

Co-op Homes

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PART ONE – POLICY

1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 Co-op Homes recognises that the delivery of an efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service is both critical in determining tenant satisfaction with the housing service and essential to the proper management of its housing stock. Co-op Homes will therefore aim to ensure that the repairs and maintenance service provides value for money, properly discharges its obligations to tenants and is responsive to their needs.
- 1.2 The Housing Corporation expects all Registered Social Landlords to develop and manage good quality homes that seek to meet people's needs and preferences now and in the future ensuring that:
- Homes are well maintained and in a lettable condition
 - Maintenance is carried out effectively and responsively and in ways that reflect residents preferences
 - Necessary investment in the future of the stock is a key priority
 - Standards of new development provision are met
- 1.3 All RSLs are expected to ensure that their stock meets the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. The Decent Homes Standard deals with four main criteria:
- Fitness for habitation
 - Disrepair
 - Reasonably Modern Facilities
 - Thermal Comfort

Co-op Homes 330 General Needs properties meet this standard and stock condition information informs the planned maintenance programme.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Co-op Homes aims to provide residents with a high quality repairs service which is easy and reliable to use. We want to ensure that all of the homes we manage are maintained in reasonable condition and that customers get a fair and consistent service from us
- 2.2 In order to achieve this, Co-op Homes will implement a planned maintenance programme to maintain homes in good condition.
- 2.3 Co-op Homes will seek to achieve an appropriate balance between reactive and planned investment in its stock. This balance will alter over time to have a greater emphasis on planned rather than reactive investment.
- 2.4 Planned Maintenance

Co-op Homes will have a programme of planned maintenance which will:-

- Review the external condition of all homes on a 5 yearly cycle and take action, where necessary to repair, renew or redecorate elements which form part of the main fabric of the dwelling (e.g. Roofs, windows, walls)
- Review the main services and equipment to our properties on a regular cycle (dictated by the needs of the services and service installations) and put in place a programme of servicing, repair and renewal to ensure that main services and equipment are maintained in good working order. This will cover lifts, pumps, communal lighting, lightning conductors, water tanks etc.
- Develop a programme of internal repair, upgrade and renewal to ensure that the internal fabric of our homes meets and maintains the decent homes standard or any future standard put in place by Government.

2.5 Reactive Maintenance

Co-op Homes will provide a reactive maintenance service which will:-

- Enable customers to order emergency repairs on a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week basis
- Offer an appointment for all routine repair jobs (any job for which the target time is more than 7 calendar days);
- Provide an acknowledgement of your repair request, giving a unique reference number and details of the repair and target time;
- Carry out repairs in line with published timescales
- Check the quality of work carried out, including checking directly with a proportion of customers
- Include general quality and satisfaction checks with customers and continually improve the service in the light of feedback where possible
- Require contractors and staff to comply with our code of conduct to ensure that high standards of customer care are met.

2.6 Equality & Diversity

Co-op Homes will ensure that all customers are treated equitably in respect of the repair and maintenance of their homes and that all residents have equal access to the service.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Reactive Repairs

Co-op Homes will ensure that all staff and customers are aware of the relative obligations of Co-op Homes (as landlord) and the customer (as tenant) in respect of repairs and maintenance. Repair obligations will be published and updated regularly and training and guidance will be provided to staff.

3.2 **Co-op Homes** will ensure that all new tenants are provided with information about how to access the repairs service, what to do in an emergency and how to complain if the service does not respond appropriately to their needs.

3.3 Appointments

Appointments will be offered for all repair jobs which have a target time of more than 7 calendar days.

3.4 Priority Times

Co-op Homes operates priority bands as set out below. We will aim to honour these timescales and may escalate any repair where there is deemed to be an overriding health and safety, medical, welfare or social need to do so.

Where work is not completed within the specified timescale, customers may be able to request that work is allocated to an alternative contractor under the Government Right To Repair legislation. If the second contractor fails to carry out the work on time, the customer will be entitled to compensation as set out in the legislation.

Priority Bands

- **Emergency** – Any repair which is required to make safe a situation where there is an imminent threat to life, limb or major damage to property. These repairs are carried out within 24 hours.
- **Urgent** - Any repair which is required to rectify a problem which causes significant reduction in amenity or comfort for customers in their home. These repairs are carried out within 7 calendar days.
- **Routine** - Any repair which is required to rectify a problem within the customers home where this is the responsibility of Co-op Homes but where the problem is not causing significant loss of amenity or comfort for the resident. These repairs are carried out within 30 days.

3.5 **Programmed - Any** repair work which requires planning or co-ordination with other services in order to complete the work or where the work cannot reasonably be completed within a 30 day period will be programmed. The customer will be given a specific target date for completion of the works.

3.6 Fencing & Gates

The tenancy Landlord and Tenant Act states that boundaries and fences must be kept in reasonable repair by the landlord. This repairs policy makes it the responsibility of Co-op Homes.

In practice, few of our customers can afford to re-fence their properties and this leads to estates and boundaries looking untidy and unkempt. This policy document:-

- Specifically accepts fencing as a Co-op Homes responsibility
- Only to be carried out as part of planned programmes
- Only like for like replacement

We can use discretion to carry out making safe repairs under the normal repairs responsibilities.

3.7 Internal Joinery

Internal joinery (doors, cills, and cupboards other than the kitchen cupboards) will **not** be replaced or repaired by Co-op Homes unless the damage is

caused by rot, woodworm or is beyond economic repair due to age. Under the letting standard properties must be let with a door to each main room and beyond this, we are only responsible for failure caused by circumstances beyond the control of the resident.

3.8 Vermin

Responsibilities are as follows:

Vermin	Resident	Co-op Homes
Rats, mice, foxes, squirrels etc	Yes	Where multiple properties are affected or as recharge item
Wasps Nests	Yes	Where multiple properties are affected or as recharge
Cockroaches	No	Yes
Ants	Yes	No
Pharaoh Ants	No	Yes
Bedbugs	Yes	Where multiple properties are affected or as a recharge item

3.9 Decorations Required Following Essential Work

This has not been a clear area and has led to customers being asked to carry out decorative work following essential maintenance or repair. This appears unfair and is not a practice we wish to continue with.

The new policy makes it clear that:-

- **Co-op Homes** will make good any area damaged by essential repair work unless the work was required due to damage caused by the resident or a guest/relative etc or by negligence or misuse of the property
- Making good will be to a reasonable standard and will not necessarily be like for like

This latter point is important. An example of a difficult case is where Co-op Homes attends a water leak from a bathroom where the customer has fitted expensive ceramic tiled flooring which has to be lifted in order to repair the leak. Co-op Homes would, in that case, offer vinyl flooring (as per our normal standard) to repair the damage caused by the leak – but would not renew the ceramic tiles. In cases where customers have installed their own equipment, Co-op Homes is not always responsible for the maintenance but may have to carry out works to protect other properties.

3.10 Rechargeable Works

Residents of Co-op Homes properties have certain responsibilities in relation to repair and maintenance and care of their homes. Where a customer is responsible for a repair or has caused damage or allowed disrepair to go unreported, Co-op Homes may carry out repair work and recharge the cost to the customer.

3.11 Repairs Required Before You Move Home

An outgoing tenant may be required to remove non-standard fittings and fixtures or equipment from their homes at their own expense prior to departure. Any costs incurred by Co-op Homes as a result of DIY or repair work carried out by customers to a poor standard or where fixtures and fittings have to be removed by Co-op Homes in order to bring a property up to a lettable standard, will be recharged to the customer.

3.12 Out of Hours Repairs

Co-op Homes will provide an emergency repairs service outside of normal working hours. Non-emergency repairs must be reported during normal working hours.

3.13 Monitoring Quality and Satisfaction

Co-op Homes wishes to understand how customers experience its services and to amend and adapt services to achieve high levels of satisfaction from customers. In order to achieve this, Co-op Homes uses a variety of methods to get feedback from customers about the service:

- Direct telephone surveys about individual repairs
- Post works inspection to assess quality and satisfaction
- General surveys about the repairs/ maintenance service
- Customer feedback slips issued as part of the repair orders

3.14 The feedback will be assessed by Co-op Homes on a regular and ongoing basis and the service is adapted to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

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PART TWO – PROCEDURES

1 Receiving Repairs Requests

- 1.1 Repair requests can be received by phone, letter, in person, email or fax at Co-op Homes' offices in Brentford, Reading and Stowmarket.
- 1.2 Employees need to be aware of the implications of giving information about the tenant or the tenancy to someone (especially on the telephone) who is masquerading as the tenant and their responsibilities as employees of Co-op Homes under the Data Protection Act to maintain customer confidentiality. The Co-op Homes Data Protection Act procedures should be followed at all times.
- 1.3 Any employee may receive repair requests and after identifying the priority of the repair or vulnerability of the customer, to then raise a **Maintenance Request** on the OmniLedger system following the guidance in the **OmniLedger Repair Order Processing Guidance Manual**.
- 1.4 The Manager responsible for Responsive Repairs will monitor the Maintenance Requests daily to ensure that all Maintenance Requests have been turned into Repair Orders or have been cancelled with an explanation why and a record of how the tenant was informed.

2 Pre Repair Order Checks

- 2.1 Before proceeding to raise a repairs order the following checks will be made:

- **Do we manage the property?**

Repairs should only be carried out on properties which Co-op Homes manages. All such properties for which Co-op Homes has responsibility will be recorded on the Property Database in OmniLedger.

- **Is the repair the landlord's obligation?**

Co-op Homes publishes details of its repairing obligations and the obligations of its tenants in their tenancy agreement and handbook. Repairs should only be carried out which are the landlord's obligation. See Repairs Policy in Part one of this document. If a Maintenance Request is raised for a repair which is not a landlord's obligation the tenant shall be contacted as soon as this is discovered and informed that the Repair Order will not be raised and the Maintenance Request then cancelled with an appropriate explanation.

- **Should the tenant be recharged for the repair?**

If the disrepair is not as a result of fair wear and tear then the tenant should be informed that a charge will be made for the repair under the **Rechargeable Repairs Procedure**.

- **Is the repair under any warrantee or defects period?**

Before raising a Repairs Order a check should be made on previous repairs in accordance with the OmniLedger Repair Processing Guidance

Manual to see whether the repair is under any type of warranty or defects liability period. If the responsive repair was undertaken in the last 6 months (12 months for electrical or heating jobs) the tenant should be contacted to determine whether this is the same repair and then the contractor shall be recalled to attend to the defect.

If the disrepair is associated with past planned maintenance works and is still within its defects or warrantee period the Maintenance Request should be referred to the Planned Maintenance Surveyor to investigate. If the disrepair is in regards to an item recently installed still under warranty (e.g. a new boiler within the last 12 months), then OmniLedger will flash a warning message advising to contact the company who performed the original installation. A new repair order should **not** be raised in this instance.

It is the responsibility of Housing Assistants and Officers to inform the Technical Services Surveyor or in his/her absence the Operations Administrator when new installations have been completed in a property. The Technical Services Surveyor or the Operations Administrator will then input the warranty details onto OmniLedger.

Once the warranty period has elapsed, the warning message will no longer appear and a maintenance request/repair order should be raised as per the process outlined below.

- **What category of repair. Emergency, Urgent, Routine or Planned?**

Determine which category the repair falls under i.e. Emergency, Urgent, Routine or Planned in accordance with the repairs policy in Part one and the leaflet "What you can expect from our repairs service".

- **Does the disrepair require a Pre-inspection**

Wherever possible, orders should be raised without pre-inspection as they cause delays and increase the cost of the repairs service. Repairs Locator software is supplied to assist the employee in identifying the correct schedule of rates item to raise jobs accurately. However, there are occasions where pre-inspections are required because the exact nature of the repair cannot be ascertained from the tenant and in such cases the person raising the Maintenance Order will request a pre-inspection from the surveyor. The Surveyor will either undertake the pre-inspection or refer to the local office with appropriate technical advice to enable the housing officer to do the inspection.

- **Do you have delegated authority to raise the order?**

The delegated levels of authority to raise repair orders are set down in the Financial Regulations and the OmniLedger system has been set up with user authority to ensure that employees can only authorise orders within the limits of their authority. At the point where the system asks for authorisation, if the amount exceeds the level of authorisation the repair order will be 'frozen' until released by a person with the appropriate level of authority. An email should be sent by the person raising the repair order to the Manager to request that s/he authorises 'frozen' orders.

3 Raising a Maintenance Request

- 3.1 In most cases a Maintenance Request should be raised on the OmniLedger system as this ensures that the repair request is logged with the date and time that the request was received. Essential access and contact details are also captured by logging the Maintenance Request.
- 3.2 A decision on whether to arrange a pre-inspection is made at the time of logging the Maintenance Request. If a pre-inspection is arranged an email must be sent to the surveyor.
- 3.3 In raising confirmation orders for emergency work undertaken out of hours it is not necessary to raise a Maintenance Request.

4 Placing a Repairs Order

- 4.1 Repairs Orders should be raised on the OmniLedger system by following the **Repairs Order Processing Guidance Manual**.
- 4.2 Depending on whether the property concerned is directly managed by Co-op Homes or a Primary Co-operative different rules for authorisation may apply. Primary Co-ops each have their own database on the OmniLedger system and their own repairs policies. **Reference to the Primary Co-ops' own repair policies, delegated levels of authority and the scope of Co-op Homes' responsibility under the relevant management agreement should be made before placing repair orders for Primary Co-ops. If in doubt advice should be sought from a Manager before placing a repair order for a Primary Co-op.**
- 4.3 Properties have been divided into geographical regions with different contractors providing services in different regions. The OmniLedger system will identify the appropriate contractor for the geographical area through the selection of the TRADE. For guidance in raising a repairs order see the OmniLedger Repair Order Processing Guidance Manual.
- 4.4 The Repair Ordering Schedule (ROS), which is a shortened version of the NHF Schedule of Rates (SoR), and the NHF SoR version 5.1, have both been loaded onto the OmniLedger system. The ROS should be used for raising responsive repair orders in most cases. This is a pre-priced schedule which provides the repair description and the committed expenditure for financial management and monitoring. There are a number of ways that the correct schedule of rates code can be entered. The correct ROS code can be identified by entering the first letter of the TRADE code e.g. C for carpentry, P for plumbing etc. Alternatively the Repairs Locator diagnostic software can be used to identify the repair which will show the correct SoR code.
- 4.5 The SoR is available as a support to the ROS if a more detailed description is required, or after a pre-inspection and for ordering repairs on voids. It is envisaged that the majority of repair orders will be raised with ROS codes and the SoR primarily used by the surveyor and voids inspector.

5 Appointments

- 5.1 Appointments should be made for all Urgent and Routine repairs. For Emergency repairs the tenant should be informed that these will be completed within 24 hours. The Housing Assistant should contact the contractor to book an appointment which meets the requirements of the target date and the tenant's availability as noted on the Maintenance Request. The tenant should then be telephoned to confirm the appointment.

6 Issuing Repair Orders to contractors

- 6.1 The OmniLedger system allows repair orders to be emailed to the contractor who should respond that the email has been received. Where the contractor does not have email a hard copy of the order should be mailed.
- 6.2 For Emergency repairs the order should be sent as confirmation (either by email or fax and post) although the contractor will act on the verbal instruction and the repair order number to identify the job.
- 6.3 OmniLedger generates a hard copy repair order and a confirmation letter to the tenant. If the order is being emailed to the contractor a hard copy is not required to be produced. In all cases (except for Emergency repairs) the tenant's confirmation letter should be printed and posted.

7 Authority Levels

- 7.1 The OmniLedger system holds the delegated authority levels of employees and will automatically prevent the order being raised until authorised by a senior manager if the person raising the works order exceeds their limit.
- 7.2 The limits for repair orders are
- Housing Assistants up to £500
 - Estates Officers up to £500
 - Senior Housing Officers up to £750
 - Planned Maintenance Surveyor up to £1500
 - Senior Manager up to £2000
 - Finance Director up to £7500
 - General Manager up to £20000

8 Variations to Repair Orders

- 8.1 The contractor may vary jobs up to the value of £50 if it is found that the work is more extensive than first thought. Beyond £50 the contractor must seek authority from Co-op Homes. The following delegated authority levels exist for employees in the Financial Regulations are:
- Estates Assistants up to £100
 - Estates/Housing Officers up to £150
 - Senior Housing Officer up to £250
 - Planned Maintenance Surveyor up to £500
 - Senior Manager up to £1000
 - Finance Director up to £5000
 - General Manager up to £10000

- 8.2 Variations of orders should be raised in accordance with the OmniLedger Repair Order Processing Manual which will ensure that the repair continues to be measured from the date of the original request.
- 8.3 Variations will only be granted where the job that needs to be done is significantly different from the job ordered. There will be no granting of variation to the target time for jobs unless the new SoR item has a longer target period in which case the target will automatically change.

9 Escalation of repair orders

- 9.1 The target times for completing a repair are set by the priority band. Repairs should not be escalated to a higher priority band unless there are serious health & safety issues, medical, social or welfare need. Before escalating a repair the housing assistant should seek authority from a Manager and enter a note on the system as a record to form an audit trail.
- 9.2 The Manager will monitor escalated repair orders on a weekly basis and identify any training issues which arise from the results.

10 Cancelling Repair Orders

- 10.1 Repair orders should be cancelled if they have been raised in error and a note added to the order as an audit trail to explain why the job has been cancelled.
- 10.2 Where the tenant fails to keep the appointment made with the contractor, the housing assistant will phone the tenant to make another appointment. If there is no response from the tenant then the order shall be cancelled with a note to that effect and a letter sent to the tenant to inform them. Similarly where the tenant fails to keep a second appointment the job will be cancelled and a letter sent to the tenant.

11 Chasing out-of-date orders

- 11.1 The contractor will report progress on repairs due to be completed on a daily basis. Target times are pre-set in the schedule of rates.
- 11.2 The housing assistant will run a report from OmniLedger on a daily basis to identify any jobs which were due to be completed and contact the contractor to chase progress.
- 11.3 The tenant must be contacted to apologise for the failure of the contractor to visit and arrange a new appointment. A note with the reason for the failure and the method used to contact the tenant should be placed on the notes record.

12 Job Recalls

- 12.1 The Defect Liability Period (DLP) for a repair job is 6 months for general repairs and 12 months for mechanical/electrical works.
- 12.2 If a tenant calls to say that there has been a fault with a repair within the time frames above, a new repair order must be raised stating clearly on the order that the job is a recall. An appointment must be made with the customer as usual, but the housing assistant must not allocate an ROS to the job.

13 Completions

- 13.1 The contractor will notify Co-op Homes of all jobs completed as soon as they have been done and the housing assistant will record this on the Repairs Order in accordance with the guidance.

14 Satisfaction surveys

- 14.1 Attempts at contacting 100% of tenants who have had repairs completed and have a telephone, will be made by the housing assistant within 2 working days of the repairs completion. The tenant will be asked a series of pre-determined questions and the housing assistant will log the responses on OmniLedger.
- 14.2 The repair order confirmation letter includes a questionnaire which the tenant can return to confirm that the job is complete. These should be recorded on OmniLedger.

15 Post Inspections

- 15.1 Post Inspections will be undertaken on a random 10% of repairs orders. An OmniLedger report will be produced weekly by the Manager who will arrange for housing assistants to contact tenants by phone, email or letter to arrange an appointment to inspect the repair.
- 15.2 Any customers who reports a completed repair as unsatisfactory or who is unsatisfied with the standard of repair when contacted by phone for the satisfaction survey shall be offered a post-inspection.
- 15.3 Any repair over £500 in value shall be post inspected.
- 15.4 All post-inspections will count towards the 10% target.

16 Invoicing

- 16.1 When invoices are submitted, a check will be made that the invoice matches the estimate on the repair order generated by the SoR before approval. There is a minimum value of £25 charge for repairs. There is no allowance for abortive visits if the contractor claims the tenant did not keep the appointment.

17 Out of Hours Repairs

- 17.1 Outside of normal office hours the phones are routed to an agency that take repair calls and instructs the contractor to attend emergencies. The following working day the housing assistant will gather the information on what emergencies were raised out of hours and raise repair orders retrospectively.

18 Key Performance Indicators

- 18.1 Weekly, Monthly and Annual reports will be produced by the Manager to measure the performance of the repairs service and the contractors. These reports will measure:
- The proportions of responsive repairs raised as Emergencies, Urgent and Routine.
 - Percentage of jobs completed within target completion times.

- Appointments kept
- Quality of repairs post-inspected
- Tenant satisfaction with quality of repairs
- Tenant satisfaction with contractor's performance

18.2 Quarterly reports will be made by the Manager to the Management Committee on the performance of the Repairs Service.

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