

HOME MODIFICATIONS

SOUTHERN CROSS HOUSING FACT SHEET



Alterations can be made so that tenants are able to live independently and safely in their own homes. Unfortunately, SCH cannot modify properties that we lease from private owners or agents. However, if the modifications required are only minor we will advocate to the agent or owner so that you can carry out these modifications.

WHAT IS A MINOR MODIFICATION?

Some minor modifications to Southern Cross Housing (SCH) owned properties are permitted without obtaining written approval.

Minor modifications can include:

- Installing a handheld shower set, and changing to lever style taps.
- Installing curtain rods, removable blinds, and curtains.
- Installing up to four picture hooks per room.
- Installing a child proof gate latch, window safety device, or child safety gate.
- Installing cleats or cord guides to secure blind or curtain cords.

WHAT IS A MAJOR MODIFICATION?

Major modifications involve structural changes. For example:

- Widening of doorways.
- Providing ramp access, and;
- Modifying the kitchen, bathroom, or laundry.

All requests for major modifications must be submitted in writing and include copies of any plans or drawings by filling in the Modifications and Additions Agreement form. The form must also include the license and insurance details of all the tradespeople undertaking the work. If you need assistance filling in the form, please ask your Housing Officer by calling 1300 757 885.

It is important that the alterations that you are proposing,

- Are consistent with the character, classification, and future use of the property.
- Will not result in ongoing additional maintenance costs for SCH.
- Will not unreasonably impact on neighbours.
- Are carried out by a licensed tradesperson.
- Are compliant with relevant construction and social housing asset standards.
- At the completion of work, you provide copies of all compliance certificates issued to SCH.

NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME ON YOUR REQUEST

Once you have submitted your request for a modification, you will be notified in writing of the outcome of your request. The outcome will include reasons for the rejection if your request was denied or any conditions that will need to be followed if the modification was approved, which includes information on your rights and avenues for appeals.



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APPEALING A DECISION

The following outlines the process for appealing a decision by SCH:

- 1. Speak to your Housing Officer.** A tenant or applicant should firstly speak to the person who made the decision.
- 2. Lodge an appeal.** If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the tenant or applicant will need to complete an Appeals Form which can be found on the SCH website at www.scch.org.au/compliments-complaints-appeals
- 3. Review.** A senior SCH staff member will review the appeal.
- 4. Determination.** The staff member will either uphold or reject the original decision. A review will be finalised within 21 days of the appeal.
- 5. HAC Appeal.** If the tenant or applicant does not agree with the determination of the appeal, they can appeal to the Housing Appeals Committee. The form can be found online at www.hac.nsw.gov.au. Please note an internal review by SCH must be completed before an appeal can be made to the HAC.

UNAPPROVED ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

If an unapproved alteration or addition is identified in your property, SCH will inspect the alterations or additions and assess their compliance with the National Code of Construction, Land and Housing Corporation Asset Standards/ Framework. SCH may decide to:

- Approve the modification.
- Approve the modification with conditions, potentially including that the property is returned to its original state at the end of the tenancy or;
- Decline the modification and request that the property is returned to its original state within a defined period.

Where the tenant has been requested to remove the alteration or addition, SCH will reinspect the property to ensure that this has been done. If the alteration or addition isn't removed, SCH will write to the tenant advising that SCH will apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a Specific Performance Order if it is not rectified within 30 days.

END OF TENANCY

Tenants may be required to remove the alteration or addition when the tenancy is terminated and pay any costs to return the property to its original state.

For more information, please refer to the SCH Alterations and Additions Policy which is available on the SCH website.

