



# Tenant Information Booklet

July 2023





# Nau mai, haere mai! Welcome to your new home.

This information book is for people who live in the Invercargill City Council Elderly Persons Housing Units. It informs tenants about their rights and obligations, and explains some of the services provided by Council. You can also refer to your tenancy agreement and the Elderly Persons Housing Policy.

If you ever have any questions about anything relating to your tenancy, contact your **Housing Officer** on **(03) 211 1777**.

## **A partnership between you and your landlord**

When you move into your unit you will find it clean and tidy. Any repairs that have not been completed before your arrival will be done as soon as possible. Your Housing Officer will carry out an inspection once you arrive to make sure everything is working and to answer any questions you might have.

# Facilities provided by Council

## Heating

Each Unit has appropriate heating, usually a heat pump. We will arrange for the regular cleaning and maintenance of heat pumps so you don't need to do anything to them.

## Laundry

All Units have an automatic washing machine. If your Unit has the appropriate tap fixtures you may wish to use your own washing machine. All costs associated with installation and maintenance of a tenant-owned washing machine are at the sole cost of the tenant, including any ongoing cost of storage of the Council-owned machine.

We don't supply clothes dryers. If you wish to install a dryer, they must be properly vented to the outside, or be a condenser dryer. All costs associated with the installation of venting systems will be at the sole cost of the tenant. Permission must be sought from Council before undertaking any such work.

Where a clothesline is provided, we will replace the wire if needed. Clotheslines are for communal use so please remember to cooperate with your neighbours regarding this.

## Cooking

All Units have cooking facilities, including an electric range or mini range.

## Television

We supply a UHF-style television aerial and connection cables. These are to remain at the property at all times. If you wish to use the aerial it is your responsibility to arrange the connection and tuning, and to meet any associated costs.

## Tenant supplied facilities

You need to supply your own refrigerators.

Curtain rails in Units remain the property of Council. If you wish to install net curtains or blinds you will need to pay for this, and you need to get Council's permission first.

Tenants are to supply all their own furniture.

## Costs

Tenants have to meet all other costs associated with their tenancy, including power, cleaning, and telecommunications.

## Alterations

As a general rule, you can't make any changes to your unit without Council's permission, but permission will not be unreasonably withheld. This includes TV aerials, SKY dishes, fibre connections and similar infrastructure, dryer vents, net curtains and blinds, and shelving. If any unauthorised alterations are found to have been made then you may be required to put the unit back to its original state.

If your needs change and your Unit no longer meets your requirements please talk to your Housing Officer. There may be ways that we can help.



# Maintenance

## Tenant responsibilities

You need to keep your unit clean, tidy and free of mice and other pests. All rubbish is to be wrapped in a rubbish bag and then put in one of the wheelie bins provided. It is the responsibility of tenants to put the wheelie bin out on the kerb for collection.

The immediate garden area around your Unit is for your use. Please make sure you keep it reasonably tidy. Green waste bins are available for tenant use. If you are unable to care for the garden, let us know and we may choose to re-establish it as a low maintenance garden instead.

Please don't smoke inside your unit.

It is recommended that tenants use the supplied shower curtain and air out their unit often to prevent a build-up of condensation. This can help to stop your Unit from becoming damp and prevent any mildew spots from appearing. When using a shower curtain, make sure it is hanging inside the shower stall so that the water will not drip onto the floor. A wet floor can be a hazard and a wooden floor may rot if it is wet often. Please make sure you use the extractor fan which has been installed in the bathroom to assist with ventilation and reducing mould.

Make sure you only flush toilet paper down the toilet and if the toilet or any drains become blocked please let us know as soon as possible.

Tenants will be required to pay to replace any lost keys, and to pay for after-hours call outs for lockouts, which can be expensive. It is a good idea to give a relative or friend a spare key in case you lock yourself out. If you have problems with your lock or if you lose your keys be sure to let us know.

Tenants must ensure their oven is kept clean as this ensures it functions efficiently, reduces fire risk and helps preserve its lifespan.

## Council responsibilities

Council will ensure that the unit is clean and tidy and free of defects before a new tenant moves in.

Council will ensure all the supply and waste pipes work properly, and will repair these in the event of a breakage or blockage. Council will arrange for any repairs to electric power points. Council will replace any windows that are broken as a result of a natural disaster or accident, unless the tenant was at fault in which case they may be required to pay for the replacement. Council will additionally repair or replace any chattels listed in the Tenancy Agreement.

Council is responsible for maintaining all the grounds except the individual tenant's gardens.

## Building maintenance hours:

8am – 5pm, Monday to Friday

Telephone (03) 211 1777

Our urgent repairs after hours number is also (03) 211 1777 and will be answered by our after-hours staff. However Contractors may not be available immediately.



## Repairs

If something breaks or needs repair, the fastest way to get the problem fixed is to ring Council and report your request. You can do this by phoning **211 1777**.

Remember to tell the person:

- **That you are a council tenant**
- Your name, address and telephone number.
- The nature and location of the fault.
- How and when it is convenient for the repair person to get into your house. If you give permission, the Property Maintenance Officer will use their own keys to enter in your absence.

If the repair is not completed within a reasonable period, or if the problem reoccurs, please telephone the Council again. If you don't let us know, we may think that everything is all right.

If you continue to get unsatisfactory results, contact your Housing Officer.

# Being a good neighbour

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The nature of the rental units mean tenants are living in very close proximity to each other. Tenants are asked to keep the following points in mind:

- The grounds are common areas. All tenants have a right to use them.
- Some of your neighbours may be frail. Make sure your grandchildren and any other young visitors know that they mustn't ride bicycles or skate boards on the property or run around carelessly.
- Driveways are not to be played in by visiting tamariki.
- Tenants are responsible for the behaviour of visitors, including if they make noise or cause a nuisance.
- Your unit is your home. You can refuse entry to anyone you do not wish to be there (except for Council Officers and then only when appropriate notice has been given). Similarly, your neighbours are entitled to their privacy. You should only ever go into their unit at their express invitation to do so.
- You and your neighbours have a right to peace. It is generally considered unreasonable to be doing noisy household tasks such as vacuuming and using the washing machine, or to be playing the television or radio loudly, between about 9pm and 7.30am. It also helps to be gentle when closing doors and cupboards.
- Neighbours should look out for one another. If, for example, a neighbour's blinds have not gone up by the usual time, phone or knock on the door to see that everything is all right. If there's no response, check with the immediate neighbours. They may know where the neighbour is. If they cannot help, contact the Housing Officer, or the After Hours service if it is out of normal work hours. Someone will call and check that all is well.
- Some of your neighbours may need help. For example, if you're fit and able, see if they would like you to put out the rubbish.
- Please do not collect other tenant's mail, unless you are asked to. Some people prefer to be quite private.
- Pets are usually very important to their owners. If your neighbour has a cat, please do not feed it unless asked to and discourage it from spending time in your Unit.

## Neighbour disputes

Occasionally disputes can arise between neighbours. If this happens, it's helpful for tenants to try to solve it themselves if it is possible and safe to do so. If this is not possible or successful, tenants should ask the housing team to assist.

## Complaints

Complaints can be made to Council by phone, email, in writing or in person. Certain complaints need to be in writing and we will let you know if this is the case.



## Security

- If you believe you are at risk from a prowler or intruder, dial 111 and ask for the Police.
- Check the identity of any unknown callers. Ask for proof. If a stranger asks to use the phone, say you don't have one, or offer to make the call yourself but do not allow the person into your unit.
- Do not open the door to a stranger. If a stranger will not go away, phone the Police and report a prowler.
- Do not leave your unit without locking doors and windows. If you are outside, ensure your entry door and any open windows are visible to you.
- **Don't leave spare keys under door mats or rubbish bins.**
- **Prepare for emergencies by giving a key to someone trustworthy, such as a family member who lives nearby.**

# Safety

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- **Have a telephone beside your bed.**
- **Don't run electric cords across floors or doorways.**
- Keep the top of your heater clear.
- Keep combustible materials away from heaters.
- Don't use floor rugs or mats as they can be a trip hazard.
- **If you need extra handrails, ask the Housing Officer.**
- **Get to know your neighbours and look out for them.**
- If you go away, let someone know where you'll be.
- Advise maintenance about any faulty outside lights.
- **Advise the Housing Officer about any shrubs obstructing paths or lighting.**
- Take careful note of where you store books – not on high shelves above where you sit or above your bed.
- If you have a wall unit or book case you bring into the unit, we would suggest securing it to the wall with “L” brackets.
- TV sets should be a close to floor level as possible, or secured where appropriate.

Council suggests that tenants discuss what to do in the event of an earthquake, such as:

- Agree on a central place for all of you to meet in the event of damage to your units.
- Agree not to leave the complex without letting each other know where you are going.
- Exchange details of each others' emergency contact person
- If you do leave the complex, leave a note on your door stating how you can be contacted. This note can be prepared in advance and kept by the door in the event you have to leave in a hurry.

# Earthquake precautions

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In case of an earthquake, Council recommends tenants take their own precautions against possessions falling onto them and injuring them, such as:

- Not storing heavier items of crockery in higher cupboards or display on high shelves, particularly above where you sit or above your bed.

## Emergency kits for tenant's consideration

Council would advise every resident to have an emergency kit prepared in advance, which could include:

- All your medications, which should be kept together in an easily accessible place in case of emergency.
- Important papers - passport, birth certificate or something that identifies you.
- Water for three days.
- Food - canned or freeze dried.
- Can opener.
- Torch/batteries.
- Radio/batteries.
- Cell phone and charger.
- Warm clothing and sturdy footwear.
- Blankets, hat.

## Smoke alarms

Council will ensure smoke alarms are provided and will test them at least annually.

If the alarm beeps or chirps for no reason please contact your Housing Support Officer.

## Insurance

The Council has insured the building in accordance with the Tenancies Act. However, this insurance will not cover tenant furniture or personal belongings. Tenants are advised to arrange their own insurance to cover breakages, personal items, and furniture.

Fire is a real risk for all tenants. Cooking should not be left unattended, and clothing or bedding should not be left too close to heaters.

## Help with your rent

If you are having trouble paying your rent, you might be able to apply for an **accommodation supplement from Work and Income (WINZ)**. Alternatively there are organisations that can help with budgeting advice, including from the Citizens Advice Bureau and Jubilee Budget and Advisory Service.

# Ending a tenancy

Tenants must inform Council in writing at least 28 days before they wish to end a tenancy. It is the tenant's responsibility to make the proper arrangements to disconnect utilities, such as the phone or internet, and to get a final meter reading for the electricity.

Tenants should leave the Unit clean and tidy. This means that you must:

- Wash the paintwork.
- Clean the carpet and vinyl.
- Scrub the toilet, basin and bath or shower box.
- Tidy your own garden.

- Clean oven and wipe out all cupboards
- Take away any rubbish.

Tenants must leave the Unit in the same state it was provided, and return all keys to Council.

Council will do an inspection after you have moved out, and you are welcome to attend this. If the Unit is found not to have been left in good condition, Council may take steps to recover the cost from you to have it put right.

If you cannot leave the Unit on the day you told Council you would, please tell the Housing Officer as soon as possible.





# Quick reference

## Maintenance and lockouts:

Property team

8am-5pm Monday to Friday

(03) 211 1777

## Emergency after hours and public holidays

(03) 211 1777

## Work and Income

0800 559 009



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CITY COUNCIL