ASSESSMENT GUIDE

FAIR WEAR & TEAR VS TENANT DAMAGE

A practical way to describe blind condition before deciding the next step.

START WITH EVIDENCE, NOT AN ASSUMPTION

Compare the current condition with the entry report and photos. Consider age, exposure, ordinary use, prior repairs and the likely cause. An example alone does not decide responsibility or cost. Apply the relevant state or territory rules.

How to read common observations

OBSERVATION	POSSIBLE READING	NEXT STEP
Sun fading or gradual ageing	Often consistent with ordinary wear.	Check age, exposure and entry photos.
Frayed operating cord	May develop through ordinary use; it is still a safety issue.	Make safe and arrange repair assessment.
Torn or missing covering	May indicate specific damage rather than gradual wear.	Compare with entry condition and record cause.
Bent rail or broken part	Cause may be unclear from appearance alone.	Photograph, note operation and seek assessment.
Stain or mould	Cause may relate to cleaning, moisture or site conditions.	Record location and investigate before assigning cause.

RECORD BEFORE DECIDING

- [ ] Entry and current photos, with date and room/window
- [ ] Product age, code and any previous repair history
- [ ] How the fault happened, if known, and whether it affects safety
- [ ] Repair assessment or quote, plus the reason for the proposed outcome

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

Repair a safety issue promptly regardless of how responsibility is later assessed. NSW Fair Trading lists faded curtains and frayed cords as fair wear and tear examples, and missing or torn curtains as damage examples. Blind-specific cases still need evidence and assessment.

NSW reference: NSW Fair Trading, Fair wear and tear versus damage in rental properties (linked).