

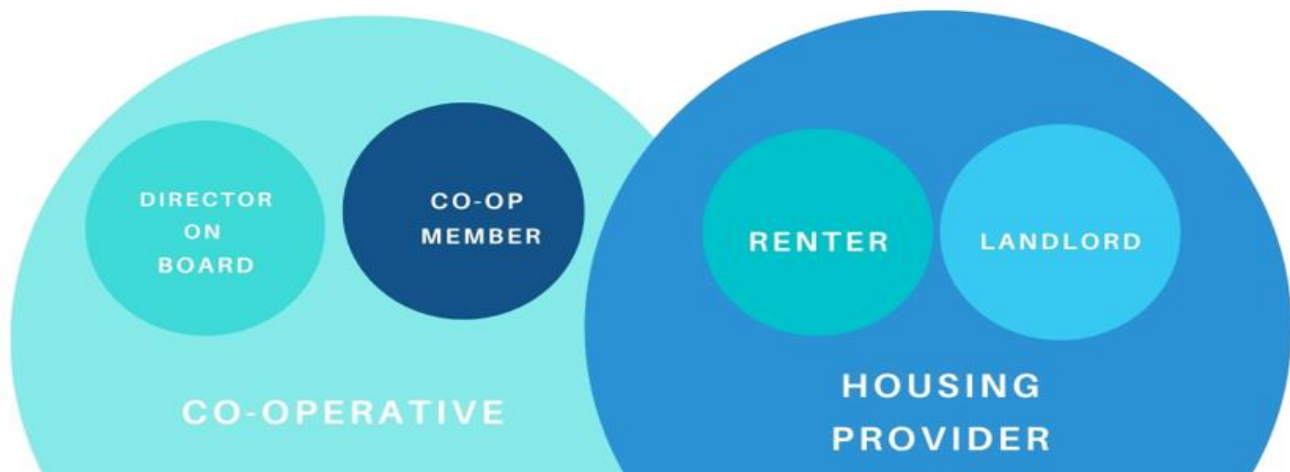
MEMBER, RENTER & CO-OP GUIDE MANAGING COMPLAINTS



This guide is to assist you to understand the complaints process either as a member who would like to make a complaint or when responding to a complaint as a function of your rental provider responsibilities or as a co-op member who has a role to play in resolving renter or co-op matters.

Members of co-operatives within the CEHL Program have multiple responsibilities. As well as being a co-op member, you are also a renter, a rental provider representative and at times could hold a specific role within the co-op such as Director or Treasurer.

Each role comes with its own set of rights and responsibilities and at times, may mean you interact as either a complainant (someone making a complaint) or as part of your role in the co-op, assist or provide a response to a complaint.

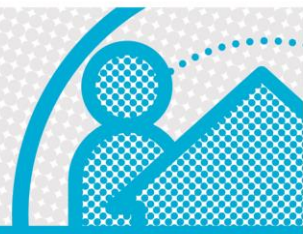


When making or responding to a complaint it is also important to understand the role of Co-operatives within the CEHL Program, who also have multiple roles:

- 1) to function as a co-operative in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Co-operatives National Law Application Act 2013.
- 2) as a provider of community housing in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, and the contractual agreement between CEHL and the co-op.

A member, renter, prospective renter, or co-op who has made a complaint to CEHL or to the rental provider may refer the complaint to the Housing Registrar for investigation if the complaint is not resolved within 30 days after it is made.

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I HAVE A COMPLAINT WHO DO I CONTACT?

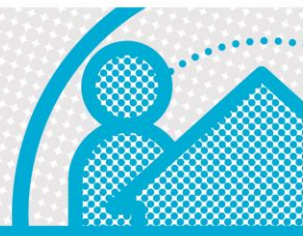
As a member renter of the co-op if you have a concern or request about your housing or your co-op, you should:

- First communicate to the co-op board of directors. They should then consider your matter and provide you with a timeline for response (refer to time frames in section 'What to do once a complaint has been made.') If you are satisfied with the response, then the matter should be considered closed.
- If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the member renter has the right to take further action to seek a resolution via the complaint process.
- if the complaint is not resolved within 30 days after it is made to CEHL or to the rental provider, the complainant may refer the complaint to the Housing Registrar for investigation.

TYPES OF COMPLAINTS AND WHO TO CONTACT

RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

 Co-operative Contact co-op first <ul style="list-style-type: none">Tenancy (if co-op is rental provider)Home repairs and maintenance matters (if co-op is rental provider)Co-op governanceCo-op grievance processNon-housing related co-op mattersCo-op operationsDispute resolution	 Shared responsibility Co-ops + CEHL <ul style="list-style-type: none">Unhoused membersLoss of membershipFamily violenceNon-referred rentersDeath of a renterExpulsionGovernance to meet Housing standards	 CEHL <i>For direct renters</i> Contact CEHL <ul style="list-style-type: none">Matters about access and provision of housingMember selectionManagement of tenanciesCompliance and delivery of Housing StandardsProgram management, reporting and operationsManaging risk
Contact Your co-op directors		Contact details Ph: 1800 353 669 Email: complaints@cehl.com.au Post: CEHL, PO Box 504, Carlton, Victoria, 3053



RESOLVING ISSUES BEFORE A COMPLAINT IS MADE

If a member renter raises a complaint with the board of the co-op, or one of the directors. It is important that the board review the information and provide a timely response, within 30 days. Often concerns can be resolved and requests responded to without becoming complaints if all parties communicate efficiently and effectively.



Above is an example of a concern being raised, a board discussing it, and providing a solution to the problem. The board cannot control how the Member Renter responds to that solution. They may agree that it is acceptable and the matter will be resolved, or they could also disagree and think that the co-op response is not adequately addressing their concern and it may progress to becoming a complaint.

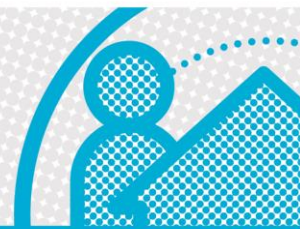
The important considerations for the co-op are that you listen to the concern or request with an open mind. Do not allow your decision making to be clouded by your feelings about the person, situation or anything other than the facts.

Consider and discuss what options are available to address the matter at hand. It could be that the co-op have no responsibility to do what is being asked of you, and it is perfectly acceptable to respond to the member renter saying that what is being requested is not something you are responsible to resolve.

However, if the matter is within your responsibility as a housing provider or co-op you do need to look at options available to you, sometimes that includes options that may not be exactly what is being asked of you but is within your ability, budget or resources to address now or within a defined future timeline.

WHEN IS IT A COMPLAINT?

Complaints can come in either a written or verbal form. If the member renter advises the board that they are making a complaint. The board need to respond in the following manner in accordance with the Program Policy and Procedure.



URGENT MAINTENANCE

If the matter is regarding an urgent maintenance request it is important that this is actioned immediately as failure to do so can result in the renter actioning their own repairs at the co-ops cost.

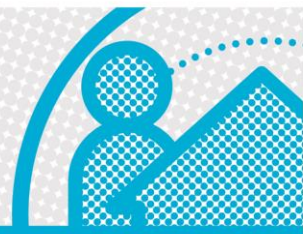
Urgent repairs are items that make the property unsafe or difficult to live in. See more details on this matter in the [CEHL Maintenance Work Category & Timeframes Fact Sheet](#).

The table below is the list of legally defined as an urgent repair item:

Burst water service	Blocked or broken toilet system
Serious roof leak	Gas leak
Dangerous electrical fault	Flooding or serious flood damage
Serious storm or fire damage	An essential service or appliance for hot water, cooking heating or laundering not working.
The gas, electricity or water supply not working.	A cooling appliance or service provided by the rental provider not working
A safety related device such as a smoke alarm or pool fence not working.	An appliance, fitting or fixture that is not working and causes a lot of water to be wasted.
Any fault or damage in the property that makes it unsafe or insecure, including pests, mould or damp caused by or relating to the building structure.	A serious problem with a lift or staircase.

WHAT TO DO ONCE A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN MADE

- (1) Record the complaint in the Co-ops complaints register
- (2) A written acknowledgement must be sent to the complainant within 2 business days. The acknowledgement must include the name of the person responsible for investigating / resolving the complaint. If the person making the complaint may need to provide additional information or testify should the matter go to VCAT. That a response will be provided within 30 days
- (3) Within 7 days of receiving the complaint the co-op must notify the Program Integration Coordinator that a complaint has been received and how the co-op plan to respond
- (4) The matter must be investigated or reviewed and a letter advising of the outcome must be provided to the complainant within 30 days
- (5) Copies of all correspondence must be filed, with a copy forwarded to CEHL for compliance reporting and the complaint register record completed and closed.



COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CO-OP

Complaints about the co-op includes any matter where a members believe your co-op has not acted appropriately or, in-line with co-op responsibilities. If the issue is due to a rental provider issue, the member renter is to raise it with the co-op first.

A member, renter, prospective renter, or co-op who has made a complaint to CEHL or to the rental provider may refer the complaint to the Housing Registrar for investigation if the complaint is not resolved within 30 days after it is made.

Co-op members can appoint a representative or advocate to act on their behalf in the dispute process. If the complaint is due to co-op conduct the Co-op board can follow the grievance process as outlined in the co-op rules. This might include mediation, co-ops can seek the assistance of the dispute settlement centre for mediation and seek further advice from Consumer Affairs Victoria, and your Co-op Development Co-ordinator.

COMPLAINTS FROM OTHERS

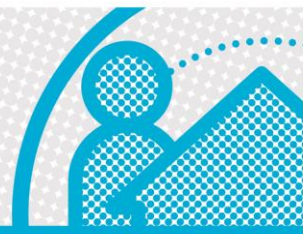
The co-op should manage complaints about their co-op and member renters in the same way as complaints from their member renters. These types of complaints might include:

- Neighbour issues – including parking and noise
- Contractor issues if a renter fails to provide access at an agreed time.

It is important to have the facts and specific details about the issue, is there sufficient evidence to support

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [CEHL Online Complaint Form](#)
- [CEHL Complaints Program Policy](#)
- [CEHL Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Housing Registrar Complaints information](#)
- [CEHL Maintenance Work Category & Timeframes Fact Sheet](#)
- [Handling disputes in a co-operative - Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)
- [CEHL Complaints resolution guide](#)
- Dispute Settlement Centre Victoria which offers a free mediation service <https://www.disputes.vic.gov.au>
- For more information on how to address co-op complaints see the Consumer Affairs Victoria website [Handling disputes in a co-operative - Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)



TYPES OF COMPLAINTS AND WHO TO CONTACT.

For complaints regarding the co-ops conduct as a housing provider / Rental Provider, you should contact CEHL.

If a complaint is regarding a dispute with the co-op about anything other than the provision of housing, you contact Consumer Affairs Victoria and be in accordance with the grievance process as outlined in your co-op's rules.

For more information on how to address co-op complaints please see the Consumer Affairs Victoria website [Consumer Affairs Victoria - Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)

NON - HOUSING RELATED COMPLAINTS

The Registrar of Co-operatives is a role that sits within Consumer Affairs Victoria.

The Registrar can act on any breaches of the Co-operatives National Law.

Grievance process of a co-op should also include the ability to seek mediation for the dispute CAV recommends the use of the Dispute Settlement Centre Victoria which offers a free mediation service <https://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/>

Member can appoint a representative to act on their behalf in the disputes process.