



Media Contact: Natasha Farrell

Mobile: 0439 261 366

Email: natasha.farrell@audit.wa.gov.au

11 May 2016

Safety devices managed poorly in public housing

In his latest report released today, Auditor General Colin Murphy found the Housing Authority (Housing) is still not managing electrical safety devices in public housing effectively to minimise risk to tenants and properties.

Mr Murphy found it disappointing that Housing was unable to confirm that all of its 36,600 properties had working residual current devices (RCDs) and smoke alarms.

'Since my original [report in 2010](#), Housing has spent significant time and resources but has not addressed all the weaknesses and issues identified in the first report.

'The provision of these safety devices is critical, given Housing deals with 4 fires and 18 electrical incidents each month and its tenants are often vulnerable people,' Mr Murphy said.

Housing cannot be sure its properties are safe because electrical safety device information is unreliable, a result of poor baseline information, missing or incorrect information and inconsistent updating from inspections and maintenance.

The audit sampled 90 property records and found all lacked complete and accurate electrical safety device information.

In 3 cases, the inspection report indicated that safety devices were in working order even though photos clearly showed the devices needed replacing.

'Staff play a major role in collecting data, but Housing has only recently made training for housing inspectors mandatory.

'Housing needs to address the concerns around safety devices otherwise they continue to put tenants and properties at some risk from electrocution and fire,' Mr Murphy said.

In April, Housing commenced a \$26 million program to identify and replace non-compliant RCDs and smoke alarms and collect correct baseline information. This program is expected to take up to 3 years to complete.

'For this program to be a success it is important that Housing address the systemic weaknesses we found in property inspections, data collection and management oversight,' Mr Murphy said.

The Auditor General's report, *Fitting and Maintaining Safety Devices in Public Housing – Follow-up* (Report 7 – May 2016) is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at www.audit.wa.gov.au.

As is the previous report – [Fitting and Maintaining Safety Devices in Public Housing](#) (Report 7 – August 2010)

ENDS

