

## Pest Management

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain Bridge Housing's approach to dealing with pests in all our properties, outlining both landlord and tenant responsibilities.

### Scope

This policy applies to all Bridge Housing social housing properties.

It should be noted that maintenance services delivered under fee for service programs and in our leasehold portfolio are subject to negotiation with the owners of these properties, which can impact on the delivery of services in some instances.

### Policy Overview

This policy provides information about the management of pests in accordance with the NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and the Pesticides Regulation 2017.

Bridge Housing is responsible to ensure that when a tenant moves into a property, the property is free from pest infestations.

In properties secured from the private rental market or those managed on a fee for service basis, Bridge Housing will ensure that the property owner has met their responsibilities and the property is pest free.

For pest problems that occur during a tenancy, the tenant is generally responsible to manage the infestation.

### Landlord Responsibilities

The landlord is responsible for ensuring the property is free from pest infestations before the tenant moves in.

Bridge Housing will ensure this occurs by fumigating vacant properties where pests are identified prior to the property being occupied.

During a tenancy, the tenant is responsible to maintain a clean environment to prevent the possibility of an infestation within the home. The tenant is also responsible to attempt to remove pests from the home at the first sign of certain types of pests, including rats, mice, cockroaches, fleas, bed bugs, wasps and ants.

Where tenants have been unable to remove pests, Bridge Housing will complete pest treatment and may charge the tenant for the cost of this work.

In the event of infestation within common areas including roof spaces, Bridge Housing is responsible to undertake an inspection and remove pests, where identified. For buildings managed under a Strata, Bridge Housing will notify and work with the strata manager to undertake necessary pest control to ensure their responsibilities are met.

## Notifying Tenants about Pest Control

The landlord is responsible for giving tenants at least 5 working days notice before a pesticide application takes place within the common areas of a unit block or complex.

Bridge Housing contractors are required to comply with relevant legislation and where required, provide a pesticide use notice while the pest control work is being carried out and for any period during which the affected area should not be entered (as set out in the notice).

Notifying tenants about pesticide use prior and during does not mean the tenant can prevent the use of pesticides in the area. The aim of the notification is to allow people to choose to reduce their exposure to the pesticides.

If a pest emergency occurs and pesticides need to be used in the common area of a unit block or complex, then it is not necessary for the landlord to give tenants prior notice, but it is still necessary for the pest management technician to give notice immediately prior to the application of the pesticide. A pest emergency may include a sudden infestation of dangerous, biting, or stinging pests such as rodents, wasps, bees, venomous spiders or bird mites.

## Tenant Responsibilities

Tenants are responsible for the eradication of most pests in their home or garden after moving in.

Bridge Housing expects tenants to take reasonable action to prevent pest infestation. This includes:

- Regularly and securely removing rubbish from the home and not allowing rubbish to pile up inside or outside of the property
- Properly storing food by ensuring all packaged food is tightly closed and not leaving fresh food out in the open for significant periods
- Regularly vacuuming and cleaning floors
- Regularly cleaning kitchen surfaces and cupboards and ensuring dirty dishes are not piled up in the sink or around the property
- Routinely using pest prevention treatments, such as those available at supermarkets and hardware stores (for example cockroach baits, mousetraps, powders and sprays)
- If you have a pet, ensuring the pet is kept clean and treated regularly for fleas (see Bridge Housing's policy on pets for more information) and the pet's food bowls are cleaned and any leftover food is disposed of.
- Bridge Housing may also request to see a copy of a certificate of treatment for fleas or receipts for purchasing flea treatments from a tenant if a severe flea infestation is present at the property.
- Not feeding wild birds such as pigeons or other species
- Regularly cleaning the garden of loose leaves and debris.

In situations where tenants do not take reasonable precautions to treat the first sign of a pest infestation and consequently any neighbouring properties become infested, Bridge Housing may charge the tenant for the cost of pest treatment.

If a tenant has a pet, Bridge Housing can request that carpets are professionally cleaned at the end of the tenancy to prevent pests (see Bridge Housing's policy on pets for more information).

If pests are present in the property at the end of the tenancy Bridge Housing may charge the tenant for the cost of treatment.

## Responsibilities for Specific Types of Pest Infestation

Type of Pest	Landlord responsibility	Tenant responsibility
<b>Ants</b>	At the commencement of tenancy	Eradication during tenancy
<b>Bees and Wasps</b>	At the commencement of tenancy or when nest is within a wall cavity or similar	Eradication during tenancy
<b>European Wasps</b>	To notify the relevant local council who will organise eradication	Report any infestation to Bridge Housing.
<b>Birds</b>	To seal off entry points used by birds to access the building structure and remove birds from the building structure	Tenant will be recharged if proven to be feeding birds.
<b>Bird Lice</b>	If infestation is caused by birds accessing the building structure (e.g. holes in eaves of roof) or when there is a severe infestation	Tenant will be recharged if proven to be feeding or encouraging birds to nest around the property
<b>Cockroaches, Fleas and Spiders</b>	At the commencement of the tenancy or when there is a severe infestation	Eradication during tenancy
<b>Bed Bugs</b>	At the commencement of the tenancy or when there is a severe infestation	Eradication during tenancy
<b>Mice and Rats</b>	At the commencement of the tenancy or when there is a severe infestation	Eradication during tenancy
<b>Possums</b>	To remove possums and seal off entry points for possums	Notify Bridge Housing of any possum infestation.
<b>Snakes</b>	At the commencement of the tenancy	Contact a local reptile handler or <a href="#">wildlife rehabilitation group</a> . They will remove the snake from your home or garden.
<b>Termites</b>	Preventative termite program is in place annually to eradicate first signs termites.	Immediately report any suspicion of termite presence to Bridge Housing. Do not disturb the infestation or attempt eradication.

## Compliments, Complaints and Appeals

**This is an appealable policy.**

If a tenant is not satisfied with a service provided by Bridge Housing or does not agree with a decision we have made, they can ask for a formal review. To do this, the tenant can talk to their housing manager or complete either a **I want to complain** or **I want to appeal form** found in the Bridge Housing's Complaints and Appeals Policy. This policy, and a helpful information leaflet, is available from Bridge Housing's office or they can be downloaded from our website [www.bridgehousing.org.au](http://www.bridgehousing.org.au).

If a tenant is unhappy with the outcome of an appeal by Bridge Housing, they can lodge a second level appeal with the Housing Appeals Committee. The Housing Appeals Committee is an independent agency that reviews certain decisions made by staff of Community Housing organisations and Housing NSW. For information on the Housing Appeals Committee call 1800 629 794 or go to [www.hac.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hac.nsw.gov.au).

## Related Documents

- [Notice of Intended Pesticide Application](#)
- [Pets Policy](#)
- [Complaints and Appeals Policy](#)