For more information

If you have any questions about applying for housing assistance:

call the Qld Government call centre on 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

call or visit your nearest Housing Service Centre

visit the Homes and Housing website at www.qld.gov.au/housing

Department of Housing and Public Works

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Just like anyone renting in the private market, social housing tenants are able to be away from their homes.

**Being away for up to eight weeks**
If you will be away for up to eight weeks at a time, or for a total of eight weeks in a 12-month period, you don’t need any formal approval, but you will need to:

- keep paying your rent and any other debt arrangements you have with your tenancy manager
- keep your electricity connected
- arrange for someone to check on your home and collect your mail while you are away
- keep your tenancy manager updated about your absence.

**Being away for more than eight weeks**
We understand that under special circumstances you may need to be away from your home for more than eight weeks at one time, or for a total of more than eight weeks in a 12-month period. In these instances, you should talk to your tenancy manager who will consider your circumstances, and assess if your need to be away from your property balances the needs of other clients on the Housing Register waiting for housing assistance.

Examples of fair reasons to be away for more than eight weeks include:
- health and wellbeing (medical treatment, hospitalisation, rehabilitation, or carer’s responsibilities)
- work, training or study
- family, kinship and cultural responsibilities
- travel for a significant life event, circumstance or emergency
- domestic or family violence or child safety issues.

If you are away for a total of more than five months in a 12-month period, your tenancy manager may discuss your ongoing needs for social housing.

**Keeping your tenancy manager updated**
It is important to tell your tenancy manager when you will be away, for how long and how you can be contacted while you are away. This will help them to:

- answer any queries about your home being ‘vacant’ or appearing to be ‘abandoned’
- contact you in case of an emergency, for example, if your home is damaged in a storm or broken into
- fairly allocate charges for property repairs caused by vandalism.

If you will be away from your home for less than eight weeks, but other approved household members will stay at home, you do not need to give your contact details to your tenancy manager. It is important to remember that as the tenant, you are still responsible for the property and approved household members even when you are away from your property.

You can contact your tenancy manager by phone or email or visit their office.

**Case Study**

A fair result: An absence for poor health
Marion spends five weeks each Christmas with her daughter in Cairns, helping with her grandchildren and receiving her daughter’s support for her mental health condition.

When Marion broke her foot, she had to stay away for another four weeks before in-home support was in place in Caboolture. After returning home, her mental health declined and a planned two-week hospital stay turned into five weeks.

Marion was away from her home for much longer than she expected, however, because she and her daughter kept her tenancy manager informed about her situation, she was able to keep her townhouse at Caboolture.

For more information, please visit www.qld.gov.au/housing.