



Housing Modifications for People with Disabilities (MNT040)

September 2014

Housing SA on behalf of the South Australian Housing Trust administers these procedures. Where these procedures apply to SAHT tenants, they also apply to tenants of the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program.

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the role and responsibilities of the agencies involved in the provision of housing modifications for persons with a disability. This procedure is to be read in conjunction with the guidelines.

2 DEFINITIONS

CSO means Customer Service Officer.

Health Professional means hospitals, community health centres, Disability SA or RDNS.

MI means Maintenance Inspector.

MTC: means Multi-Trade Contractor

OT means Occupational Therapist.

PK: means Premium Keep

PR: means Prefer retain

RDNS: means Royal District Nursing Service

3 ACTIONS / RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 General guidelines

- **Level 1 (minor modifications):** These modifications do not require the input or advice of an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist. They are usually requested through a General Practitioner and generally do not require any change to the fabric of the building. This includes but is not limited to the following types of works:
 - Installation of additional clothes lines
 - Short vertical grab rails (not identified by the OT), level doors, handles or lever taps
 - Renewed toilet pan
 - Sensor light installation
 - Reversing a door, or installing a step, or a threshold ramp.
- **Level 2 (major modifications):** these modifications will generally require an Occupational Therapist to be engaged to undertake an assessment and specify the required modifications. Level 2 modifications will usually require the fabric of the building to be altered. These types of modifications include, but may not be limited to:



- Structural alterations such as extensive handrails
 - Widening of doorways
 - Installation of ramps
 - Modified toilet and/or bathroom
 - Kitchen modifications or bath removals
- If the modifications are not in accordance with the ***Housing Modifications for Persons with a Disability Policy (HOU226)*** or the future planning intent of the property is not PK or PR, the MI will liaise with Housing Services and the relevant Maintenance Field Manager to discuss alternative options and possible relocation of the tenant to alternative accommodation.
 - If the household is to be relocated / transferred, Housing Services will obtain consent from the person with a disability to inform other support agencies.

3.2 New applications for allocation

- 3.2.1 Prior to offering a dwelling to an applicant, the dwelling must be assessed by the MI to determine if it is suitable for persons with disabilities and/or suitable for modifications. (See ***Housing Modifications for Persons with a Disability Policy (HOU226)***).

3.3 Current tenants requesting a disability modification

- 3.3.1 When modifications in the property are required because of disability, the tenant (or the person with the disability) will:
- Complete Section 1 of the ***Housing Modifications Application Form*** and sign the declaration.
 - Obtain written verification from a “health professional” that is familiar with the person’s disability or condition.

Note: Written verification will be accepted in the form of EITHER Section 2 of the *Housing Modifications Application Form* completed and signed by a “health professional” OR a letter from the “health professional” specifying the nature and likely duration of the disability or condition and the type of modifications required.

- Forward the ***Housing Modifications Application Form*** along with written verification from the “health professional” to the Housing SA Office.



3.3.2 Upon receipt of a **Housing Modifications Application Form** or **Housing Modifications Special Needs Assessment Form** or OT assessment, the CSO will date stamp the application, record the tenant's request on HURON and forward the application to the Administration Officer who will:

- Check that the "person with a disability" is a resident of South Australia and has been approved by Housing SA to reside in the dwelling.
- Check written verification as per stated in 3.3.1.
- Where the form has not been completed correctly, return the form to the applicant along with *Disability Modifications – Application Further Information* letter.
- If the form and the written verification have been completed correctly, record on Huron Notations screen that the application and attachments have been forwarded to the MI.
- Assess if the modification is minor (level 1) or major (level 2).

3.4 Level 1 (Minor Modifications)

3.4.1 Where the modification is assessed as level 1 the Administration Officer will:

- Raise a P3 works order to the MTC (if there is any uncertainty regarding item codes etc, seek clarification from the MI).

Note: if the financial delegation is not sufficient to raise a works order, the Administration Officer will seek approval from the MI, who will authorise the order raising.

- Generate a *Disability Modifications - Full Approval letter* and send it to the tenant.
- Record details on HURON P Notations (via customer number).
- Arrange for the application to be filed in the customer file.

3.5 Level 2 (Major modifications)

3.5.1 Where the modification is assessed as major (level 2), the Administration Officer will forward the application and any supporting documentation to the MI for assessment.

3.5.2 The MI will review the request and determine if the proposed modifications are in accordance with policy and the future planning intent.

Modifications approved

3.5.3 Where the modifications are deemed essential and are in accordance with the relevant policies and future planning intent, the MI will determine if the modifications require an assessment by an OT.

3.5.4 If an OT assessment is required, the MI will:

- Check if the applicant is eligible for assistance from the referring agency (e.g.: hospitals, community health centres, Disability SA or RDNS) or any other agency.
- If “**yes**”, the agency is responsible for obtaining a needs’ assessment (at their own cost) and forwarding to Housing SA.
- If “**no**”, Housing SA will be responsible for providing a needs’ assessment for the tenant.

Note: The MI must make all reasonable efforts to determine whether the person is eligible for services from the referring agency or any other agency. This may involve further follow up with the applicant, their health professional, the referring agency (where applicable) or any other agency that may be responsible for assisting the person with the disability. Where any doubt exists, the MI will consult with their Maintenance Field Manager.

3.5.5 Where Housing SA is responsible for the OT needs assessment, the MI will issue a works pro-forma and forward it to the Administration Officer, who will:

- Raise an order to the OT Service Provider.
- Forward the job order, the original ‘**Housing Modifications Application Form**’ and a ‘**Housing Modifications Special Needs Assessment Form**’, to the OT Service Provider for an assessment to be undertaken.

3.5.6 When the documentation is received, the OT will:

- Visit the “*person with a disability*”
- Conduct an assessment in accordance with the guidelines specified by Housing SA.
- Inform the person/tenant of the range of options that could meet their needs.
- Complete the Housing SA **Housing Modifications Special Needs Assessment Form** and submit it to the Housing SA Office.

Note: Assessment is to be completed by OT/Physiotherapist only if major modifications are requested.



- 3.5.7 Upon receipt of the OT assessment, the Administration Officer will record its receipt on HURON P Notations (via client number) and forward it to the MI.
- 3.5.8 MI will review the tenant's requirements and the OT assessment. If required, the MI will also visit the site to confirm if the property is suitable for the modifications requested, before approving the tenant's request. The MI will also renegotiate the OT's proposal with the service provider, if considered necessary.
- 3.5.9 Once the assessment is agreed to, and where scheduled items codes cover the work required, the MI will issue a works pro-forma and forward it to the Administration Officer for an order to be raised for the MTC to undertake the work.
- 3.5.10 Where the work requires unscheduled item codes, the MI will prepare a broad scope of the work required and forward it to the Administration Officer requesting for an order to be raised for the MTC to undertake a site inspection and prepare a detailed scope of works.
- 3.5.11 The Administration Officer will:
- Raise the works order as requested by the MI.
 - Generate a *Disability Modifications- Full Approval letter* and send it to the tenant.
- NOTE: Where Maintenance Operations is NOT undertaking all the works requested, use *Disability Modifications - Part Approval letter*.**
- Record details on HURON P Notations (via customer number).
 - Arrange for the application and a copy of the approval letter to be filed in the customer file.
 - In cases where compensation is or may be payable to the person with a disability, forward a copy of the ***Housing Modifications Application Form*** and *Works Order* to the Insurance Services Unit.
- 3.5.12 Upon receipt of the works order, and if **a scope of works was not** required, the MTC will:
- Carry out the works to the relevant codes and standards.
 - When the work is completed, notify the MI and send the invoice for payment to Housing SA Maintenance Accounts Payable.
- 3.5.13 If a **scope of work was requested**, the MTC will:
- Undertake a site inspection.
 - Prepare a detailed scope of works as requested by the MI.



- Where required, obtain plans and specifications in association with the OT or physiotherapist and provide all necessary drawings and specifications for the works.
 - Send the detailed scope of works along with all supporting documentations and drawings to the MI for approval (via regional mailbox).
- 3.5.14 The MI will review and approve the scope of works sent by the MTC. If the MI does not agree with the scope of works, it will be rejected stating the reasons why. The MTC will then amend the scope and send it back for approval.
- 3.5.15 When the scope is approved, the MI will forward it to the Administration Officer for the works order to be raised for the MTC to undertake the work.
- 3.5.16 The MTC will then:
- Carry out the works to the relevant codes and standards.
 - Advise tenant(s) on expected timeframes.
 - Liaise with the person/tenant and the OT or physiotherapist as necessary. (A request may be made for the OT or physiotherapist to visit the site during construction to clarify details).
 - When the work is completed, notify the MI and send the invoice for payment to Housing SA Maintenance Accounts Payable.
- 3.5.17 The Administration Officer will arrange for the documentation to be filed in the customer file

Modifications not approved

- 3.5.18 Where modifications are **not approved**, the MI will notify the Administration Officer, who will:
- Generate a *Disability Modifications Non - Approval letter* and send it to the tenant (the letter will inform the tenant of his/her right to appeal the decision)
 - Record details on HURON P Notations (via client number).
 - Arrange for the application and a copy of the non - approval letter to be filed in the customer file.
 - Email the assessment to the relevant Regional Team Leader recommending that the tenant be transferred to another property. A copy of the *Disability Modifications Non - Approval letter* will be attached.

3.6 Insurance Services Unit – compensation claims

3.6.1 In instances where compensation is or may be payable to the person with a disability, Housing Services will forward a copy of the *Housing Modifications Application Form* and *Works Order* to the Insurance Services Unit, who will:

- Contact the person with the disability/insurer/representative (whichever is applicable), to discuss the compensation claim.
- Obtain written confirmation from the representative that they are acting on behalf of the person (if applicable).
- Issue a *Statement of Claim* to the person with the disability/insurer/representative (whichever is applicable), seeking reimbursement for the cost of the modifications.
- Raise the cost of the housing modifications as a debt against the person with the disability/insurer/representative's trust account (whichever is applicable).
- Monitor and record any payment(s) made and close the file when complete. (Refer to Insurance Services Unit for further details).

4 DOCUMENTATION

Housing Modifications Application Form (QHM-FO-026)

Housing Modifications Special Needs Assessment Form (QHM-FO-027)

Works Pro-forma (Order for Repairs) (QHM-FO-004)

Disability Modifications – Application Further Information Letter

Disability Modifications – Full Approval letter

Disability Modifications – Non-Approval letter

Disability Modifications - Part Approval letter

5 REFERENCES

Housing Modifications for Persons with a Disability Policy

Heating in Dwellings Policy

Occupational Therapist Guidelines v5

Disability Modification Guidelines – Appendix 1



APPENDIX 1

Disability Modification Guidelines

A guide for Housing Officers, Maintenance Inspectors and Occupational Therapists to be read in conjunction with the “Housing Modifications for Persons with a Disability” policy.

- **Air Conditioning** – Housing SA does not supply or maintain air conditioning units other than those installed for special housing programs (e.g.: boarding houses, Aboriginal housing). However, where a reverse cycle air conditioning unit has been approved, supplied and installed by another funded program (e.g. Disability SA), Housing SA will reimburse the Agency for the installation costs only. Maintenance of these units is the responsibility of the agency or tenant. The installation costs must be approved by Housing SA prior to installation of the unit.
- **Concrete / Paving** – will be provided to ensure safe access from the front boundary to the main front door and from the rear door to the clothes line. Small in-fills up to 5sq metres can be provided to assist with access (wheelchairs, wheeled walkers etc)

Note: - driveways and perimeter paving are not to be provided under the Disability Modifications Program (cost category 11) dangerous concrete is to be managed in accordance with the *Maintenance Policy (Cost of Maintenance – Party Responsible (cost category 00))*.

- **Electricity Mobility Aids** – modifications will be provided to assist the storage of electric mobility aids on request. Options may include but are not restricted to: Partial enclosure of front or rear porch areas with provision of a ramp and external power point. Construction of a shed in rear yard of property with concrete floor and power point.
- **Flashing Doorbells** – where a person suffers a hearing loss greater than 90 decibels Housing SA will provide a flashing doorbell. Two flashing lights only will be installed in the room of the tenant’s choice. Extra lights will be the responsibility of the tenant.
- **Fencing and Gates** – Existing fencing and gates will only be modified where deemed essential (e.g., lower a gate latch to assist with access). New fencing and gates will be supplied where deemed essential (i.e. autistic children, or where a particular family member is deemed to be at risk of escaping/absconding from the property)

- **Floor Coverings** – requests for removal or renewal of floor coverings are not to be processed as disability modifications. Floor coverings must be managed in accordance with the *Maintenance Policy (Cost of Maintenance – Party Responsible)* (e.g., a request to remove floor coverings because the tenant suffers from asthma would be treated as a non-approval). Permission may be given to the tenant to remove the carpet at their own cost. Dangerous carpets or vinyl must be treated as “health & safety” and managed in accordance with the *Maintenance Policy (Cost of Maintenance – Party Responsible)*.
- **Gardens/landscaping** – modifications to gardens or landscaping are not permitted under the Disability Modifications Program. All such requests are to be processed as non-approvals. (e.g., requests for stairs or handrails) to raised garden areas must be treated in accordance with the *Maintenance Policy (Cost of Maintenance – Party Responsible)*
- **Grab rails and Handrails** – may be installed to assist with access and mobility in toilets, bathrooms, internal /external doorways, and ramps. Grab rails and Handrails will not be provided in bedrooms.
- **Hot Water Services** – where a hand held shower is supplied by a gravity feed ceiling unit and causes fluctuations in temperature, the unit may be changed over to a mains- pressure unit. The costs must be charged to cost category 00.
- **Kitchen Cupboards** – where a tenant cannot bend to access lower cupboards, installation of an extra pantry cupboard or an overhead cupboard is recommended. Installation of “Lazy Susans” into existing kitchens is not allowed.
- **Lever Taps** – lever tap and lever tap heads will be supplied where deemed essential.

Note: external taps/garden taps will not be modified.

- **Lifting equipment / Change Tables** – Housing SA will provide structural alterations to areas where others have provided equipment. In these circumstances Housing SA will, where possible, provide suitable strengthening modifications for the utilising of the equipment. The tenant or their agency is responsible for the installation of the equipment.
- **Modified smoke alarms** - An appropriate smoke alarm system will be installed in newly constructed or modified dwellings in line with State Government Legislation. The system will be specific to the person’s requirements. It is the person’s responsibility to provide Housing SA with appropriate advice or details from a health professional. A Vibralarm will be installed where hearing loss is greater than or equal to 90dB.
- **Non-slip Floor Treatment** – non-slip floor treatments are only applied on tiles or concrete floors in *designated wet areas*,(e.g. bathroom and laundry floors.)

Note: kitchens are not designated wet areas. Externally, shiny concrete or slippery tiles on front or rear porches can also be treated to ensure safe access. Paths or perimeter paving will not be treated.

- **Ramps** – where deemed essential Housing SA will provide a maximum of two ramps to any one property. One ramp only is acceptable under certain circumstances,(e.g. where the person with the disability cannot mobilise independently).
- **Rainwater supply and Rainwater Tanks** – the provision of rainwater supply and rainwater tanks is not allowed under the *Housing Modifications for Persons with a Disability Policy*. All requests should be addressed under the *Maintenance Policy (Cost of Maintenance – Party Responsible)*
- **Remote Control Door Opening Device** – will only be provided in cases of Quadriplegia or where a particular disability results in the same loss of mobility equivalent to Quadriplegia.

Note: - remote control devices will not be provided for Roller doors

- **Safety Devices** – safety films on windows, heat detectors, timers for power points or any other electronic devices are deemed to be aids and are not related to “access”. All such devices remain the responsibility of the tenant or their advocate/agency.
- **Safety Switches (Residual Current Device)** – these units are not to be supplied on request. RCD’s will only be installed as part of a major disability modification as required by the SA Wiring Code.
- **Skylights / Lighting** – skylights are only to be installed where deemed essential due to a vision impairment substantiated by an Optometrist or the RSB. Fluorescent light fittings may also be installed where deemed essential. Down lights are non-standard and not to be installed in lieu of Fluorescent light fittings.
- **Sensor lights** – sensor lights only to be installed at main front entrance to assist persons with limited mobility (walking frames, wheelchair users) to enable safe access. A person who is reasonably ambulant would not meet this criteria.
- **Stoves / Ovens** – will be modified to suit access requirements, (e.g. installation of an elevated cooker or separate hot plate and wall oven where required)

Note 1: Housing SA does not supply or install timers or “cut-off” devices to stoves. All stoves and ovens are to be ordered through Electrolux and booked to cost category 00.

Note 2: - simple changeovers from gas to electric must also be booked to cost cat. 00.

- **Security Items** – where a person with disabilities requests installation of security aids to provide personal safety and protection (doors, screens, window locks, peepholes etc) , the request is to be processed as a non-approval and managed in accordance with the *Maintenance Policy (Cost of Maintenance – Party Responsible)*
- **Windows** – existing windows will be modified where possible to assist with ease of opening (e.g., sash lifters/handles) may be enlarged, or winders may be modified. New windows will not be installed under the Modifications Program; they must be assessed as part of the fabric replacement program.