

Goods left behind policy

Purpose

This policy establishes the approach of West Turk Housing and Elderly Services Co-operative (West Turk) to goods left behind at the end of a tenancy.

Scope

This policy applies to all long-term rental properties owned or managed by West Turk.

Policy statement

West Turk will balance the need to ensure that properties are not left vacant for long periods due to uncollected goods with its legal obligations under the Rental Tenancies Act in relation to goods left behind by a tenant at the end of their tenancy. West Turk act in accordance with the requirements of the Rental Tenancies Act when removing and disposing of goods left behind.

End of a tenancy

At the conclusion of a tenancy, or when West Turk becomes aware of the death of a sole tenant, a representative of West Turk will enter the property to remove and destroy any perishable foods or dangerous goods.

Access to goods

West Turk will provide reasonable access for tenants to remove their goods or personal documents from the property in the seven (7) days following the termination of a tenancy.

Removal of goods

Seven (7) days after the termination of a tenancy, West Turk will arrange for the removal of any goods left behind in the property.

Personal goods (official documents, photographs, images on still and video cameras, computer hard-drives, letters) will be securely stored in the West Turk office for 90 days. If personal goods are not collected after 90 days, West Turk will comply with relevant laws relating to the destruction of personal goods.

Goods of no monetary value may be destroyed. Other goods will be placed into secure storage for 28 days, after which the goods may be sold at public auction.

The costs for removal and storage of goods will be passed onto the tenant, unless waived at the discretion of the Housing Manager.

Notification to tenants

If a forwarding address has been provided, West Turk will notify the tenant in writing:

- where their goods are stored and how they can be accessed
- fees associated with the removal and storage of their goods (where applicable)
- that goods may be sold at public auction if not reclaimed within 28 days
- date, time and location of public auction (where applicable)

If no forwarding address has been provided, West Turk will attempt to contact the tenant by telephone or email. West Turk will also apply the requirements of the Rental Tenancies Act in relation to public notices and sale of goods.

Reclaiming goods

West Turk will not unreasonably refuse to return goods to the tenant or person who owns them (if it is not the tenant). West Turk will advise the tenant of their right to appeal to VCAT if goods are not returned.

Sale of goods

If goods are sold at public auction, West Turk may retain the proceeds from the sale to recover the costs for removing, storing and selling the goods. Any remaining proceeds will be paid to the tenant in accordance with a VCAT order.

Legislation and standards

This policy implements West Turk's obligations under:

- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- Residential Tenancies Act
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities