

Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative Policy Document

Policy Number:	033
Policy Name:	Alterations and Disability Modifications
Version Number:	001
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1. Introduction

Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd (WRHC) recognises that tenants will have changing needs in regards to their housing. These changes may be due to age and/or disability.

WRHC is committed to ensuring that tenants are able to remain in their homes and will assist in this process where financially and physically possible.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the changing needs of tenants are responded to fairly, flexibly and within the capacity of the Co-operative.

This policy is applicable to requests for modifications and alterations to buildings required due to illness, injury, age or disability.

3. Scope:

This policy applies to all properties managed by WRHC.

4. Relevant Co-op Objectives

Sustaining Tenancies

5. Policy

Any request for alterations and modifications to a property must be in writing and be accompanied by the appropriate medical and professional certification for a request to be considered.

The tenant will be responsible for WRCH receiving the correct documents to enable the request to be considered.

All documentation must be from appropriately qualified professionals.

All documentation/assessments and supporting information will be at the tenant's expense.

Third party funding of minor and major modifications will be subject to the same documentation requirements and processes as those to be funded by WRCH.

Major modification: WRCH will, in the first instance, preference the utilisation of existing modified properties through property transfers before approving new major modifications or alterations to a property.

WRHC adopts the following two categories of modification descriptors:

Minor Modification

Minor modifications are items that do not require structural changes to a property and the value of the modification is less than \$2000.00

Examples include:

- plumbing handles and equipment;
- door handles and related furniture; and
- hand rails.

Major Modifications

Major modifications are defined as structural changes to a property and the cost exceeds \$2000.00

Examples include:

- Doorway widening;
- Modification to utility areas, kitchen, bathroom and laundry design;
- Ramps;
- Fixed hoists; and
- Flooring surfaces or materials.

Funding for minor and major modifications

WRCH is limited in the amount of funds it has available to accommodate modifications to properties. Tenants will be asked to confirm that they have researched and applied for alternative funding providers (third party) when a request is received. Funding may be sourced, where applicable, from Federal, State and Local Government aged care and disability programs. WRHC can help by identifying current programs.

Where the modification is approved but cost prohibitive to WRCH, the tenant may be asked to contribute in part or whole to the works in order for the works to proceed.

Property Transfer

Where an alternative tenanted property within the management of WRCH is deemed suitable to the needs of the tenant requiring modifications, WRHC will attempt to negotiate a mutually-agreed property transfer. Any property transfer must be with the consent of both parties.

WRHC may assist with removal expenses in cases of demonstrated need.

It is preferred that neither tenant has rent arrears before a property transfer can occur. In this circumstance, however, this will not prevent a transfer from occurring based on the need of either tenant.

Supporting Documentation (Minimum requirements):

Minor Modification:

- Doctor letter or statement;
- Occupational Therapist (OT) Report: outlining the need; and
- Detailed specifications of any item to be installed.

Major Modifications:

- Doctor's Letter or statement;
- OT report outlining the need, including detailed specifications of any construction requirement and/or item to be installed;
- **Detailed specifications of any item to be installed;**
- Detailed plans and drawings of any structural requirements and equipment specifications (if any); and
- All relevant information as to the contractors/tradesperson/s who are to complete the works. Where WHRC is contracting the works the applicant does not need to provide these details.

All modification requests will be considered on the basis of need, financial viability and future use of the property.

6. Responsibilities

The Housing Administrator will:

- ensure applicants are provided with the information to complete a modification request;
- ensure applicants are referred to relevant services where possible; and
- co-ordinate the modification with the relevant contractors.

The Cyclical Committee and Finance and Administration Committee will:

- assess all completed applications for modification; and
- make recommendations to the Board of Directors as required.

7. Definitions

Minor Modifications	Items that do not require structural changes to a property and the cost is less than \$2000
Major Modifications	Items that are defined as structural changes and the cost exceeds \$2000

8. Related Documents

Rules of the Williamstown Rental Housing Co-op Ltd
General Lease

Policy Manual of WRHC
Residential Tenancies Act 1997
Disability Discrimination Act 1992