



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**  
**Housing**

**GOVERNMENT REGIONAL OFFICERS'  
HOUSING (GROH)**

**Utilities Policy**

**September 2018**

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# GROH Utilities Policy and Guidelines

## Purpose

This Policy and Guidelines (Policy) outlines the responsibilities for supplying utilities services to Government Regional Officers Housing (GROH) dwellings and for paying for the use of these services.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all owned and leased dwellings, including those that are occupied, vacant, allocated and unallocated to GROH clients. It is for use by Housing employees, GROH clients, GROH tenants and the general public.

## Definitions

**Client Agency** means either:

- an Employing Agency, which is a Department under the administration of a Minister of the Crown in the Government of the State, or any Crown instrumentality, hospital, board, body corporate or other body of whatever description, proclaimed as a Department under s.7 of the *Government Employees' Housing Act 1964* (GEH ACT); or
- a Responsible Agency, which is the agency responsible for arranging the salary and other entitlements (including accommodation) of the tenant when this tenant is not an employee of an Agency.

**Communities** means the Department of Communities.

**GROH** means the Government Regional Officers' Housing program administered by the Department of Communities – Housing.

**GROH client** means either:

- a client agency; or
- any other client serviced by GROH (**other GROH client**).

**GROH dwelling** means a house as defined in s.5 of the GEH Act, which is owned, leased or constructed by Housing and allocated for use by GROH.

**Housing** means the Housing Authority operating within the Department of Communities.

**Owned dwelling** means a GROH dwelling that is owned by Housing.

**Leased dwelling** means a GROH dwelling that is leased from the private rental market by Housing.

**Officer** means an employee of the Department of Communities - Housing Division .

**Other GROH client** includes other worker housing programs, e.g. Non-Government Organisations, non-proclaimed state government Agencies, other housing programs or private tenants.

**Serviced unit** means any unit of accommodation that is part of a multiple-dwelling development and that may share common water, electricity and/or gas meters and facilities such as driveways, carports, washing lines and gardens.

## Policy Statements

### 1. Electricity

- 1.1. Tenants are responsible for paying all electricity accounts charged by the electricity supplier during their GROH tenancy, except for tenants of serviced units south of the 26° parallel – see section 5.1.1.
- 1.2. Tenants must arrange for the meters to be read when they occupy and vacate a GROH dwelling.
- 1.3. The electricity must not be disconnected when tenants vacate a GROH dwelling.

### 2. Gas

- 2.1. Tenants are responsible for paying for all gas consumed in a GROH dwelling, except for tenants of serviced units south of the 26° parallel – see section 5.1.1.
- 2.2. Gas cylinder rental is the responsibility of Housing (for owned properties) or the property's owners (for leased properties).
- 2.3. Tenants of GROH dwellings that have gas hot water systems and that are located north of the 26° parallel may be eligible for a gas consumption reimbursement from their Client Agency (see the Attachment A 'DOCEP Circular No 7 of 2008: Gas Hot Water Systems – Areas North of 26 Degrees South Latitude').

### 3. Water consumption

- 3.1. Tenants are responsible for paying all water consumption charges, including infringements, incurred during their tenancy, except for tenants of serviced units – see section 5.1.1.
- 3.2. To prevent the waste of water and associated costs, tenants must switch off faulty sections of automatic reticulation. (However, as per 'GROH Grounds

and Gardens Policy' section 2.1.1, tenants' remain responsible for maintaining gardens.)

- 3.3. Outstanding water consumption charges will be treated as debt and pursued in accordance with the 'GROH Debt Recovery Policy'.
- 3.4. Tenants cannot appeal their water consumption charges through Communities' Appeals Mechanism.
- 3.5. Tenants disputing water consumption charges will have the charges reviewed through an internal investigation to determine if a property maintenance related issue contributed to excessive water use.

#### **4. Rainwater tanks**

- 4.1. In locations where there is no water supply or the water supply is unsuitable or insufficient, Communities may provide rainwater tanks or water filtration systems.
- 4.2. Tenants are responsible for the costs of refilling tanks. Client Agencies may reimburse these costs.
- 4.3. If a suitable and sufficient water supply becomes available, rainwater tanks may be removed.

#### **5. Serviced units**

- 5.1. For serviced units, south of the 26° parallel, electricity, gas and water consumption charges will be paid by Communities and recouped from Client Agencies.
- 5.2. For serviced units, north of the 26° parallel:
  - i. water consumption charges will be paid by Housing and recouped from Client Agencies, and
  - ii. electricity and gas consumption charges will be paid by the tenant.

Note: The gas and electricity costs of tenants of serviced units north of the 26° parallel may be offset by a gas consumption reimbursement (see Attachment A) and/or a subsidy for electricity charges related to air-conditioning units (see 'Government Housing Air Conditioning Policy').

- 5.3. To recoup its expenditure outlined in 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, Communities will charge Client Agencies a service charge (See the 'GROH Serviced Units Policy').
- 5.4. Client Agencies may pass on all or some of Communities service charge to their employees.

## **6. Home Heating**

6.1. Suitable heating will be supplied to the main living area(s) of all GROH dwellings.

# Attachment A



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Commerce  
Labour Relations

Our Ref: LR0133/2008  
Enquiries: Labour Relations Advisor

CIRCULAR TO DEPARTMENTS AND AUTHORITIES NO 6 OF 2013

## GAS HOT WATER SYSTEMS - AREAS NORTH OF THE 26 DEGREES SOUTH LATITUDE

This Circular replaces Circular 7 of 2008.

Tenants occupying Department of Housing houses equipped with gas hot water systems are eligible for a reimbursement relating to the additional cost of having to purchase gas for use in the gas hot water system. This is not an entitlement to payment of the full subsidy to all tenants of houses with gas hot water systems. Reimbursement is based upon the individual usage in excess of 1.25 45kg bottles used in a subsidy period.

Due to movements in the Consumer Price Index since the subsidy was last reviewed, the level of subsidy for gas used in the operation of gas hot water systems has been set at up to a maximum amount of \$33.00 per month as from 1 July 2013.

To assist in establishing the procedure for this reimbursement the following examples may be used as a guide.

### Example 1

Annual purchase 6 bottles at \$175 = \$1050.00  
Normal domestic usage of 1.25 bottles @ \$175 = \$218.75  
Balance is \$831.25  
Cost of gas for heating water - \$831.25 divided by 12 = \$69.27 per month average costs  
Officer to be reimbursed the maximum amount of \$33 x 12 months = \$396

### Example 2

Annual purchase 3 bottles at \$175 = \$525.00  
Normal domestic usage of 1.25 bottles @ \$175 = \$218.75  
Balance is \$306.25  
Cost of gas for heating water is \$306.25 divided by 12 = \$25.52 per month average costs  
Officer to be reimbursed \$25.52 x 12 months = \$306.25

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8 October 2013

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## Document History

VERSION	DATE	REASON	POLICY AUTHORS	OFFICER'S TITLE	DATE LOADED ON INTERNET
1.1	September 2001	Policy Reformatted	Andrew Smith	Policy and Projects Officer	N/A
1.2	August 2006	The original version of the document for the purposes of amendments and updates is held by GROH and is stored on the Department of Housing and Works Corporate Data System in the Business Services Section of GROH under CURRENT POLICIES.	Lisbet Schäfers	Projects and Policy Officer	N/A
1.3	October 2009	Policy Reformatted	Danielle Faulkner	Coordinator Policy and Projects	N/A
2.0	January 2018	This GROH Utilities Policy incorporates the following: 1. GROH Utilities Policy (v.1.3) 2. GROH Water Consumption Policy	Chris Walker	Policy and Research Officer	January 2018
2.1	September 2018	This GROH Utilities Policy revised to incorporate the GROH Home Heating Policy	Brett Hockley	Senior Policy and Practice Officer	September 2018

## Authorisation

VERSION	AUTHORISED BY	APPROVAL DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE	SECTIONS MODIFIED (IF APPLICABLE)
2.0	Director Housing Programs	September 2018	September 2018	



## Summary Information

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Executive Director Contracting
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Senior Policy and Practice Officer, Contracting
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	GROH Utilities Policy GROH Water Consumption Policy GROH Home Heating Policy
<b>Review</b>	September 2019
<b>File Number</b>	18/D1488287
<b>Document Control</b>	This document is published on the Communities website, <a href="http://www.housing.wa.gov.au">www.housing.wa.gov.au</a> , under the 'Housing', 'GROH Agencies' section of the 'Investors & Partners' menu.
<b>Associated Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Government Employees' Housing Act 1964</i></li> <li>• <i>Residential Tenancies Act 1987</i></li> <li>• Housing Authority Maintenance Policy Manual</li> <li>• Department of Commerce, Labour Relations: 'Circular No. 6 of 2013'</li> </ul>