

When a tenant dies

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities understands it can be a difficult time after the death of a family member. Everyone goes through grief in their own way and time.

The following information guides how the Department will support a household during this difficult time.

What you need to tell the Department

Please notify your local Housing office as soon as possible about the death of a household family member. It is also important to let the Department know if there are any remaining people in the premises. This will help the Department support your household during this difficult time.

The Department does not require written advice of a death. This means you do not need a death certificate to notify the Department.

If you are identified as the Executor or Administrator, the Department will need supporting documents such as a will or court issued document. Any authorised family representative or Next of Kin may need to confirm their identity to the Department. This is to respect the personal information or belongings of the tenant.

When there are remaining people in the premises

A loss of a family member can be unexpected. This may sometimes leave family members in the premises without a tenancy agreement with the Department.

The Department will offer a new tenancy agreement with the remaining household members. The remaining household must meet the eligibility criteria for public housing for this to happen. Occupants who are not recognised occupiers may also be offered a new tenancy agreement, if they are eligible for public housing and are not a temporary visitor.

If the remaining household is not eligible for public housing, the Department will not make them homeless and will assist them to access housing, where available. This may include access to support services or affordable housing options.

The tenancy will continue if there is a tenant remaining who signed the tenancy agreement. This includes any recognised occupiers in the premises with them. A new rental rebate will need to be submitted to confirm the rent payable.

In some circumstances, the Department may transfer the household to a more appropriate sized premises. The Department will consider the household situation and will not transfer a household within six (6) months after the death of a tenant.

What to expect from the Department

The Department acknowledges there can be a lot of paperwork and arrangements that need to happen after the loss of a family member. You can expect the Department to be considerate and compassionate while you are making arrangements. The following information is what you can also expect from the Department.

Rent free period

To help give households time, the Department will allow up to six (6) weeks for the public housing premises to be returned. This includes removal of personal belongings and items. No rent will be charged during this period. You can contact your local Housing office, if more time is needed to return the premises.

Payments to the Department

When the Department is notified of a tenant's death, their rent deductions set up by the Department will be stopped. Any rent deductions set up external to the Department will need to be stopped by an authorised representative with the relevant institute.

Final inspection

The Department will complete a final inspection and outgoing condition report within three (3) days, of the premises being returned. If you are unsure about how the premises should be returned, you can request a Housing Officer to complete a pre-vacate inspection with you.

Return of security deposit (bond) and credits

The Department will return any security deposit or credits to the tenant's estate, where applicable. Any unpaid rent or debt from the previous tenant may be claimed from the tenant's estate. The Department will notify you in writing of any security deposit it is proposing to retain.

Support services

Below are some support services you may wish to contact for support or advice. These services are available to anyone. You can also speak to your local Housing office if you wish to be referred.

	(08) 8920 4100 (Darwin)
Somerville – Grief and Bereavement	(08) 8935 1500 (Palmerston) (08) 8972 5100 (Katherine)
Somerville – Financial Counselling	1800 007 007
Anglicare NT	(08) 8985 0000
Lifeline	13 11 14
Your local Centrelink office	13 62 40
NT Office of the Public Trustee	1800 517 223 (Free call)
Council on the Ageing (COTA) NT	(08) 8941 1004

Local Housing offices

For more information please contact your local Housing office or visit nt.gov.au.

Alice Springs	(08) 8951 5344	Nhulunbuy	(08) 8987 0533
Arafura Region	(08) 8995 5122	Palmerston	(08) 8999 4767
Greater Darwin	(08) 8999 8814	Tennant Creek	(08) 8962 4497
Katherine	(08) 8973 8513		