

Property Damage Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Property Damage Policy is to outline the approach of SDA Living Australia in managing, reporting, and responding to property damage in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), in accordance with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Practice Standards and Quality Indicators, particularly those related to SDA.

This policy ensures that the rights of NDIS participants are respected, that properties remain safe and compliant, and that repairs are completed promptly.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All NDIS participants living in SDA operated by SDA Living Australia.
- All staff, contractors, and service providers working in or around SDA properties.
- Any property owned, leased, or managed by SDA Living Australia that is used for SDA purposes.

3. Principles

- **Resident Rights and Dignity:** All residents have the right to a safe, secure, and well-maintained home. We will handle property damage incidents with respect and without blame.
 - **Responsibility:** Responsibility for damage will be determined fairly, considering capacity, intent, and environmental factors.
 - **Timeliness:** Repairs will be assessed and carried out promptly to maintain safety and quality.
 - **Transparency:** All actions, costs, and decisions will be communicated clearly to residents and their support representatives.
- Compliance:** This policy aligns with SDA Practice Standards, the NDIS Code of Conduct, and relevant tenancy and building legislation.

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4. Definitions

- **SDA:** Specialist Disability Accommodation funded under the NDIS.
 - **Damage:** Any destruction, impairment, or loss of function to SDA property, whether accidental or intentional.
 - **Reasonable Wear and Tear:** Deterioration that occurs through normal use, not considered damage.
- Unauthorised Modifications:** Changes to property not approved by SDA Living Australia

5. Reporting and Assessment of Damage

- **Immediate Reporting:** Staff and residents are encouraged to report property damage as soon as practicable by emailing or phoning SDA Living Australia on email or phone number provided at the property. The Service Provider will also be asked to provide SDA Living Australia with an Incident Report outlining the cause of the damage/repair.
- **Initial Safety Response:** If damage poses a safety risk (e.g. broken glass, exposed wiring), temporary safety measures will be implemented immediately.
- **Damage Assessment:** A qualified contractor will assess the extent and cause of damage within 24–72 hours of notification.

6. Determining Responsibility

Responsibility for damage will be assessed based on:

- Intent (accidental vs intentional)
- Environmental or behavioural context (e.g. disability-related behaviour)
- Duty of care of staff and support workers
- Whether the resident has a Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP) or restrictive practices in place

Residents will not be held liable for:

- Damage resulting from their disability
- Reasonable wear and tear
- Staff negligence or failure to implement approved Support Plans

Where damage is deemed intentional or negligent (and not disability-related), SDA Living Australia may work with the resident's Support Coordinator and/or wider support network to explore funding repair costs, insurance claims, or other resolutions.

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7. Repairs and Maintenance

- Urgent repairs will be completed within 24–48 hours.
Non-urgent repairs will be scheduled and completed within a reasonable timeframe (typically 7–14 business days).
- Participants will be informed of the repair process, timeframes, and any impact on their living arrangements.

8. Resident Engagement and Education

- Residents will be supported to understand their tenancy rights and responsibilities.
- House meetings or one-on-one discussions may be used to raise awareness about property care and damage prevention.
- Residents are encouraged to contribute to solutions or preventive strategies, especially if damage has occurred more than once.

9. Record Keeping and Documentation

- All incidents of property damage will be recorded in SDA Living Australia's incident management system.
- Records will include photos, descriptions, repair estimates, and any correspondence with residents or support networks.
- Reports may be shared with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission if required under reportable incident guidelines.

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