



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

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

Utilities Policy

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GROH Utilities Policy and Guidelines

Purpose

The Government Regional Officers Housing (GROH) Utilities Policy (the Policy) outlines who is responsible for supplying utilities services to GROH dwellings and for paying for the use of these services.

Scope

This Policy applies to all GROH owned and GROH leased dwellings, including those that are occupied and vacant. It is for use by Communities' 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.

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 Communities and allocated for use by GROH.

GROH leased dwelling means a GROH dwelling that is leased from the private rental market by Communities.

GROH owned dwelling means a GROH dwelling that is owned by Communities.

Officer means an employee of the Department of Communities.

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.
- 1.2. 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.
- 2.2. Gas cylinder rental is the responsibility of Communities (for GROH owned properties) or the property's owners (for GROH leased properties).
- 2.3. Tenants of GROH dwellings located north of the 26° parallel that have gas hot water systems, may be eligible to be reimbursed for the annual cost of gas consumed to produce hot water.
- 2.4. Tenants will not be reimbursed for all gas consumed. The reimbursement comes into effect when more than 1.25 (one and a quarter) 45 kg bottles of gas are consumed in one year.
- 2.5. The maximum reimbursement amount is \$33.00 per month as from July 2013.
- 2.6. The employing client agency will pay the reimbursement.
- 2.7. The examples in Attachment A indicate how the reimbursement is calculated.

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.
- 3.2. To prevent the waste of water and associated costs, tenants must switch off faulty sections of automatic reticulation. (Note tenants remain responsible for

maintaining gardens as per GROH Grounds and Gardens Policy section 2.1.1.)

- 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 the water supply is insufficient or unsuitable for domestic use, Communities may provide rainwater tanks or water filtration systems.
- 4.2. Tenants are responsible for the costs of refilling rainwater tanks. Client Agencies may reimburse these costs.
- 4.3. If a sufficient and suitable 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 Communities 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 the gas consumption reimbursement outlined in section 2.3 – 2.6 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 and 5.2, 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 the 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

Gas use and reimbursement for one year: two examples

Example 1:

Employee purchases 6 bottles at \$175 per bottle	\$1,050.00
'Normal' domestic use set at 1.25 bottles at \$175 per bottle	\$218.75
Balance	\$831.25
Employee's average cost per month (\$831.25 divided by 12):	\$69.27

Reimbursement

Employee receives maximum reimbursement: \$33 per mth x 12 mths:	\$396
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Example 2:

Employee purchases 3 bottles at \$175 per bottle	\$525.00
'Normal' domestic use set at 1.25 bottles at \$175 per bottle	\$218.75
Balance	\$306.25
Employee's average cost per month (\$306.25 divided by 12):	\$25.52

Reimbursement

Employee's reimbursement is \$25.52 per mth x 12 mths	\$306.25
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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
2.2	June 2019	This GROH Utilities Policy revised to incorporate the information from Circular to Departments No 6 of 2013 – Gas Hot Water Systems – Areas North of 26 Degrees South Latitude (Circular withdrawn)	Brett Hockley	Senior Policy and Practice Officer	August 2019

Authorisation

VERSION	AUTHORISED BY	APPROVAL DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE	SECTIONS MODIFIED (IF APPLICABLE)
2.2	Executive Director Contracting	June 2019	June 2019	

Summary Information

Responsible Officer	Executive Director Contracting
Contact Officer	Senior Policy and Practice Officer
Superseded Documents	GROH Utilities Policy GROH Water Consumption Policy GROH Home Heating Policy
Review	September 2020
File Number	19/D789662
Document Control	This document is published on the Communities website, www.housing.wa.gov.au , under the 'Housing', 'GROH Agencies' section of the 'Investors & Partners' menu.
Associated Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Government Employees' Housing Act 1964</i> • <i>Residential Tenancies Act 1987</i> • Housing Authority Maintenance Policy Manual • Department of Commerce, Labour Relations: 'Circular No. 6 of 2013'