

Pest Control Policy

1. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and responsibilities for the treatment of pests in Unison properties.

This policy applies to all Unison staff, including employees, contractors and volunteers.

2. Key responsibilities

Place Management and Facilities Advisors are responsible for the implementation of the policy and ensuring that staff have access to resource materials and training in identification, treatment, control, and prevention of pests.

2.1 Unison Facilities Advisors are responsible for:

- Common area inspections, identification and assessment of infestations.
- Generating service requests and liaising with Pest Control contractors.
- Arranging treatment of properties in Vacant Maintenance where required.
- Liaising with and coordinating works in conjunction with Place Management team.

2.2 Place Management teams are responsible for:

- Discussing prevention and pest control management with tenants at sign-up.
- Having tenants sign a *Pest Management Plan* when difficulties managing pests are identified.
- Identifying signs of infestation during property inspections.
- Reporting infestations promptly to their Team Leaders, Facilities Advisers and renter's supports (if applicable).
- Liaising with Support Workers (where applicable) to ensure tenants are assisted to understand, prevent, identify and treat pest infestations.
- Discussing the tenant's responsibility in preparing the property for treatment (i.e. remove all items on floors, throw away rubbish etc.).
- Providing referrals to support agencies for renters where appropriate.

2.3 Renters are responsible for:

- Making efforts to prevent pest infestations.
- Ensuring property is ready for pest control (i.e. clean floors and surfaces etc.).
- Following advice on the treatment of personal items.
- Notifying Place Management staff as soon as possible of confirmed or suspected pest infestations, whether in units or in common areas.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Principles

- Unison delivers maintenance and upkeep to properties to ensure a safe environment for the residents, as well as ensuring the asset portfolio is adequately maintained.
- Pest infestations are treated as a serious risk to Unison renters, property, staff and contractors. Unison responds promptly to infestations.
- Unison ensures that licensed pest control operators undertake pest control activities using tested and appropriate treatments.
- Place Management and Property practices seek to reduce the risks of pest infestation by engaging and working with renters.

3.2 Application

Responsibility for pests is assessed on a case-by-case basis. The renter may be responsible if their actions or behaviour contributed to the problem.

In the first instance, renters are responsible for keeping their tenancy clean and tidy so as not attract pests. Where it is determined that the renter is responsible for a pest infestation, the resultant pest control in the tenancy is the responsibility of the renter.

An agreed *Pest Management Plan* is developed by Unison and it will determine who is responsible for the pest treatment, payment responsibilities and may include details on property preparation for treatment, renter and housing provider responsibilities and an environmental risk assessment.

3.2.1 In the circumstance where pest control is the responsibility of the renter;

- the renter (and/or their support agency, if applicable) are expected to treat the pests and bear the cost.

3.2.2 Unison treats at Unison's expense or as negotiated with renters and/or supports:

- Pests that are evident in internal common areas of buildings, such as kitchens, hallways, and laundries.
- Pests that are evident in external common areas of buildings where Unison has responsibility for garden maintenance e.g. wasps, pigeons.
- Pests that cause structural damage to properties e.g. termites.
- Pests in units in high density properties that have been infested by neighbouring units.
- Pests that pose a risk in single-dwelling, low risk properties i.e. properties without enclosed, shared corridors between rooms.
- Pests that have resisted control by other means, e.g. keeping property clean, using domestic pest sprays.

3.2.3 Unison may treat (at the renter's expense or as negotiated):

- Pests in standalone buildings in conjunction with pest control measures such as education and agreement from the tenant to follow a *Pest Control Agreement*.
- Subsequent infestations that pose a risk to renters.

- Pests in units in high density properties that are caused by individual renters e.g. non-compliance with the *Pest Management Plan*.

If Unison and the renter can't agree about who should pay for removing pests, either can apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a decision.

4. Definitions

High density properties: multi-unit developments with enclosed, shared corridors between rooms/units.

Pests: Include bed bugs, fleas, flies, cockroaches, spiders, termites, and vermin such as rats, mice, etc.

5. Related Information

- [Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal \(VCAT\)](#)