action that puts people or the property in danger or cause serious disruptions for community members. Illegal activities, items, property or substances brought onto the premises will be reported to the police.

Privacy and confidentiality

About your privacy

We respect your right to private space and we will not enter your home except for pre-arranged or emergency maintenance matters (in accordance with the *Residential Tenancy Act, 1997*) or if we have serious concerns for your welfare.

What happens to the information we get from you?

Your privacy is very important to us. Any information we receive from you will be held in the strictest confidence. The only circumstances in which we will release information are:

- If you consent to the release of information, or
- If it's necessary to prevent or diminish a serious or imminent threat to the health or safety of a person, or
- It is required by law.

Unless any of the above circumstances apply, we will not release any information about you, including your residential address to anybody (including family and friends). Any requests for information about you will be communicated to you at the earliest opportunity.

We are required to periodically send statistical information to our government funding body. This information is sent in a way that ensures that individuals are not identifiable. If you wish, you can request for your information to not be included in this data report.

In cases of serious incidents (on-site or off-site), we are obliged to provide the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) with a detailed report, including client details and circumstances of the incident.

Information Privacy Principles

The ten Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) are the practical core of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Victoria)*. With limited exemptions, all Victorian government agencies, statutory bodies and local councils must comply with the IPPs. Although Salvation Army Housing (Victoria) (SAHV) is not a Victorian government agency or statutory body, it still adheres to the IPPs. Listed below is a summary of the IPPs as they apply to SAHV:

IPP 1 — Collection

SAHV only collects personal information that is necessary for the performance of functions. Clients are advised that they can gain access to personal information.

IPP 2 — Use and disclosure

The use and disclosure of personal information only for the primary purpose for which it was collected or a secondary purpose the person would reasonably expect. Use for secondary purposes requires a signature on the Client Contact Sheet for IA&P or another similar form (for other program areas at SAHV). In the case of referrals, consent to release information should be obtained.

IPP 3 — Data quality

SAHV encourages clients to provide us with personal information that is accurate, complete and up to date.

IPP 4 — Data security

SAHV practises strict database security and adopts reasonable steps to protect personal information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

IPP 5 — Openness

SAHV has clearly stated policies on the management of personal information and provides the policies to anyone who asks.

IPP 6 — Access and correction

SAHV believe individuals have a right to seek access to their personal information and make amendments to it.

IPP 7 — Unique identifiers

A unique identifier is a number, similar to a tax file number or driver's license number, that is assigned to an individual to identify them for the purposes of an organisation's operations. Unique identifiers can facilitate data matching. Data matching can diminish privacy breaches. Under IPP 7, the databases used by SAHV are bound by the limits expressed in IPP 7, of adopting and sharing of unique identifiers.

IPP 8 — Anonymity

SAHV gives individuals the option of not identifying themselves when entering transactions with us if it is lawful and feasible.

IPP 9 — Trans-border data flows

Stated simply, if your personal information travels, your privacy protection should travel with it. Transfer of personal information outside Victoria is restricted. However, personal information may be transferred only if the recipient practices privacy protection under standards similar to Victoria's IPPs.

IPP 10 — Sensitive information

IPP 10 restricts the collection of sensitive information like an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political views, religious beliefs, sexual preferences, membership of groups or criminal record.

If you feel your privacy has been breached, please refer your concerns to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner:

Privacy Victoria
Level 11, 10–16 Queen Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000, Australia

GPO Box 5057
Melbourne Victoria 3001, Australia

DX 210643

Telephone:

Local call within Australia: **1300 666 444**

From outside Australia: **+61 3 8619 8719**

Fax:

Local call within Australia: **1300 666 445**

From outside Australia: **+61 3 8619 8700**

Email: enquiries@privacy.vic.gov.au



Working with your Housing and Support Workers

One of the major points of difference between tenancy in transitional housing and tenancy in public housing or private rental is that while living in the property, you will be expected to work directly and continually with your Housing and Support Workers. Part of this work will comprise creating a plan for your move to long-term housing.

During the early part of your tenancy, this could mean meeting with your Support Worker every week, along with some contact by phone.

By signing the lease agreement and relevant consent forms, you have given SAHV permission to communicate with your Support Worker with regards to your tenancy. The Housing and Support Workers will work together to support you throughout your tenancy period. Therefore, you are required to engage positively with your Support Worker to achieve a positive outcome regarding long-term housing.

As mentioned above, you will be required to work together with your Support Worker throughout your

tenancy period in transitional housing, to create an 'exit plan'. This simply means working out the type of long-term housing that is the right and most realistic option for you, and what you need to do to get there. Continual contact also ensures your case management plan is going well.

Even if you think you no longer need regular help and support from your Support Worker, you will still have to work with them, as it is an important part of your agreement, and a requirement if you want to retain your tenancy in the transitional housing program.

If you refuse to engage with your Support Worker (or an alternative Support Worker if necessary for any reason) your tenancy may be discontinued. If you choose to stop engaging with your Support Worker, please be aware that this is a decision you are making that will affect your tenancy. You are required to meet with your Housing and Support Workers regularly to discuss how your tenancy is going and how arrangements for moving to long-term housing are going.



Your tenancy agreement (lease)

The tenancy agreement or lease that you sign is a legal contract between you and Salvation Army Housing (Victoria), which states your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and our rights and responsibilities as the landlord.

Please remember: you have responsibilities as well as rights. You will find those in your tenancy agreement, which is part of your information kit. It is important that you keep a copy of your agreement.

The agreement is initially set for a maximum period of between three to four months. However, this can be a shorter period of nine weeks, if requested by either party. Tenancies are reviewed towards the end of this period. In some cases, where a person has been working positively towards securing appropriate housing and as a way to address relevant support needs, we may extend the tenancy.

The tenancy agreement contains your name, address and the date your tenancy starts. It also states the market rent of the premises, which may not be the rent you are required to pay. (See the section on how your rent is determined on page 12.)

The agreement contains important requirements you must fulfil as a tenant:

- You must always pay your rent on time or in advance
- You must use your home only as a place of residence
- You must not use your home for illegal purposes
- You must advise us of any change in the members of your household
- You must apply for permission from your Housing Worker if you wish for any additional residents to move in
- You must apply for permission from your Housing Worker if you wish to keep pets at your property
- Your rent will be reassessed according to the income of the new household
- You must engage continually with your Support Worker for the length of your tenancy
- You must actively seek alternative long-term housing.

Your property condition report

The Property Condition Report describes the condition of the premises at the start of your tenancy. It is also undertaken at the end of your tenancy. The Property Condition Report ensures that you are not charged for any damage you did not cause.

Our Housing Workers prepare the first report immediately before your tenancy commences. You should read, sign and return the report to the Housing Worker listed at the front of this booklet.

If you do not agree with some or all of the statements in the report, you will need to write what you disagree with on both copies of the report before signing them, and return one copy to us. It is important that you keep your copy of the report, as you will need it when you vacate the premises.



Property condition

SAHV is responsible for ensuring that your property is in a suitable condition and good state of repair at the beginning of your tenancy. As a tenant, you must keep the property clean and take care to avoid any damages.

As your landlord and in partnership with The Director of Housing, we are responsible for the ongoing maintenance of your property, in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act, 1997*. This act outlines repairs as either urgent or non-urgent. The actions we undertake and how quickly we do so depends on whether the repair is urgent or non-urgent.

Examples of urgent repairs include a burst water service, blocked or broken lavatory system, a serious roof leak, gas leak, dangerous electrical fault, flooding or serious flood damage, serious storm or fire damage, failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance provided for hot water, water, cooking or heating.

We will organise most repairs to your home. However, you must do smaller, more routine repairs, such as replacing light bulbs. Keeping your garden clean and tidy from rubbish and general house cleaning is also your responsibility. If your personal items, such as television or fridge are broken or damaged, you must get them repaired yourself.

Fire safety and smoke alarms

Your home is fitted with a smoke alarm which provides early warning in case of a fire. You should take care not to tamper with it. Check the alarm regularly to make sure it still works. You can also test your alarm at any time by pushing the test button. When you do so, your alarm will beep. If it doesn't beep when tested, contact your Housing Worker immediately. The test button will flash once every minute throughout the life of the alarm. This is normal and does not mean your alarm is faulty.

Do not let dust, cobwebs or grease accumulate on your alarm as this can cause problems. Your smoke alarm has been installed to protect you and your family. Look after it and it will look after you.

Infestation/mould

It is your responsibility to maintain the property in a manner that will not contribute to any infestation or mould. Any kind of infestation may occur while you reside in the property, such as ant infestation. To prevent the formation of mould, you need to ensure that steam does not build up. This can be done by regular ventilation and/ or regular cleaning. Please notify us as soon as you notice mould growth or any infestation. If you fail to maintain the property in a manner that prevents the creation of mould, you will be accountable for the costs associated with the mould or infestation treatment.

Reporting maintenance

As soon as you become aware of any maintenance issue that requires attention, you should notify your Housing Worker during normal business hours (9.00am–5.00pm). The Housing Worker will organise for a tradesperson to conduct repairs.

Your name, address and telephone number, along with information relevant to the nature of the issue, will be recorded. The tradespeople do not have duplicate copies of your keys and will not be able to assist you if you lose your keys or lock yourself out.

The repairs we will organise for your home generally fall into any of two categories below:

Non-urgent repairs

These are repairs that are not urgent, e.g. a damaged cupboard. We will arrange for non-urgent repairs to be completed within 14 days. Under exceptional circumstances, such as widespread storm damage, there may be a delay to priority and non-urgent repairs while we attend to urgent repairs. However, under normal circumstances, you should expect a response within these times. You will be informed about what action will be taken and the contractor will contact you directly to arrange access.

Urgent repairs

These are repairs that need to be fixed urgently, e.g. a blocked toilet or a dangerous electrical fault. We aim to attend to urgent repairs straight away and will arrange for them to be completed within 24–48 hours. **You must be at the property for 24 hours if it is an urgent repair.**

The following repairs are considered urgent:

- Burst water service
- Blocked or broken lavatory system
- Serious roof leak
- Gas leak
- Dangerous electrical fault
- Flooding or serious flood damage
- Failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance that has been provided by the Director of Housing for hot water, water, cooking, heating or laundering
- Failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to your home
- Any fault or damage that makes your home unsafe or insecure
- A serious fault in a lift or staircase.



**Urgent after-hours
repairs call 13 11 72**

If you need an urgent repair out of normal business hours or on a public holiday, an after-hours maintenance service is available by calling **13 11 72**.

After hours apply:

- On public holidays
- Between 4.30pm and 9:00am during the week (Monday to Friday)
- Weekends (Saturday and Sunday).

Please note: You must be at the property for 24 hours if it is an urgent repair.

Keys

Tenants will be issued with one key to their property. Your Housing Worker has a duplicate copy of your key. If you lose your key you should contact them immediately and they will arrange to get you a copy. **Please note: You will be charged for the replacement.**

Property modifications

Installing fixtures and altering the property is not permitted unless you have SAHV consent to do so.

If we become aware that you have installed any fixtures or made any alterations without consent, we may serve you a *Notice for breach of duty to tenant/s of rented premises*, which will require you to:

- Restore the rented premises to the condition they were in immediately before the installation, **OR**
- Compensate them by an amount equal to the reasonable cost of restoring the premises to that condition.

If you fail to comply with the breach of duty notice, we may apply to VCAT to get a compliance order or may serve a second breach of duty notice.

Before a tenancy agreement ends, if you have installed fixtures or renovated, altered or added to the property (even with the landlord's written consent), you must restore the property to its original condition, unless you reach an agreement with the landlord to allow the alterations to remain. Make sure the agreement is in writing.

Furniture

We may provide you with various items of furniture and equipment to help you get established in your new home. A list of what is provided will be stated in your Residential Tenancy Agreement. These items are provided for your use during your tenancy, but remain the property of Salvation Army Housing (Victoria) and are not to be removed.

Please report any faults or damage of furniture to SAHV. If you purchase new items for your household, please ensure you store SAHV's existing furniture at your premises. All items must remain on the property at the end of your tenancy. Anything missing will be deemed stolen and a police report will be filed.

We will provide your household with a voucher to purchase small household goods. The voucher amount will vary for each household composition. The provision of this voucher occurs only once, at the beginning of the tenancy.

Each household is required to use the voucher to purchase the listed household items:

- Baking tray
- Broom
- Can opener
- Chopping board
- Crockery
- Cutlery
- Dish rack
- Dustpan and brush
- Glasses
- Kettle
- Mop and bucket
- Rubbish bin
- Saucepan
- Toaster
- Toilet brush
- Vacuum
- Utensils
- Child safety household products
- any other, as household sees fit.

Utilities

Water, gas, phone, electricity.

As the tenant, you are responsible for paying for the usage costs of utilities — water, gas, phone and electricity. Your utilities should have been discussed with you before signing the tenancy agreement.

Insurance

We do not provide insurance cover for your possessions. You may wish to take out a household insurance policy to cover your furniture and personal belongings from damage or theft.



Rent

How your rent is determined

We calculate our rent differently from private landlords. Your rent is determined against the 'market rent' of your property. We will ask for details of your income and calculate a 'rebated rent' depending on your household income — the same as public housing.

What is market rent?

All transitional housing properties have a rent value, which is called market rent. The market rent for your home is shown in your tenancy agreement and is reviewed each year. If your market rent changes, we will write and tell you what your new market rent is and your rental amount may change based on the new market rent.

What is rebated rent?

You can apply (through your Housing Worker) to pay a rebated (reduced) rent. Your eligibility for a rebate depends on your household income. If you have a reduced income, you will not have to pay the full market rent for your home. Obtaining rebate rent means you are not entitled to Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

Your Housing Worker can provide you with information and assistance regarding your eligibility for a rebate and how your rebate is calculated.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)

A tenancy that has rebated rent applied is not eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance. If you are receiving CRA while paying rebated rent, you might be fined by Centrelink.

How to make rental payments

You are required to pay your rent in advance. There are several ways you can make rental payments:

- **Centrepay** — An automated system where Centrelink will send your rent directly to us each time you are paid, or
- **Payment using deposit book** — You can pay your rent into our bank using the deposit book you will be issued, or
- **Direct debit** — You can arrange a direct debit from your bank or building society account (your bank or building society may charge for this service).



Who else can live in my home?

If you want someone else to move in and share your home with you, you must first get approval from your Housing Worker. Remember, the person moving in will become a resident and will not be able to stay if you decide to move out.

The arrival of a new resident will affect how much rent you pay. Check with your Housing Worker to find out what difference it will make to your rent.

Changes to your rent

What if my household income changes?

If your household income changes, the amount of rent you pay may also change. You must tell your Housing Worker whenever your household income goes up or down. This will ensure that you are charged the correct rent at all times.

Things that will make your household income change include:

- Someone acquiring or losing a job
- Someone joining or leaving the household
- Someone getting a pay rise or pay cut
- Change in the type or amount of pension or benefit you receive from Centrelink
- Increase or decrease in child maintenance payments.

What is a rent review?

The amount you pay in rent is reviewed periodically to ensure that you are paying the correct amount. Your Housing Worker will write to you just before the review to explain what you should do.

Rent arrears policy

Rent arrears mean you have rent amounts overdue. Correspondence sent to you concerning your arrears or rent payments is very important. **Please do not ignore this correspondence.**

We view the payment of rent as an essential condition of the tenancy, but are also aware that tenants on low incomes sometimes find themselves in financial difficulty. If you fall behind with your rent, we may be willing to enter into an arrangement to allow for the repayment of arrears.

If you fail to contact us or do not uphold an agreement to catch up with your rent, you will automatically put your tenancy at risk. If you have any difficulty paying your rent, please contact your Housing Worker immediately to discuss your situation and work out a payment arrangement.

Neighbours

Whether you are in your home or the areas surrounding it, you must ensure that you or your visitors do not disturb your neighbours. If you do not respect the rights of your neighbours you may be evicted.

If a neighbour bothers you because of noise, for example, you should try to resolve the matter yourself first by talking to them about the problem. If this does not work, you should contact your Housing Worker who will talk with you about the problem. However, if the problem you are facing is serious or threatening, e.g. you are being harassed, you should call the police.

You must work actively towards establishing good relations with your neighbours. To ensure that you are not responsible for any neighbourhood problems, here are some things you can do:

- **Keep the noise down**
Don't disturb your neighbours by playing music or the TV loudly or at an unreasonable time of the day or night. Think about those who live around you, particularly if you live in a block of flats. They may be trying to sleep.
- **Be responsible for your children and visitors**
Children have the right to play, but make sure your children and visitors do not trespass onto other people's property while in a common area (e.g. driveways) or make too much noise at an unreasonable time.
- **Respect other people's privacy**
Try to be friendly to your neighbours but always remember — most people like their privacy.
- **Keep your neighbourhood looking nice**
You can help keep your neighbourhood clean and tidy by putting rubbish in the bins provided and placing the bins out on collection days. It is your responsibility to ensure that rubbish does not accumulate around the premises.

Other issues relating to the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants are covered in *Renting: Your Rights and Responsibilities*, a copy of which you will find in this information kit. If English is not your first language, please advise us and we will provide you with a copy of this booklet in your preferred language.

Moving out

Letting your Housing Worker know

Before moving you must contact your Housing Worker. You must also do the following:

- Provide 7 days' notice of your intent to vacate
- Advise us of your forwarding address
- Ensure that your rent is paid up to the due date, and
- Notify your relevant utility providers (water, gas and electricity) of the date your tenancy finishes. This will prevent you from being charged for the usage of utility services by the next tenant.

Cleaning up

When you move out, please ensure you:

- Remove **all rubbish** from the property
- Leave the property in a clean and tidy condition
- Remove all your belongings
- Return all copies of the house keys to your Housing Worker immediately after moving.

If you do not comply with the above, we may charge you for the costs of removing any goods left behind and cleaning the property, as well as extra rent for returning the keys late and any other maintenance costs.

Please note: You will keep getting charged rent until you return the key; therefore it is in your best interests to return your key as quickly as possible.

Goods left behind

If you leave any goods behind after you move out, we are obliged to deal with these in accordance with the provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act, 1997* and the *Australian Consumer Law Act*. This may mean that your belongings are removed from the property and either destroyed or disposed of. Therefore, please ensure you do not leave any belongings behind at the time of leaving.

Bushfires in Victoria

Victoria is one of the most bushfire-prone regions in the world with bushfires threatening lives and homes each summer. Bushfires are dangerous and the only way to ensure your safety is to be well away from the threat.

Prepare and act early

If you live in a bushfire risk area you need to understand the Fire Danger Ratings and Bushfire Warning Systems, stay informed and monitor local conditions.

SAHV staff will send you a text message or call you on total fire ban days as well as heat alert days as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure you are aware of these bans and alerts.

Fire agencies recommend that you develop a written Bushfire Survival Plan and discuss this with your family. Your plan should specify **WHEN** you will leave. **WHERE** you will go. **WHO** you will call. **WHICH** way you will go, with three route options. **WHAT** you will take. And a **BACK-UP PLAN**. You should have an **EMERGENCY KIT** prepared and a plan for children, the elderly and your pets if necessary.



On an Extreme rated fire danger day, the safest option is to leave the night before, or early in the morning.

IF THERE IS A CATASTROPHIC DANGER RATING THE ONLY OPTION IS TO LEAVE.

Please take the time to read the enclosed leaflets. During total fire ban days it is advised you visit the CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au or listen to local **ABC Radio Station 774** to hear up-to-date information regarding status of bushfires.

Advise your Housing Worker if you are evacuating the property. SAHV staff will not be able to attend your property on days declared an extreme bushfire day.

Don't hesitate to contact your Housing Worker if you need any further advice.

Bushfire Warnings – What Do They Mean? >

Advice >

- There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.

Watch & Act >

- Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.

Emergency Warning >

- You are in imminent danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

Don't expect warnings to be issued in any particular order — the first you hear about could be an Emergency Warning.

Fire danger ratings tell you how dangerous a fire would be if one started.

Total fire bans tell you what you can or can't do on days where fire will spread rapidly and be out of control.

Source: Rural Fire Service

Total Fire Ban

A Total Fire Ban is declared on a day when a fire is most likely to spread rapidly (because of extreme fire weather) or if there are already widespread fires and there are not enough resources to fight it.

CFA declares the Fire Danger Period for each municipality (shire or council) at different times in the lead up to the fire season. It depends on the amount of rain, grassland curing rate and other local conditions.

During a Total Fire Ban you are not allowed to light, maintain or use a fire in the open air, or to carry out any activity in the open air that causes, or is likely to cause, a fire.

If you are planning to travel to a bushfire prone area, it is recommended that you check the total fire ban status on that particular day. You can do this by visiting the CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au.

Bushfire evacuation

Some properties are prone to bushfires. Your Housing Worker will advise you if the property is subject to bushfires. SAHV strongly recommends that you make yourself familiar with evacuation processes in the local area.

Please stay alert by listening to the various fire alerts via radio, social media, online and the relevant hotline numbers. You can contact the **VicEmergency Hotline** on **1800 226 226** any time. They can advise you about the bushfire risk and evacuation protocols. You can also stay informed via emergency.vic.gov.au/respond

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service:

- TTY users phone 1800 555 677 then ask for 1800 226 226
- Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 226 226
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1800 226 226

If you don't speak English call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 for translated information from the VicEmergency Hotline. If you know someone who can't speak English, provide them with this number.



VicEmergency Hotline
1800 226 226

Client Services Charter

We want to provide you with the highest quality of service that we can. We will strive to listen and work with you to make sure that you get all the help and support that is available and suitable for you.

The Client Services Charter tells you what you can expect from us and our staff. It also tells you what you can do to help us give you the best service we can.

What you can expect of us

We will:

- Make it easy for you to contact us
- Help you apply for or use our services
- Inform you about your rights and responsibilities
- Arrange for an interpreter or other language services if you need or request them
- Do the things we say we will do, e.g. getting back to you when we say we will
- Be polite and respectful of your views, opinions and personal circumstances such as your culture, family situation, age, gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation or gender identity
- Protect your personal information and only use it for the right reasons
- Inform you if you are not eligible for a service or if there is a waiting list
- Provide you with advice on other supports that may be available
- Give you opportunities to be involved in the decision-making processes about the services you access, and support you when you want to be involved
- Inform you about any decisions that will affect you and the reasons for our decision
- Provide you with information on how to make a complaint or ask for review of a decision we have made
- Try our best to meet any cultural needs you may have.

How you can help us

You can help us provide you with a better service only if you and/or your support person:

- Gives us complete and accurate information
- Informs us of any change or potential change to your situation or life
- Treats our staff with respect and courtesy
- Do the things you have agreed to do, e.g. keeping appointments with us or informing us if you can't attend appointments
- Nominates a support person to assist you in dealing with us, if required
- Respects our property and the other people using our services
- Provides us with honest feedback about our services.

Your responsibilities

As a client of SAHV, it is your responsibility to:

- Be respectful to everyone, including SAHV staff, volunteers, case workers and other clients
- Keep appointments, or notify us before the appointment time if you're unable to attend
- Not attend appointments while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs
- Work towards implementing any agreement /plan in partnership with your Housing and Case Worker
- Provide information that will enable the Housing Worker to provide you with adequate response or assistance
- Ensure you keep the property in a reasonably good and clean condition.





Advocacy and information

There are multiple agencies in Victoria that can help you with your tenancy in terms of advice, support and/or advocacy.

Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS)

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) is familiar with the THM program and properties. Through their Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) they can advocate on your behalf and provide you with accurate information and advice.

- Free Call—**1800 066 256** or **03 8415 6200**
- ONCALL Interpreting services—**03 9867 3788**
- Address—2 Stanley Street, Collingwood

Tenancy Union Victoria

Tenancy Union Victoria supports all tenants in Victoria with residential and rooming house matters. Call for information and basic advice about your tenancy.

- Tenants helpline number—**03 9416 2577**
- Social housing advice line—**1800 068 860**
- Rooming house residents—**03 9411 1444**

Residential disputes via VCAT

We are required to deal with tenancy related disputes in accordance with the provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act, 1997*. If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with a tenancy related dispute, you have the right to take the matter to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal. The Residential Tenancies Tribunal has the power to hear and settle any dispute that occurs between a landlord and a tenant. The Tribunal is established as an independent board under the *Residential Tenancies Act, 1997*.

You may wish to use an advocate to assist you. The Tenants Union can be contacted on **1800 068 860** (free call). They may be able to offer you support as well as advice.

Another source for tenancy advice and support is Consumer Affairs Victoria, who can be contacted on **1300 55 81 81**.

For further information about the role of the Tribunal, please refer to the booklet *Renting a home: A guide for tenants*.

Complaints and feedback

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your tenancy and/or the support services you receive, we want to hear about it. We welcome all positive feedback but also want to know if you've had a bad experience or feel we could have done something differently.

You can provide feedback by completing a service-user feedback form provided by your Housing Worker, or contact us and we will send one out to you. Close to your exit date, you will receive a feedback survey with a reply paid envelope so you can tell us about your experience. Complaints can be verbal or in writing.

What can you make a complaint about?

- Unprofessional behaviour
- Poor advice
- Unsatisfactory service
- Misuse of Information
- Maintenance/repair turnaround.

By contacting your Housing Worker, we can:

- Listen
- Give you information and advice
- Help you get answers to your questions
- Try to resolve your complaint
- Deal with issues in a timely manner
- Keep you updated on your complaint.

We will keep you updated at regular intervals. You can also call us to check on the progress of your complaint. We will explain what has happened thus far and next steps. We will also give you an indication of how long the process will take and how simple or complex it will be to resolve your problem.

If you have raised complaints/issues with us about our service and are not satisfied with the response and feel your rights have not been met, you can contact the following services:

- Homeless Advocacy Service on **1800 066 256**
- Department of Human and Health Services (DHHS) Complaints Management Unit on **1800 155 743**
- Housing Registrar on **03 9651 1402** or email housingregistrarcomplaints@dtf.vic.gov.au

Appeals

At SAHV we believe you have the right to appeal a decision. If you are not satisfied with a resolution of your complaint or a decision made by SAHV, you can make an appeal.

You can appeal a decision by:

- Writing to: Salvation Army Housing Victoria (SAHV), 95-99 Railway Road Blackburn VIC 3130
- Email: sahvic.info@salvationarmy.org.au

During the process, SAHV will:

- Keep matters confidential
- Document your complaint
- Attempt to resolve the matter quickly and fairly
- Keep you informed of progress
- Advise you of the outcome, generally within 14 days.

You have the right to seek support and information from other organisations at any time. These agencies are listed on page 18, under 'Advocacy and information'.

Surveys

SAHV is committed to improve the service we offer to our tenants. In order to evaluate our assistance we would like you to help us do this by completing our surveys.

All the information that you provide to us will be treated in the strictest confidence. You do not have to give your name and address if you don't want to.

If you need some help to complete the survey call us and we will call you back and complete the questions with you over the telephone. We can also arrange for a translator, if necessary.

A survey will be provided to you upon commencement of your tenancy. Annually, SAHV sends out surveys via:

- post with reply paid envelopes that allow you to post the survey back to us, and
- text messages to complete online, and/or
- via email, if you have provided us with an email address.

Other important services

Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
The Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria (toll free)	1800 015 188
Statewide Homelessness Assistance (toll free)	1800 825 955
Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service	1800 105 303
Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service	1800 755 988
WIRE Women's Information Referral Service	1300 134 130
Interpreting and Translating Service	13 14 50
Safe Steps Family Violence Resource Centre	1800 015 188
After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services	13 12 78
Victoria Legal Aid	1300 792 387
Aboriginal Legal Aid	1800 064 865
Women's Legal Service of Victoria	03 9642 0877
Sexual Assault Crisis Line	1800 806 292
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Lifeline	13 11 14
Maternal and Child Health (24 hours)	13 22 29
Men's Referral Service	1800 065 973
Nurse On Call	1300 606 024
Parentline Victoria	13 22 89
Victims of Crime Helpline	1800 000 055
Beyondblue (depression and anxiety)	1300 224 636
Frontyard Integrated Youth Services (information, assessment and referral)	03 9611 2411
Directline (drug and alcohol queries)	1800 888 236
National Pregnancy Support Helpline	1800 422 213

