



7.16 Absence from Property

Scope

This policy applies to all SGCH tenancies.

Principles

SGCH:

- Recognises that at times tenants will need to be absent from their property for medical, family, cultural and other reasons
- Seeks to maximise utilisation of scarce housing resources
- Ensures that properties are occupied to meet housing need.

Policy

Tenants need approval from SGCH to be away from their home for more than six weeks. SGCH will give approval if it is satisfied that:

- The rent will be paid.
- The property will be looked after.
- There is a valid reason for going away.

Period of absence

If a tenant will be away from their home for more than six weeks, they must request approval from SGCH, even if other members of the household remain in the home while the tenant is away.

Reasonable grounds for absence up to three months:

- Caring for sick/frail family members.
- Hospitalisation, institutional care, nursing home care or rehabilitation.
- Escaping domestic violence, harassment or threats of violence.
- Assisting with immigration matters in the country of origin.
- Holidays.
- Employment, education or training.
- Going to prison. (If the reason for imprisonment is related to a breach of the Tenancy Agreement, SGCH will commence action to terminate the tenancy).

Absences longer than three months will be considered on a case by case basis. If a tenant will be absent for longer than three months, SGCH will encourage the tenant to relinquish their tenancy. Refer to Eligibility (Tenancy Reinstatement).

Maintaining tenancy obligations while the tenant is away

The tenant must appoint an agent to act on their behalf while he/she is away. The agent must be over 18 and could be another household member, a family member, friend or solicitor.

The agent must inspect the property regularly and maintain it to the standard stated in the Tenancy Agreement.

If the agent is not currently a member of the household and wants to live in the dwelling while the tenant is away, he/she must apply to be an additional occupant.

Rent

For details regarding rent during approved absences, refer to the Rent (approved absences) policy.

Extended absence without approval

If SGCH finds a tenant has stayed away from their home for more than six weeks without informing SGCH, or has stayed away longer than the time SGCH approved, SGCH will make reasonable efforts to contact the tenant to clarify the situation.

SGCH may:

- Charge market rent on the property from the time the tenant has left, or from the date the approval expired, and
- Take action to end the tenancy. SGCH may take this action even if the rent is paid up and the property has been looked after.

Related documents/resources

- Policy – Rent (approved absences)
- Policy - Eligibility (Tenancy Reinstatement)