

# Red card policy

## Managing antisocial behaviour

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities takes public housing safety seriously and has a Public Housing Safety Strategy in place to promote community safety in and around public housing.

As a part of this strategy, the Department has a Red Card policy to help manage antisocial behaviour in and around public housing only.

The Red Card policy allows the Department, represented by Public Housing Safety Officers (PHSOs), to respond to and investigate complaints of antisocial behaviour in public housing tenancies in a consistent manner, and take action against tenants who regularly, or seriously, interfere with the peace and safety of other tenants, neighbours and those in the vicinity.

PHSOs, with the help of the NT Police, only manage antisocial behaviour that occurs in and around public housing.

## What is antisocial behaviour?

Antisocial behaviour is defined in the *Housing Act 1982* as:

- Involving abusive and/or violent behaviour directed to a person; and/or
- Creating alarm or fear in, or annoyance to, neighbours or others in the vicinity; and/or
- Involving graffiti, littering or vandalism.

The Department categorises antisocial behaviour in three categories:

### 1. Minor antisocial behaviour

Conduct that causes annoyance from a public housing premises, including behaviour on land adjacent to or opposite the premises.

Examples include:

- Nuisance from tenants, recognised occupiers, and visitors who are at the premises with the consent of the tenant
- Excessive noise from items such as televisions, stereos, radios, motor vehicles, party or behaviour that interferes with the reasonable peace and privacy of neighbours
- Offensive/foul language that interferes with the reasonable peace and privacy of neighbours or causes annoyance to neighbours or others in the vicinity, including Department staff and/or contractors

## 2. Moderate antisocial behaviour

Abusive behaviour directed to a person, or behaviour that causes fear or alarm to neighbours or others in the vicinity of the premises, including behaviour on land adjacent to or opposite the premises.

Examples include:

- Threatening, intimidating, abusive, frightening and harassing behaviour directed at others, including Department staff and/or contractors
- Verbal abuse that creates alarm or fear in neighbours or others in the vicinity, including Department staff and/or contractors
- Moderate damage to property belonging to the Department and/or neighbours that is intentionally caused or permitted

## 3. Serious antisocial behaviour

Violent behaviour caused or permitted by the tenant towards a person, neighbours or others near the premises, including behaviour on property next to or opposite the premises, or vandalism or damage to Department property.

Examples include:

- Abusive, aggressive and/or frightening behaviour aimed at others that goes beyond verbal abuse, including behaviour towards Department staff and/or contractors
- Threats to the health and safety of a person
- Use or threatened use of a weapon in a person's possession
- Physical assault and acts of violence

## How does the Red Card policy work?

All complaints about the behaviour of tenants or their visitors are thoroughly investigated by the Department.

Where an incident of antisocial behaviour is substantiated and constitutes a breach of the tenancy agreement, a tenancy may be issued with demerit points.

If a tenancy receives six demerit points, the Department may initiate action to terminate the tenancy and take possession of the premises.

When a tenancy is at risk of receiving a demerit point, the Department will take reasonable steps to engage with the tenants to offer support and help them to sustain their tenancy.

If a tenant completes a 12 month period from the date of the last substantiated incident without any further substantiated incidents of antisocial behaviour, any demerit points accrued will expire.

## How are demerit points issued against antisocial behaviour?

Demerit points for substantiated incidents of antisocial behaviour depend on the severity of the incident:

- Minor incident: one demerit point
- Moderate incident: two demerit points
- Serious incident: three demerit points

## Can a tenancy be terminated for antisocial behaviour before six demerit points are issued?

In the case of serious incidents of antisocial behaviour that result in personal injury or serious damage to the premises, the Department may initiate action to terminate the tenancy before six demerit points are reached.

## How do I make a complaint about antisocial behaviour?

If the matter does not require urgent assistance, you can report it to the Public Housing Safety Hotline on 1800 685 743, Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm.

For assistance after hours contact the NT Police on 131 444.

If the situation is an emergency or the matter is urgent call the NT Police on 000.

## What about criminal activity?

Suspected criminal activity should be reported directly to the NT Police on 131 444 or 000 in the case of an emergency.

## Where can I get more information?

To find out more, visit the website [nt.gov.au](http://nt.gov.au) or contact your local Housing office:

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