



# CARING FOR YOUR HOME WALLS: A Complete Guide

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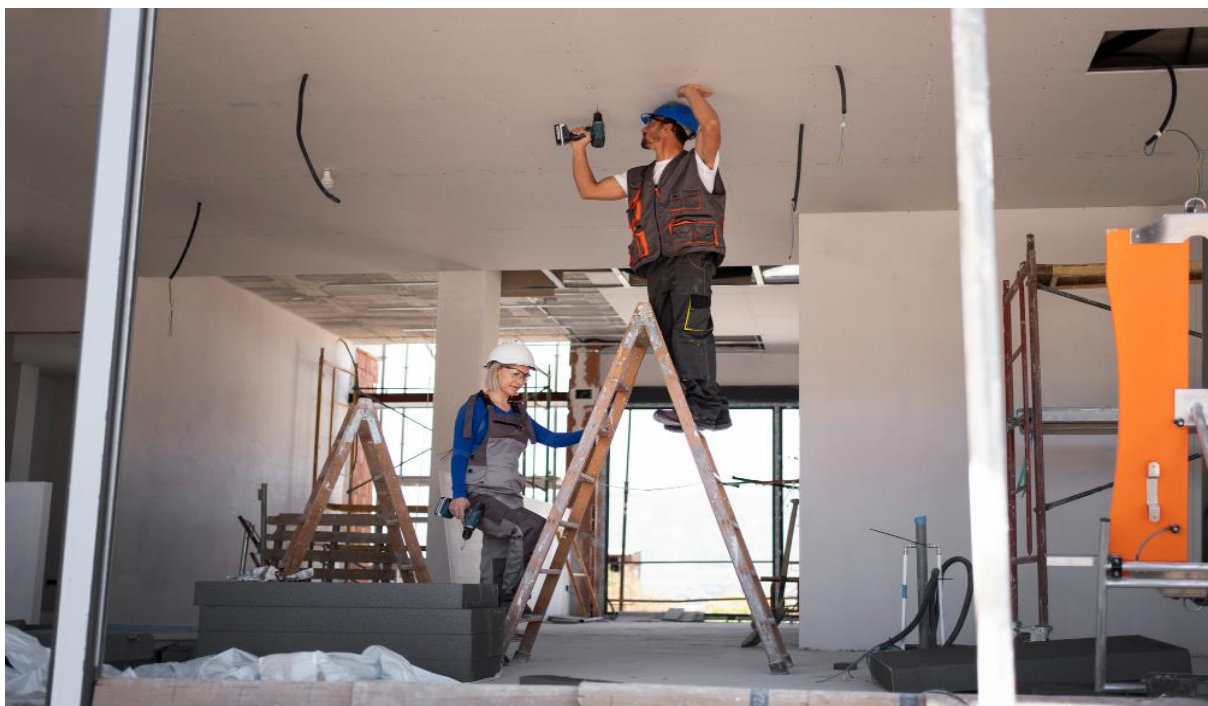
## Abstract

Walls are one of the most visible and important features in any home, shaping both its appearance and comfort. Over time, they face dust, stains, scuffs, and natural wear, making regular care essential. This guide explores practical ways to maintain painted walls, from everyday upkeep to repainting tips, while also addressing important health and safety issues such as lead paint in older properties. With insights drawn from government policies, tenancy laws, and expert advice, the article provides a complete perspective on protecting your walls. Whether you are a homeowner or a tenant in Adelaide, learning how to care for your walls not only preserves their beauty but also supports a healthier, safer living environment.

## Getting Started

Caring for your home walls begins with understanding why maintenance matters. Walls are constantly exposed to daily activity, which can leave behind marks, scratches, and dust. Small steps like gentle cleaning and timely touch-ups can make a significant difference in keeping them fresh and long lasting. It is also important to consider the type of paint finish, as different surfaces respond differently to cleaning methods. Beyond appearance, wall care has practical implications for health and tenancy responsibilities, especially when living in Adelaide where housing policies and rental agreements define clear expectations. By starting with simple routines and building awareness of your rights and obligations, you set the foundation for effective wall care that benefits both your home and wellbeing.

## Repairs and maintenance



## Key points

A regular maintenance schedule will help you to prevent or identify problems early.

Develop an annual schedule to check and maintain the inside and outside of your home.

Get expert advice and services where needed, especially for specific problems such as leaks, cracks and settlement, damp, salt, or termites.

If you have an older home, it may include hazardous materials, such as asbestos or lead paint. Do not try to remove hazardous materials yourself. Get expert advice. Sometimes the best course of action is to seal the material, rather than removing it.

## General maintenance

Repairs and maintenance extend the life of your home, improve its liveability and reduce health risks. With advice from a builder or designer, create a repair and maintenance schedule that prioritises urgent concerns and prevents larger problems from developing. Some of the examples listed below may require advice and repairs by a suitably qualified professional.

Outside your home:



- Check external painting and touch up as required.
- Repair or seal broken glass and windows with air leaks to reduce draughts and heat loss. Repair windows that are jammed or 'painted closed' and make them



operable to improve cross ventilation. A variety of sealing strips, tapes and seals are available from hardware outlets.

- Protect and restore old windows and joinery.
- Check subfloor areas for dampness. Divert groundwater and provide additional subfloor ventilation where existing ventilation is inadequate.
- Check and replace corroded sacrificial anodes in hot water tanks, and check the pressure release valve for operation and leaks.
- Install, repair or replace insect screens to encourage natural cooling and 'night purging' in hot weather.
- Replace insulation that has been moved or damaged in ceilings and fill insulation gaps. Older insulation can settle and loses its insulating properties. Check the depth and 'loft' and replace as necessary.
- Replace cracked roof tiles and repair roof ridging, if necessary.
- Clean gutters regularly and check for leaks. Ensure adequate fall to drainage outlet.
- Trim trees and shrubs away from the house.



Inside your home:

- Check fridge door seals and replace if necessary. If your fridge is not energy efficient, now might be the time to upgrade to one with a high energy star rating.
- Install smoke detectors in correct locations and check the batteries in them.
- Check for air leaks. Fit dampers to chimney flues (or insulate if unused), seal around windows and doors, and fill cracks and gaps to reduce draughts.

- A thermal imaging camera can help to detect water leaks, shifted insulation and other issues. A qualified professional can assist.
- Have your heating and cooling systems checked and maintained by a qualified professional.
- Paint and repair walls and ceilings with low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints to improve amenity and air quality.
- Consider replacing doors so you can 'zone' areas to control heat flow.
- Remove worn carpets, which can be a source of dust mites and allergens.

## **Specific problems**

### **Leaks**



Leaks can quickly lead to significant damage.

- Roof leaks are often best detected when it is raining, because you can trace the water from the wet spot back to the source. Replace loose roof fixings and seal holes with silicone or bitumen-backed tape and a heat gun (do it yourself, or get a builder).
- Cavity wall leaks are often caused by failed cavity capping or flashings and blocked weepholes along the base of the wall or over windows and door openings. Replace flashings (get a plumber and bricklayer), clear weepholes, and remove and replace bricks where necessary to get rid of debris and mortar droppings (do-it-yourself, or use a bricklayer).

- Floor leaks can commonly be traced to leaking pipes or to moisture under concrete slabs being forced up through cracks and fissures by hydrostatic pressure. They can be rectified by repairing or replacing drainage (use a plumber) or installing adequate, up-slope groundwater drainage or diversion (get professional advice).
- Shower recesses may be a source of leaking if waterproofing is inadequate or has been damaged. Check and repair if necessary (get a waterproofing expert or qualified tradesperson).
- Check water supply and drainage pipes for signs of rust and/or leakage. Repair or replace as necessary and, while you are there, insulate exposed hot water pipes (get a plumber).

### **Cracks and settlement**



Cracks and settlement can be cosmetic or an indication of more serious structural problems. Common causes are:

- 'heave' (soil expanding and pushing the ground upwards) of reactive (clayey) soils
- slip by unstable or disturbed soils
- settlement (compression and sinking of the ground) under poorly prepared footings
- variable soil moisture content causing uneven foundation swelling or heave due to drying by tree roots



- poor drainage.

Seek professional advice from an engineer before repairing. Sometimes repairs can act as wedges and increase structural damage when foundations swell in the next wet or dry season.

Rectification can involve underpinning of footings to provide better support or piling to ensure that each section of the building is supported by material with similar bearing value (that is, it all moves by the same amount). Sometimes, underfloor drainage is required to ensure that internal walls bear on material with similar moisture content to the sun and wind-exposed external walls, to create even heave. Control joints that accommodate movement while remaining sealed may be required, if even heave is not achievable.



## **Damp**

Damp in a home can cause poor indoor air quality as well as mould, mildew and rot. This can increase the risk of health problems and shorten the lifespan of your building. Damp can be caused by:

- condensation, commonly due to inappropriate insulation, poor ventilation of bathroom and kitchen areas or use of inappropriate unflued heaters. Address this by installing insulation and building membranes correctly, improving ventilation levels and installing externally vented exhaust fans and appropriate heating.

- underfloor and wall cavity moisture, caused by poor subfloor ventilation or ground clearance, excess moisture (leaking flashings, pipes or plumbing) or condensation build-up. Check subfloor and cavity wall vents to make sure they are not obstructed by previous additions, garden beds, mulch build-up, or nests of insects or other pests. Install additional vents as required. Repair leaking pipes and divert stormwater.
- rising damp occurs in the absence or breakdown of damp-proof courses in masonry. If left untreated it will rot timbers that are in contact with the masonry and cause structural failures. Leaking shower recesses are a common problem in homes built from the mid-1970s, commonly because of movement in timber structures and failure of waterproofing membranes. Rising damp can be permanently removed by a specialist company, and do-it-yourself kits are also available, preferably for use at the outset of renovations.

### **Salt**

Salt in brickwork is caused by high soil salinity levels and rising water tables. It usually occurs below the damp-proof course and can completely destroy brickwork, causing collapse if left untreated. In extreme cases, it can also rust poorly placed or protected reinforcing steel in footings and slabs. Seek professional advice on its cause and solutions.

### **Termites**



Termite risk factors to look for include:

- inadequate subfloor clearances and slab-on-ground



- insufficient subfloor ventilation and light
- abutment with susceptible construction or soil (for example, slabs, verandas, patios, steps, gardens)
- inadequate site drainage, leaking water services
- presence of subfloor attractants (for example, tree roots, buried timber, damp areas)
- cracks and fissures in slabs
- penetration of service connections.

To prevent termites, remove any risk factors in your home. Check for and fit adequate termite protection (if you're repairing or renovating, do it while the existing structure is exposed) with:

- continuous termite shield to cavities
- ant-capping to piers and bearers
- shields to service penetrations.



To deal with existing termite damage, remove and repair or replace any termite-damaged timber and ensure that the pests are no longer active or able to access the building. Identify the access point for any previous damage and repair or install barriers.

Get a professional assessment and report by a suitably qualified pest control contractor, and implement all the preventive steps recommended in your termite report including:

- checking all ant caps and barriers
- restoring at least 400mm clearance under subfloor timber structures and making sure there is good ventilation and drainage
- clearing garden beds and mulch build-up from walls and exposing at least 100mm of slab edges where possible.

Retrofitting using physical barriers is simplest for homes with raised timber floors and isolated piers, and more complex for perimeter masonry foundations or slab-on-ground. Retrofit barriers to protect wall cavities, such as mesh or graded stone, and termite-proof service penetrations using physical barriers.

Environmentally benign chemical barriers are the least preferred, but may be necessary in some situations. Use chemicals with minimum toxicity. Chemicals that require regular reapplication are usually the safest option. Ensure that they are reapplied according to the recommended schedule. Retrofit a reticulated system in cavities for chemical protection.

Schedule an annual termite inspection by a reputable, licensed inspector.

### **Dealing with hazardous materials**

Be cautious before disturbing existing materials:

- Many pre-1982 buildings have some asbestos including linings of eaves, roofing, wall linings in wet areas and cladding.
- Most pre-1970 buildings have lead paint.
- Other harmful substances can include PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) from old fluorescent light fittings, loose glass fibres or old asbestos pipe and duct insulation.

Removal is not necessarily the best option – sometimes it is better to seal and enclose.

### **Top tips for painting interior walls**



If you don't get it just right, it's a sure bet those around you will notice all those tiny imperfections (you know, the ones you're trying to avoid). Here are five top tips to give you a professional-looking painting project you'll be proud of.



1. Get creative: Before we get into the nitty-gritty of painting those interior walls, take note – a blank canvas is the perfect time to get creative in your space. Transform your space with colour and texture with Dulux Design Concrete Effect in either Pale Elements or Onyx Edge. Enjoy the refined modern industrial textural effect of polished concrete by rolling on paint and trowelling off with steel trowel to achieve the look.



Work in small sections to keep paint wet when trowelling, and apply three coats, which will enhance the depth and appearance of the finish.



2. Always prime your walls: All new walls should be sealed with a primer. If old paint has gone “chalky”, using a sealer will bind the existing coat and maximise paint coverage and sheen.



3. Use the W technique: The “W” pattern is used to spread the paint (without lifting your roller). Apply your “W” in the unpainted area, before reworking your freshly-coated wall. Repeat until all sections are complete.



4. Work with your floor colour: One of the most common errors people make in choosing a paint colour, is not taking into account the way wall colours will look against the colour of the floor. Also, take colour cues from accents in furniture fabric before selecting a hue for the space.

5. Ceilings come first: It’s probably common knowledge that you should paint your ceiling first, however, experts say many people forget to complete all coats when in a rush. It’s best to let the ceiling undercoat dry first, before taking on all of the other elements such as windows.



## How to Clean Painted Walls?

Walls are one of the most overlooked areas in the house cleaning session. They are often coated with dust, dirt particles, smudges, pollen, smoke, grease splatters, insect droppings and even mould spores in a humid and dark environment.

Spots near light switches, windows, doors, furniture and heavy appliances take the most abuse and collect soil and grime, downgrading the indoor air quality. Dust-laden and stained painted walls can linger germs and cause health hazards like asthma, watery eyes and respiratory disorders.



If you want to revive the lost shine of your painted walls, give them an attention-to-detail cleaning. Remember that using harsh products or abrasive tools can wear out the paint, and you may also lose your hard-earned bond money if you move out of your rental property in Adelaide.

So, here is a comprehensive guide to help you clean all painted walls like a pro. Follow the right hacks and maintain the pristine look of your living space.

### 1. Know the Type of Paint on Walls

This is one of the crucial steps when cleaning your painted walls. According to end of lease cleaning Adelaide professionals, every wall finish requires specialised treatment and cleaning method to avoid damage. So, consider the following types:

- **Latex Paint Finish:** Clean it with water and a mild cleaning agent. Do not use harsh products or scrubbing tools.



- **Flat, Satin and Eggshell Finish:** It is less durable and often collects dust and debris. Avoid scrubbing too hard. Also, don't wash walls with harmful or ammonia-based cleaners. Instead, use mild detergent and water.
- **Glossy and Semigloss Finishes:** These are often used in kitchens and are more durable. You can use mildly abrasive cleaners for stain removal. However, they are also prone to scratches if not treated properly.

## **2. Prep the Area and Dust the Walls**

So, begin the process by preparing the area for deep cleaning. Remove artwork, lamps, paintings and other hanging items from your walls. Also, move heavy furniture to access nooks and crannies.

Eliminating dust particles, pet hair, cobwebs, and other allergens from ceilings can be done using a microfiber cloth or a telescopic duster. This is one of the best dusting techniques for allergy sufferers.

Tip: Place an old towel on the floor against the baseboard to trap dripping water from the walls during the cleaning process.

## **3. Use Warm, Soapy Water to Clean Eggshell or Flat Painted Walls**

There is no rocket science behind cleaning delicate paint finishes like eggshell or satin. Since they are prone to scratches and damage, use only mild cleaners and soft sponges to remove stains.

Mix dishwashing soap in warm water, dampen a sponge and wash your windows. Pay special attention to stained spots and streaks by gently scrubbing them with a sponge. Ensure you wipe down the dripping water to prevent nasty streaks behind.

Tip: Squeeze out the excess solution from the sponge before cleaning your eggshell walls.

## **4. Revamp Oil-Based Painted Walls with Baking Soda**

The method is straightforward and eco-friendly. Use the power of baking soda, which has mild scouring properties, to remove smudges and grease stains from your oil-based painted walls.

To prepare the solution, add baking soda, dish soap, and warm water. Dip a sponge or cloth in the solution and gently scrub the walls, covering the nooks and crannies. In the final step, wipe down the walls with a clean cloth to remove baking soda residue and achieve a shiny look.



Tip: Expert End of lease cleaners Adelaide recommends avoiding white vinegar or other acidic cleaning agents on walls as it can wear out the paint finish or discolour your walls. You can hire them and pass your end-of-tenancy inspection with ease.

### **5. White Vinegar to Save Gloss Finish of Walls**

Semigloss or gloss-painted walls are easy to clean. It can withstand acidic or mildly strong cleaners. You can remove mould, mildew, grease stains and oil splatters using white vinegar and warm water. All you need to do:

- Mix equal parts of vinegar and warm water into a spray bottle.
- Add a teaspoon of dishwashing liquid.
- Spray on the affected area and gently scrub with a wet sponge
- Wipe with a cloth and let it dry.

Tip: Use a step stool to reach the top surfaces, like ceilings and crevices. You can also wash windows and blinds using the same solution.

### **6. Remove Stains and Smudges From Latex Finish**

You can easily remove heavy soil, grease and smudges from your latex-painted walls using warm water and baking soda. Gently scrub it on the affected area. Use the circular motion and wipe down with a damp cloth.

Wipe down using rubbing alcohol to tackle heavy soil and lingering germs. Do not forget to disinfect the high-touch areas like doorknobs and light switches.

### **7. Tackle Mould Stains with 3 % Hydrogen Peroxide**

Hydrogen peroxide can remove mould spores from almost all surfaces, including painted walls. First, test it on a hidden area to see how it reacts. Then, mix 3 per cent peroxide and spray it on the walls.

Use a soft-bristled brush or a magic eraser to gently scrub the surface. To prevent potential side effects, ensure proper ventilation by keeping doors and windows open. Rinse, wipe, and air dry the surface for the best outcomes.

### **8. Touch Up Your Painted Walls**



If nothing works, you can conceal the stained area with touch-up paint. You can hire a professional handyman to apply the fresh paint coat and revive your walls. You can also hire professionals for a budget end of lease cleaning Adelaide for the hassle-free retrieval of your bond money.

Use an eco-friendly paint that doesn't contain volatile organic compounds. These can pollute the indoor air and cause various health problems.

### **Wrapping up**

Cleaning painted walls is a simple process. Ensure you understand the paint type and tackle stains, smudges and grease accordingly. Read the above tips and retrieve your painted walls as they are new.

### **Maintenance and repairs**





Housing SA will normally carry out and pay for repairs resulting from fair wear and tear. It is important that tenants notify Housing SA as soon as any repair is needed.

Urgent repairs, such as a gas leak or burst water pipes, may be reported at any time by telephoning 131 288.

Non-urgent repairs may be reported by telephoning 131 288 between 7am and 7pm or by using the online report form.

The tenant must pay the cost of any repairs which, in Housing SA's opinion, are not the result of fair wear and tear. The tenant is also responsible for keeping the dwelling in good rentable condition. This means that the tenant must pay the cost of repairs to damaged windows, screens, fences and gates, of clearing blocked drains and of replacing plugs, light globes or lost keys. Where damage is caused by the tenant's family or visitors Housing SA will also require the tenant to pay.

Tenants may wallpaper interior walls, lay floor coverings and hang pictures. However, the tenant must repair any damage caused by doing these things. Trust officers are available to advise tenants on appropriate methods and materials. The tenant must have Housing SA's approval before making any additions or alterations to the premises.

### **Maintenance policy**

This policy sets out:

- when and what type of maintenance the SA Housing Trust will carry out at South Australian Housing Trust properties

- the tenant's responsibilities when making alterations or modifications
- who's responsible for paying for costs associated with maintenance.

This policy also applies to housing managed by the SA Housing Trust in Aboriginal communities, except where otherwise specified.



The SA Housing Trust may provide maintenance on occupied Homeland properties in remote areas of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands at the owner's request if both the below conditions are met:

- it's within 30 kilometres of an Aboriginal community
- there's a risk to an occupant's health or safety.

The SA Housing Trust modifies properties to meet the needs of people with disabilities in line with the Housing modifications for people with a disability policy.

Tenants may appeal maintenance decisions and charges in line with the Appeals policy.

The SA Housing Trust complies with the Housing Safety Authority Minimum housing standards(external site)(external site) in line with the Housing Improvement Act 2016(external site)(external site) and regulations.

Properties with non-essential maintenance works may be tenanted provided they meet the minimum housing standards and are safe, clean and compliant. Any outstanding works are completed in line with this policy.

## **Maintenance standards**

Work is carried out in a trades-like manner, for example work is completed to the same standard as a tradesperson, or by a registered or licensed person, for example electrician, where required by law.

All maintenance work complies with:

- relevant legislation and regulations
- all work, health and safety requirements
- all relevant SA Housing Trust policies and procedures.

Responsive maintenance is unplanned, reactive work, to restore an item or area to an appropriate standard in line with this policy, for example dripping taps, blocked sewers or drains.

Programmed maintenance is targeted maintenance that's part of a planned program, for example external painting, kitchen or wet area upgrades.

In Aboriginal communities, cyclical maintenance is scheduled during the year and may include plumbing, hot water service and electrical safety checks. Responsive maintenance requests may be addressed during programmed maintenance, depending on timeframes.

## **Fair wear and tear**





Fair wear and tear is deterioration or damage associated with age and reasonable use, for example worn vinyl, dents and scratches to timber flooring, deteriorating fly screens.

Non-fair wear and tear is any damage caused by mistreatment or neglect, regardless of intention, for example broken windows, holes in walls and doors.

### **SA Housing Trust's responsibilities**

The SA Housing Trust's responsible for:

- carrying out maintenance when required to bring the property up to a suitable standard as set out in the Maintenance accommodation standards
- determining if damage is caused by mistreatment and neglect
- paying for maintenance costs associated with fair wear and tear
- investigating and managing insurance claims
- managing maintenance issues related to domestic abuse in line with the Domestic abuse policy

### **Tenant's responsibilities**

Tenants are responsible for:

- the basic maintenance of the property, for example replacing light globes, treating minor mould or reporting major mould in the property
- keeping the property and surrounding area clean and in good condition, for example cleaning, removing rubbish
- maintaining garden areas that are their responsibility, for example mowing lawns, controlling weeds
- keeping plumbing fixtures, pipes, water tanks and drainage systems clean and sanitary, for example not flushing sanitary items down the toilet
- telling the SA Housing Trust about any damage, blockage, breakage or deterioration in or around the property as soon as possible
- providing access to the property so maintenance can be carried out, in line with the Maintenance non-access procedures
- paying a non-access call-out fee if they report emergency maintenance but are not at home when the contractor arrives
- paying the SA Housing Trust for costs incurred to fix non-fair wear and tear, unless it's the result of illegal activity caused by someone who isn't the tenant, another occupant or a visitor, and a Police Incident Report number for the incident is provided.

Tenants living in Aboriginal communities aren't charged non-access call-out fees.

### **Prioritising maintenance**



Maintenance is prioritised depending on how urgent it is.

### **Priority 0**

Maintenance requested by the SA Housing Trust to make a site safe in an emergency event, in line with emergency service attendance at a site, for example a gas explosion, vehicle impact, major fire.

Work starts within 45 minutes of it being reported and is completed within 5 hours. This response time is not available in all locations.

### **Priority 1**

Maintenance that may affect someone's health and safety or makes a site unsafe, for example fully blocked or broken sewerage systems, broken door locks or uncontrolled burst hot or cold water services.

Work starts within 4 hours of it being reported and is completed within 5 business days.

### **Priority 2**

Maintenance that causes a serious inconvenience to the tenant, for example a partially blocked toilet, or has the potential to be dangerous, for example absence of power, gas or water to the site.

Work starts within 24 hours of it being reported and is completed within 7 business days.

### **Priority 3**

Maintenance work that's not urgent, for example refit a cupboard door or ease a door.

Work starts within 10 business days of it being reported and at a time agreed to with the tenant. It's completed within 20 business days.

### **Priority 4**

Repairs with a specific start or completion date as determined by the SA Housing Trust, for example programmed maintenance, vacant properties or maintenance that needs a specific start time.

Prioritising maintenance in Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands

Priority is determined by the Maintenance Field Officer.

Priority 1 work generally starts either:

- the same day if it's reported to the contractor before 1pm
- the next business day if it's reported after 1pm.

Priority 2 work starts within 2 business days of it being reported.

Priority 3 work starts within 5 business days of it being reported.

Priority 4 and 5 relates to work that causes inconvenience, for example a dripping tap, or could affect the value of the property long-term.

Priority 4 work starts within 7 business days of it being reported.

Priority 5 work starts within 30 business days of it being raised by the Maintenance Field Officer.

Priority P is assigned to repairs carried out annually or bi-annually with a specific start or completion date as determined by the SA Housing Trust, for example electrical safety or water checks.

### **Home improvements and alterations**



Tenants must apply to the SA Housing Trust for approval to carry out their own home improvements or alterations.

The SA Housing Trust assesses the tenant's request, taking into account:

- the property's Future Planning Intent
- if the alteration's suitable for the property
- looking at the property's certificate of title
- any encumbrances or easements.

Tenants are responsible for:

- getting the SA Housing Trust's written approval to carry out the work before starting
- getting all other relevant approvals, for example from the local council
- paying for all costs associated with the work, for example paying contractors
- making sure work is carried out by appropriately qualified, licensed and insured professionals, for example electrician for electrical work
- providing the SA Housing Trust with all documents relating to the approval and installation, for example certificate of compliance, council approval
- maintaining and repairing improvements or alterations
- removing the improvement or alteration, and repairing any damage this causes when they leave the property, except if the SA Housing Trust agrees otherwise.



## Repairs and maintenance in private rental properties



Landlords and tenants share the responsibility for repairs and maintenance in rental properties. Tenants need to tell the landlord when something needs to be fixed and the landlord must carry out repairs within a reasonable time.

Landlords are usually responsible for:

- larger repairs such as the electrical wiring or gas heaters
- replacing items such as tap filters
- annual gardening work such as pruning fruit trees.

Landlords are responsible for repairs, even if a tenant knew about a problem when they moved in. Items noted in the tenancy agreement as excluded, or serious structural issues listed in a housing improvement notice, aren't required to be fixed by the landlord.

Tenants usually:

- replace items such as light globes
- clean items such as air conditioner filters
- carry out general gardening such as mowing and weeding.

### Advising the landlord



Urgent repairs, such as gas leak , need to be reported to the landlord as soon as possible.

For other repairs, ask the landlord to fix the problem in writing using the request for repairs form.

### **Landlord's notice to enter**

A landlord can enter the property to carry out the repair at the tenant's request, or after giving at least 48 hours' notice – written notice is best.

No notice is required to enter for urgent repairs.

A landlord could be breaking the conditions of an agreement if they are aware of a problem and don't repair it within a reasonable time.

### **Landlord refuses to repair**

If a landlord refuses to fix something, the tenant can:

- apply to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) for:
  - the repairs to be carried out
  - compensation related to losses resulting from the non-repair
  - the tenancy to end
- organise to have urgent problems fixed and give the landlord an invoice from an authorised repairer. A licensed professional must:
  - carry out the repairs

- provide a report stating the cause of the problem and the work carried out.

### **Damage caused by the tenant**



Tenants must repair damage they caused at the property. This includes damage caused:

- intentionally or through neglect
- by visitors or other people living at the property.

A tenant should report this damage to the landlord and repair it within a reasonable time.

If the landlord offers to repair the damage and the tenant agrees, the landlord can charge the tenant SACAT's set rate of \$32.21 an hour for time spent to repair, plus the cost of any materials purchased.

If this damage isn't repaired, a landlord can issue a notice to the tenant asking them to fix the problem or the lease agreement will end.

### **Domestic appliances**

Landlords maintain domestic appliances, such as an oven, air conditioner or gas heater.

At the start of an agreement a landlord must list the appliances on the lease and provide the tenant with manufacturers' manuals or instructions on how to use them. If this isn't done, a tenant can't be held responsible for repairing damage caused while using the appliance.

Landlords must make sure any newly installed or replaced appliances meet minimum energy and water efficiency standards.

### **Property alterations**

Tenants can ask permission to make minor alterations or safety modifications, as long as they don't affect the structure of the premises.

Changes can't be unreasonably refused for:

- minor alterations or additions
- reasonable changes necessary for disability assistance
- reasonable changes necessary for mobility or access needs relating to age

Requests to the landlord should detail:

- the nature of the alterations and modifications
- how the property can be restored.

Consent must be given in writing.

Landlords must have a good reason to refuse permission for a tenant to connect a service, such as digital TV and internet access.

Anything added must be removed at the end of the tenancy, unless the landlord agrees for it to remain. Tenants are responsible for the repairs of any damage caused by the removal.

### **Locks and keys**





Landlords need to make sure the property is secure and fix things, such as a lock that sticks.

Tenants and landlords need to agree to a lock being changed or removed. Neither can refuse the change without good reason. Exceptions to this apply for the protected person in domestic abuse situations.

Tenants who lose keys will need to pay for the cost of gaining access or having a new key cut.

The tenant can collect a spare key from the landlord as long as it's reasonable to do so. A fee can't be charged for the temporary use of a key.

The landlord can charge reasonable expenses if they are prepared to attend the property to provide the access. Details of any potential fee should be included as a condition in the agreement.

## **Pests and vermin**

### **Infestation at the start of a tenancy**

Landlords are usually responsible for getting rid of the following pests:

- ants
- bees and wasps - and during the tenancy if in a wall cavity
- cockroaches, fleas and spiders

- mice and rats
- snakes - and during the tenancy only if the landlord breaches the agreement, for example by leaving piles of rubbish in the garden.

### **Pest control during the tenancy**

Tenants are usually responsible for getting rid of the pest and landlords need to seal off any entry points.

Pests that are the responsibility of the landlord:

- white ants
- possums - remove and seal entry points
- birds - remove and seal entry points.

### **Smoke alarms**



All rental properties must have a working smoke alarm installed. More than one smoke alarm could be needed to provide enough warning.

Check you have the right type of smoke alarm

Landlords should check that smoke alarms are working during routine inspections.

### **Conclusion**

Caring for the walls in your home is about more than appearance. It is a practice that preserves comfort, supports health, and ensures durability. By combining simple upkeep routines with safe approaches to repainting and stain removal, you can protect both the surface and the finish of your walls. Awareness of potential risks, such as lead paint in older homes, adds another layer of responsibility to everyday care. At the same time, understanding tenancy laws and housing policies in South Australia ensures that maintenance is managed fairly between landlords and tenants. When these elements come together, wall care becomes a balanced approach to living well, safeguarding property, and creating a welcoming space that lasts for years.

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### **Top tips for painting interior walls**

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### **How to Clean Painted Walls?**

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