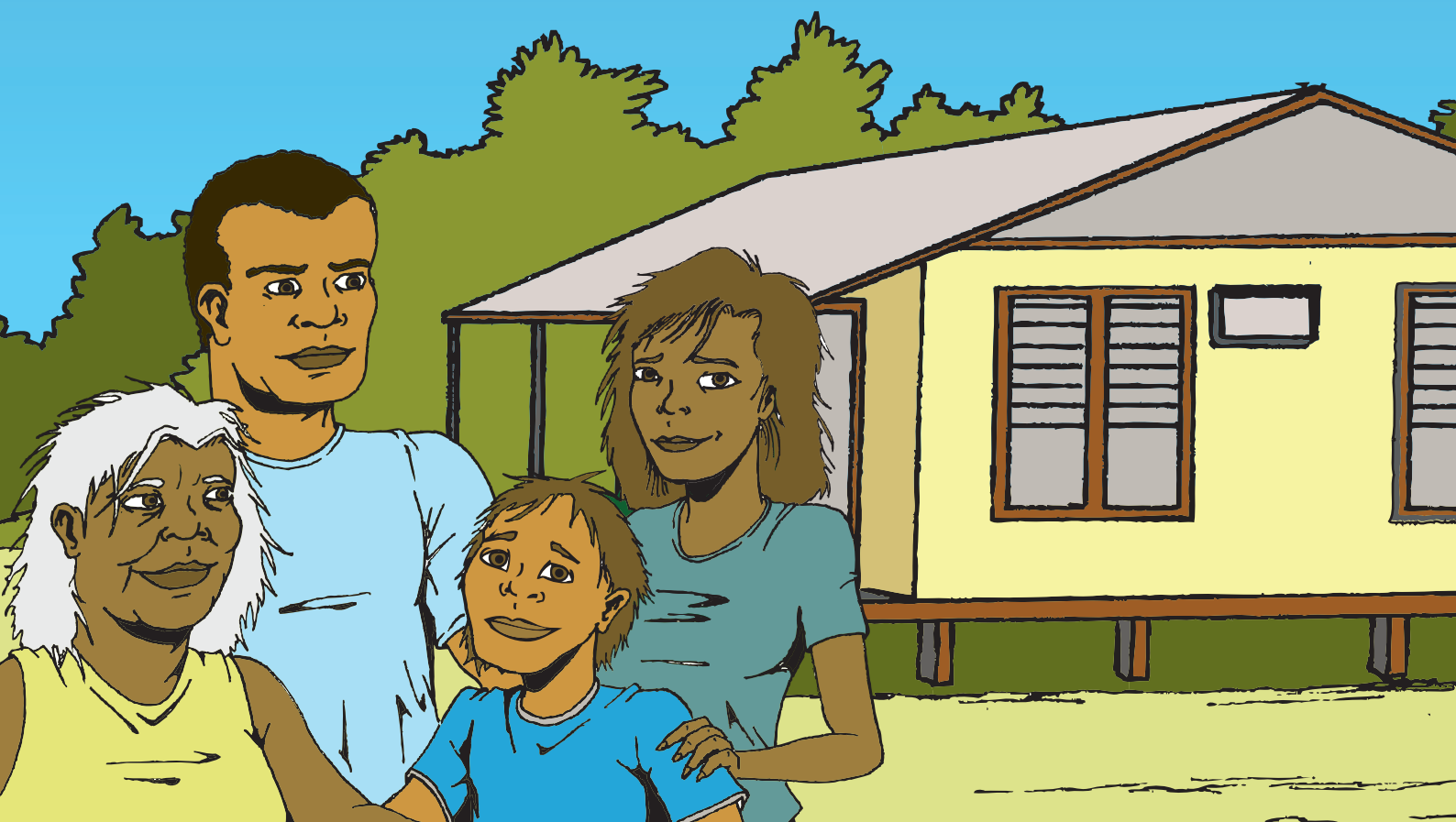


# looking after your home



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# About this booklet

This booklet is a guide to help you understand what you need to do to keep your house safe, clean and healthy.

A safe, healthy house:

- is clean
- is looked after and fixed
- is not broken or damaged
- has no rubbish laying around the house or yard
- does not have lots of animals, bugs or pests in it
- has a clean, maintained yard.

As a tenant, you are responsible for looking after your house and reporting repairs when they are needed.

If you have any questions please contact your local housing officer.

You community contacts

Repairs and maintenance: \_\_\_\_\_

Tenancy support services: \_\_\_\_\_

Remote housing maintenance hotline: 1800 104 076

# Cleaning your home

## General cleaning

As a tenant, you are responsible for keeping your house clean. Cleaning your house regularly is very important as it helps keep your family healthy.

Some areas of your home, such as the kitchen benches and sink, should be cleaned every day. Other areas can be cleaned weekly (such as floors and bathrooms) or monthly (such as fan blades and wiping out cupboards).

Your local housing officer will check how clean your house is during regular inspections. Below is a checklist of areas to clean regularly.



### Benches and sinks

- Wipe kitchen benches and sinks, especially after you have been preparing food.
- Remember, do not use the kitchen cloth anywhere else so germs do not spread.



### Stove and oven

- Clean the stove and oven. Make sure all the food and grease is removed.



### Cupboards and shelving

- Wipe out cupboards and shelving, especially ones that you keep food in – this will help stop pests and bugs.
- Food in cupboards should be kept in closed containers or sealed bags.



### Bathroom

- Keep the bathroom clean – mop the floor, clean around the taps and wipe out the shower, bath and basin.
- Remember, don't use the bathroom cloth anywhere else so germs spread.



### Toilet

- Scrub the toilet with disinfectant or toilet cleaner.



### Floors

- Sweep and mop the floors in all rooms regularly.
- Remember to rinse and dry the mop after it is used to stop mould growing.



### Dusting

- Dust away any spider webs as needed.



### Windows and louvres

- Clean all the windows and louvres regularly.
- Report any cracked or chipped window glass.
- Don't let anyone or your pets put holes in flyscreens or security screens.



### Rubbish bin

- Always put rubbish in the bin.
- Put the wheelie bin out so it can be emptied on 'bin day'.



### Fans

- Clean the fan blades regularly with a wet cloth.
- Fans work better when the blades are clean.
- Don't let children or anyone else swing on the fan and bend the blades.



### Walls, doors, cupboards, light switches and powerpoints

- Wipe dirty marks off walls, doors and cupboards.
- Dust all the light switches and power points.
  - If they are dirty, you can wipe over them with a cloth.
  - Do not put water on them or spray cleaners on them.



### Bugs and pests

- Keeping your house clean, and making sure food isn't cooked, stored or eaten in bedrooms, will help keep bugs and pests away.
- Cockroach baits and bombs can be used before the problem gets too big.
- If you have problems with large numbers of bugs and pests, report this to your local housing officer as your house may need to be sprayed.



### Taps

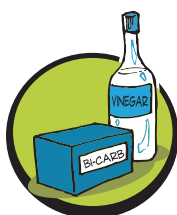
- If taps are leaking, report it to your local housing officer or repairs and maintenance officer.
- Don't turn off taps too tightly as this can damage them.

## Cleaning products and tools

To help with the cleaning there are a number of cleaning products that are recommended.



Toilet cleaner and disinfectant. White vinegar is also an effective cleaner and is cheap to buy and safe to use.



Vinegar and bicarb soda are cheap, good cleaning products.



You can buy products made to clean particular things, such as ovens, windows, showers, bathrooms and floors. These products can be poisonous and can make people very sick. Always keep these products in a locked cupboard or high off the ground so young children cannot get to them. Most cleaning can be done with white vinegar which is cheap to buy and safe to use.

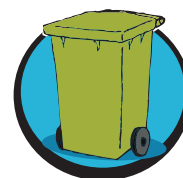


Cleaning cloths – So you don't spread germs, always use one cleaning cloth in the kitchen, a different one in the bathroom and a different one on the floor and walls. Using different coloured cloths will help people remember where each cloth can be used.

## Rubbish

You must keep your house and yard free of rubbish.

Your local Shire Council provides each house with a rubbish bin or wheelie bin that should be kept outside the house.



You can keep small bins inside but make sure you empty them regularly into the wheelie bin. Remember to put the wheelie bin out on 'bin day' so it can be emptied.

To keep flies and maggots out of your bin, keep the lid closed all the time and wash the bin out each time it is emptied.

# Your kitchen

## Benches

- Wipe the benches every day, especially after you have had food on them, and keep them as clean as possible. This will help with safe food preparation and keeping bugs and pests away.

## Cupboards

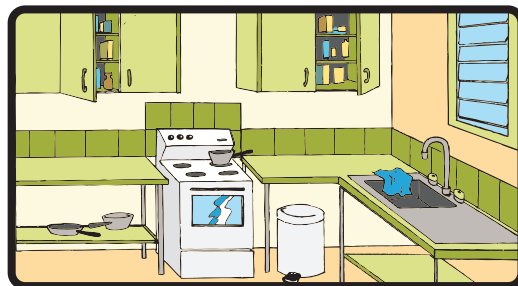
- Wipe out the cupboards regularly to help stop cockroaches and other bugs and pests.
- Food in the cupboard should be kept in closed containers or sealed bags.
- Tighten screws if door handles are loose. You can use a screw driver or butter knife to do this.

## Stove and oven

- The stove top, inside and outside of the oven should be cleaned regularly to remove food and grease.
- Use an oven cleaner to remove grease from inside the oven.
- Only use saucepans or proper cooking trays. Don't put plastic or fabric in the oven or on the stove as this can cause a fire and other damage.
- Never let anyone stand or sit on the open oven door.
- Make sure oven racks stay in the oven – don't use them for outside cooking.

## Sink

- Wipe out the sink regularly.
- Don't put any food or other items down the drain as this will block it.





# Your bathroom and toilet

Bathrooms and toilets must be kept clean and well maintained. This will stop mould growing and germs spreading.

Don't use the cloth you clean the bathroom with anywhere else in the house.

## Basin

- Wipe basin regularly.
- Don't put any rubbish or items down the drain.
- Remove hairs from the drain so it doesn't get blocked.



## Shower and bath

- Clean around the taps.
- Wipe the bath and the shower walls.
- If there is mould, consider using white vinegar or a bathroom cleaner.
- Remove hairs from the drain so it doesn't get blocked.
- Don't put any rubbish or items down the drain.

## Floor

- Regularly sweep and mop the floor.
- Wipe up spills or slippery areas immediately.
- Make sure the floor drain is not covered up.
- Remove hairs and any other rubbish from the floor drain.



## Grab rails and other fixtures (such as soap holders)

- Wipe with a cloth.
- Check they are not loose or slippery.

## Toilet

- Scrub the toilet with a toilet brush and disinfectant, white vinegar or toilet cleaner to keep it clean and stop germs from spreading.
- Wipe over the outside of the toilet and cistern with a cloth and disinfectant.
- Don't flush anything besides toilet paper down the toilet. Nappies, other personal products and rubbish must never be flushed down the toilet. They will block the drain and stop the toilet from working properly.



# Your laundry

## Laundry tub

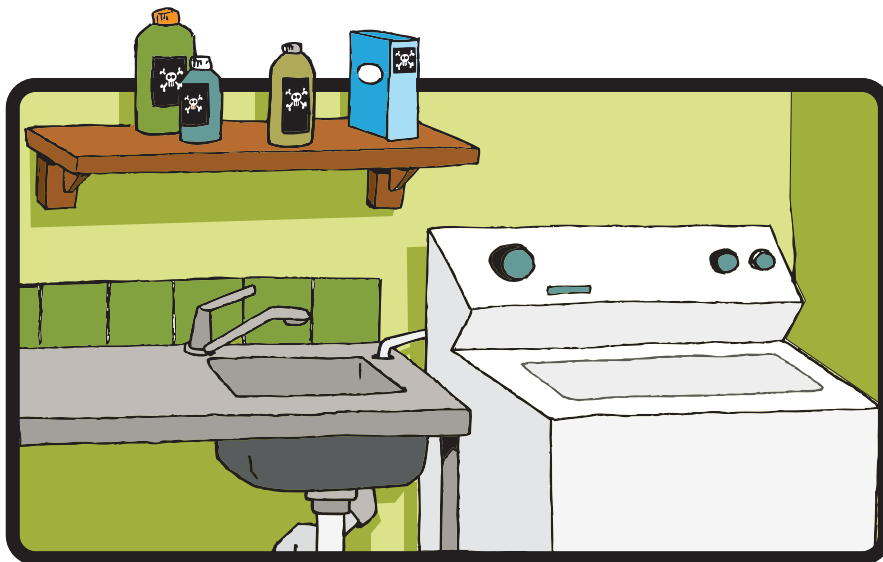
- Wipe the tub out regularly.
- Keep the tub clean and clear of rubbish.
- Do not put any items down the drain.

## Floor drain

- Make sure the floor drain is not covered up.
- Remove hairs and any other rubbish from the floor drain.

## Washing machine

- Tenants must supply and maintain their own washing machine.
- Dirty water drains from the washing machine through a hose. There may be a hole beside your laundry tub for the drainage hose. Before you use the washing machine, make sure the hose is put into the hole so the dirty water can drain away and not go on the floor.
- If there is no hole for the hose, put the hose in the laundry tub and make sure it won't fall out. Most hoses have a round plastic bend on them to help stay attached to the side of the sink.



# Looking after your home

You are responsible for looking after your home and keeping it in good working order.

## **Electricity meters**

An electricity meter is installed at your home.

It is the tenant's responsibility to buy tokens to operate the meter.

## **Light bulbs**

It is the tenant's responsibility to replace light bulbs and fluorescent tubes when they don't work.

You can buy spare light bulbs and fluorescent tubes at your local shop. There are many different types of light bulbs, so make sure you know what type you need.

To change the light bulb:

1. Turn off the light switch and let the bulb cool.
2. Remove the old light bulb or fluorescent tube. If they feel hot, wait for them to cool before you take them out.
3. Put the old bulb or tube in the bin straight away.
4. Fit the new bulb or tube. Do not over-tighten or press on the bulb too much as it might break.
5. Turn on the light to make sure it works.

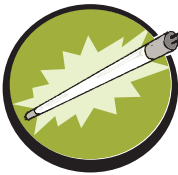
## Types of light bulbs and tubes



Bayonet – These bulbs have two ‘prongs’ on the side of the base. These bulbs are fitted by pushing them up into the socket and turning half a turn to the right. These bulbs are expensive to run and blow easily.



Edison screw – These bulbs do not have prongs and are screwed into the socket. They are called ‘incandescent’. They are expensive to run.



Fluorescent tubes.

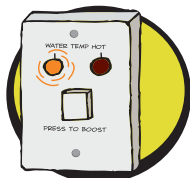


Energy saving - You can replace your bulbs with energy saving bulbs which use less electricity but give the same amount of light. They are more expensive to buy but last a lot longer and are cheaper to use.

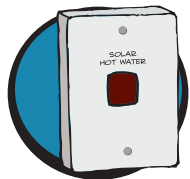
## Solar hot water system

If you have a solar hot water system, the panels are installed on the roof. If it has been cloudy or rainy, the water might not heat up enough. If the water is not hot enough you will have to turn on the booster switch to heat the water.

There are two types of booster switches.



If the water is not hot enough, the orange light will come on. Only press the booster switch if the orange light is on.

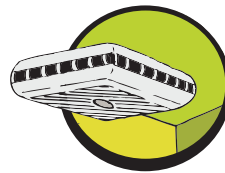


If the water is not hot enough, press the red button. The red light will go off when the water is hot again.

## Smoke alarms

Maintaining your smoke alarm is important as they help keep your family safe. Some smoke alarms have batteries and you will need to replace them when they run out or go flat.

There are different types of smoke alarms. Check with your housing officer what you need to do to maintain the smoke alarms in your house.



## Pest control

There are a number of things you can do to keep pests, such as cockroaches, ants, insects, ticks and fleas, under control. These include:

- keep your home clean
- keep the lawn mowed and yard neat and tidy
- put rubbish in the bin and make sure the bin is emptied and cleaned regularly
- make sure food that is in the cupboard is in sealed containers or bags
- don't store, eat or cook food in bedrooms
- keep doors closed and make sure flyscreens do not have holes
- keep your dogs outside and make sure they don't have ticks and fleas. You could use tick collars and flea washes to keep fleas and ticks away.

You can use an insect spray to help get rid of bugs around your home. Follow the instructions carefully as these chemicals can be dangerous if not used properly.

If you have problems with large numbers of bugs and pests, report this to your local housing officer as your house may need to be sprayed.



# Repairing your home

The rent you pay goes towards regular repairs.

**As soon as something is broken or stops working properly – report it to your local housing officer. The sooner you report it, the sooner it will be fixed.**

You also need to report any damage that has been done to your home. Tenants may have to pay for repair work that is needed because of misuse and deliberate or intentional damage.

## Reporting broken plumbing and electricity

The following things must be reported immediately as they are very dangerous or unhealthy for people living in the house:

- blocked toilets and drains
- sewerage leaks or sewerage coming up the pipes
- leaking water mains and pipes
- exposed electrical wires (which can happen if power points or light fixtures are pulled out of the wall or there is a hole in the wall)
- gas leaks.

## Regular repairs

Regular repairs will be done on your house and these repairs will be listed when your house is inspected. You should also report other repairs that are needed in between inspections such as:

- dripping taps or taps that are tight to turn
- stove elements that are not working
- fans that are not working properly
- power points that are not working.

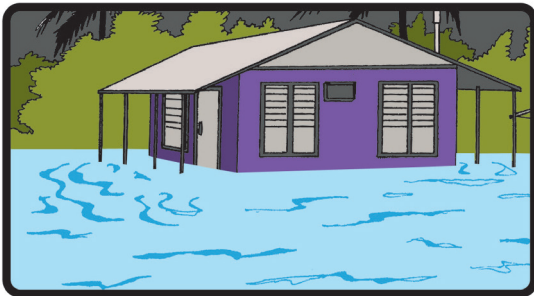




## Damage caused by natural events

There are times when your house may be damaged because of accidents or natural events you cannot control, such as floods, storms or bushfires. Please report this damage straight away.

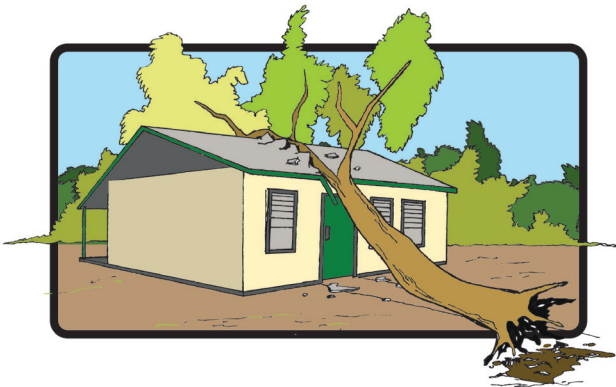
Flood



White ants



Big wind or cyclone



## Damage caused by misuse

If something in your home is damaged because you or another tenant or visitor didn't use it properly, you may be responsible for paying for the repairs. Examples of misuse include:



using the oven door as a chair



using the oven as a heater or dryer



swinging on the clothes line.

## Intentional damage

Never let anyone damage your home. Tenants may have to pay for repair work that is needed to fix deliberate or intentional damage that is done by:

- someone living in your house
- someone visiting your house
- your pets.

You must report all intentional damage to your local housing officer immediately. If someone else, including visitors, intentionally damages your home you should also report it to the police. Examples of intentional damage include:



breaking locks on doors



ripping shelving and other fixtures off walls



breaking, punching or kicking holes in walls



holes and rips in a flyscreen caused by people or pets



ripping out light fittings, power points or switches



breaking windows or lights



fire caused by someone smoking in your house or leaving something cooking on the stove.

# Your yard

## Yard

You must look after the yard. Keep the lawn short and mow it regularly. Pull out the weeds and put them in the bin.

## Plants

You can plant shrubs, bushes and flowers in your yard, however it is your responsibility to look after them.

All plants must be two metres from the house to help stop white ant damage.

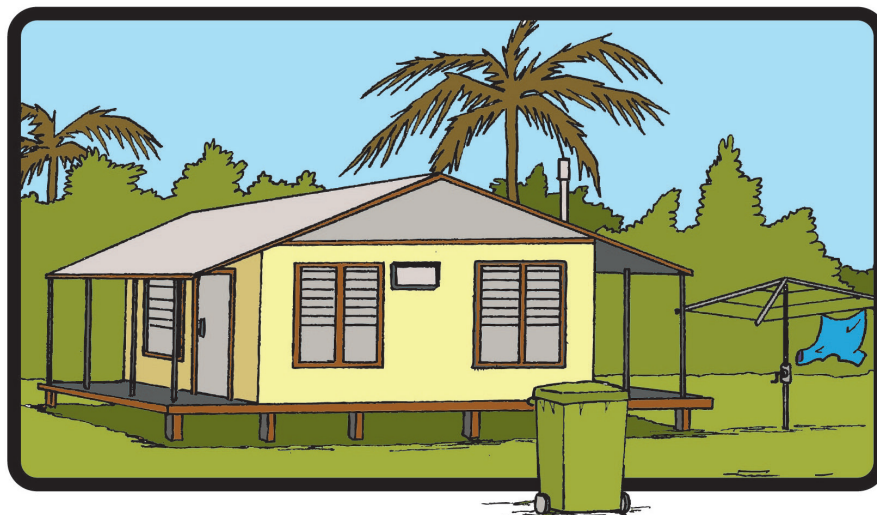
## Clothes line

Every house has a clothes line.

Don't hang anything heavy on the line and don't let people swing from the clothes line. This will break the clothes line and you will be responsible for paying for the repairs.

## Rubbish

You must keep your yard clear of rubbish. Put all the rubbish in the wheelie bin. Don't leave old car bodies in your yard. If you need help getting large items such as car bodies or old appliances out of the yard ask your local shire council for advice.



# Keeping pets

Tenants are allowed to keep pets but you must not let them damage the house and yard or annoy people.

Dogs should be kept outside. You could use tick collars and flea washes to keep fleas and ticks away. If you have pets you must keep them healthy and safe.

There might be rules for your local community about how many dogs you can keep. Ask your local housing officer or the Shire Council office about this.

Tenants cannot keep large animals (such as cows and horses), poultry (such as chickens and ducks), reptiles or native animals.





# Regional offices

## **Arafura**

8999 8563

## **Greater Darwin**

8999 8814

## **Alice Springs**

8951 5344

## **Katherine**

8973 8513

## **Nhulunbuy**

8987 0533

## **Palmerston**

8999 4767

## **Tennant Creek**

8962 4497

**Remote Housing Hotline** 1800 104 076

[TFHC.nt.gov.au](http://TFHC.nt.gov.au)