

# LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOUSE



*A dry, well-aired home is easier to heat and healthier for your family.*

When you move into your house, Housing New Zealand Corporation will make sure it is clean and tidy. We'll check that windows are secure, locks are working, the garden is tidy, lawns mowed, and that there are no pests like mice or cockroaches.

After you move in, you need to keep your house safe and healthy, by:

- dusting with a damp cloth and vacuuming regularly
- keeping the bathroom and kitchen areas clean and dry
- putting fat in the rubbish (once it is cold and has gone hard), rather than pouring it down the sink
- wiping up crumbs and spills that might attract pests
- making sure rubbish bags are tied up and put out on rubbish collection day – rubbish bags are available at the supermarket.

More information about your responsibilities and ours are in your tenancy agreement.

## Preventing mould and mildew

A dry, well-aired house is easier to heat and healthier for you and your family. You can help to keep your house healthy and reduce the chance of mould and mildew, by doing the following things:

- open windows and doors when you are at home
- open windows so that steam can escape from cooking or bathing
- open curtains early in the morning and close them when the sun goes down

- keep lids on pots when cooking on the stove
- wipe condensation off walls and windows when it happens
- hang washing outside to dry
- open windows when using a clothes drier so moisture can escape
- dry clothes and shoes before putting them away
- leave wardrobes slightly open for ventilation
- keep the shower curtain hanging inside the shower/bath so water doesn't drip on the floor, and wash the curtain every few weeks
- use an electric heater rather than gas, which creates a wet heat
- pull beds and furniture away from the walls so they can breathe
- keep only a few plants inside.

For ways to save money on power, see the fact sheet: *Keeping power costs down*.

## Removing mould or mildew

- Wash mould or mildew with diluted household bleach (one part bleach three parts water mixed together) as soon as it appears, as it's harder to remove once it's been there a while.
- Use a clean sponge or cloth when washing off mould or mildew and rinse it often to reduce the risk of it spreading.
- Wear gloves when washing the mould or mildew away – be careful not to splash any liquid on your clothes or in your eyes, and open windows to improve airflow while you clean.

## Talk to us on 0800 801 601

If you would like more details about any information in this fact sheet, or have any queries about Housing New Zealand, please call our Customer Services Centre free, any time on **0800 801 601**, or visit our website [www.hnzc.co.nz](http://www.hnzc.co.nz)

If you have a hearing impairment, you can contact us using the NZ Relay Service on [www.nzrelay.co.nz](http://www.nzrelay.co.nz), or you can fax 0800 201 202.

## Controlling pests

If you have problems with pests, we can organise pest control for you, but you will need to pay. Pest control is listed under 'P' in the Yellow Pages.

### Mice and rats

- Keep your property clean and tidy so rats and mice have nowhere to nest and no food source.
- Use steel wool to block up holes that mice may use.
- Buy mousetraps from the supermarket or hardware store and bait them with cheese or peanut butter. Or buy poisoned bait from garden or hardware shops and follow the instructions. Be careful to set poisoned bait out of reach of children and pets.
- Always wear rubber gloves when getting rid of dead rats or mice.

### Cockroaches

- Put bay leaves or garlic in cupboards to keep cockroaches away.
- Wash the floor and wall behind fridges and stoves regularly, and spray these areas with long-lasting insect spray.

### Ants

- Sprinkle ground or whole cloves in cupboards to keep ants away.
- Sprinkle talcum powder or cream of tartar at the point where ants come inside.
- If you find an ant nest, pour boiling water into it. Check the water won't damage anything – apart from the nest!



### White-tailed spiders

White-tailed spiders usually live in cool dark areas – under bark in gardens, wood piles, litter and walls. They also hide under beds and in clothing left lying on the floor. Their bite can cause pain, swelling, redness and small ulcers.

- Use flyspray to get rid of them.
- Total release aerosol pesticide cans are also available from hardware stores. Follow the instructions on the can.

*We'll make sure your home is clean and tidy when you move in. After you move in, you need to keep your home safe and healthy.*

### Find out more?

If you have any questions or your circumstances have changed then talk to us. Call free any time on 0800 801 601 or visit our website [www.hnzc.co.nz](http://www.hnzc.co.nz)

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