



TENANT ALTERATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

If you wish to carry out any work in your home that would be described as an alteration or improvement, please read this leaflet BEFORE you start any work.

Question 1: What do you mean by 'alteration' or 'improvement'?

Answer: An **alteration** is where you wish to:

- replace a fixture or fitting, such as kitchen units or internal doors, with items which are of the same quality or standard as those we would normally provide, or fit laminate flooring (in flats – ground floor only);
- remove an existing fixture or fitting and not replace it.

An **improvement** is where you wish to:

- replace an existing fixture or fitting with one which in our opinion is of a higher quality than we would normally provide;
- install an item where there is none at present, e.g. a new shower;
- extend the property in any way, e.g. by adding a conservatory or porch.

Question 2: What do I have to do?

Answer: Your Tenancy Agreement and Tenant Handbook say you that you must tell us what you are planning to do, and apply in writing for our permission **before** you start any work. To apply, please complete the Application Form enclosed with this leaflet.

Your Tenant Handbook gives some examples of work you need permission for. If the work you are planning is not on that list and you are not sure, **please** contact us before you start any work.

For some small jobs, such as putting up a small shelf, putting textured paint ('Artex') on your ceiling, or laying a small area of garden slabs, you do not have to go through the full application and permission process. If you think your work might come into this category, please check with us first.

Question 3: Do I need to contact anyone else?

Answer: Depending on the type of work, you may have to apply for **Planning Consent** and maybe also a **Building Warrant** from West Lothian Council (Tel: 01506 228000).

For some types of work, obtaining Planning Consent and/or a Building Warrant before you start is a **legal requirement**. You are responsible for checking if either or both of these permissions are required, and if they are, you will be responsible for applying to the Council and paying the necessary fees etc.

When you apply for our permission you will have to tell us whether or not Planning Consent or a Building Warrant will be required and if yes, if you have applied for and received permission. We must see this permission before we agree to any work starting.

Question 4: *What if I do not ask for your permission before carrying out any work?*

Answer: Asking for our permission is a condition of your tenancy. If you do not get our permission first, we will have the legal right to request that you 'undo' any work you have done and reinstate the property as it was before, all at your expense.

Question 5: *What about re-decoration?*

Answer: You do not have to tell us if you plan to re-decorate using wallpaper and paint.

Question 6: *Do I need your permission to install a satellite dish, laminate flooring or a burglar alarm?*

Answer: Yes. We will not approve a satellite dish where we provide communal digital aerials – check with us first if this applies to your address. For laminate flooring we have specific requirements you have to follow.

Question 7: *What happens after I send you my application form?*

Answer: We will acknowledge receipt in writing within 3 days. We will consider your proposal and if necessary, contact or visit you to obtain additional information or clarify any questions. If Planning Consent and/or a Building Warrant is required we will confirm that you must show these to us before we give permission and you start any work.

Question 8: *How long will it take for you to consider my application?*

Answer: Most applications will be straightforward and should be dealt with within 2-3 weeks. Others may take longer but our aim will be to reply in writing within 28 days at the latest. If the proposal is very complicated we may need longer but we will keep you advised about when we expect to be able to reply.

Question 9: *Will you attach any conditions if you approve my application?*

Answer: For some types of work we have some standards you have to meet. We may also need to make some conditions about how the work is done, or remind you that the work must be carried out by qualified or registered tradesmen. For example, if you wish to install gas appliances you must use a Gas Safe registered contractor, and any electrical work must be carried out by EIC contractors. They must give you safety certificates covering the work they have done when it is finished.

Question 10: *What happens when the work is completed?*

Answer: You need to tell us. Along with the letter giving you permission you will receive a Completion Form which you should send to us when the work is finished. We will arrange to inspect the work and then advise you if it has been carried out satisfactorily or not. If any other work is required to meet our standards we will give you details of what has to be done and agree a timescale for the work with you.

Question 11: What information do I have to supply with my application?

Answer: This all depends on the type of work you are planning. Here are some examples:

Garden Hut A plan of the garden showing where the hut is to be placed and giving the dimensions of the hut and the distance from the property and boundary fences. The application should state the materials to be used for the walls and roof.

Garage For a detached garage, a plan of the garden showing where the garage is to be placed giving the dimensions of the garage and the distance from the property and boundary fences. The plan should also show the motor access to the garage and whether any alteration to the existing pavement is needed. The application should state the materials to be used for the walls and roof.

Shower As well as information about the type of shower and where it is to be placed, details of the changes to be made to wall tiling to ensure that there is no damage caused to wall surfaces or flooring from water spray.

Kitchen Alterations A scale plan of the new kitchen layout showing the number of wall and floor units, layout of work-surfaces including the sink and the position of appliances, and any alterations to power points and lighting.

If we need more information after you make your application we will contact you.

Important

Alterations or extensions to the electrical wiring system or to gas supplies or pipework must only be carried out by competent and qualified tradesmen.

They must give you a safety certificate, completed and signed by them, to verify that the work has been carried out correctly. We will need to see these certificates.

You are responsible for employing competent tradesmen and for making sure you have these certificate(s) at the end of the work.

***We hope that the information in this leaflet has been helpful to you.
If you have any other questions, please contact your Housing Officer
in the first instance.***