

# Absence from Property

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## 1. Purpose

It is a condition of all social housing tenancy agreements with Housing Trust that tenants personally occupy their premises. However, Housing Trust recognises that from time to time tenants may need to be absent from their home for a range of reasons.

## 2. Policy Statement

Tenants require approval from Housing Trust to be away from their home for more than six (6) weeks, even if other members of the household remain in the home while the tenant is away.

Housing Trust will not unreasonably withhold approval for an absence, so long as it can be satisfied that:

- The tenant intends to return to the property after their absence
- Rent and water charges (if applicable) will continue to be paid by the tenant
- The property will be looked after and the tenant's lease obligations will be maintained

Absences longer than three (3) months will be considered on a case by case basis by the General Manager. However, if a tenant is expected to be absent for longer than 3 months Housing Trust will generally encourage the tenant to relinquish their tenancy and potentially seek Tenancy Reinstatement on their return.

Housing Trust will encourage tenants to nominate a person to act on their behalf while they are absent from the property. They should be over 18 years of age and could be another household member, a family member or friend, or solicitor.

If Housing Trust discovers that a tenant has been absent from their home for more than six (6) weeks without informing Housing Trust, all reasonable efforts to contact the tenant to clarify the situation will be made. If the tenant cannot be contacted, Housing Trust may:

- Consider the property to be abandoned (see Abandonment Policy)
- Take action to terminate the tenancy in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act* (See End of Tenancy Policy)