

## **T 4.09 Absence from Property Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

This policy sets out how Common Equity NSW (CENSW) defines and manages tenant absences from their property. It also outlines the circumstances in which a tenant may apply for reduced rent during an extended absence.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all tenancies managed by CENSW.

### **3. Policy**

CENSW recognises that tenants may need to be temporarily absent from their home for a variety of reasons. While we support reasonable absences, social housing is a limited resource and should be lived in by the people it is allocated to.

Tenants are expected to notify CENSW of any planned absence longer than two weeks. Any absences over six weeks will be assessed and approved on a case-by-case basis, in line with this policy.

#### **3.1 Requesting an Absence from Property**

Tenants must:

- provide advance notice of absences in writing (using the Absence from Property form)
- appoint an agent if the absence is longer than two weeks (this is someone who can talk to CENSW, assist with inspections or repairs, and ensure the property is secure)
- provide contact details while away

Acceptable reasons for absences over six weeks include:

- caring for sick or frail family members
- hospitalisation, institutional care, nursing home care or rehabilitation
- escaping domestic violence, harassment or threats of violence
- assisting with immigration matters in your country of origin
- holidays
- employment, education or training
- incarceration

#### **a. Approving an Absence from Property**

We will approve your absence from property if we are satisfied that each of the following is met:

- tenancy charges, such as rent and water usage, will be paid
- the property will be adequately cared for
- there is an acceptable reason for going away
- an agent has been appointed to act on behalf of the tenant (the agent must be over 18 years of age)

#### **b. Reduced Rent During Absences**

Tenants may apply for a rent reduction for up to three months if they are away from the property and meet one of the following conditions:

- They are in hospital, rehabilitation, or institutional care and are paying a fee for the stay.
- They are incarcerated and not receiving any income during this time.

Tenants must provide supporting documentation (e.g., hospital admission letter, Centrelink letter, confirmation from a correctional facility) when applying for reduced rent.

#### **c. Extended Absences of Failure to Return**

If a tenant:

- remains away for more than 3 months without approval, or
- fails to return at the agreed time

CENSW may:

- seek to end the tenancy (see Ending a Tenancy Policy), or
- consider transferring tenancy to an eligible household member (see Recognition as a Tenant (Succession) Policy)

#### **d. Unapproved Absences**

If a tenant is away from the property for over six weeks without approval from CENSW, this may be treated as a breach of the Residential Tenancy Agreement, and we may take action to end the tenancy in line with the Ending a Tenancy Policy.

### **4. Appeals**

Tenants have the right to appeal decisions made under this policy. The CENSW Appeals Policy has more information on appeals.

### **5. Related Legislation, Documents and Policies**

- [Residential Tenancies Act 2010 \(NSW\)](#)
- Rent and Debt Management Policy
- Ending a Tenancy Policy
- Recognition as a Tenant (Succession) Policy
- Appeals Policy

## 6. Variations

Name and Designation of Approver	Head, Co-operative Services
Contact/Responsible Delegation	Cooperative and Tenant Services Manager
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