

HOUSING TASMANIA FACT SHEET

If you are going to be away

Everyone needs to go away from time to time. If you are going away for more than a few days, it really helps if you tell us. Otherwise, we might think that you've abandoned your home, and then we might think we can give the home to someone else.

It's also a good idea to ask a friend, family member or other person that you trust to keep an eye on your home while you're away. This person is called an agent and we explain more about their role on page 2. You also need to keep paying the rent while you're away.



What if you're going to be away for a while?

If you're going to be away for more than eight weeks, you must let us know the reason. Some of the reasons that you might go away include:

- a long holiday – the rules say that you can only do this once every 12 months
- you or someone in your family is sick, in hospital, in respite or in rehab
- you have to look after someone in your family
- you have to go to prison
- you have to travel because someone died
- you have to travel because of a family crisis
- you are studying somewhere away from your home
- you have to go away to stay safe from family violence or other problems where you are at risk.

Sometimes, these reasons can take more than eight weeks to sort out. In this case, you need to contact us and ask for an extension.



There may be problems if you are going to prison for a reason that is against the rules of your lease or tenancy agreement. For example, if you have committed a drug offence, this is against the rules of your lease.

What if you'll be away for eight weeks or more?

If you're going to be away for more than eight weeks, you need to apply. We need to understand why you're going to be away for so long, and when you're coming back. We want to work with you to make sure that you can keep your home. But there are a lot of people waiting for a place to live. If a home is vacant, we'd like to give it to someone who needs it.

Can other people live in the home while you're away?

It might be that you're going away, but the other people in your household will continue to live in the home. In this case, you need to tell us who is living in the home and how much they are earning.

Responsible adults can live in the home while you're away. However, children under 16 years can't stay there without adult supervision.

Keeping an eye on the home

If you're going away for more than a few days, we'd like you to appoint an agent. This means asking someone – like a friend, family member or other person you trust – to keep an eye on the home while you're away.

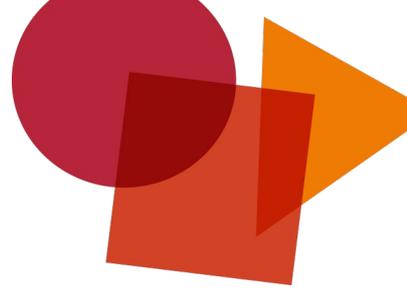
The agent can stay in the home while you're away if they want to.

They can be one of the adults who usually lives in the home, or another person. The agent needs to:

- make sure the home is well cared for
- tell us about any problems, like a break in or any maintenance that is needed. For example, if a window is broken or a wall is damaged – noting that it will be your responsibility to fix most things.

Can you sub-let the home?

Sub-letting is when you rent the house to another person. You cannot do this. Having an agent live in your home while you're away is not the same as sub-letting. It's fine for the agent to live in the home while you're not there, as long as you let Housing Tasmania know about it.



Getting more support

Have you heard of Housing Connect? This is the way to get housing and support in Tasmania. Housing Connect can work out what kind of housing you need and can help you if your circumstances change. This service is for both new and existing tenants. If you are going to be away for a while, you may find that Housing Connect can help you access a better housing option. Housing Connect can also help you with support to stay in your current home.



Andrea's story

One day last year, Andrea received a distressing phone call. Her Mum, who lives in Melbourne, had a stroke.

Andrea rushed to Melbourne to look after her Mum. She forgot to tell Housing Tasmania that she was going to be away. Andrea's Mum needed a lot of care. In the end, it took nearly five months to find a good nursing home for her to live in.

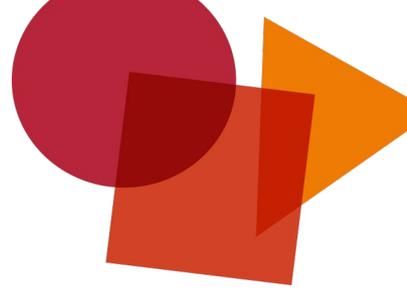
During this time, Housing Tasmania tried to contact Andrea many, many times. We phoned her and we sent letters. However, we never got a response.

When Andrea got back to Tasmania, she was shocked to find out that she couldn't live in her home anymore. We thought she'd abandoned the home, and we gave it to someone else who was on the waiting list. We also removed Andrea's belongings, which we must do by law in these situations.

If Andrea had phoned or emailed us while she was away, she wouldn't have lost her home. Andrea could also have asked Housing Connect for support at any time while she was away.

How to tell us if you're going to be away

Please give us a call on 1300 665 663. Please tell us how we can contact you while you're away. And please tell us who you have asked to keep an eye on the home.



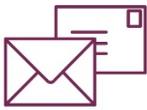
Our contact details



Housing Tasmania – 1300 665 663



TTY users phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 13 55 13.
Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for
1300 13 55 13. Internet relay users connect to the NRS
then ask for 1300 13 55 13.



Department of Communities Tasmania
GPO Box 65
HOBART TAS 7001



www.communities.tas.gov.au/housing