



# CONTRACTOR NEWSLETTER

March 2015

### Latest News

It is that time again and we have another bumper edition with some issues which may affect you or your business.

Since our last issue in August, we have a few new contractors. So for their benefit I have included some topics of ongoing interest.

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### Fair Trading ALERT: Major changes to home building laws



Fair Trading have advised major changes to home building laws that have come into effect on 15 January 2015 with further changes coming into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015. Please take the time to peruse their website for further information: [http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/sites/ftw/About\\_us/Legislation/Changes\\_to\\_legislation/Major\\_changes\\_to\\_home\\_building\\_laws.page](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/sites/ftw/About_us/Legislation/Changes_to_legislation/Major_changes_to_home_building_laws.page).

### Major changes from 15 January 2015 Licensing

- The threshold for requiring a licence for building and general trade work has been raised from over \$1,000 of work to over \$5,000 (including labour and materials). Specialist work (such as plumbing, electrical and air conditioning) still needs a licence regardless of the cost of work.
- Stand-alone contracts for internal paintwork as well as work related to tennis courts, ponds and water features no longer need a

licence, unless done as part of other home building work.

- Up to 12 months in prison is a new sentencing option for a second or subsequent offence for unlicensed contracting or not having the required statutory insurance.
- Licence eligibility has been tightened to stamp out 'phoenixing'; where a company closes down leaving large unpaid debts, only to re-emerge as a new company trading under a different name.
- Fair Trading needs to be notified within 7 days if a licensed builder is 'wound up'.

### Major changes from 1 March 2015

#### Contracts

- The threshold is being raised for the more detailed contract requirements from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Home building work under \$20,000 will still need a written 'minor works' contract.
- A cap on deposits for work over \$20,000 will be increased from 5% to 10%. Builders will only be able to request a maximum of 10% for a deposit for all projects, regardless of the value.
- Contracts over \$20,000 will need a progress payment schedule (only authorised payments are allowed) and a termination clause.
- The mandatory consumer building guide, to be provided to consumers before entering a contract, is being streamlined to provide essential information on both parties' rights and responsibilities.

### Fair Trading ALERT: National Construction Code now free for NSW builders

Fair Trading announced on the 2 February 2015, NSW builders now have free access to the National Construction Code, as part of a joint Federal Government initiative aimed at reducing shoddy work in the building industry. For further information:

[http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/About\\_us/News\\_and\\_events/Media\\_releases/2015\\_media\\_release\\_s/20150202\\_national\\_construction\\_code\\_now\\_free.page](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/About_us/News_and_events/Media_releases/2015_media_release_s/20150202_national_construction_code_now_free.page)

### Contractor Survey Cards

Most of you will have been issued with Contractor Survey Cards. Some might not be aware but we survey our tenants twice a year to comment on your performance. This year, PLH has decided to adopt a different approach and use these survey cards.

Please distribute these randomly or every 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> job. We are trying to capture positive and negative feedback. They are free to the tenants and you are only asked to enter the work order number on the card (circled). This is what they should look like.

**PACIFIC LINK HOUSING** **Contractor Survey**  
 Now that work has been completed at your property we would like to know your thoughts. Please complete the questions below and mail back to our office (free of charge).

Job Number: (contractor to complete)

1. Did the contractor make an appointment?	YES
2. Was the contractor professional while in your home?	YES
3. Did the contractor clean up after the work was completed?	YES
4. Were you happy with the overall job carried out by the contractor?	YES
5. Any other comments	

Your Name:..... (optional)  
 Thank you for your time in completing this survey. Your comments are valuable to Pacific Link improving our service to you.

We have received a few already. Thanking you in advance for participating. If you have not received any or need more cards please contact the office.

### "While you were out" Cards

Common reasons for not completing work on time has been either access issues or tenants not keeping appointments or tenants not returning calls. PLH has created and will provide contractors with official 'While you were out' cards. This visibly identifies that you are after the tenant for authorised PLH maintenance and not just a contractor spruiking their business.

They are the same size as the survey card. The contractor is to complete all the details and leave at the property – letterbox or in a visible location.

Contractor  called  
on  /  / 20 (Date)  
at  :  AM  PM

To complete the following maintenance arranged by Pacific Link Housing.  
 (Brief description)

You were unavailable when our contractor called. Would you please call the contractor on  
Ph/Mob  to make a suitable time for the  
maintenance to be completed.

*Thank you for your co-operation*

Enclosed with this newsletter are some cards. Again, if you need more please contact the office.

### Eagles and Tradelink

Many plumbers and electricians are aware that white goods were previously supplied by Harvey Norman. This agreement has not changed, however PLH has approached Eagles and Tradelink to supply whitegoods and various plumbing items.

Eagles and Tradelink, combined have a branch in all our areas. This will hopefully guarantee a quicker turnaround time, unless an item has to be ordered in.

PLH has signed agreements with these suppliers and we are encouraging contractors to organise supply of white goods/plumbing items. These items will be paid by PLH; all that is required is for you to quote the PLH work order at time of ordering. Items noted on the specification list will be kept in store for our contractors and items may be delivered or picked up.

These suppliers are on trial until 30 June 2015 to assess quality of service.

If you are having any issues with these suppliers please contact the office.

### New Installations

#### ATTENTION ALL PLUMBERS!

In the past year, we have had quite a few hoses burst for one reason or another resulting in vanities being replaced. It is our understanding, that while it might not be an industry standard to install stop cocks for all new vanities/sinks unless a flick mixer is used, PLH is requesting that they be installed as a precaution. If attending any PLH property and you are servicing the vanity or kitchen tapware please check if stop cocks are present. Call the office for further advice.



### Vacant turnaround

Contractors should be aware that we are regulated to complete vacant works within 14-28 days (and that includes obtaining quotes and upgrade works). To ensure we meet our regulatory KPI, we are seeking your co-operation by providing realistic time frames, but more importantly trying to complete the work within this timeframe.

We understand that sometimes things are beyond your control, but if you know that you can not complete the work within the required and/or specified timeframe, please advise us ASAP otherwise penalty fines will be imposed.

PLH is currently looking at options to streamline this overall process.

### Home Warranty Insurance

The properties that Pacific Link Housing manages are owned by Land and Housing Corporation. Generally any work for the State Government is exempt from HWI. We have been advised that any work that Pacific Link arranges that is valued over \$20,000 the contractor should seek HWI.

If any contractor is interested in working with high value contracts they should seek the required coverage and advise the office.

### Specifications/Innovative products



PLH has issued a specification list to many contractors already. If you need a copy, please call the office.

We are always appreciative of any innovative products that could be adopted throughout our

properties. Products that provide all types of efficiencies, increase sustainability and overall improved performance are most welcomed. If you encounter any such products, please send us an email with details.

### Asbestos

PLH's Asbestos Management Plan has been adopted by the Board and the Asbestos Policy has been completed and distributed to relevant trades.

All contractors should note that the majority of our housing stock is 30+ years old; therefore it should be assumed that asbestos will be present in some shape or form. It is expected that any repairs/removal of asbestos is handled in the correct manner and in accordance with the Act. If in doubt please contact us for clarification and further direction, we take this matter very seriously and would like to ensure in all cases that the safest work practices are followed.

Just a reminder that if you are removing any damaged asbestos you will be required to provide evidence that it has been disposed of correctly; this also applies to sub contractors handling asbestos for you. A copy of the receipt where the asbestos has been disposed must accompany your invoice.

Have any contractors already had asbestos awareness training? Could you let us know at [Maintenance@pacificlink.org.au](mailto:Maintenance@pacificlink.org.au) ? As part of our Asset Management Plan it is our expectation that contractors who handle asbestos are aware of the differences.

### Risk

Pacific Link has alerted you in the past of incidents within complexes or tenants who have become more volatile than usual. As part of our commitment to your safety and well being we will continue to disclose this information. Work orders will be identified with either of the following:

1. *Visit 1* – proceed with caution
2. *Visit 2* – must be accompanied with another person/staff member (2 person visit).

If you have been advised of a security risk, please do not take it lightly and proceed as required until further notice.

### Employees and Sub-contractors

Should you engage the services of a sub-contractor, please be aware that as an approved PLH contractor it is your responsibility to ensure they are aware of our expectations and code of conduct. Similarly, employees should be aware of any changes to the contract.

**Please ensure that all employees and sub-contractors are made aware of any relevant issues noted in this newsletter while on site of any PLH managed property.**

### Quality Control

Any work will be subject to quality inspections. This may occur at any time and unannounced. The purpose is to ensure that the work is being completed in a timely manner, has been completed as requested and completed to a satisfactory standard.

To avoid call backs or delays in payment processing, please ensure that all work specified on work orders has been completed,

regardless if you have undertaken the work or a subcontractor.

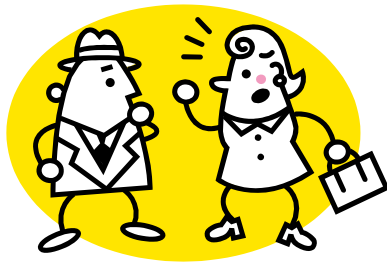
More importantly if you have been called back to attend to an issue please advise the office that the job has now been completed.

## SWMS

As part of being a PLH contractor, you have agreed to comply with all applicable health and safety legislation and ensure all sub-contractors do likewise. PLH requires all contractors to be compliant with the legislation and provide all required documentation. Contractors must keep up to date the SWMS. If you have identified a high risk task, it is expected that a SWMS is provided before work commences.

## Contractor Conduct and tenant interaction

Pacific Link encourages all contractors and subcontractors to be more sensitive of tenants/clients when attending to repairs. Be mindful that it is not always obvious if someone has escaped familial hardship.



Section A.5 of our contract relates to Language and General Behaviour. Please note the following:

- *Bad language must not be used in the presence or hearing of any tenant, visitor, guest or employee of the Principal.*
- *Loud and boisterous behaviour (without bad language) can be threatening and offensive to others, especially the elderly and infirm, and those suffering an illness.*
- *Ensure that personal behaviour does not interrupt nor threaten the general enjoyment by tenants of their home and surrounding environment.*
- *Do not be judgemental nor belittle a tenant for any reason by attitude, tone of voice or action.*

While on site, if there are any issues on quality of workmanship from previous contractors please notify the office and discuss the matter with an Asset staff member. Please refrain from discussing any issues with tenants.

## On-site cleaning

Just a reminder.....Under no circumstances is rubbish – green or material – to be dumped in the tenant's bins. It is your responsibility to remove all your building and green waste from site. This applies to vacant and tenanted properties.

It is our expectation and a requirement that all trades clean up after themselves.

## Lock up

Please ensure that when you have finished for the day or need to leave a property that all doors are secured, including the screen doors. Please ensure all sub-contractors are aware.

## Lock boxes

When a property is on a lock box, under no circumstances are the keys to be taken off the property. For whatever reason you leave the property ensure the keys are put back into the lock box.

If any trade is leaving keys in the lock box, please ensure that they are not on tags or rings – they must be left loose. They have on occasion, blocked the clear button from opening the box.

## Autumn/Winter Lawn Maintenance

### ATTENTION ALL GARDENERS!

To all our gardeners, March-April will be the time to start thinking about your autumn/winter lawn maintenance



program. If the weather continues to be warm, please continue on a more frequent basis.

We prefer if lawns and gardens are maintained every 6 weeks during these cooler months. All lawns are to be whipper snipped, edged and all paths blown down in the common area. Weeds are to be continued to be sprayed each visit.

Don't forget if you have anything to contribute please send us an email. Thanks and until next time...

The editor  
Assets