



ABORIGINAL HOUSING VICTORIA

Code of Conduct for Contractors

April 2023

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1. Purpose

Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) employs private contractors¹ to carry out maintenance and upgrade work on our portfolio of properties. This work ranges from minor repairs to major upgrading. It usually takes place while properties are occupied by renters. This may create some inconvenience for both renter and contractors. At times, AHV engages other contractors to undertake works that necessitate their attendance at rented premises, e.g. property valuers.

To ensure the work is done as smoothly as possible, renters and contractors need to cooperate with each other. They also need to honour agreements and treat each other and each other's property with care, courtesy and respect.

The Code of Conduct for Contractors sets out the standard of behaviour expected of contractors, their employees and their subcontractors when they are conducting work in occupied premises on behalf of AHV, by promoting integrity and ethical behaviour consistent with AHV's purpose and values, and to guide contractor conduct when interacting with AHV staff and clients.

AHV does not engage contractors who do not agree to follow this code.

This document also includes guidelines for AHV renters to successfully navigate through the shared responsibility to ensure:

- a consistent and quality maintenance and other contracted services ;
- the support of its employees in the ongoing management of the service
- ensuring a high level of Contractor performance; and
- Improved renter satisfaction around maintenance and other contracted services.

2. Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- the conduct of the Contractor, their personnel and visitors when attending AHV rented premises;
- any subcontractors and suppliers, and their personnel and visitors when attending AHV rented premises; and
- AHV and its personnel.

The Code of Conduct must be observed at all times when working on or visiting AHV properties and in dealings with renters and employees. The Contractor must bring the provisions of this Code of Conduct to the attention of their personnel, and ensure that they understand and comply with the requirements of the Code.

¹ Throughout this document the term "Contractor" applies to the Contractor, their personnel and/or their subcontractors, suppliers and their personnel.

3. Context and Values

AHV aims to provide appropriate, affordable and secure housing assistance for low-income Aboriginal people living in Victoria.

Aboriginal cultural values underpin AHV's values. Our values provide an ethical framework within which all decisions are made and our services are delivered, including contracted services. Our values guide how we relate to our clients, each other and to the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. The Contractor is expected to undertake works/activities on behalf of AHV in a manner which is consistent with AHV values.

AHV's values are:

Respect and support for Aboriginal identity and culture and for our renters and stakeholders

Striving for excellence through leadership in Aboriginal housing and best practice service delivery

Integrity, trust and honesty in all our business activities

Collaborative relationships with our community, renters, government and stakeholders

Kindness, compassion, courtesy and dignity in our relationships with our clients, our stakeholders and with each other

AHV's recognised Aboriginal cultural values are:

- Recognition and respect for country and for traditional owners and their role and position.
- Recognition of traditional law and custom and the importance of caring for country.
- Recognition of, and support for, the transmission of Aboriginal language, culture and beliefs and practices.
- Reciprocity and the obligation to share with and care for each other, and to be cared for on and off country.
- Respect for Aboriginal Elders and their role in communities.
- Recognition and respect for the importance of families and extended family networks in the raising of children and in maintaining strong communities.
- Respect for and support of Aboriginal people's right to maintain and practice their connection to country, spirituality, culture and identity and to always maintain their dignity.

4. Cultural Statement

The First Nations people of Australia have the oldest continuous cultures in the world. AHV celebrates and takes pride in the rich and spiritual culture, values and practices of Australia's First Nations people. We celebrate the significant contribution made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture to the enrichment of Victorian society, and we acknowledge and respect the special place of Victorian Traditional Owners as Victoria's First Nations peoples.

As an Aboriginal community organisation, we acknowledge that our legitimacy is derived from the strong relationships we have with Victoria's Aboriginal communities and our success is through achievement of our shared vision and aspirations.

Our vision is that **Aboriginal Victorians secure appropriate, affordable housing as a pathway to better lives and stronger communities.**

We believe that achievement of our vision is through the provision of housing services which enhance the dignity of our clients and renters, and which respects and celebrates their cultural beliefs, values and practices.

Our policies and procedures are designed so that our practice and service delivery is in accord with this cultural statement.

5. Relevant legislative frameworks

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth)

6. Related AHV documents

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy
- Privacy Policy

7. Acronyms and Definitions

Term	Definition
AHV	Aboriginal Housing Victoria
Conduct	The manner in which a person behaves
Contractor	Tradesperson hired by AHV to complete maintenance works
Renter	Person who occupies property rented from AHV

8. Respective responsibilities

AHV has a duty to the Contractor to:

- act fairly;
- maintain high ethical standards in its dealings;
- honour agreements and undertakings and act in good faith;
- establish a fair and equal basis for relationships; and
- be courteous at all times.

The Contractor has a duty to:

- act fairly and in good faith;
- adopt high ethical standards in its dealings with AHV;
- honour agreements and undertakings;
- be courteous to AHV's employees and its renters at all times; and
- perform all agreed works and activities in accordance with the Contract (including this Code of Conduct) and all other processes and requirements outlined within the Contract.

9. Zero tolerance to violence of any form

The Contractor must adhere to AHV's mandate of a zero tolerance approach to violence in any form.

In undertaking works/activities on AHV's behalf, the Contractor must maintain a safe workplace, free from physical violence, racist behaviours, sexist behaviours, bullying or harassment.

10. Personal safety, health and wellbeing

In situations where the Contractors consider that during the course of performing works/activities for AHV, they have become involved in or could face a situation concerning their personal safety,

health or wellbeing, or their property, materials and equipment are endangered, they have the right to:

- leave the property;
- not perform the works/activities; and
- not suffer or incur a liability under the terms of the Deed/Contract for not performing the works/activities (subject to the Deed/Contract).

The Contractor must inform AHV of any concerns immediately upon leaving a property.

It is not possible to define every event where a Contractor might consider it necessary either to not enter a property or to leave after entering. However, examples where decisions of this nature might reasonably be made include:

- where a renter or other people at the property appear affected by alcohol or other substances and entry to or remaining on the property may provoke an undesirable or unsafe situation;
- where there are groups of people at or near a property and their demeanour and general attitude is one of menace;
- if a renter is agitated and/or is displaying erratic or other concerning behaviour which may pose a threat to personal safety;
- where aggression is displayed and directed towards the Contractor, including an aggressive animal or pet owned by the renter; and
- in any instance (whether caused by or contributed to by the Contractor) where the Contractor determines that the safety of the Contractor, its machinery, equipment and other property, is either in danger or under threat of danger, or where an unsafe situation has developed.

In all such instances representing a personal threat or menace, the Contractor, must:

- not enter the property or withdraw from the property immediately;
- leave the property if a situation becomes unmanageable or if a dispute arises with a renter, which will significantly affect progress of required works;
- politely decline to engage in non-essential discussion;
- not respond or argue; and
- collect their equipment, leave the premises and immediately inform AHV of the situation.

11. Illegal activity

If, during the course of the Contract the Contractor comes across, views or otherwise sees an illegal act or a crime in progress, the Contractor must immediately inform Victoria Police. If the Contractor witnesses illegal acts, including domestic violence or the harm or abuse of children or young people, they must:

- ensure their personal safety;
- inform AHV; and
- call the police, ambulance or other appropriate emergency services.

Where theft is alleged, the incident must be reported to the police and AHV.

12. Compliance with the Law

Contractor should not engage in any practices that have contravened the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010 in relation to any dealings with AHV*.

Suspected improper conduct, offers of bribes, commissions and any other irregular approaches from suppliers, prospective suppliers or other individuals will be investigated and reported in accordance with AHV's policies and processes.

Contractor who believe they have observed corrupt conduct in AHV staff may contact the Manager HR/OD. Also, they can make a protected disclosure directly to the Independent Based-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) on 1300 735 135.

AHV will take decisive action, including possible disciplinary action, against individuals who discriminate against or victimise those who speak up in good faith.

13. Gifts and Conflict of Interest

No member of AHV staff shall seek or accept any immediate or future reward or benefit from a Contractor in return for the performance of any duty or work for AHV, or where it could be reasonably perceived as influencing them or their position.

Any gift or benefit offered by a Contractor to a board member or staff will be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Code of Conduct. All gifts (token or non-token) that have a value of \$50 or more need to be disclosed to the Manager HR/OD.

The Contractor shall at all times avoid situations which may give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest in its dealings with AHV and AHV's staff. A conflict of interest may be a 'general' or a 'material' conflict of interest. Where such a situation is not avoidable, the Contractor must declare any actual or perceived conflicts in line with AHV's internal processes (including procurement) for reporting conflicts of interest.

14. Confidentiality

Contractors may be directed to treat some or all information within its dealings with AHV as confidential. Contractor activities will be carried out in a way that supports AHV staff in meeting their obligations to ensure information of a commercially sensitive or confidential nature is obtained, stored, processed or published (where applicable) in an appropriate manner in accordance with the relevant.

15. Language and general behaviour

The Contractor must ensure that its personnel do not:

- use offensive language in the presence or hearing of any renter, visitor, guest or AHV employee;
- behave in a loud and boisterous manner, as this can be threatening and offensive to renters, especially the elderly and infirm, and those suffering illness;
- act in a manner which interrupts or threatens the general quiet enjoyment by renters and residents of their home and surrounding environment;
- make comments or act in a manner which may be interpreted by the renter, resident or guest as judgemental, discriminatory, offensive or demeaning; or
- offer unnecessary opinion on the work of others, who may have serviced the renter's home or on faults or problems the Contractor has been engaged to rectify.

16. Child safety

AHV is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children and have zero tolerance to all forms of child abuse.

The Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors must:

- Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- Treat children and young people with respect;
- Only enter and remain in AHV properties where children are present, if the renter or the renter's adult representative is also present;
- Ensure that if they are required to undertake works/activities in the presence of a child, that at least one other adult is also present;
- Not engage in any form of physical contact with children;
- Not engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature, or use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- Not express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.

17. Working during renter's absence

The Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors must:

- not remain at a renter's home during the renter's absence, unless they have obtained prior written permission from the renter to work in a renter's home during their absence and arrange access during this time;
- for the purposes of clarity, do not enter and/or remain in a property where children are present without the presence of the renter or the renter's adult

representative, irrespective of any prior written permission given by the renter to the Contractor and its personnel to enter and/or remain at the property;

- leave the property in a secure state when unattended.

If urgent access is necessary and written permission cannot be obtained (despite reasonable efforts on the Contractor's part), the Contractor must contact AHV as soon as practicable, and must only enter the property if AHV's written approval to do so is obtained.

18. Renters' right to privacy

The Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors are required to respect the right to privacy of renters, residents and visitors to the property. The Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors must treat as strictly confidential, and, not discuss or make comment to any other person:

- any personal matters relating to the renter/resident/visitor, such as their conduct, appearance, gender, race/ethnicity, the appearance of their home, or on any issue relating to their standard of housekeeping; and,
- any personal information provided directly to the Contractor or overheard during the course of carrying out works/activities at the property.

19. Smoking, alcohol and prohibited substances

The Contractor must ensure that its personnel do not:

- smoke on any AHV property, including external grounds; or
- be under the influence of alcohol or a prohibited substance while performing works/activities on behalf of AHV or on or prior to entering any AHV property or when returning after lunch or other trips away from a Site.

20. Arrival at a renter's home

When arriving at a renter's home, the Contractor must ensure that its personnel:

- greet the renter, identify themselves, and identify that they are personnel of the Contractor undertaking work on behalf of AHV;
- ask the renter in a friendly and courteous manner if it is convenient to commence working;
- give renter notice before commencing work. Contractors need to advise renters of the anticipated sequence and duration of the work. If there is a change, the contractor must inform the renter.
- explain to renters the nature of the work, the timing of dirty or dusty work, and any shut-downs of services. Contractors need to advise occupants of neighbouring properties that may also be affected and
- not announce their arrival by a loud entry of their vehicles and equipment in the driveway or the front street verge. Contractors' vehicles must be parked in the street or in other properly designated parking areas. The renter's permission must be obtained before entering or parking in the property.

The Contractor must not enter or remain in occupied properties if the renter is not present. If the Contractor cannot get this permission promptly, they must discuss this with AHV.

21. Courtesy and general appearance

When visiting or working at a renter's home, other areas such as grounds, neighbourhood precincts, and AHV's offices, the Contractor must ensure that its personnel:

- show the renters, residents and their visitors full courtesy and respect;
- minimise noise, disruption and inconvenience;
- respectfully comply and identify themselves and produce identification when renters request them to do so;
- be of neat and tidy personal appearance and suitably attired in a clean and reasonable standard of dress suitable for the work or activity to be undertaken;
- wear footwear and clothing that is clean, free of mud, wet paint, grease, etc. before entering a renter's home; clean up any mud, paint, grease and other contaminants that have been spilled in occupied properties while works have been undertaken, Any soiled or damaged items must be restored to their initial condition;
- treat the renter's home, personal property and surrounds with due care and respect at all times; and
- give full consideration to the residents' comfort, wellbeing, health, welfare, safety, and security – any disruptions to the household must be kept to a minimum.

22. Use of a renter's services and facilities

The Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors must:

- not use a renter's power, gas, or water, without prior permission;
- reimburse the renter for all costs incurred where permission is given;
- not use the renter's toilet, washbasins, stoves, and hot water or eat food in the renter's home without prior permission; and
- not use, nor seek permission to use a renter's telephone to make or receive calls except in the case of an emergency. Calls must not be diverted to a renter's phone from the mobile or other communication service of the contractor.

If the renter's permission is not given in these situations, respect the renter's decision in good grace and make alternate arrangements.

23. Parking and storage of materials

The Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors must:

- obtain permission from the renter before parking or placing any vehicle, building supplies, site office, storage container or other facility on the grounds of their home, or on any verge;

- not obstruct any driveway, crossing or roadway, or pathways and access ways in the grounds of apartments and in neighbourhood properties; and
- strictly adhere to any requirement of a local authority regarding the use of roadways, verges or pathways, including any requirement or instruction to pay for footpath crossings and/or repair damage.

24. Protection of renter's property

The Contractor must take all reasonable precautions when carrying out work/activities to maintain the renter's security and protect against theft, breakage or damage of the renter's property and goods in the immediate vicinity of the site.

25. Removal of rubbish

The Contractor must remove all rubbish resulting from works/activities and leave the property in a tidy, clean and liveable state at the end of each working day.

26. Visitors

Apart from delivery people or others required to assist in the progress or completion of the works/activities, personal visitors of the Contractor are not permitted to enter an AHV property and surrounding areas. This includes in the front and rear yards, neighbourhood precinct areas, apartment common areas and community areas, inside renters' homes, or on any other property.

In the case of emergency, a message may be delivered to the Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors with the prior permission of the renter.

27. Animals

The Contractor, their personnel and subcontractors must not bring any animal or pet onto any AHV property.

Animals and pets owned by renters must not be antagonised or mistreated by the Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors.

28. Communication with renters, residents and visitors

The Contractor, its personnel and subcontractors must not under any circumstances, comment on any matters relating to the Deed/Contract, or AHV's operations. This includes discussion and comment on the condition of AHV properties or AHV's policies and processes.

29. Breaches of Code of Conduct

Renters who believe a contractor is in breach of this code, may contact AHV to seek appropriate investigation and action. AHV takes alleged breaches of this Code seriously and will investigate any complaints received from renters.

To ensure procedural fairness, AHV will contact the relevant Contractor to advise that a complaint has been received, and will outline the proposed action to investigate the complaint.

30. Policy Log

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Changes	Review Date
1	July 2019	AHV Board	New policy	July 2022
2	6 April 2023	AHV Board	Updated reference to 2022 Child Safe Standards and minor terminology updates	April 2026