
40. Useful Life of Building Elements

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This Policy Guideline is intended to provide a statement of the policy intent of legislation, and has been developed in the context of the common law and the rules of statutory interpretation, where appropriate. This Guideline is also intended to help the parties to an application understand issues that are likely to be relevant. It may also help parties know what information or evidence is likely to assist them in supporting their position. This Guideline may be revised and new Guidelines issued from time to time.

This guideline is a general guide for determining the useful life of building elements for considering applications for additional rent increases¹ and determining damages² which the director has the authority to determine under the *Residential Tenancy Act* and the *Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act*. Useful life is the expected lifetime, or the acceptable period of use, of an item under normal circumstances.

Applications for additional rent increases

A landlord may apply for an additional rent increase in an amount greater than the basic Annual Rent Increase in extraordinary circumstances. One of those circumstances is when a landlord has completed significant repairs or renovations that could not have been foreseen under reasonable circumstances and that will not recur within a reasonable time period³. When reviewing applications for additional rent increases, the director may use this guide to determine whether the landlord could have foreseen the repair or renovation.

Damage(s)

When applied to damage(s) caused by a tenant, the tenant's guests or the tenant's pets, the arbitrator may consider the useful life of a building element and the age of the item. Landlords should provide evidence showing the age of the item at the time of replacement and the cost of the replacement building item. That evidence may be in the form of work orders, invoices or other documentary evidence.

If the arbitrator finds that a landlord makes repairs to a rental unit due to damage caused by the tenant, the arbitrator may consider the age of the item at the time of replacement and the useful life of the item when calculating the tenant's responsibility for the cost or replacement.

¹ Residential Tenancy Regulation, s. 23; Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Regulation, s. 33.

² RTA, s. 67; MHPTA, s. 60.

³ Residential Tenancy Regulation, s. 23; Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Regulation, s. 33.

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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Used items

If the item being replaced was used when first installed, then the useful life will be determined by taking into account the length of time of that previous use.

Items that do not appear in the table

If a building element does not appear in the table, the useful life will be determined with reference to items with similar characteristics in the table or information published by the manufacturer. Parties to dispute resolution may submit evidence for the useful life of a building element. Evidence may include documentation from the manufacturer for the particular item claimed.

Items where the useful life is substantially different from the table

If the useful life of a building element is substantially different from what appears in the table, parties to dispute resolution may submit evidence for the useful life of a building element. Evidence may include documentation from the manufacturer for the particular item claimed.

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ASSET		Useful life in years
PARKING LOT, DRIVEWAYS AND WALKWAYS		
	i. Asphalt, concrete	15
	ii. Gravel	10
	iii. Interlocking brick	20
	iv. Repairs	5
FENCES		
	i. Concrete	20
	ii. Metal, steel, chain link	25
	iii. Wood	15
ROOFS		
	i. Sloped (asphalt shingles)	15
	ii. Flat	20
	iii. Repairs	5
CONCRETE		
1.	Concrete floor (slab), rebar repairs	10
2.	Curbs	15
3.	Foundation walls	20
4.	Stairs and porches	10
5.	Retaining walls	25
MASONRY		
	i. Replacement	20
	ii. Repairs	15

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ASSET		Useful life in years
METALS		
1.	Balcony railings, steel	15
WOOD AND PLASTICS		
1.	Balcony railings, wood	10
2.	Decks and porches	20
3.	Retaining walls, wood	15
DOORS AND WINDOWS		
1.	Doors	20
2.	Garage door and operator	10
3.	Lock replacement, building	20
4.	Windows	15
5.	Window framing	
	i. Wood	15
	ii. Aluminium	20
SIDING		
	i. Aluminium, steel	25
	ii. Cedar, masonite, stucco	20
THERMAL AND MOISTURE PROTECTION		
1.	Eavestroughs, downpipes	20
2.	Waterproofing	
	i. Membrane	15
	ii. Sealer	5
3.	Insulation	20

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ASSET		Useful life in years
FINISHES		
1.	Carpets	10
2.	Flooring	
	i. Tile	10
	ii. Hardwood, parquet	20
3.	Gypsum board (drywall)	20
4.	Painting	
	i. Exterior	8
	ii. Interior	4
5.	Panelling	20
MISCELLANEOUS		
1.	Elevator	20
2.	Landscaping	15
3.	Locker	15
4.	Mailbox	15
5.	Playground equipment (swings, etc.)	10
6.	Satellite dish	10
7.	Sauna	15
8.	Steel television antennae	15
9.	Storage	20
10.	Swimming pool	15
11.	Whirlpool, jacuzzi	15
FURNISHINGS		
1.	Appliances	
	i. Clothes washer / dryer	15
	ii. Dishwasher	10

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ASSET		Useful life in years
FURNISHINGS (con't)		
	iii. Microwave	10
	iv. Refrigerator	15
	v. Stove	15
2.	Cabinets, counters: bath, kitchen	25
3.	Drapes, venetian blinds	10
4.	Furniture	10
MECHANICAL		
1.	Heating systems	15
2.	Ventilation	
	i. Sanitary exhaust	
	A. Central systems	20
	B. Individual systems	15
	ii. Insulation	25
	iii. Air conditioning	20
	A. Incremental units	15
	B. Sleeve, window units	15
	iv. Furnace	
	A. Electric, forced air	25
	B. Oil, gas, forced air	25
	C. Oil, gas, wall or floor	20
	v. Hot water tanks	

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MECHANICAL (con't)		
	A. Commercial	20
	B. Domestic	10
3.	Mechanical	
	i. Culvert (metal, concrete)	25
	ii. Lawn sprinklers (underground)	10
	iii. Plumbing fixtures	
	A. Faucets	15
	B. Tubs, toilets, sinks	20
	iv. Sanitary systems	25
	v. Septic tank and tile bed	20
	vi. Storm system	25
	vii. Water treatment	20
	viii. Wells and water system	20
ELECTRICAL		
1.	Generator	25
2.	Fire alarms, smoke detectors	15
3.	Fire extinguishers	10
4.	Intercom	15
5.	Light fixtures	15
6.	Panel and wiring	15
7.	Power line	25
8.	Rewiring	25
9.	Temperature control	

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ELECTRICAL (con't)		
	i. Electric	15
	ii. Pneumatic	15
10.	Transformer	25