

Property Management Focus.

Bringing you the [latest news](#) from the world of New Zealand property management.

Is it a good idea to let a tenant do property maintenance?



When a tenant comes to you wanting to do some simple renovation work or property maintenance, it can seem like an attractive offer.

However, before you agree there are factors you should seriously consider:

- Will the tenant require something in return? Will they request a reduction in rent or some other kind of compensation for their efforts?
- Do they have the required skills to do a good job? For example, re-painting a room may sound simple, but the reality is different and a good job requires a significant amount of preparation and skill (ever tried cutting in along ceilings, mouldings and other areas that require a perfectly straight line of paint?)
- Could they do more damage than good? Do you really need to call in a professional to deal with the issue. If it's anything to do with electrics or plumbing, the answer is definitely yes!
- If you are supplying the materials, and the job is substandard will it end up costing you?
- Have you considered the implications if the tenant injures themselves while attempting repairs?
- What if the tenant asks for compensation for their work at the end of the tenancy?

Always proceed with caution, and ask your property manager if you have any questions or concerns.

Who is responsible for what, at your rental?

A property manager will ensure your property is regularly checked for any damage or wear and tear, and will have a selection of reliable tradespeople they can call on to do maintenance work.

However, here are some rules of thumb to keep in mind:

• Fair wear and tear

A tenant is not responsible for normal wear and tear to the property or any

chattels provided by the landlord when they use them normally. The tenant is responsible for any intentional damage.

• Chimneys

Cleaning the chimney is the landlord's responsibility. The tenant remains responsible for cleaning the ashes from the hearth. The landlord must have the chimney swept and checked at least annually to make sure it's safe. (A landlord's insurance policy for

the property will often not cover the property if the chimney is not swept at least annually).

• Lightbulbs

Both landlords and tenants can be responsible for light bulbs, as they are not covered by the Residential Tenancies Act.

However, if the landlord supplies light bulbs and the tenant takes them at the

end of the tenancy, or damages them intentionally or carelessly, the tenant may be responsible for replacing them.

If the light bulbs remain in place but have blown, responsibility is less certain. Standard light bulbs may be seen as consumables and replaceable by the tenant, or may be seen as fair wear and tear and replaceable by the landlord.

Non-standard light bulbs – which may be more expensive or are tricky to fit – may be the responsibility of the landlord. If a light bulb of this kind blows, it's likely to be treated as fair wear and tear.

- **Landlords must agree before tenants add any fixtures**

Tenants cannot affix anything to the property, or renovate or make alterations or additions, unless the landlord agrees. The changes must agree with what's in the tenancy

agreement, or the landlord must give written consent first.

Before the tenancy ends, the tenant can remove any of their fixtures, unless this would cause irreparable damage to the premises or the agreement from the landlord was conditional upon it remaining and becoming the property of the landlord at the end of the tenancy. Fixtures are things that are fixed in position (such as garden sheds, spa pools, heat pumps, security alarms or lights, clothes lines and panel heaters).

Any fixture put up by a tenant and not removed at the end of a tenancy becomes the property of the landlord. But this doesn't apply if a different agreement exists, or the landlord has led the tenant to believe that the tenant can remove the fixtures after the tenancy ends.

If the tenant causes damage when

removing the fixtures, the tenant should tell the landlord. The landlord should then tell the tenant whether they want them to repair the damage, or negotiate compensation.

- **Exterior**

Both landlords and tenants are responsible for maintaining the outside of the house

The landlord is responsible for outside cleaning and maintenance tasks such as house-washing and gutter cleaning. The tenant can do outdoor cleaning tasks like window cleaning (if the windows are easily accessible, not apartment buildings or multi-level houses) as part of their responsibility to keep the property reasonably clean and tidy. It is a good idea to discuss this topic in detail at the start of the tenancy and note what is agreed on the tenancy agreement to avoid misunderstandings.

(Source: Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment)

REINZ Property Manager of the Year

Every year, the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand celebrates property managers who go above and beyond for their clients.

This year, Amanda Harrison of Harcourts Tandem Property Management in

Warkworth, won the national prize for Property Manager of the Year.

Well done Amanda for being a fantastic representative of Harcourts property management.



Amanda (centre) accepts the award at the REINZ celebration.

Looking to rent out a property?

Contact your local Harcourts property manager for market rental appraisal.

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