

Pest Management

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain Bridge Housing's approach to dealing with pests in both leasehold and capital properties. The policy outlines both landlord and tenant responsibilities in respect to managing pests.

Scope

This policy applies to all Bridge Housing tenants. 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

Rats, mice, cockroaches, fleas, termites (white ants), wasps, and ants can cause infestation of pests and vermin in the home. This policy provides information about the management of pests in both leasehold and capital properties. The policy identifies both landlord and tenant responsibilities under the NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010.

Bridge Housing will ensure that when a tenant moves into a property the property is free from pest infestations. In capital properties, Bridge Housing will ensure the property is free of pests in line with our responsibilities for pest control. In leasehold properties and properties 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. In capital properties, Bridge Housing will ensure this occurs by fumigating vacant properties where pests are identified. In leasehold properties and properties managed by Bridge Housing on a fee for service arrangement, Bridge Housing will work with the owner of the property to ensure they meet their landlord responsibilities where pests are identified.

During a tenancy, the landlord has a responsibility for certain types of pests, including rats, mice, cockroaches, fleas, termites (white ants), wasps, and ants. In capital properties Bridge Housing will ensure its landlord responsibilities are met. In leasehold properties, and properties managed by Bridge Housing on a fee for service arrangement, Bridge Housing will work with the owner of the property to ensure they meet their landlord responsibilities.

In the event of infestation within common areas, Bridge Housing will undertake pest treatment to common areas under our management. If the property is in a strata building, then 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

It is compulsory for the landlord to notify tenants when pesticides are being used in the common areas of a unit block or complex. Notice must be given before and during a pesticide application.

The landlord is responsible for giving tenants at least 5 working days notice before a pesticide application takes place. The pest management technician is responsible for giving tenants notice while a pesticide application is under way.

Notifying tenants about pesticide use before it happens 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 they wish.

For properties where Bridge Housing is organising the treatment, a letter containing a 'Notice of Intended Pesticide Application' will be sent to each individual tenant to provide at least 5 working days notice. Bridge Housing will also ensure pest management technicians engaged to carry out treatments erect a 'Notice of Pesticide Use' on the day(s) of the treatment.

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

In both capital and leasehold properties, the tenant is responsible for the eradication of pests within their home or garden if the infestation occurs after the tenant has moved in.

If a Bridge Housing tenant lives in a leasehold property or property managed by Bridge Housing on a fee for service arrangement, the tenant should contact Bridge Housing immediately to determine action. The tenant must never directly correspond with the property owner/agent.

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

- Regularly and securely removing rubbish from the home and properly disposing of it and to not allow 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 work 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 widely-available at supermarkets and hardware stores (for example mousetraps, powders, sprays and baits)
- If a pet is kept in the home, ensuring the pet is kept clean and treated for infestations, particularly fleas, on a regular basis (see Bridge Housing's policy on pets for more information); and ensure pet's food bowls are cleaned regularly and any leftover pet 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 deal with a pest infestation and consequently any neighbouring properties become infected due to the tenant's neglect, Bridge Housing may recharge the tenant who neglected their responsibilities

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 recharge the tenant

Responsibilities for Specific Types of Pest Infestation

Type of Pest	Landlord responsibility	Tenant responsibility
Ants	At the commencement of the tenancy	Eradication during tenancy
Bees and Wasps	At the commencement of the tenancy or when nest is within a wall cavity or similar	Eradication during tenancy
European Wasps	To notify the relevant local council who will organise eradication	Report any infestation to Bridge Housing.
Birds	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
Bird Lice	Only if infestation is caused by birds accessing the building structure (e.g. holes in eaves) or when there is a severe infestation	Tenant will be recharged if proven to be feeding birds
Cockroaches, Fleas and Spiders	At the commencement of the tenancy	Eradication during tenancy
Bed Bugs	At the commencement of the tenancy or when there is a severe infestation	Eradication during tenancy
Mice and Rats	At the commencement of the tenancy	Eradication during tenancy
Possoms	To remove possums and seal off entry points for possums	Notify Bridge Housing of any possum infestation.
Snakes	At the commencement of the tenancy or if the landlord's action is responsible (e.g. piles of rubbish left in garden)	Eradication during tenancy
Termites	Preventative measures and eradication	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 it has made, they can ask for a formal review. Bridge Housing's *Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Policy* outlines how we will undertake a review of our decision. A copy of our policy and information leaflet, is available from Bridge Housing's office or downloaded from our website www.bridgehousing.org.au.