

We are refurbishing and replumbing

Over a 15-year period, Huge will be refurbishing and replumbing just over 5300 rental units at properties built in the 50s, 60s and 70s. This is a large and much-needed project that will be ongoing until around 2032.

Since the buildings were constructed, the plumbing and power lines have been subjected to severe wear and tear. These now need to be replaced in order to minimise the risk of future leaks and water damage. We also need to replace electrical systems and improve the ventilation in many places to meet the modern regulatory requirements that apply to electrical safety and indoor climate.

FAQ about the replumbing

We have put together an FAQ with questions that commonly arise in connection with a replumbing project. In most cases our tenants will stay on during the construction period. However, some properties require more comprehensive work, in which case tenants will have to move to temporary housing.

If you do not find answers to your questions below, you are welcome to get in touch with one of our reconstruction coordinators. Contact information can be found at the bottom of the page.

Q: What is a replumbing project?

A: A replumbing project involves the replacement of all pipes and conduits that carry tap water and wastewater to and from the building. Because significant interventions are required to access the pipes hidden in the walls and floors, both bathrooms and kitchens will be affected. In particular the bathrooms, where both walls and floors will need to be knocked down in order to get at the pipes requiring replacement.

Q: Why is the replumbing required?

A: All sewerage and water pipes have a limited service life. They wear with time, and there is a risk that they will crack or become clogged by scale, which causes expensive and unpleasant water damage. This makes it absolutely imperative to replace the plumbing every 40 to 50 years, before the pipes' service life is up.

Q: How will I know when you will be replumbing my building?

A: We start planning a project around 1 to 2 years before the intended start date. When we initiate planning, we send information about our plans to the contract holders of the

units at the property in question. At this time we also send out invitations to an information meeting attended by representatives from both Huga and Hyresgästföreningen (the Swedish Union of Tenants). At this meeting, representatives are also elected from among participating tenants to serve on a consultation group – samråd or samrådsgrupp in Swedish.

Read more on samråd on huge.se/vanligafrågor

Q: How do you go about it? Are you replacing all the plumbing entirely, or are you relining the pipes?

A: Whether we replace or reline the pipes depends on the condition of the pipes. A thorough inspection of the pipes is made to decide which alternative is the most adequate solution for each particular property.

Q: What can I do to affect the replumbing project? Do I have any say?

A: According to the Tenancy Act, as a tenant you have the right to receive information about what will happen in connection with a planned reconstruction or refurbishment that causes the dwelling's value or layout to change.

As a tenant of a public housing company, you have the opportunity to exert influence over your tenancy according to Allbolagen (the Public Housing Company Act). In terms of maintenance work and improvements, you can exert this influence by participating in the consultation group formed for each major project. The group includes representatives from Huga, Hyresgästföreningen (the Swedish Union of Tenants) and tenants at the property in question. The tenants choose their own representatives at the first information meeting held in the early stages of the project.

Consultation builds consensus

The purpose of forming consultation groups is to build consensus through dialogue. Consultation can help facilitate the decision-making process for all parties involved where entire properties are due for major reconstruction or refurbishment projects.

Structured dialogue makes it easier to determine what actions should be taken, and helps reduce uncertainty for you as a tenant. Exactly how the consultation process works may vary from case to case depending on various project factors.

Tenants' consent

We also need your consent to be able to get started on the improvement project. At the first information meeting, which all affected tenants are invited to attend, we will hand out a consent form by which you authorise us to carry out those measures that are considered to raise the standard of the building.

We also need your consent to enter your flat when the time comes. Read more under the question below.

Q: What happens if I do not give my consent – if I do not approve of the work you plan to perform in my flat?

A: Your approval is needed for value-adding reconstruction or refurbishment work. We need it in order to be able to perform standard-raising work in the flat, and at least half of the tenants need to approve work in common areas in order for us to be allowed to raise the rent after a project has been completed.

The Tenancy Act also states that Hyresnämnden (the regional rent tribunal) may permit property owners to commence a refurbishment and replumbing project even if one or more tenants have not approved the planned measures. In order to facilitate the process for both you and for us, Huge participates in consultation groups made up of the Tenants Association and specially-elected tenant representatives.

Regular maintenance does not require approval

However, as a landlord we do not need your consent to perform actions that are considered to be regular maintenance of the property. This includes work like painting, wallpapering, replacing floor coverings, polishing wooden floors or replacing appliances. Such maintenance work also includes simply replacing water pipes and plumbing, which does not require your consent per se.

Approval to enter the flat

As a rule, we also need your approval to enter your flat to perform reconstruction, maintenance or refurbishment work.

Ultimately, the Tenancy Act entitles us as the landlord to apply to Kronofogden (the Swedish Enforcement Authority) to enter your flat if we are refused permission to perform work that is of significance to the property in general, or which has been approved by the rent tribunal.

What does the law say? Read more on Boverket.se

Q: How long does it take to carry out replumbing at a property?

A: How long it takes to complete the replumbing project depends on several factors, such as whether the tenants stay on, or if they are relocated to temporary housing. For obvious reasons, the work goes faster in empty buildings than in buildings where we have to take the remaining tenants into consideration by minimising messiness and noise.

The time required also depends on how extensive the work is, which varies from project to project and is determined after a thorough technical survey of the property ahead of the replumbing project, as well a technical survey of the refurbishment required in connection with the project.

Time required if residents stay on

At properties with tenants that stay on in their units, a project can take from two to five months, depending on whether we replace both kitchen and bathroom plumbing in one go, or if we split the work into phases. At some properties we begin with the bathroom and finish it completely, which takes about eight weeks. After a pause of about a month, we will come back and carry out the planned work in the kitchen over a period lasting from three to four weeks.

Time required if residents are relocated

At some properties we need to carry out more extensive renovations. In this case we will move our tenants into temporary housing. This kind of refurbishment and replumbing project generally takes six to eight months to complete.

Q: Do I need to move?

A: Most of our residents will be able to stay on, but in some cases we will need to move tenants into a temporary unit for about six months. This case-by-case variation is owing to the fact that the approach and the scope of work varies from project to project and property to property.

If you will be impacted by a refurbishment and replacement project, we will notify you whether you will be able to stay on or will have to move out when the initial information meeting is held one year and two years respectively before the work is to commence.

Temporary housing

Certain properties are in need of more renovation than others. In this case we give all tenants the option to move into temporary Huge-owned housing for as long as the work is ongoing. Individual tenants who work at night or who cannot stay on during the time the property is a construction site for medical reasons can also get help moving into temporary housing.

Huge will pay for the move and can also offer – after an individual assessment – to help you with the packing if there is a need for that. You will also receive a lump sum of SEK 3000 to compensate you for any extra expenses that the relocation may cause you to incur. The compensation is provided in the form of reduced rent around one to two months after you move back into your permanent unit.

Those staying on

If you are staying on in your flat during the project, things will be a bit inconvenient, as you will have to deal with noise and dust in the building. We understand completely the hassle of having construction workers walking in and out of your flat, sometimes several times a day.

To compensate you for the fact that you cannot fully use your flat during this time, we will reduce your rent based on the SABO guidelines governing restricted use of rental units.

If you work nights, or cannot stay on while we are replumbing for medical reasons, you can get help moving into temporary housing after an individual assessment in this regard. Please note that if you move into temporary housing from a property where residents are allowed to stay on, you will not be compensated in the form of reduced rent, but will pay the rent set for the temporary unit that you move into.

Q: How high will my rent be after the replumbing project?

A: Our goal is to give our tenants preliminary notice of how much the rent may be raised before we commence a refurbishment or reconstruction project.

At about the same time that we begin the process of planning value-enhancing reconstruction or refurbishment, we will also begin negotiations with the Tenants Association regarding the rent adjustment. The negotiations are based on the work that we plan to carry out – and how it will change the utility of the flat units. Any tenant-selected options and the size of the flat are also factors that will influence the adjusted rent.

As a rule, we are not able to provide final notice regarding your adjusted rent until around two months before a reconstruction or refurbishment project is complete. The reason the final notice is delayed until that time is that it is only at that stage of the project that we know the actual costs of the project, at which point we can include the general rent increase by agreement with the Tenants Association.

Q: Will I be compensated financially?

A: The compensation will vary depending on whether you are staying on or moving to a temporary housing.

Compensation if you stay on

If you live at a property where everyone stays on, you are entitled to compensation, as you cannot fully utilise your flat. You will be compensated in the form of reduced rent during the time the work is ongoing. How much your rent will be reduced depends on the

number of days and the extent to which your right of use is impaired. We adhere to the SABO guidelines governing what is referred to as "impairment of the right of use".

Compensation if you move into temporary housing or are evacuated

If you live at a property where the tenants are required to move out, you will receive SEK 3000 as compensation for the increased costs usually entailed by a relocation. The compensation is provided in the form of a deduction from your rent around one month after you have moved back into your permanent unit.

If you choose, following an individual assessment, to move into a temporary unit at a property where residents who are staying on

If you live at a property where residents are staying on during the construction period and you work nights or cannot stay on for medical reasons, you will not receive any compensation for restricted right of use. You will pay the normal rent in effect for the temporary housing unit that you move into.

Q: What disruptive work will you be doing?

A: Aside from the extra traffic in the stairwells and in your flat, there will be some noise. Especially when we are opening up the pipework, i.e. exposing the old pipes and tearing up tiled bathroom walls and floors. This sound propagates through several stories of the building.

Q: Can I go to the bathroom, shower, wash and do dishes?

A: If you are among those staying on, there are bound to be everyday limitations, as construction workers will need to enter and leave your flat several times a day, and both your kitchen and your bathroom will be a construction site.

But even if your access to your kitchen and bathroom is restricted, you will always have access to water for cooking, doing dishes, and so that you can attend to your hygiene. For example, we will install a waterless toilet in your flat. We will also install shower trailers with a toilet in the courtyard.

The laundry room will be available the entire time, but there will be periodic reductions in capacity.

Q: I will be staying on during the replumbing. Do I need to be home during the day when the workers come to work in my flat?

A: No, you do not have to be home. One of the first things we do before we get started is to replace the lock cylinder in your front door and fit it with what is called a construction cylinder. This way only you and authorised workers can enter your home. When the work is done, we will reinstall your old lock.

Q: Is there anywhere for me to go if I am staying on but I'm bothered by the work during daytime hours?

A: We endeavour to ensure that a space where you can spend some time during the day will be available for every project. If you are home during the daytime, you should be able to go there if you feel too bothered by the noise or the comings and goings of construction workers. Generally, the Tenants Association will grant the use of its office. The space has a sitting area with a kitchenette, along with a shower and toilet. You need not be a member of the Tenants Association to use this area.

Q: Will things get very messy?

A: If you live at a property where the residents can stay on, you will see that things get quite messy, both in your flat, in the stairwell, and out in the courtyard. But the workers will do a rough cleaning of the parts of the flat where they have been working at the end of each workday – usually the bathroom, kitchen and hallway. Once the project is complete, all flats and other spaces at the property will be given a final clean at no charge to you.

Outside, we will set up skips, and there may be sacks of construction waste in the courtyard. Once the project is complete, we will clean up and plant new grass where required in order to wipe out the traces left by the construction site.

Q: What are the working hours?

A: Working hours at properties with residents who are staying on are weekdays, generally from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Disruptive work outside the flats may commence at 7:30 a.m. Work inside the flats is done from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Q: I have pets. Do you take that into account?

A: Yes, of course we take pets into consideration. But because there may be a great deal of noise and clatter during working hours, we recommend that you arrange temporary accommodation for them. The noise may be hard on their sensitive ears, especially when we are opening up the walls.

If you have a cat or dog at home, you need to keep them locked up in a room during working hours, and will also need to put up a sign outside your front door indicating that you have pets, so that the construction workers know that they are there. Nobody wants your pets sneaking out the door as workers enter your flat.

Q: What can I do as a tenant to get prepared?

A: What you can do to prepare may depend on whether you are staying on, or move to a temporary housing.

Those staying on

If you are staying on during the refurbishment, you need to prepare the areas of the flat where we will be working, so that things run smoothly. You also need to secure your belongings to make sure that nothing is ruined.

Bathroom, shower and separate toilet

Because we will be tearing out all of the bathroom fittings, it is important that you do the following:

- Empty the bathroom completely, and store all loose belongings in another room of your flat.
- Remove all hooks, shelves and other items you want to keep, and store them elsewhere.
- Leave your washing machine where it is, if you own one. We will disconnect it and move it to a different part of the flat, and will reconnect it when the renovation is complete.

Kitchen

To keep items in cabinets and on shelves from falling down from the vibrations caused by the work we do in your flat or your neighbour's flat, it's a good idea to:

- empty all cabinets
- take things down from shelves

You will also need to:

- empty the cabinets under the sink
- remove floor mats

Hallway and cloakroom

Because the construction workers need to use the hallway as a transport route, they will cover your wardrobes and floors with a protective sheet to avoid damage. You will need to:

- move any clothing, shoes, rugs, furniture and other things that you have placed or store here.

If the electrical system in the entire flat is being replaced it will take one working day to replace the electrical system. You will be notified in advance of the exact date when this will happen.

Prior to the replacement of the electrical system, you will need to:

- move furniture and other items away from the walls in the entire flat so that the electrician can access power switches and wall outlets
- take down all ceiling lamps

Remember that the electrical outlets in walls and ceilings will be grounded outlets following the replacement. For this reason, the plugs of your lamps and other electrical equipment may require replacement for you to be able to use them.

Temporary housing

Huge will cover the costs of moving into the temporary unit. But in order for the relocation to be free of charge to you, you need to meet certain criteria related to the move. Make sure you start packing well in advance so that everything is ready to go when the removal company arrives. Both the flat and the storage unit need to be completely emptied and cleaned. If you work, you may need to take a day off, as you need to be at home on the day of the move. You need to open the door for the removal company and unlock at the new address. We will deliver removal boxes to your home well ahead of moving day.

Q: Can I feel confident that no unauthorised persons will enter my home?

A: In order for you to feel confident that only authorised persons will have access to your flat, we will replace the lock cylinder to your flat with a temporary construction cylinder. This way only you and the contractor responsible for the renovation will have keys to the temporary lock. All construction workers hired by us are also required to visibly display an ID badge. If it is not visibly displayed, we recommend that you ask to see it.

While the renovation is in progress, do not use any additional lock (tumbler), if there is one on your door. You will receive a separate notice informing you ahead of the cylinder replacement.

Q: How is the project insured? Is my home insurance policy enough?

A: Your home insurance is valid during the refurbishment. If you are staying on, you need to notify your insurance company that the flat will be replumbed. And if you are moving into temporary housing, you also need to report this and take out a new policy for the temporary unit, while discontinuing the one you have for your permanent unit.

The home insurance policy covers any damage to and loss of your personal belongings as a result of burglary, fire or water damage. But keep in mind that you are also responsible for protecting your belongings. So be sure to put away your belongings and make sure that you keep your valuables in a safe place.

If you are staying on, we will install a temporary construction lock, but this does not alter the terms of your home insurance policy. Both Huge and the contractors we employ also have a joint responsibility to prevent damage.

Should damage occur nonetheless, you need to report it to us. We will compensate you for the excess, limited to a maximum of SEK 1500 for damage to personal property if any of our contractors should be responsible for causing it. If there has been a burglary, however, you need to report it to the police.

Q: What environmental aspects do you take into account when you refurbish your properties?

A: When we refurbish buildings or build new ones, we choose materials that are both economically and environmentally sustainable. Both building materials and chemicals should have as little impact on people and the environment as possible. We document our choice of materials for every property in an environmental database. The database is an important tool that helps us make informed choices on materials.

With regard to construction waste from our refurbishment projects, we are working towards streamlining the sorting process so that more material can be recycled. We are also improving the sorting of household waste to include more sorting containers in flats and rubbish rooms.

When purchasing products like appliances and lighting fixtures, it goes without saying that our choice is affected by energy efficiency and energy economy.

Q: What happens once you have completed the refurbishment?

A: Once we are done, the flat will be inspected, and any adverse findings will be remedied. In buildings where tenants stay on, we will remove the construction cylinder and reinstall the flat's old lock cylinder. If you wish, you may attend the inspection both prior to start of construction and after project completion.

Shortly after the final inspection, we will send you a survey that we hope you will take the time to respond to. The survey gives you an opportunity to share your opinions and experiences – from what you think of the information you received prior to and during the refurbishment to what you think of the final result.

Any more questions?

If you live in a building that we are replumbing, or if you have been notified that we will shortly be initiating replumbing of your property, you are welcome to contact our reconstruction coordinators by email at rot@huge.se, or by phone on 08-502 360 10.

If you are not directly affected at the moment and have general questions, please contact customer service directly by phone on 08-502 360 10.