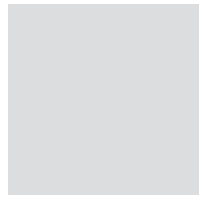




# Preparing buildings for residential lease





**Leasing out of missional buildings for residential use can provide congregations with a sustainable income stream to fund mission.**

**There are some key considerations in preparing a residential property for lease.**

## **Minimum Standards – What are they?**

### **Rental Minimum Standards – your obligations**

Everybody deserves to live in a safe and secure home. As a rental provider, you are required by law to ensure your property meets the mandatory standards on or before the day a renter moves in.

See attached brochure from Consumer Affairs Victoria for more information.

### **Smoke Alarms and Safety Checks**

All homes must have smoke alarms. Rental providers must make sure that smoke alarms are properly installed and working.

Smoke alarms are compulsory and must be installed in all Victorian residential properties including houses, units, flats and townhouses. Rental providers must ensure their rental property is appropriately fitted with smoke alarms.

All buildings constructed after 1 August 1997 must have hard-wired smoke alarms with a battery back-up. Buildings built before that date can have a battery-powered smoke alarm. Homes built or renovated after May 1, 2014, require interconnected smoke alarms.

Smoke alarms must meet the Australian Standard AS 3786.

Gas appliances such as heaters, stoves and gas fired hot water systems, must be properly maintained. If gas appliances aren't maintained, they can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

Rental providers who enter into a new agreement after 29 March 2021, must have gas safety checks conducted every 2 years by a licensed or registered gasfitter.

Before entering into a rental agreement, a rental provider must disclose to a renter the date of the last gas safety check, and any outstanding recommendations from the safety check.

Rental providers who enter into a new agreement after 29 March 2021, must have all electrical installations and fittings checked by a licensed electrician at least once every 2 years. This also applies to rental agreements where a fixed term agreement rolls over into a periodic rental agreement after 29 March 2021.

If an electrical safety check has not been conducted within the last 2 years at the time a renter occupies the rental property, an electrical safety check is to be completed as soon as possible.

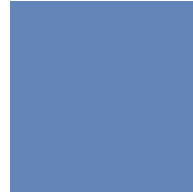
Before entering into a rental agreement, a rental provider must disclose to a renter the date of the last electrical safety check, and any outstanding recommendations from the safety check.



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



**Mission Resourcing Unit**  
Property Services



## Is it Necessary to Consult on All Lease Arrangements?

All lease arrangements need to be carefully considered and negotiated to ensure that the decision to lease out the missional building or land will align to the missional objectives of the congregation and not put at risk the Church.

All lease agreements are entered into in the name of **The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Victoria)** or **The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Tas.)** and must only be signed by the **Synod Property Officer**.

**PART and Presbytery Approval is required for all residential leases, and approval must be obtained prior to lease commencement or any lease renewal.**

When a Managing Agency is appointed, they must be advised that they cannot sign documents on behalf of the Property Trust. All documents must be signed by the Synod Property Officer – this includes the Management Agreement, Disclosure Statement and Lease Agreements.

Church councils need to be aware there are costs (such as Land Tax, Council Rates, Safety Checks and Maintenance) that will be incurred when leasing out residential property.

Church councils must notify the Local Council that the property will no longer be used for Church purposes.

Please contact Property Services if you require any further assistance or information relating to leasing out residential property.

Sarah Pick – Manager, Assets and Administration

**(03) 9116 1957** or **0456 919 464**

[sarah.pick@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:sarah.pick@victas.uca.org.au) or [property@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:property@victas.uca.org.au)



Uniting Church in Australia  
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# Rental minimum standards – your obligations

Everybody deserves to live in a safe and secure home. As a rental provider, you're required by law to ensure your property meets the mandatory minimum standards on or before the day a renter moves in.

Minimum standards fall into 14 categories. Check these off the list below before you let a renter move into the property.

Bathroom
Electrical safety
Lighting
Kitchen
Laundry
Locks
Heating

Mould and damp
Structural soundness
Toilets
Ventilation
Vermin-proof bins
Window coverings
Windows



## Bathroom

A property's bathroom must have a sink, a shower or bath, and hot and cold water.

Showers must have a shower head with a 3-star water efficiency rating. If a rental provider can't install one – for example, because of the property's age – a shower head with a 1- or 2-star rating is acceptable.



## Electrical safety

Rental properties must have modern switchboards with circuit breakers and electrical safety switches. You must hire an electrician to check this.



## Lighting

Interior rooms, corridors and hallways must have access to working lights. The property must have natural light during the day. This can include light coming from other rooms. At night, there should be access to artificial light.



## Kitchen

The property must have a kitchen with:

- a cooking and food preparation area
- a sink in good working order connected to hot and cold water
- a stovetop in good working order that has two or more burners.

If there's an oven, it must be in good working order.



## Laundry

If there's a laundry, you must ensure it's connected to a reasonable supply of hot and cold water.



## Locks

External entry doors (other than screen doors) must have functional deadlocks or locks that people can unlock with a key from the outside. These must be able to open without a key from the inside.



### Heating

There must be a fixed heater in the main living area that's in good working order. For rental agreements starting from March 2023, this heater should be energy efficient. If an existing heater isn't energy efficient, the rental provider must upgrade it.

Under the standards, an energy-efficient fixed heater is either:

- a non-ducted air conditioner or heat pump with a 2-star or above energy rating
- a gas space heater with a 2-star or above energy rating
- a ducted heating or hydronic heating system with an outlet in the main living area
- a domestic solid fuel-burning appliance, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove.



### Mould and damp

All rooms must be free from mould and damp caused by or related to the building structure.



### Structural soundness

The property must be structurally sound and weatherproof.



### Toilets

The toilet must be in good working order and connected to a sewerage or septic system.

The toilet must be in a separate room, either by itself or in an appropriate room like a bathroom or a combined bathroom–laundry.



### Ventilation

All rooms must have adequate ventilation, including the bathroom, shower, toilet and laundry.



### Rubbish and recycling bins

You must supply the renter with rubbish and recycling bins. Bins must be vermin-proof and meet council collection standards.



### Window coverings

The property must have curtains or blinds in rooms used for living or sleeping. They must open and close, block light and maintain privacy.

Make them safer by installing a [curtain and blind safety kit](#). You can order a free kit from Consumer Affairs Victoria or buy one from a hardware store.



### Windows

All external windows that people can open must have latches. The latches must secure the windows against outside entry.

Windows that can open must also be able to be left in the open or closed position.

### If your property doesn't meet minimum standards

The minimum standards are mandatory.

Under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, it is a criminal offence to let a new renter move into a rental property that does not meet minimum standards. Individuals can face maximum penalties of over \$11,800, while companies face maximum fines of over \$59,000.

### If you fail to repair the property

As a rental provider, you must make urgent repairs immediately.

If you don't take immediate action, renters may arrange urgent repairs themselves if they cost less than \$2,500. You will then need to reimburse the renter.

Renters may also seek help from [VCAT](#), which may arrange for them to put your rent money into a special account while waiting for you to organise repairs. This account holds their rent instead of giving it to you as their rental provider. After a certain time:

- if you arrange the repairs, you can ask VCAT to give you the rent from that account
- if you haven't made the repairs and the property doesn't meet minimum standards, the renter can ask VCAT to repay to them some or all the rent from that account.

### If you are finding it hard to make repairs due to financial hardship

Minimum standards for rental properties are mandatory in Victoria.

If you are finding it hard to afford to make repairs because of financial hardship, you will be required to provide VCAT with evidence.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, you can speak to a financial counsellor via the following service:

National Debt Helpline

1800 007 007

[ndh.org.au](http://ndh.org.au)

Find further details about financial counselling services on the CAV website at [consumer.vic.gov.au/financial-counselling-provider](http://consumer.vic.gov.au/financial-counselling-provider)

### Further information and support

For more information about the rental minimum standards, visit [consumer.vic.gov.au/rentalstandards](http://consumer.vic.gov.au/rentalstandards)

### Contact us

If you need help understanding the rental minimum standards, please contact Consumer Affairs Victoria.



Submit an enquiry via [forms.consumer.vic.gov.au/gef](http://forms.consumer.vic.gov.au/gef)



1300 55 81 81

9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday  
(excluding public holidays)



Translating and Interpreting Service  
(TIS National)

131 450

Ask for Consumer Affairs Victoria