



residential  
tenancies  
authority

# Renting a house or unit in Queensland

Form 17a



Rental bond number:

# Assistance information

## Translating and Interpreting Service

If you need interpreting assistance to help you understand the information in this booklet, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 (for the cost of a local call) and ask to speak to the Residential Tenancies Authority.

## Arabic

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة في الترجمة لفهم المعلومات الموجودة في هذا الكتيب، يرجى الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفهية على الرقم 131450 (بكلفة مكالمة محلية) واطلب التحدث مع سلطة الإيجارات السكنية.

## Bosnian

Ako trebate pomoć tumača da biste razumjeli ovu knjižicu, molimo Vas da nazovete Službu prevodilaca i tumača (Translating and Interpreting Service) na 13 14 50 (po cijeni lokalnog poziva) i pitajte da Vas spoje sa Upravom stanovanja (Residential Tenancies Authority).

## Chinese (Simplified)

如果你需要传译员帮助你理解这本小册子所含信息的意思，请致电翻译服务处，电话号码：13 14 50 (本地电话费)，并要求接驳住宅房屋租赁办公室 (Residential Tenancies Authority)。

## Chinese (Traditional)

如果你需要傳譯員幫助你理解這本小冊子所含信息的意思，請致電翻譯服務處，電話號碼：13 14 50 (本地電話費)，並要求接駁住宅房屋租賃辦公室 (Residential Tenancies Authority)。

## Croatian

Ako trebate pomoć tumača za razumijevanje ove knjižice, molimo Vas da nazovete Službu prevodilaca i tumača (Translating and Interpreting Service) na 13 14 50 (po cijeni lokalnog poziva) i pitajte da Vas spoje sa Upravom stanovanja (Residential Tenancies Authority).

## Dari

اگر ترجمان میخواستید تا به شما کمک کند که معلومات این دفترچه را بفهمید به اداره ترجمان کتبی و شفاهی به شماره ۱۳۱۴۵۰ (به قیمت یک تلفون محلی) تلفون کنید و بخواهید که با مسئول اجاره خانه های مسکونی (Residential Tenancies Authority) گپ بزنید.

## Farsi

اگر برای درک اطلاعات مندرج در این دفترچه به مترجم احتیاج دارید تا شما را کمک نماید، لطفاً بوسیله تلفن شماره ۱۳۱۴۵۰ (به هزینه یک تلفن داخلی) با اداره ترجمان کتبی و شفاهی تماس حاصل فرمائید و بخواهید که با مسئول اجاره خانه های مسکونی (Residential Tenancies Authority) صحبت کنید.

## Filipino (Tagalog)

Kung kailangan mo ng tulong sa pagsasalín o pagpapaliwanag ng wika upang maintindihan ang impormasyon sa buklet na ito, paki tawagan ang **Serbisyo sa Pagsasalín at Pagpapaliwanag o Pag-iinterpreté ng Wika sa 13 14 50** (sa halaga ng tawag na lokal) at hilinging makipag-usap sa Awtoridad ng mga Pagpapa-upa at Pag-upa ng Tirahan (Residential Tenancies Authority).

## Indonesian

Jika Anda membutuhkan bantuan juru bahasa untuk membantu Anda memahami informasi di dalam *booklet* ini, silahkan menghubungi Layanan Penerjemahan dan Kejurubahasaan (**Translating and Interpreting Service**) melalui telepon 13 14 50 (untuk tarif pulsa lokal) dan minta disambungkan ke bagian **Residential Tenancies Authority**.

## Japanese

本冊子の内容を理解するために通訳の援助が必要な場合は、13 14 50 の翻訳通訳サービス (市内通話料金のみ) まで連絡し、レジデンシャル・テナンシーズ・オーソリティ (賃貸住宅権威機関) に話すように依頼してください。

## Khmer

បើលោកអ្នកត្រូវការជំនួយបកប្រែភាសាដើម្បីជួយលោកអ្នកឲ្យយល់ព័ត៌មាននៅក្នុងកូដបៀវត្សនេះ សូមទាក់ទង **Translating and Interpreting Service** (សេវាបកប្រែភាសា) តាមទូរស័ព្ទលេខ 13 14 50 (ឥតថ្លៃទូរស័ព្ទក្នុងតំបន់) ហើយសុំនិយាយទៅកាន់ Residential Tenancies Authority (អាជ្ញាធរទទួលបន្ទុកការជួលផ្ទះសេវា)។

## Korean

이 책자의 내용을 이해하는데 통역 서비스의 지원이 필요하실 경우 통역 번역 서비스 13 14 50 (시내 통화 요금)에 연락하신 후, 주택 임차대 기관 (Residential Tenancies Authority)에 연결하도록 요청하십시오.

## Samoan

Afai ete manaomia le fesoasoani faamatalaupū e fesoasoani ia te oe ina ia e malamalama ai i faamatalaga o loo i lenei tama'itusi faafesootai le **Auaunaga o Faamatalaupū ma Faaliliupū ile 13 14 50** (ile tau o telefoni i pitonuu) ma fesili ile Pule o Nofoga Mau Tototgi ete talanoa iai.

## Serbian

Уколико Вам је потребан преводилац да бисте разумели информације у овој књижици, молимо назовите **Службу преводилаца и тумача (Translating and Interpreting Service)** на 13 14 50 (по цени локалног позива) и тражите Управу за становање (Residential Tenancies Authority).

## Spanish

Si necesita la ayuda de un intérprete para poder comprender la información contenida en este folleto, por favor contacte al **Servicio de Traducción e Interpretación en el número 131450** (por el precio de una llamada local) y solicite que lo comuniquen con la Administración de Inquilinatos Residenciales - "Residential Tenancies Authority".

## Thai

หากท่านจำเป็นต้องได้รับความช่วยเหลือในการแปลภาษาเพื่อช่วยท่านให้เข้าใจข้อมูลในเอกสารคู่มือฉบับนี้ โปรดติดต่อ **Translating and Interpreting Service** (บริการแปลและล่าม) ที่โทรศัพท์หมายเลข 13 14 50 (ค่าโทรศัพท์ท้องถิ่น) และขอพูดกับ Residential Tenancies Authority

## Tigrinya

ኣብዚ ጥራዕ እዚ ዘሎ ኣበሬታ ንምርዳእ ናይ ምስትርጓም ኣገዛ እንጅሕር ኣድሊዩኩም፡ ብቐጠራ ስልኪ 131450 (ብናይ ሃገር ውሽጢ ቁጥ) ናብ ግልጋሎት ምስትርጓምን ምስትርጓምን ደብዳቤኩም ምስ በዓል መዘ ክራይ መንበሪ ኣባይቲ ንምርዳሎብ ስተቲ ።

## Vietnamese

Nếu quý vị cần giúp đỡ về thông dịch để hiểu được thông tin trong tập sách nhỏ này, xin vui lòng điện thoại **Dịch Vụ Thông Phiên Dịch qua số 13 14 50** (trả phí tổn cước gọi địa phương) và xin nói chuyện với Thẩm Quyền Về Thuê Nhà Ở (Residential Tenancies Authority).

## Hearing and Speech Impairment: National Relay Service

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment and you use TTY or computer modem, call

13 36 77

## Disability Information and Awareness Line (DIAL)

Brisbane	(07) 3224 8444
(toll-free within Australia)	1800 177 120
Fax	(07) 3896 3467
TTY	(07) 3896 3471
(toll-free within Australia)	1800 010 222
Email	disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au

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## Icons

Icons are used to help you find important information quickly. Below is a key for the icons used in this booklet.



Talk to the lessor/agent. This icon is placed next to information that needs to be discussed with your lessor/agent.



RTA forms are available from most Australia Post Outlets throughout Queensland.



Key information on a topic.



A handy checklist.



Services providing help or more information are listed on the back of this booklet.



Forms, fact sheets or further information are available by contacting the RTA on 1300 366 311 or by visiting [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)

**Disclaimer:** This information statement summarises the law, but it is not the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (the Act). The Act and your tenancy agreement are the legal documents relating to your tenancy. If there is an inconsistency between this information statement and the Act, the Act prevails.

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# Welcome to your new home

## Why have I been given this booklet?

If you've been given this booklet, you must be about to rent a new home! This can be a busy time in your life – there's moving, unpacking, and possibly cleaning at your previous home (premises) to be done. When you get some time to relax and enjoy your new home, take the time to **read** the important information in this booklet – and **keep it** in a safe and handy place throughout your tenancy.

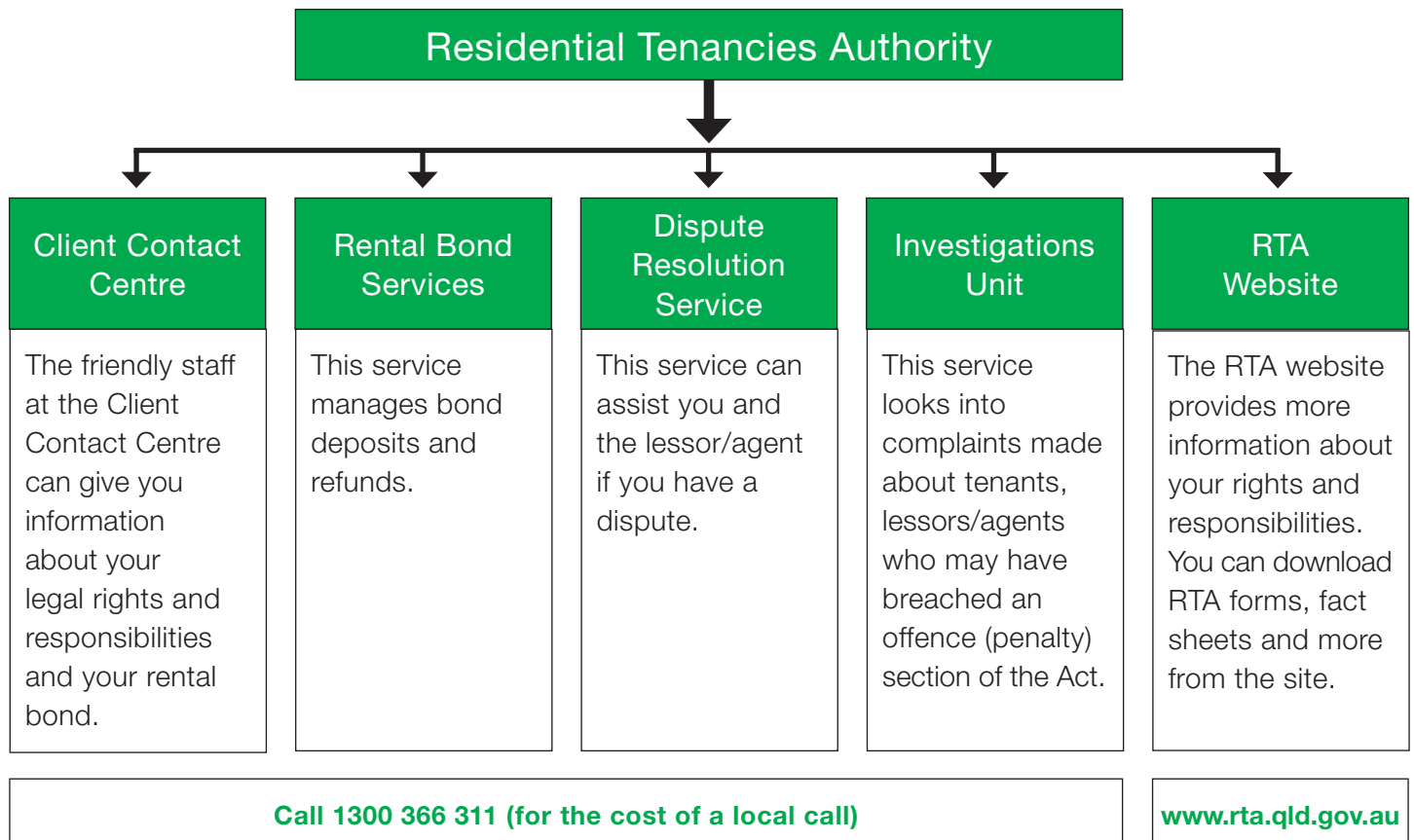
This booklet is a guide to how the law applies to renting. It will help you to understand your legal rights and responsibilities. The laws (rules) for renting in Queensland can be found in the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (the Act). **To find out whether you're covered by the Act or not, refer to 'The Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008' on page 35.**

**Your most common tenancy questions are answered in this booklet.** If you need more information about how the Act applies to your individual tenancy agreement, or if you are unsure whether this Act applies to you, contact the RTA on **1300 366 311** or visit **www.rta.qld.gov.au**.

## What is the RTA?

The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) administers the Act. The RTA is an independent and impartial government organisation that assists **both** tenants and lessors (landlords)/agents to understand their legal rights and responsibilities as set out by the Act.

## What support services does the RTA offer?





# Rights and responsibilities

## What are my rights and responsibilities when renting?

All tenants and lessors/agents must comply with the law. It is important to understand your rights and responsibilities from the very start of your tenancy.

### Your responsibilities as a tenant

You have responsibilities to the lessor/agent of the property. You must ensure you:

#### Meet your responsibilities under the agreement:

- pay the rent on time and in the way written in your agreement
- abide by the terms of your agreement and any body corporate by-laws that apply
- tell the lessor/agent if you damage the premises (accidentally or otherwise)
- follow the rules set out by the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

#### Respect your new home:

- use the premises mainly as your home, unless otherwise agreed
- do not use your home for any illegal purpose
- do not cause a nuisance, or seriously affect the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of your neighbours
- keep any inclusions (e.g. the stove) clean
- make sure you or your guests do not deliberately damage the premises
- be responsible for your behaviour and that of your guests.

### The responsibilities of the lessor/agent

The lessor/agent has responsibilities to you, the tenant. They must make sure:

#### They meet their responsibilities under the agreement:

- they cover the cost of preparing the agreement (and follow the agreement)
- all charges, rates and taxes for the place are paid for
- a full set of keys is given to one tenant, and the others get keys for entry
- they follow the rules for renting set out by the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

#### They provide you with a suitable home:

- the premises is ready for you to move into on the date agreed
- the premises is fit to live in and in a good state of repair
- the premises meets all laws that deal with health and safety
- the place is reasonably secure
- they do not cause a nuisance, or seriously affect the reasonable peace, comfort and privacy of the tenant
- they keep the premises and any inclusions in good repair during the agreement
- common areas (if there are any) are kept clean.

### Discrimination

You have a right to fair treatment when you are looking for and renting a place to live. If you feel you may have been discriminated against in connection with accommodation, refer to page 35 'Discrimination' or contact the Anti-Discrimination Commission (for contact details refer to the back of this booklet).

If you have a dispute with the lessor/agent, refer to pages 29–30. 

### Forms to be used



Form 18a – *General Tenancy Agreement*

Form 2 – *Bond Lodgement*

Form 1a – *Entry Condition Report*

Download these forms from [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)



### Starting a tenancy checklist

When you start a tenancy, you will need to:

- read and sign a written **General Tenancy Agreement (Form 18a)** including the standard terms before you pay bond, rent in advance, or move in
- get a signed copy of your tenancy agreement
- get a copy of this booklet (the lessor/agent is required by law to give this to you)
- pay a bond (if required) and complete a **Bond Lodgement (Form 2)**
- pay rent in advance (if required)
- get receipts for any monies you pay**
- get one full set of keys for **one** of the tenants named on the agreement, and entry keys for the other tenants named on the agreement
- receive a signed and completed copy of the **Entry Condition Report (Form 1a)** from the lessor/agent
- complete the “tenant” sections of the **Entry Condition Report (Form 1a)**, mark it if you disagree, record the water meter reading on the form, sign the copy and return it to the lessor/agent within **3 days** from when you’re allowed to move in. The lessor/agent must then give you a copy of the final report within 14 days, and
- keep copies of all these documents in a safe place – **they are important documents that may help if there is a dispute over your bond.**

### What if I want to share with other people?

#### Before you sign anything!

Sharing a home with other people can make renting a more affordable option. If you are thinking about entering into a share home arrangement it is important to be aware of your legal rights and responsibilities before you sign a tenancy agreement. For example, you have a responsibility to notify the lessor/agent if there are any changes to the occupants in the household.

The Act recognises that people share rented homes and has rules covering a number of legal arrangements. There are many different share home situations including: co-tenancies, subletting, boarding and lodging. The rights and responsibilities of the parties will depend on what legal arrangements apply. You should work this out at the start of the

tenancy to avoid disputes. **It doesn’t matter what your living arrangements are, if a bond is taken it must be lodged with the RTA in the same way as all other bonds and the relevant forms must be completed.**

#### Fact sheet

For more information about ‘Share Homes, Co-tenancies, and Subletting’ look at the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.

If you are a public housing tenant, other conditions may apply to you. Contact the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services).

### What's a *General Tenancy Agreement (Form 18a)*?

When you rent a premises, you need a written agreement (even if you are renting from a friend or family member). The tenancy agreement is a legally binding contract between you and the lessor. It's the lessor/agent's responsibility to prepare the agreement and give a copy to you before you commit to the tenancy.

There are 2 types of tenancy agreements:


- **Fixed term agreements** – when you agree to rent the premises for a fixed amount of time (such as for 6 or 12 months or other agreed term), and
- **Periodic agreements** – when you agree to rent the premises for an undefined amount of time (in this case there will be a start date but no specified end date).

### What's in the tenancy agreement?

The tenancy agreement must include:

1. the name and address of the tenant (you), and the agent (if there is one) or the lessor
2. the dates for when the agreement starts and ends (or state the agreement is periodic)
3. details about how and when you should pay the rent and how much rent is to be paid
4. the set of 'standard terms' – there are some standard laws (terms) which set out what you and the lessor/agent can and can't do (these pages of terms should be given to you as part of the tenancy agreement – **make sure you read these pages**), and
5. any special terms – if the lessor/agent asks you to abide by any special terms in the agreement these special terms must not conflict with the standard terms or the law.



### What if there are special terms in my tenancy agreement?

You and the lessor/agent can negotiate the special terms. Make sure you read and understand the special terms, add the terms you have negotiated for, and sign the agreement if you agree to all the terms. An example of a special term is 'One blue heeler dog (Benny) is approved to be on the premises but is to remain outside at all times'. 

### What happens after I sign a tenancy agreement?

Once you have read and understood all the terms of the tenancy agreement, you need to sign it, and return it to the lessor/agent within **5 days** of receiving it. After you have signed the agreement, the lessor/agent will sign it and give you a copy. They must give you a copy of the signed agreement within **14 days** of receiving your signed copy.

### What if I don't have a tenancy agreement?

If the lessor/agent doesn't give you a written agreement before you move in, or doesn't give you a copy of the agreement after you've signed it, you should ask the lessor/agent to do so. If your request is refused, you still have protection under the law. If you have a dispute about the agreement with the lessor/agent refer to pages 29–30.  



**The tenancy agreement is an important document. It's your contract with the lessor/agent.**

**By signing the tenancy agreement, you make a legal commitment to do what it says in the agreement. Make sure you read the tenancy agreement carefully, that you understand it before you sign it, and keep your copy in a safe place. Contact the relevant service listed on the back of this booklet for help or more information.**

### What's a rental bond?

Rental bond is money you pay at the beginning of a tenancy which the lessor/agent can claim if you breach the agreement and they suffer any financial losses because of your breach (for example, if you owe money for rent, damages, or other costs at the end of the tenancy). Bond money is not rent and is not the same as paying rent in advance.

It is common to pay a bond when you sign a tenancy agreement. If you are a social housing tenant other conditions may apply to you. Contact the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services).

### How much bond can be charged?

If your rent is \$700 a week or less, the **maximum** bond a lessor/agent can charge is equal to 4 weeks rent. It doesn't matter what the bond/s are called (for example, a 'rental bond', a 'pet bond', a 'key bond' etc), you cannot be charged more than this amount in total for bonds. If the rent is more than \$700 a week, there is no limit on the bond that can be charged (in which case you can negotiate the amount of bond with the lessor/agent).

If you are a sub-tenant the same rental bond conditions apply as for lessors/agents. This means the 'head tenant' is entitled to ask you to pay a bond (based on your weekly rent) for protection from any possible financial losses under the sub-tenancy agreement.



If you are in employee housing, the maximum bond is different.

### What happens after I pay the bond?

Claiming your rental bond back? Refer to page 27–28.

When you pay a bond the lessor/agent/head tenant needs to:

- give you a receipt for your bond money as soon as they have received it
- fill in a *Bond Lodgement (Form 2)* – you'll also need to sign this form, and
- send your bond money to the RTA (the lessor/agent/head tenant is required by law to do this within 10 days of receiving it).

The RTA holds the bond while you live in the premises. The RTA will send you an official receipt to let you know they've received your bond. The receipt has your rental bond number on it. If you contact the RTA about your bond you will need to quote this number. **Make sure you keep this notice in a safe place.** If you do not receive an official receipt within a few weeks, it's a good idea to ring the RTA to check whether they have received your money. A penalty may apply against the lessor/agent/head tenant if they do not lodge your bond with the RTA. **You can write your bond number in the space provided on the cover of this booklet.**



**It doesn't matter what your living arrangements are, if the person you're renting from takes a bond, it must be lodged with the RTA. Failure to comply with this requirement is an offence. Lessors/agents and head tenants may be prosecuted by the RTA for failing to lodge bonds of tenants, sub-tenants, boarders and/or lodgers.**

### What if I need help to pay the bond?

If you can't afford the bond, the lessor/agent may let you pay the bond in instalments, or you may be able to get a bond loan from the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) if you meet their requirements. Talk to the lessor/agent about instalments, or call the Department of Communities.

### Can I transfer a current bond?



Sometimes your previous and new lessor/agent will allow you to transfer your bond to your new premises rather than claiming it back at the end of the tenancy. You will need to negotiate this with them.



### Can I be charged rent in advance as well as a bond?

#### Rent in advance is not part of the rental bond.

Most lessors/agents require tenants to pay their rent in advance. You will normally pay the first lot of rent before you move in. For example, you might be asked to make a pre-payment of 2 weeks rent so you can live in the premises for those next 2 weeks. No matter how much rent you pay in advance, you can't be asked to pay more rent until the rent paid in advance has been used up.

The lessor/agent can't ask you to pay more than 1 month's rent in advance if you have a fixed term agreement, or more than 2 weeks if you have a periodic agreement. However, you can pay more rent in advance if you want to.

### Who gets keys to the premises?

If there is more than one tenant named on the tenancy agreement then the lessor/agent must supply **at least one** of the tenants with a key and/or device (like a swipe card) that opens **every** lock to the premises. For example, one of the tenants must be provided with a key (or remote control) for the garage door, a key for all lockable doors/cupboards, a key for the mailbox, etc.

Each of the **other** tenants named on the tenancy agreement must receive a key so they are able to enter the premises. For example, a key for each lock that:

- secures an entry to the premises (for example, the front/back door), and
- secures a road or other place that is normally used to gain access to the premises (for example, security gates).

### What's an *Entry Condition Report* (Form 1a)?

This is an important document which helps if there is a dispute over your bond or water charging for the premises. It can be compared with the *Exit Condition Report* (Form 14a) when you leave – refer to pages 25–26.

When you move in, the lessor/agent needs to complete the lessor/agent sections including noting the presence of water efficient devices,

and give you a copy of the signed *Entry Condition Report* (Form 1a).

The lessor/agent must give you a copy of this report either when they give you the tenancy agreement for signing or on the day the premises is available for you to move in.

### When should I complete the *Entry Condition Report* (Form 1a)?

It's best if you complete your part of the report **before the day you move in** so you can record the true condition of the premises at the start of the tenancy (before you have lived there). However, you have **3 days** after the day you're allowed to move in to complete the report.

### What do I need to include in the *Entry Condition Report* (Form 1a)?

The lessor/agent will give you a completed and signed form. It's up to you to examine the premises thoroughly. You should include the water meter reading on the form to help calculate your water consumption. If you don't agree with the lessor/agent's comments, add clear comments in the 'tenant' column before you sign it. You can also take photographs or a video of things if you need to.

### What do I do when I've finished filling in the *Entry Condition Report* (Form 1a)?

Return the completed and signed copy of the report to the lessor/agent **within 3 days** after the day you're allowed to move in. The lessor/agent must then give you a copy of the final report within 14 days.



**The *Entry Condition Report* (Form 1a) is an important document which helps if there is a dispute over your bond or water charging for the premises. It's proof of the condition of the premises before you started living there and will be compared with the *Exit Condition Report* (Form 14a) – ('fair wear and tear' excepted). Take care to complete it thoroughly and carefully within 3 days after the day you're allowed to move in. Take photographs or a video of things if you need to. You should also record the water meter reading on the form to help calculate your water consumption. Keep a signed copy in a safe place.**

### What are my rights and responsibilities during the tenancy?

All tenants and lessors/agents are bound to comply with the law. Both you and the lessor/agent have rights and responsibilities **during** the tenancy. For a list of the rights and responsibilities of both parties refer to the table on page 5 of this booklet. This section will help you to understand some of **your** important rights and responsibilities during the tenancy.



#### Ongoing costs checklist

While you're renting, the main costs you need to budget for include:

- rent payments (these are regular on-going payments, usually weekly or fortnightly)
- services connected to the premises like gas, electricity and telephone (apart from regular payments, there may be one-off connection fees and security deposits to pay for)
- other costs written into your tenancy agreement (for example, refer to page 11 'Can I be charged for water?' and 'What if I'm sharing an electricity or gas meter and there's only one bill?'), and
- any repairs to the premises you may be liable for, for example, if you accidentally break a window.

### Who pays for insurance?

The lessor must pay for the rates and is responsible for insurance for the premises (that is, insurance for the building, but not for your belongings).

If you want protection for your belongings you will need to take out "contents insurance" (a once a year or month-by-month payment to cover the cost of your belongings if they're stolen or damaged).

### How do I pay the rent?

At the start of the tenancy you and the lessor/agent should have discussed how you would pay your rent (this information should be documented in your tenancy agreement). You must pay your rent in the way stated in the tenancy agreement. If your tenancy agreement does not include this information then you must pay your rent in one of the approved ways (listed in the table to the right).

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**Late paying your rent? Refer to page 17 'What if I don't pay my rent on time and I get a Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)?'**

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Responsibilities for paying the rent	Examples
<p><b>How</b> the rent will be paid</p> <p><i>* If the lessor/agent wants you to pay rent by a way not listed in the Act (e.g. rent card), then two other rent payment options that <b>are</b> listed in the Act (such as cash or cheque) must be offered as well.</i></p>	<p>You <u>must</u> pay your rent as stated in the tenancy agreement. If your tenancy agreement doesn't include that information there are approved ways you can pay the rent including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cash</li> <li>• cheque</li> <li>• deposit to a financial institution account nominated by lessor</li> <li>• credit card</li> <li>• EFTPOS</li> <li>• deduction from your pay or pension, or</li> <li>• in any way that you and the lessor/agent agree to*.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Where</b> the rent will be paid</p>	<p>Your tenancy agreement might give you the options to pay the rent by cheque at the agent's office or direct deposit into a nominated bank account.</p>
<p><b>How often</b> the rent will be paid</p>	<p>Your tenancy agreement might say you have to pay rent every second Friday.</p>



**You and the lessor/agent should agree on how, when and how often the rent will be paid. This information should be included in your tenancy agreement. Once you have an agreement about how to pay rent, it cannot be changed for the duration of the tenancy agreement unless both you and the lessor/agent agree to the change in writing.**

### What if I pay my rent electronically?

If your agreement is to pay your rent electronically (for example, direct deposit) make sure you pay the rent as stated in the tenancy agreement. For example, if the tenancy agreement says 'rent to be paid every second Saturday', your payment must be made on that day to meet the terms of the agreement (you may need to allow for processing time). You should be clear about this with the lessor/agent at the start of the tenancy. If you're paying your rent by direct debit, always make sure you have sufficient funds available, otherwise you could end up in rent arrears and you might have to pay bank charges/fees.

### Should I be getting rent receipts?

**Rent receipts are your proof you've paid the rent – keep them in a safe place.** The lessor/agent **must** give you a receipt if:

- you pay your rent in cash, or
- if you pay by cheque and you ask for a receipt.

If you pay rent some other way (like direct deposit from your bank account), you won't normally get a receipt for the money (but the transaction will appear on your bank statements).

The lessor/agent must keep a record of the rent you pay, and you can ask for a copy of the rent record at any time. If you ask for a copy of your rent record, the lessor/agent must give it to you within **7 days**.

### Can I be charged for water?

Lessors are able to pass on the full water consumption costs to tenants:

**BUT ONLY IF:**

- the rental premises are individually metered (or water is delivered by vehicle), and

- the tenancy agreement states the tenant must pay for water consumption, and
- the rental premises are water efficient.


If the premises are not water efficient, but the other two conditions are met, the lessor can charge you for water consumption that exceeds a reasonable amount.



**At the start of the tenancy, you and the lessor/agent should agree about water charging. If the lessor/agent intends to charge you for your full water consumption make sure you read the 'Water Charging' fact sheet to find out about ALL the rules before they can do this. If they are only charging you for part of the water consumption, include the water charging arrangements as a 'special term' in the tenancy agreement, including the amount of water both you and the lessor agree to pay for.**

### Fact sheet

For more information about 'Water Charging', look at the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.

If you and the lessor/agent disagree about water charges, refer to pages 29–30. 

### What if I'm sharing an electricity or gas meter and there's only one bill?

If you rent a unit or flat, sometimes there is only one meter recording the entire building's use of a service (such as electricity), instead of everyone having their own meter. If this is the case, the supply company will probably only send out one bill for the entire building's use of that service. If this happens, your tenancy agreement must show how your share of the bill will be worked out. However, this doesn't apply to water charges where the premises **must** be individually metered before costs can be passed on to you.

### Can my rent be increased?

Sometimes the lessor/agent will seek to increase your rent. The rules for rent increases will be different depending on what type of agreement you have. However, no matter what type of agreement you are on, **rent cannot be raised more than once every six months.**

If you are a public housing tenant other conditions will apply to you. Contact the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) (look under H in the White Pages for your local office).

Rent increases	
During fixed term agreements	During periodic agreements
The rent <b>can't</b> be increased <b>unless</b> a 'special term' in your tenancy agreement states the rent can be increased and the amount of the increase or how the increase is to be worked out. If your fixed term agreement allows for rent increases, the lessor/agent must give you at least <b>2 months notice in writing</b> before increasing the rent.	The rent <b>can</b> be increased at any time <b>during</b> a periodic agreement. If the rent is being increased during a periodic agreement, the lessor/agent must give you at least <b>2 months notice in writing</b> . The written notice might be a letter saying when the rent increase will start and how much the rent will increase by.



### If my rent increases, will my bond increase too?

If the rent goes up, the lessor/agent might also ask you to pay more rental bond. Any extra bond **must** be lodged with the RTA using a **Part-Payment of Rental Bond (Form 7)**.

Bond increases	
During fixed term agreements	During periodic agreements
You can only be given a notice of bond increase if it is at least <b>11 months</b> since your agreement commenced, or since the last bond increase on the same agreement. The lessor/agent must give you at least <b>1 months notice in writing</b> about the bond increase.	You can only be given a notice of bond increase during a periodic agreement if it is at least <b>11 months</b> since your agreement commenced, or since the last bond increase. The lessor/agent must give you at least <b>1 months notice in writing</b> about the bond increase.

**Want to know the maximum bond you can be charged? For more information on rental bonds see page 8 'How much bond can be charged?'**

### What if I think a rent increase is excessive?

If you think a rent increase is excessive, you may wish to dispute it. It's a good idea to contact the lessor/agent directly to try to negotiate the rent increase.  

If you and the lessor/agent can't come to an agreement yourselves you can contact the RTA for help with a dispute resolution. You can also apply to the Tribunal for an order about the increase if you believe it is excessive. You must lodge a **Dispute Resolution Request (Form 16)** or apply to the Tribunal about a rent increase within 30 days after you receive a notice of the increase. For information about the RTA's Dispute Resolution Service refer to pages 29–30 or contact the RTA.

In deciding the application, the Tribunal may consider the following:

- the range of market rents usually charged for comparable premises
- the proposed increased rent compared to the current rent, and
- anything else the Tribunal considers relevant.

**Want to know the median weekly rents in your local area? Visit [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)**



### Can my rent (and bond) be increased when my fixed term agreement ends?

At the end of a fixed term agreement you and the lessor/agent need to decide whether you will move out, stay on under a new fixed term agreement or stay on under a periodic agreement. For information about ending a fixed term agreement, notice periods for ending agreements and when an agreement becomes a periodic agreement refer to the 'Ending a Tenancy' section on pages 21–26. Towards the end of a fixed term agreement, the lessor/agent may offer you a new fixed term agreement with a higher rent. If this happens you can:

- accept the increased amount of rent and sign the new agreement
- choose not to accept the new agreement and give the lessor/agent a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)**, or
- take no further action, in which case the lessor/agent has some options (see below).

If you choose not to accept the new agreement or if you take no further action the lessor/agent can:

- give you a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)**, or
- take no further action, in which case your agreement will become periodic (and the rent would remain at the fixed term rate).

For information about rent increases under periodic agreements see page 12 'Can my rent be increased?'

If you accept the increase and sign the new agreement (but consider the increase excessive) you can apply to the Tribunal to have the increase reviewed. However, you must comply with whatever the Tribunal decides for the period of the agreement.

**It is also possible the amount of bond may increase on the new agreement.** Any extra bond **must** be lodged with the RTA using a **Part-Payment of Rental Bond (Form 7)**.

### Is it possible to get a rent discount or decrease?

There may be situations where you can negotiate with the lessor/agent for a rent discount or decrease. For example, you might be able to negotiate a rent decrease if a part of your home is destroyed or becomes unfit to live in. Or the lessor/agent might offer you a rent discount if you pay the rent as agreed and on time, or before the due date. However, you cannot be charged a fee if your rent is late.

### Fact sheet

For more information about 'Rent Payments and Holding Deposits', look at the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.



**If there is a dispute about the rent, you must continue to pay the rent stated on the tenancy agreement until the dispute is resolved. If you and the lessor/agent agree to a rent discount or decrease it's a good idea to get it in writing to avoid a dispute about this later on. If you have a dispute about a rent increase refer to page 12 'What if I think a rent increase is excessive?'**

### Who's responsible for looking after the premises?

During the tenancy, you and the lessor/agent have **shared responsibilities** in ensuring that, as far as possible, the premises remain in the same condition as at the start of the tenancy ('fair wear and tear' excepted). For example, you are responsible for keeping the premises and inclusions clean and you must meet the costs of **damage** to the premises that you and/or your guests are responsible for (that is, damage done maliciously, purposely or negligently). The lessor/agent is responsible for ensuring the premises are fit to live in and in good state of repair and they must meet the costs of **maintaining** the premises and inclusions in good condition (including damage caused by 'fair wear and tear'). For a list of the rights and responsibilities of both parties refer to the table on page 5 of this booklet.

For example, if a window breaks because a ball you and your children are playing with goes through it, you're responsible and you may have to pay. But if a window breaks because the hinges are old and the window falls out, that may be 'fair wear and tear' and the lessor/agent may have to pay.




**You must tell the lessor/agent about the need for repairs as soon as you become aware of it. If you ask the lessor/agent to repair something, they must arrange for the repairs to be carried out within a reasonable time. If the lessor/agent doesn't carry out the repairs, this may be a breach of their agreement with you. If this is the case there are steps you can follow (refer to page 16 'What can I do if the lessor/agent breaches the agreement?')**

### When can the lessor/agent visit my premises?

The lessor/agent must take reasonable steps to ensure your privacy. They are allowed to enter the property in accordance with the *rules of entry* under the Act, but there are steps that must be followed:

- in most cases, the lessor/agent must give you notice in writing using an **Entry Notice (Form 9)**
- entry must happen at a reasonable time. Lessors/agents are unable to conduct an entry on Sundays or Public Holidays, or between 6:00pm and 8:00am on other days, unless you both agree
- the lessor/agent must specify on the notice of entry a two hour time period during which they intend to enter the premises. The lessor/agent must enter the property during that particular two hour period. They can then stay in the property past the end of the two hour period to complete the job. This does not apply to entry by tradespeople.

If you have concerns about the entry time it's best to contact the lessor/agent immediately. You and the lessor/agent should try and negotiate another suitable entry time. If the lessor/agent has followed the rules set out by the laws, provided the correct notice and entry is proposed at a reasonable time, they can still enter the premises to conduct their lawful business.

Failure to comply with these requirements is an offence and you can make a complaint to the RTA if you believe the entry to your premises was unlawful. For disputes about entry refer to pages 29–30. 

### Fact sheet



For more information about 'Entry and Privacy,' look at the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.

Lawful reason for entry	Minimum notice
To inspect the premises	<b>7 days</b> (a maximum of one routine inspection every <b>3 months</b> )
Follow-up inspection to check a significant breach* has been remedied, <b>or</b> to check on the quality of repairs by a tradesperson	<b>24 hours</b> (the entry must occur within 14 days of the expiry date on the <b>Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)</b> ).
To carry out repairs or maintenance to the premises (this includes installation and maintenance of electrical safety switches and smoke alarms)	<b>24 hours.</b> Entry can occur without notice if the premises are located in a remote area and there is a shortage of tradespeople.
To show the premises to a prospective purchaser	<b>24 hours notice</b> and a reasonable time has elapsed since the last entry for this reason (refer to page 18 'What if the lessor wants to sell the premises?' for forms required).
To show the premises to a prospective tenant	<b>24 hours notice</b> and a reasonable time has elapsed since the last entry for this reason. You must also have given a <b>Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)</b> or have received a <b>Notice to Leave (Form 12)</b> from the lessor/agent.
To allow a valuation of the premises	<b>24 hours.</b>
If the lessor/agent reasonably believes the premises have been abandoned	<b>24 hours.</b>
If the tenant and lessor/agent both agree that the lessor/agent can enter	At the agreed time.
In an emergency	No notice required.
If the lessor/agent reasonably believes that entry is needed to protect the premises from damage that is about to happen	No notice required.
By order of the Tribunal	As specified in the order.

\* The Act lists a significant breach as relating to: using the premises for an illegal purpose, keeping a pet on the premises, the number of occupants allowed to reside in the premises or another matter if the reasonable cost of fixing the matter exceeds 1 weeks rent.

### Can I add fixtures and do other work to the premises?

You can only install fixtures and fittings to the premises (like picture hooks) with **written permission** from the lessor/agent. The written permission should outline what changes are approved and any terms to the agreement (like whether you can remove the fixture when you leave). If you want to remove fittings you've added, you can only do so if you repair any damage caused by the removal of these fittings.

The lessor/agent cannot unreasonably withhold their agreement if you ask to add a fixture to the premises. If you think they are being unreasonable about fixtures, refer to pages 29–30.  

### What's the difference between an emergency repair and a routine repair?

The law lists a variety of situations that are considered emergency repairs including:

- a burst water service or a serious water service leak
- a blocked or broken lavatory system
- a serious roof leak
- a gas leak
- a dangerous electrical fault
- flooding or serious flood damage
- serious storm, fire or impact damage
- a failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to the premises
- a failure or breakdown of an essential service or appliance on the premises for hot water, cooking or heating, and
- a fault/damage that is likely to cause injury, undue inconvenience or which makes the premises unsafe or insecure (for example broken stairs).

If your situation is not listed as an **emergency repair** it is considered a **routine repair**.



### What do I do in an emergency?

When the lessor/agent prepares your tenancy agreement, they should include information about what you should do in an emergency. The tenancy agreement may tell you to contact the lessor/agent first, how to contact them after hours or in an emergency, and may give you the contact details of nominated repairers for problems to be fixed (for example an electrician and a plumber). **You can write the lessor/agent's emergency contact details in the space provided at the back of this booklet.**

### What if I can't get in touch with the emergency contact person?

If there's an emergency and neither the lessor/agent nor the nominated repairer can be contacted, you can arrange for a suitably qualified person to carry out the repairs, to a maximum value of 2 weeks rent. You can either pay the repairer and get the lessor/agent to give you the money back, or you can ask the repairer to bill the lessor/agent.

### What if I paid for the emergency repairs myself?

If you arrange for emergency repairs, the lessor/agent must pay you back, or pay the bill, **within 7 days**. You will need to give the lessor/agent a copy of the invoice or receipt, plus a short letter stating what happened and how much they need to pay. If the lessor/agent doesn't pay the money within **7 days**, you can make an urgent application to the Tribunal for an order. For information about making an application to the Tribunal contact the RTA for a copy of *Handling tenancy disputes in the Tribunal*.  

The lessor/agent can also apply to the Tribunal if they think they should not have to pay for the emergency repairs.

### Forms to be used



- Form 11 – *Notice to Remedy Breach*
- Form 13 – *Notice of Intention to Leave*

Download these forms from [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)

### What can I do if the lessor/agent breaches the agreement?


If the lessor/agent breaches the tenancy agreement in some way (such as by failing to maintain the premises in good repair), you can issue them with a **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)**. On the notice, explain how the lessor/agent has breached the agreement.

The lessor/agent then has at least **7 days** to remedy the breach (fix the problem).

### What if the lessor/agent doesn't fix the problem in the allowed time?

If the lessor/agent doesn't fix the problem within **7 days** (and the problem is a breach of the agreement), you can:

- apply for dispute resolution through the RTA (see pages 29–30) and if this is unsuccessful, you can apply to the Tribunal for an order about the breach (for example, to have the work done), or
- give the lessor/agent a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** giving **7 days notice** that you will end the agreement (if you decide to do this see below for more information).

If you give a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** for an unremedied breach you must continue to pay rent until the date specified on the form (handover day). **If you are on a fixed term agreement, you may also still be responsible for paying the rent up to the end of the agreement and/or for re-letting costs.** For example, if the lessor/agent was waiting on the availability of tradespeople or spare parts, you vacated the premises using this process and they decided to make a claim on your bond for re-letting fees, you may have to demonstrate that you encountered difficulties or hardship due to an inappropriate response from the lessor/agent. 

If the lessor/agent fixes the problem after you've given a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** but before handover day, you can either end the tenancy or choose to withdraw your **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)**. If you decide to withdraw your intention to leave, you need to write to the lessor/agent before handover day. You can then continue with the tenancy agreement if the lessor/agent agrees in writing.

If the lessor/agent doesn't fix the problem within **7 days** of receiving the **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)**, you may be entitled to some compensation. The Tribunal would decide this.




**If you've requested or paid for maintenance to be done on the premises, you should not take the matter into your own hands by paying less rent or no rent as a way to get the work done, or as a way to get your money back. If you do this you are breaching the agreement and you could be given a Notice to Leave (Form 12).**

If the lessor/agent breaches the agreement in the same way **more than twice** in a one year period and you have given the lessor/agent a **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)** each time, you can apply directly to the Tribunal to end the tenancy. You can apply to the Tribunal to end the tenancy even if the lessor/agent has fixed the breaches each time.

There are rules around issuing notices, such as which forms must be used, how they can be delivered (including electronic delivery by email and facsimile) and the notice periods which apply. For more information about "Allowing Time When Serving Notices", see the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.





### What if I enforce my rights and the lessor/agent responds by ending my tenancy?

If the lessor/agent gives you a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)** without grounds, which you believe is given to you because you asked the lessor/agent to carry out repairs or because you enforced your rights in some other way, you can make an urgent application directly to the Tribunal to have the notice put on hold until an adjudicator makes a decision. You must apply to the Tribunal within **4 weeks** of getting the **Notice to Leave (Form 12)**. For information about making an application to the Tribunal, contact the RTA for a copy of *Handling tenancy disputes in the Tribunal*. 

### What if I've breached the agreement?

If you breach the agreement in some way, the lessor/agent can give you a **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)**. On the form, the lessor/agent will explain how you have breached the agreement. You then have a minimum of **7 days** to fix the problem.



### What if I don't pay my rent on time and I get a Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)?

Once you are more than **7 days** behind in the rent, you have breached your tenancy agreement and the lessor/agent can give you a **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)**. You then have **7 days** to pay whatever is owing. If you pay your rent (or fix the problem) within the **7 days**, your tenancy agreement will continue. If you are having difficulty paying the rent you should contact the lessor/agent directly and work out a repayment plan.  

If you don't fix the problem within the time allowed, the lessor/agent can:

- give you a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)**, which gives you a minimum of **7 days notice** to leave for unremedied rent arrears and **14 days notice** to leave for unremedied general breaches of your agreement, or
- apply to the RTA's Dispute Resolution Service for help to solve the problem.

### What if I don't agree with the lessor/agent about a Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)?

If the lessor/agent gives you a **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)** claiming you have breached the tenancy agreement in some way and you don't agree, you have a right to challenge the breach notice. For a dispute about a **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)** refer to pages 29–30.  

### What are my options after being given a Notice to Leave (Form 12)?

If you have been issued a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)** for an unremedied breach, you must:


- move out by the handover date specified on the form (you must be given a minimum of **7 days notice** for unremedied rent arrears and **14 days notice** for unremedied general breaches of your agreement), or
- you can pay the rent or fix the problem and **ask** if you can stay.

If you pay all the rent (or fix the problem) after you've received a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)**, you can ask the lessor/agent if you can stay. You should do this in writing, explaining how you have fixed the problem and that you would like to continue living there. **The lessor/agent does not have to agree to let you stay, but may agree to do so. If the lessor/agent agrees to let you stay make sure you get their agreement in writing.**

### What if I don't leave after being given a *Notice to Leave* (Form 12)?

If you don't move out by handover day the lessor/agent can apply directly to the Tribunal for a *Termination Order* and a *Warrant of Possession*. The lessor/agent must apply to the Tribunal within **14 days**.

The lessor/agent cannot use force to make you leave the premises and the lessor/agent cannot enter the premises to recover possession of it without a *Warrant of Possession*.

If the lessor/agent applies to the Tribunal, you will be notified about the hearing (the time and date). You have a right to attend this hearing to explain your situation and to present any evidence you have. For information about the Tribunal contact the RTA for a copy of *Handling tenancy disputes in the Tribunal*. 

If the Tribunal decides the case in the lessor/agent's favour, it will make a *Termination Order* in favour of the lessor/agent and will issue a *Warrant of Possession*. The warrant authorises a police officer or stated authorised person to enter the premises and make you leave.

### What if I breach the agreement more than twice?

If you breach the agreement, the lessor/agent can give you a ***Notice to Remedy Breach* (Form 11)** giving you **7 days** to fix the problem. If you fix the problem within the time allowed, the tenancy agreement will continue. But if you breach the agreement in the same way **more than twice** in a 1 year period, on the third (or more) time the lessor/agent can apply directly to the Tribunal to end the tenancy.

The lessor/agent is not obliged to apply to the Tribunal, and the tenancy agreement could continue if you and the lessor/agent agree.





If you breach the tenancy agreement and are given a *Notice to Leave* (Form 12), you may still be responsible for paying the rent until another tenant can be found to occupy the premises or until the tenancy ends. The Tribunal might also make an order for you to pay compensation.

### What if the lessor wants to sell the premises?

If the lessor decides to sell the premises and they want to enter to show the premises to a prospective purchaser, they must inform you in writing using:

- the ***Notice of Lessor's Intention to Sell Premises* (Form 10)**, and
- the ***Entry Notice* (Form 9)**.

The lessor/agent must give you a ***Notice of Lessor's Intention to Sell Premises* (Form 10)** which should include details of how the lessor is planning to sell the premises. If you have concerns about the lessor/agent's sales strategy, it is best to contact the lessor/agent immediately to discuss the matter. You and the lessor/agent should try to negotiate about the sales plan. For disputes about the sale of the premises refer to pages 29–30.  

The lessor/agent must give you an ***Entry Notice* (Form 9)** with **at least 24 hours notice before each entry**. If the selling agent is different from the agent who manages your tenancy, the selling agent must also give your agent a copy of each ***Entry Notice* (Form 9)** before entering the premises to show it to a prospective buyer.

**If you're on a fixed term agreement** the lessor/agent cannot make you leave because they have decided to sell. You can stay until the end of your agreement and the new owner will become the lessor. The new lessor/agent cannot change the terms of your fixed term agreement unless you agree to the changes. You may need to pay rent to your new lessor or their agent – you will need to be notified of this in writing.

However, if the premises are marketed for sale during the first two months of the fixed term agreement and you have not received written notice of the proposed sale prior to entering the agreement, you have the option of ending the tenancy by giving a *Notice of Intention to Leave* (Form 13) with two weeks notice, to the lessor/agent.

Time limits apply to end a tenancy for this reason. Check with the RTA for more information.

**If you're on a periodic tenancy** and the contract for sale states that the purchaser requires the premises to be vacant, the lessor/agent may issue you a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)**. You must be given at least **4 weeks notice** after the signing of the contract for sale.

### What if a lessor/agent wants to hold an open house?

Where premises are to be sold, the lessor/agent can only hold an open house or on-site auction with the tenant's agreement. Photos showing tenant possessions can only be used if the tenant agrees.

### Who is responsible for smoke alarms?

Both you and the lessor/agent have responsibilities for smoke alarms in the rental property. Smoke alarm laws are set out in the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*. They include obligations for tenants and lessors in relation to:

- installation of smoke alarms
- responsibility for testing and cleaning, and
- responsibility for replacing batteries.

**Please refer to the table over the page for a guide to what tenants and lessor/agents are responsible for in relation to smoke alarms.**

The *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* allows lessors entry to the rental premises to install and maintain smoke alarms. The *rules of entry* allow lessors to give a 24 hour entry notice for the purposes of entry to comply with the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990* in relation to smoke alarms.

**For more information about the obligations for the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms in rental premises visit the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service website [www.fire.qld.gov.au](http://www.fire.qld.gov.au) or call their Information Hotline on 1300 369 003.**

It is important to remember that the lessor cannot ask you to take on their obligations (act on their behalf) as outlined in the easy reference table i.e. change batteries at the start of the tenancy.



**For information on how to test and clean smoke alarms in your home, read the manufacturer's instructions which should be provided to you by your lessor. The most common way to test a smoke alarm is by pressing the test button; however the instructions must be followed when you maintain the alarms during your tenancy.**

### Fact sheet

For more information about 'Smoke Alarms' look at the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.



**All domestic rental accommodation must have a working safety switch installed at the premises.**

### Easy Reference Table for Tenants and Lessors

Your obligations for smoke alarms	During the tenancy	Your lessor's obligations for smoke alarms	Start of the tenancy	During the tenancy
		<b>Installing alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	Smoke alarms complying with Australian Standards must be fitted in all rental properties and in accordance with the Building Code of Australia.	Lessors must give tenants 24 hours notice for entry to install smoke alarms.
<b>Testing alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	At least once every 12 months and according to manufacturer's instructions (for tenancies 12 months or longer).	<b>Testing alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	Within 30 days before the start or renewal of the tenancy and according to manufacturer's instructions.	
<b>Replacing batteries in alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	When batteries are flat or nearly flat.	<b>Replacing batteries in alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	Within 30 days before the start of the tenancy if batteries are flat or nearly flat.	
<b>Cleaning alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	At least once every 12 months.	<b>Cleaning alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	Within 30 days before the start or renewal of the tenancy and as specified by manufacturer's instructions.	
<b>Advising lessor of any failing smoke alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	As soon as possible when an alarm fails or is about to fail and/or needs replacing for a reason other than batteries failing.	<b>Replacing failing smoke alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	Smoke alarms must be replaced before the end of their serviceable life.	Smoke alarms must be replaced before the end of their serviceable life. Lessors must give tenants 24 hours notice for entry for the purposes of maintaining smoke alarms.
<b>NOT interfering with smoke alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	At NO time can a tenant remove or relocate the smoke alarm or do anything to interfere with the alarm's warning sound. At NO time can the tenant remove the batteries unless replacing them.	<b>NOT interfering with smoke alarms</b> (Penalties apply)*	At NO time can the lessor remove or relocate the smoke alarm unless it is being replaced or maintained. At NO time can the lessor do anything to interfere with the alarm's warning sound. At NO time can the lessor remove the batteries unless they are replacing them.	At NO time can the lessor remove or relocate the smoke alarm unless it is being replaced or maintained. At NO time can the lessor do anything to interfere with the alarm's warning sound. At NO time can the lessor remove the batteries.

\* Penalties apply to both lessors and tenants under the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*. For further information, the RTA strongly advises you to contact the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service by telephone on 1300 369 003 or visit their website at [www.fire.qld.gov.au](http://www.fire.qld.gov.au).



### Forms to be used



Form 13 – *Notice of Intention to Leave*

Form 14a – *Exit Condition Report*

Form 4 – *Refund of Rental Bond*

Download these forms from [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)



### Ending a tenancy checklist

When you're preparing to move out, you will need to:

- make sure you have received a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)** or that you have given the lessor/agent a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** (make sure you use the right form and give the right amount of notice based on why the tenancy is ending)
- continue to pay rent until the date shown on the **Notice to Leave (Form 12)** or the **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** (handover day) – if you leave in the middle of a rent period you may have to make a final rent payment covering the days until the handover date on the form
- organise to move all your things out
- clean the premises (the premises should be in the same condition as when you moved in – 'fair wear and tear' excepted)
- check the special terms in your tenancy agreement (contact the relevant service listed on the back of this booklet for more information if you have concerns about a special term)
- complete a copy of the **Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)** (it's up to you to complete this form – and **it will help you if there is a dispute over your bond**)
- take photos or a video of the premises if you want to
- record the water meter reading on the **Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)**
- if possible, arrange a time with the lessor/agent to do a joint final inspection of the premises (to go over the **Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)**)
- give the copies of the **Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)** to the lessor/agent and get a signed copy of the report for your records
- arrange a time to return all the keys, including any that have been cut during the tenancy
- make sure you give your forwarding address to the lessor/agent and to the RTA so you can be contacted about your bond if necessary
- arrange to cancel any services you have connected to the premises (for example electricity, gas, telephone, etc)
- arrange with the lessor/agent for the **Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)** to be completed and signed, and
- keep all of your documents in a safe, handy place – **they are important documents that may help if there is a dispute over your bond.**


### How does a tenancy end?

There are a number of ways a tenancy can end. Sometimes **you** will end the agreement and sometimes the **lessor/agent** will end the agreement. However, the tenancy must be ended legally, that is, in one of the ways set out in the 'standard terms' in your tenancy agreement. It is important to understand your rights and responsibilities at the end of the tenancy.

### What if I decide to break my fixed term agreement (leave early)?

If you decide to leave **during** a fixed term agreement, you should contact the lessor/agent immediately to discuss the matter because there may be costs involved. You must also give the lessor/agent a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)**. You may be able to leave your fixed term agreement early if:

- you and the lessor/agent agree to end the agreement (you should get the lessor/agent's agreement in writing), or
- your circumstances allow for you to apply to the Tribunal for an order to end your agreement (refer to page 23 'Are there other circumstances that might end the agreement?').

If you give the lessor/agent a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** during a fixed term agreement, you are still legally responsible for the tenancy. You may be liable for the rent until the end date on your fixed term agreement and for other costs. 

### Will there be costs involved if I break the fixed term agreement?

The lessor/agent can require you to pay for the reasonable costs they incur if you break the tenancy agreement. For example, costs for re-letting the premises which might include:

- compensation for lost rent
- the cost of advertising for new tenants, and/or
- costs incurred by the lessor – such as if the lessor has to pay a letting fee to an agent.


If you have a dispute about these costs, refer to pages 29–30.  



A tenancy agreement is a legally binding document. When you signed the agreement, you agreed to be responsible for paying the rent until the end date on the tenancy agreement. If you break the tenancy agreement (for example, if you decide to leave during a fixed term agreement or if the lessor/agent asks you to leave because you have breached the agreement), you may still be legally responsible for paying the rent until another tenant can be found to occupy the premises or until the tenancy ends and you may be liable for other costs.

### What are my options at the end of the fixed term agreement?

Before the end of a fixed term agreement (the earlier the better), you and the lessor/agent need to decide whether you will:

- move out
- stay on under a new fixed term agreement, or
- stay on under a periodic agreement. 



If the end date of a fixed term agreement goes by without any contact between the lessor/agent and you, the agreement simply continues as a periodic agreement. You cannot just move out at the end of a fixed term agreement without letting the lessor/agent know.

### What if I'm leaving (or being asked to leave) after the fixed term agreement?

Neither you nor the lessor/agent need a reason for you to move out at the end of a fixed term agreement (this is called ending an agreement 'without grounds'). You do, however, need to give the right amount of notice (**14 days**) on the correct form. However the lessor/agent must give you 2 months notice to leave if it's without grounds.

For information about ending a fixed term agreement, refer to page 24 'What's the correct amount of notice at the end of the tenancy?'

### What if I'm staying on under a new fixed term agreement?

If you stay on under a new fixed term agreement the lessor/agent will need to prepare a written agreement. If there are no changes other than the new end date, this can be done by both parties signing a letter or statement which sets the new date. Alternatively, if there is to be a change to any of the terms of the agreement (other than the end date), then the lessor/agent will need to prepare a new written tenancy agreement which must be signed by all parties, before the current agreement ends. If there is a significant change (such as a rent increase you regard as excessive) to the terms from your current agreement, you can dispute this, but only after you've signed the new agreement.

### When does an agreement become a periodic agreement?


If you stay past the end of the fixed term agreement without a new fixed term agreement being signed, your agreement becomes a periodic agreement. Because you continue to pay rent and the lessor/agent accepts the rent, the tenancy agreement continues (with no specified end date). The main difference with moving to a periodic agreement is that it is easier to change some terms of the agreement and it is easier to end the tenancy. For information about ending a periodic agreement, refer to page 24 'What's the correct amount of notice at the end of the tenancy?'


### Are there other circumstances that might end the agreement?

In certain circumstances, the law allows either the lessor/agent or the tenant to apply directly to the Tribunal for an order to end their agreement. Applications can be made to the Tribunal to end the agreement in the following circumstances:

- failure to leave – for example, if the lessor/agent has issued a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)** or if you have issued a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** and the form has expired
- excessive hardship – for example, if you or the lessor/agent wanted to terminate the tenancy because of illness, financial difficulties or a job transfer to another area

- damage – for example, if you caused damage to the premises, or if the lessor/agent caused damage to your belongings
- injury – for example, if you or the lessor/agent caused injury to the other party
- certain repeated breaches of the tenancy agreement – for example non-payment of rent (and the same breach is repeated for a third (or more) time in a 1 year period where the previous 2 breaches were remedied in the remedy period), or
- objectionable behaviour – for example, if you or the lessor/agent have harassed or intimidated the other party.


Alternatively, the tenant or lessor/agent may wish to negotiate another outcome. For information about using the RTA's Dispute Resolution Service refer to pages 29–30. 

If a tenant has their tenancy ended, ceases to occupy the premises for some other reason or dies, a co-tenant or other occupant can apply to the Tribunal and seek to be recognised as the tenant. For information about making an application to the Tribunal contact the RTA for a copy of *Handling tenancy disputes in the Tribunal*. 

#### Fact sheet

For more information about 'Continuing a Fixed Term Tenancy Agreement' or 'Ending a Tenancy Agreement' look at the fact sheets on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.

### Domestic Violence

If you are experiencing domestic violence and you are living in rental accommodation in Queensland, there are laws in place to protect you (whether you are a tenant, co-tenant, the spouse or a person in a domestic relationship with a tenant, or a person not named on the tenancy agreement). 

#### Fact sheet

For more information about your tenancy rights in cases of domestic violence, look at the fact sheet 'Domestic Violence – Information for Tenants' on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.

### What's the correct amount of notice at the end of the tenancy?

If you or the lessor/agent want to end the tenancy, the correct amount of notice must be given to the other party and the correct form must be used or there could be a claim for compensation. Remember,

these are the minimum notice periods and parties can jointly agree to a longer time.

In most cases, if **you** decide to leave you must give notice, using a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)**. If the lessor/agent is asking you to leave, they must give you notice, using a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)**.

Reason for ending the agreement	Notice required
At the end of a fixed term agreement – ‘without grounds’ (no reason)	You, <b>the tenant</b> – must give at least <b>14 days notice</b> to the lessor before the agreement ends. <b>Lessor/agent</b> – at least <b>2 months</b> notice must be given to the tenant prior to the ending of the agreement.
Any time during a periodic agreement – ‘without grounds’ (no reason)	You must give the lessor/agent at least <b>14 days notice</b> ‘without grounds’ (no reason) under a periodic agreement. The lessor/agent must give you at least <b>2 months notice</b> ‘without grounds’ (no reason) under a periodic agreement.
You or the lessor/agent have not complied with a <b>Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)</b> within the allowed period and the breach is a breach of the agreement	You must give at least <b>7 days notice</b> of your intention to leave for an unremedied breach but there may be costs involved – refer to page 16 ‘What if the lessor/agent doesn’t fix the problem in the allowed time?’. The lessor/agent must give you at least <b>7 days notice</b> to leave for unremedied rent arrears and at least <b>14 days</b> for an unremedied general breach.
You or the lessor/agent have breached the agreement in the same way twice in a 1 year period, a <b>Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)</b> was issued each time, and the breach was remedied in the remedy period	If you or the lessor/agent breach the agreement in the same way for a third (or more) time in a 1 year period an application can be made directly to the Tribunal for a termination order to end the agreement (this is only for certain breaches). Time limits may apply.
There has been a Tribunal order	The notice will be determined by order of the Tribunal.
You or the lessor/agent have not complied with a Tribunal order	At least <b>7 days notice</b> is required for non-compliance with a Tribunal order.
Non-livability (for example, the premises have been destroyed, made partly or completely unfit to live in, or cannot be used lawfully as a residence any longer)	You <b>can</b> leave on the <b>same day</b> you give notice to leave for non-livability (this must be within <b>1 month</b> of the event). You <b>must</b> leave on the <b>same day</b> if the <b>lessor/agent</b> gives you notice to leave due to non-livability (this must be within <b>1 month</b> of the event). If you don’t leave after being given a <b>Notice to Leave (Form 12)</b> , the lessor/agent can apply directly to the Tribunal – refer to page 18 ‘What if I don’t leave after being given a <b>Notice to Leave (Form 12)</b> ?’.
For some other reason covered by law (such as excessive personal or financial hardship)	In certain circumstances, you or the lessor/agent can apply directly to the Tribunal for a termination order to end the agreement (refer to page 23 ‘Are there other circumstances that might end the agreement?’). The notice will be determined by order of the Tribunal.
The lessor has entered into a contract to sell the premises and the contract states the purchaser requires vacant possession of the premises (only applies to periodic agreements)	The lessor/agent is required to give you at least <b>4 weeks notice</b> (if vacant possession is a condition in the sale contract) when you are on a periodic agreement. If vacant possession is not a condition in the sale contract, the standard notice period for periodic agreements applies.
At any time if both the lessor/agent and tenant agree in writing	Anytime as agreed to by both parties.





You must continue to pay rent until the date shown on the form (handover day). Even if you move out before handover day or if the handover day is in the middle of a rent period, you will need to make a final rent payment covering the days until the handover date on the form. Giving a *Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)* does not automatically end your commitments to the agreement – you may still have to pay rent until a new tenant is found or until the end of the agreement. If you are unsure about your commitments at the end of your tenancy, you should contact the RTA or the relevant service listed on the back of this booklet.

### Fact sheet

For more information on ‘Allowing Time When Serving Notices’, look at the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.

### What cleaning do I need to do?

Once you’ve moved all your things out, it’s your responsibility to leave the premises, as far as possible, in the same condition as it was before you moved in (‘fair wear and tear’ excepted). You should also read the special terms in your tenancy agreement to see if there are any extra things you need to do before you move out of the premises.

### What if I’ve signed special terms like carpet cleaning or pest control?

While the law doesn’t specifically mention carpet cleaning or pest control, you might find these requirements are included as special terms in your tenancy agreement.

If professional carpet cleaning or pest control are special terms in your tenancy agreement, the lessor/agent can’t make you use a specific company.

If you have any concerns or a dispute about cleaning carpets and/or pest control, discuss your concerns with the lessor/agent or refer to pages 29–30.



### What’s an *Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)*?

This is an important document which helps if there is a dispute over your bond or water charging for the premises.

The *Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)* is similar to the *Entry Condition Report (Form 1a)*, which you should have completed when you moved in. The *Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)* shows the condition of the premises when you leave and will be compared with the condition of the premises before you moved in (the *Entry Condition Report – Form 1a*).

### When should I complete the *Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)*?

By handover day, you need to complete a copy of this report.

### What do I need to include in the *Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)*?

On the form you will need to indicate whether items are clean, undamaged, and working. You can take photos or a video of the premises if you need to. You should also record the water meter reading on the form to help calculate your water consumption. Your report and any photos/videos you take are evidence of the condition of the premises after you have lived there.

### What do I do when I’ve finished filling in the *Exit Condition Report (Form 14a)*?

If possible you should try to arrange a joint, final inspection. If you and the lessor/agent can’t find a suitable time, you must arrange to give a copy of the report to the lessor/agent as soon as possible (at the end of the agreement). **You also need to arrange to return the keys to the lessor/agent.** The lessor/agent is then responsible for completing their side of the report, signing it and returning a copy to you within **3 business days** of receiving it. Keep your copy in a safe and handy place.

### How can I be contacted about the *Exit Condition Report* (Form 14a) and my bond refund?

For more information about rental bond refunds refer to page 27–28.

When you move out, you must give your new address to the lessor/agent if they ask you in writing so they can send you a copy of the completed *Exit Condition Report* (Form 14a) and contact you about the rental bond if necessary. You can only withhold your new address from the lessor/agent if you have a good reason to do so. If you don't have a good reason to withhold your new address, doing so could be an offence and you could be fined. In any case, you should provide the RTA with your forwarding contact details (they won't pass these details on to the lessor/agent) – then you can still be contacted about the rental bond if necessary.

### Can the lessor/agent hold an open house to re-let the property?

Where a lessor/agent wants to re-let the property, they can only hold an open house with the tenant's agreement. Photos showing tenant possessions can only be used if the tenant agrees.



The *Exit Condition Report* (Form 14a) is an important document which helps if there is a dispute over your bond or water charging for the premises. Once you've moved all your things out and cleaned the premises, complete the report thoroughly and carefully before you leave. You should also record the water meter reading on the form to help calculate your water consumption. It's proof of the condition of the premises after you have lived there and will be compared with the *Entry Condition Report* (Form 1a) which shows the condition of the premises before you lived there ('fair wear and tear' excepted). The lessor/agent is then responsible for completing their side of the report, signing it and returning a copy to you within 3 business days of receiving it. Keep your copy in a safe and handy place.

### Abandoned premises

If the lessor/agent has good reason to believe you've abandoned the premises and they want to enter to inspect it, there are rules they must follow.

#### Fact sheet

For information about the rules for 'Abandoned Premises' look at the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.

### Goods left behind

It is your responsibility to remove all of your things from the premises by handover day. However, if you leave anything behind, the lessor/agent must deal with it in a certain way.

#### Fact sheet

For more information about 'Goods and Documents Left Behind', look at the fact sheet on the RTA website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or call the RTA.

### Forms to be used



- Form 4 – Refund of Rental Bond
- Form 16 – Dispute Resolution Request

Download these forms from [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)



### Getting a quick bond refund checklist

To make sure the bond is paid out in the quickest possible time you need to:

- make sure you have met all of your responsibilities for ending the tenancy (refer to pages 21–26)
- talk to the lessor/agent (and/or other parties) and try to come to an agreement about how the bond will be paid out (if you can't come to an agreement refer to page 28 "What if we don't agree about the bond refund?")
- complete and sign a **Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)**. Make sure you, any other parties listed as contributors to the bond and the lessor/agent all sign the form
- make sure you complete your forwarding address or contact details on the **Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)**. Also provide these details to the lessor/agent **and** to the RTA so you can be contacted about the bond if necessary, and
- make sure you provide your bank details if you want your bond paid directly into your bank account.

### Form 4

Make sure you complete the forwarding address section

Make sure you have completed the form correctly before you sign the form

### Who can claim the bond money?

Any person listed as a contributor to the bond or the lessor/agent can claim the bond money by posting a **Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)** to the RTA.

### When can a claim be made on the bond money?

An application for the bond money can be made on or after handover day, i.e. the date stated on the **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** or on the **Notice to Leave (Form 12)**.

Bond money can also be paid out during a tenancy as long as you, any other contributors to the bond and the lessor/agent agree to it and sign the **Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)**.

### What are the different ways the bond can be claimed?

There are two ways a rental bond can be claimed at the end of a tenancy:

1. all of the parties to the bond (for example, you, your co-tenants and the lessor/agent) come to an agreement about how the bond will be paid out. All parties must complete and sign the **Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)**. This is the **quickest way to get a bond refund**.
2. one of the parties (for example the lessor/agent) makes a claim on the bond using a **Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)** without the signature or agreement of the other party/ies (refer to page 28 'What if we don't agree about the bond refund?').



Make sure the *Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)* has been completed correctly and you agree with how the bond is going to be paid out before you sign it. Never sign a blank form even if you have made a verbal agreement with the lessor/agent (or other party) about how the bond will be paid out.

## What are the payment options when the bond money is getting refunded?

On the *Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)* you should indicate how the refund is to be paid. Your bond money can be returned to you by:

- **direct credit** – once the RTA has received and approved the form (signed by all parties), the refund is paid directly into your bank account the next day
- **refund by cheque** – once the RTA has received the form (signed by all parties), a cheque will be posted, or
- **refund in cash** – present the form (signed by all parties), in person, for a refund in cash – this can be done at most Queensland Australia Post Outlets (processing time applies).

Moving overseas? Contact the RTA for more information on alternative ways of having your bond refunded.

## What if we don't agree about the bond refund?

If one of the parties completes a *Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)* and posts it to the RTA without the signatures or agreement of the other parties, it is called making a claim on the bond.

The RTA will process this form and notify the others that a claim has been made on the bond money by sending a letter called a '**Notice of Claim**'.




Make sure the RTA has your forwarding contact details so they can contact you if there has been a claim on your bond money.

If you receive a '**Notice of Claim**', you then have **14 days** to:

1. dispute the claim by submitting a ***Dispute Resolution Request (Form 16)***. The RTA's Dispute Resolution Service will then try to help resolve the dispute.
2. agree with the other parties' claim by signing the Notice of Claim and posting it back to the RTA. The RTA will then refund the bond as directed on the ***Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)***.
3. not respond. **It is important to be aware that the RTA will automatically refund the bond as directed on the first *Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4)* received if there is no contact from the other party by the date stated on the Notice of Claim form.**

It's important to provide the RTA with your new contact details so you can be kept informed about what's happening with your bond money.

## What if the RTA's Dispute Resolution Service can't help us reach an agreement about the bond refund?




If a ***Dispute Resolution Request (Form 16)*** was submitted and the RTA's Dispute Resolution Service couldn't help you to reach an agreement, the RTA will then send a notice called a '**Notice of Unresolved Dispute**' to the party/ies who disputed the claim. If you receive this notice, you can apply to the Tribunal for a decision. You must lodge an application with the Tribunal **and** provide a copy of the Tribunal receipt to the RTA within **7 days** of receiving the *Notice of Unresolved Dispute*. If you don't lodge your Tribunal receipt with the RTA, the bond will automatically be refunded as directed on the first form received. For information about making an application to the Tribunal, contact the RTA for a copy of *Handling tenancy disputes in the Tribunal*. 



### What are my options if I have a tenancy dispute with my lessor/agent?

Your first option is try to resolve the dispute with the lessor/agent directly.

Except in cases defined as ‘urgent’ by the law (refer to page 30 ‘When can I apply to the Tribunal?’), you can only apply to the Tribunal if the dispute has not been resolved through the RTA’s Dispute Resolution Service and you have been issued a **‘Notice of Unresolved Dispute’**.

Options for resolving tenancy disputes		
Option 1 Self resolution	Option 2 RTA’s Dispute Resolution Service	Option 3 The Tribunal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to identify the issue/issues.</li> <li>• Find out your legal rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Seek advice and/or assistance from one of the services listed on the back of this booklet.</li> <li>• Talk with the other party and try to negotiate an agreed outcome.</li> <li>• If you are able to reach an agreement, make sure you get the agreement in writing signed by both parties.</li> <li>• If the matter cannot be resolved, move on to option 2 and use the RTA’s free Dispute Resolution Service.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can apply to the RTA’s free Dispute Resolution Service (time limits may apply depending on what the problem is).</li> <li>• To apply for dispute resolution, complete a <b>Dispute Resolution Request (Form 16)</b> and send it to the RTA.</li> <li>• An officer from the RTA will then contact you to arrange for the dispute to be discussed.</li> <li>• The officer is impartial and will not make a decision, but may be able to help you and the lessor/agent to negotiate a resolution with just a few telephone calls.</li> <li>• They can give you information about the law and how it relates to your particular problem, they can provide a telephone negotiation service, and can set up conferences between you and the lessor/agent (face to face or over the telephone).</li> <li>• Agreements made through this service are written down and become part of your tenancy agreement. The Tribunal can enforce the decision, if necessary.</li> <li>• If conciliation is not suitable or the matter is not resolved the officer will issue a <b>‘Notice of Unresolved Dispute’</b>.</li> <li>• You may then decide to move on to option 3 and apply for your dispute to be heard by the Tribunal. </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a dispute between a tenant and lessor/agent has not been resolved with help from the RTA’s Dispute Resolution Service or if it falls under the category of an urgent application as defined by the law, either the tenant or lessor/agent can apply to have the dispute heard by the Tribunal (time limits may apply depending on what the problem is).</li> <li>• For information about making an application to the Tribunal contact the RTA for a copy of <i>Handling tenancy disputes in the Tribunal</i>.</li> <li>• Submit an application for a Tribunal hearing.</li> <li>• The Tribunal is an informal court. A referee will listen to both sides of the case and assess any evidence provided.</li> <li>• The referee will make a decision (order) about the dispute. </li> </ul>


### When can I apply to the Tribunal?

Under the Act, an 'urgent' matter means an application that can be made straight to the Tribunal without having to go through the RTA's Dispute Resolution Service. The term 'urgent' does not refer to the importance or urgency of the matter to you but rather that dispute resolution is not required. Most of the problems that happen during a tenancy are not treated as urgent under the law and you and the lessor/agent should try to solve the problem yourselves or go through the RTA's Dispute Resolution Service.

An application is considered urgent if it's about the following:

1. If you or the lessor/agent are seeking an order to **end the tenancy** for any of the following reasons:
  - failure to leave – for example, if the lessor/agent has issued a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)** or if you have issued a **Notice of Intention to Leave (Form 13)** and the form has expired
  - excessive hardship – for example, if you or the lessor/agent wanted to end the tenancy because of illness, financial difficulties or a job transfer to another area
  - damage – for example, if you caused damage to the premises, or if the lessor/agent caused damage to your belongings
  - injury – for example, if you or the lessor/agent caused injury to the other party
  - certain repeated breaches of the tenancy agreement – for example, non-payment of rent and the same breach repeated more than twice in a 1 year period
  - objectionable behaviour – for example, if you or the lessor/agent have harassed or intimidated the other party, or
  - death of a sole tenant.
2. To restrain a person from causing damage or injury when an application to end the agreement is made on the same grounds.
3. For the lessor/agent to make repairs for health or safety reasons.

4. For a spouse or occupant to be recognised as the tenant or co-tenant in the event of domestic violence or damage or injury to the occupant or someone else allowed on the premises.
5. If you dispute a **Notice to Leave (Form 12)** because you believe it was given in retaliation for exercising your rights.
6. If you dispute the lessor/agent giving an **Abandonment Termination Notice (Form 15)**.
7. If you are asking for a re-hearing of a decision by the Tribunal to declare a premises abandoned.
8. If the lessor/agent is applying for costs or expenses to be taken from sale of your goods that were left behind.
9. If you are applying for compensation because you are dissatisfied with how the lessor/agent dealt with goods that were left behind.
10. To resolve a dispute about reimbursement of costs for emergency repairs.
11. To determine whether an agreement is covered by the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.
12. If you dispute a tenancy database listing.

If you need to apply to the Tribunal to resolve an urgent case contact the RTA for a copy of *Handling Tenancy Disputes in the Tribunal* (also available from the RTA's website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au) or your local Magistrates Court). 

### What happens if an offence has been committed?

An offence is committed when a person breaches a section of the Act that has a penalty provision attached to it. For example, it is an offence for a person not to lodge a rental bond with the RTA within 10 days.

If a tenant, lessor or agent believes that an offence has been committed, they can make a formal complaint to the RTA. The RTA's Investigations Unit is the division of the RTA that deals with alleged offences (breaches of the Act with penalty points attached), and they have the power to investigate any alleged offenders. Offences are heard in the Magistrates Court and if you or the lessor/agent are found guilty of an offence a fine may apply and a conviction may be recorded. If you want to make a formal complaint about an alleged offence, contact the RTA and a 'Complaint Kit' can be sent to you.

If you have a dispute about anything else (that is not an offence), you and the lessor/agent can resolve the dispute yourselves or use the RTA's dispute resolution process. Contact the RTA to apply for free dispute resolution.

### What do I need to include with my formal complaint?

When submitting a formal complaint about an alleged offence to the RTA, you will be asked to provide evidence to support your claim (such as proof you have paid a rental bond to a lessor/agent if the alleged offence is that the lessor/agent didn't lodge your bond money with the RTA). For a prosecution (going to court) to commence, sufficient evidence is required to prove the allegation beyond a reasonable doubt. If the RTA takes prosecution action you may be required to appear in court as a witness. The complaints and investigations process is completely separate from the dispute resolution process.

### What does the RTA do with complaints about offences?

The RTA focuses on encouraging voluntary compliance with the law. During an investigation, the first aim is to educate all the parties about their obligations and responsibilities under the law.

Prosecutions may be commenced when:

- other strategies have failed, or are inadequate to address the seriousness of the complaint, or
- it is considered to be in the public interest or in the interests of the residential tenancies sector.

### What is a tenancy database?

Tenancy databases are electronic registers run by privately owned companies which list tenants' names and record information about them. These registers are used by lessors and agents as a means of protecting their property investments. The law allows lessors or agents to list you on a tenancy database under certain circumstances (see below).

### What are the laws about tenancy database listings?

Laws introduced in Queensland in 2003 set out the rules for when you can and can't be listed on a tenancy database.

You can only be listed on a tenancy database if you are named on the tenancy agreement and the tenancy agreement has ended, and either:


1. You owe the lessor/agent an amount of money that **is more than** your rental bond, in one of the following circumstances:
  - you owe money to the lessor/agent under an RTA conciliation agreement or a Tribunal order and the time for paying the amount has passed, or
  - you were served with a **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)** for rent arrears and you have failed to remedy that breach, or
  - you have abandoned the premises (unless you are disputing this and the dispute is currently subject to a Tribunal order).

2. For objectionable behaviour or repeated breaches (but only if the Tribunal terminated your tenancy agreement for those reasons).

A lessor/agent **cannot** list you on a tenancy database unless they have advised you in writing and provided you with details about the proposed listing, or they have taken reasonable steps to tell you about the listing.

If you are advised of a proposed or existing listing and you don't agree with the reasons you have been listed, you can:

1. Talk to the person who made the listing and try to reach an agreement about changing or removing the listing.
2. Lodge a **Dispute Resolution Request (Form 16)** with the RTA to assist in negotiating an agreement about the listing.
3. Apply directly to the Tribunal to order the listing person or agency not to make the listing or to vary the listing.

If you need assistance with a tenancy database listing or an Tribunal hearing, contact the RTA for a copy of *Handling tenancy disputes in the Tribunal*. 

If you believe the listing does not meet the approved criteria you have **6 months** from becoming aware of the listing to dispute it.

If you believe a listing has been unjustly or incorrectly made, as defined in the Act, there is no time limit for you to dispute it and you may make an application to the Tribunal at any time.







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## The Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008

The *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (the Act) sets out the rules for renting in Queensland.

The Act sets out the **rights and responsibilities** of tenants (you) and lessors/agents (the person who owns or manages the place you want to live in).

It describes what you and the lessor/agent can and can't do, how to address issues that may arise during the tenancy and explains what happens if you or the lessor/agent break the law.

The Act applies to the following types of tenants:

- private tenants who rent directly from the lessor or through a real estate agent or housing manager
- public housing tenants
- community housing tenants
- tenants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Shire Councils
- tenants in government employee housing, and
- tenants in general employee housing.

The Act does not apply to:

- holiday lettings
- educational institutions (except for bond provisions and employee housing), or
- retirement villages.

## Discrimination

The *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and Federal anti-discrimination laws are in place to protect tenants and prospective tenants from discrimination.

This means a lessor/agent must not discriminate when selecting a tenant or place conditions on the tenancy which make it harder for people in particular groups to gain access to rental properties.

Under anti-discrimination laws, you are protected if you are treated unfairly or unfavourably in any way in connection with accommodation because of:

- sex
- marital status
- parental status (having children)
- pregnancy
- race/nationality
- impairment/disability
- age
- religion
- political belief or activity
- trade union activity, or
- lawful sexual activity.

It would be considered discrimination if a lessor/agent were to treat you unfairly on any of the above grounds by:

- refusing to rent you a property
- charging you a higher rent or bond
- imposing different conditions on your tenancy, or
- evicting you.

Further information about discrimination is available from the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland on 1300 130 670.

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## Important Numbers

### Emergency contact details:

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# Contacts and resources



## Residential Tenancies Authority

Level 23, 179 Turbot Street, Brisbane  
Post: GPO Box 390, Brisbane Q 4001  
Phone: 1300 366 311  
Website: [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)

## Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services (QLD)

These community-based services provide information, advice and advocacy services to tenants.

The telephone numbers shown are correct at the time of printing. These services are listed in the White Pages under 'Tenancy Advice'.

## Brisbane Region

Inner Northern Suburbs (New Farm Office)	3358 3951
Inner Southern Suburbs (South Brisbane Office)	3844 9814
Logan/North Albert/Beaudesert/Woodridge (Slacks Creek Office)	3826 1598
Brisbane North Region (Morayfield Office) (if you are outside Brisbane)	5428 6011 1800 809 700
Outer Northern Suburbs (Stafford Office)	3857 8686
Outer Northern Suburbs (Zillmere Office)	3863 2721
Outer Southern Suburbs (Acacia Ridge Office)	3277 7583
Wynnum/Manly/Redlands (Wynnum Office)	3893 0016

## Regional Queensland

Atherton Tablelands	4091 3128 1800 652 777
Bowen	4786 3735
Bundaberg and Surrounds	4153 2957
Cairns and Surrounds	4031 6733
Fraser Coast (Pialba Office)	4124 1523
Gladstone and Region	4976 6360
Gold Coast North (Southport Office)	5591 1102
Gold Coast South (Palm Beach Office)	5598 3230
Gympie and South Burnett	5482 7623
Ipswich and Surrounds	3281 5409
Mackay	4957 6334
Mt Isa/North West Region	4743 9659
Rockhampton/Central Highlands	4922 7411
Roma District	4620 1065 1800 620 663
Sunshine Coast (Nambour Office)	5476 0555
Toowoomba and Surrounds	4616 9707
Townsville and Surrounds	4772 5617 1800 772 561
Whitsunday (Cannonvale Office)	4945 4288

## Tenants Union of Queensland

[www.tuq.org.au](http://www.tuq.org.au) 1300 744 263

## Crisis accommodation information

Lifeline 131 114

## DV Connect

For Women (24hrs a day 7 days a week) 1800 811 811  
For Men (9am – 5pm Monday to Friday) 1800 600 636

## Alternative Dispute Resolution Centre

Department of Justice and Attorney General 3239 6007  
(if you are outside Brisbane) 1800 017 288

Anti-Discrimination Commission Qld 1300 130 670

Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management 1800 060 119

Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) (Bond Loans) 3225 1704

Call your local area office listed under 'H' in the White Pages if you are outside Brisbane.

## The Tribunal

Look under 'Magistrates Court' in your local White Pages.

## RTA forms

The RTA produces approved forms to be used during a tenancy. To obtain a form or to gain information regarding form ordering options, please contact the RTA or access the RTA's website. RTA forms are available from most Australia Post Outlets around Queensland or from the RTA's distributor on 1300 136 939 or fax (07) 3216 2258 or email [RTAforms.qld@auspost.com.au](mailto:RTAforms.qld@auspost.com.au). If you don't have access to a computer, contact your local library to use a computer.

Form 1a	Entry Condition Report (General Tenancies)
Form 2	Bond Lodgement
Form 3	Transfer of Bond
Form 4	Refund of Rental Bond
Form 5	Change of Lessor or Lessor's Agent
Form 6	Change of Shared Bond Arrangement
Form 7	Part-Payment of Rental Bond
Form 8	Lessor's Agent Signature Record <small>Not at Australia Post</small>
Form 9	Entry Notice
Form 10	Notice of Lessor's Intention to Sell Premises
Form 11	Notice to Remedy Breach
Form 12	Notice to Leave
Form 13	Notice of Intention to Leave
Form 14a	Exit Condition Report (General Tenancies)
Form 15	Abandonment Termination Notice
Form 16	Dispute Resolution Request
Form 17a	Renting a house or unit in Queensland
Form 18a	General Tenancy Agreement
Form 19	Notice to Vacate by Mortgagee to Tenant/s

## RTA fact sheets

The RTA produces a range of fact sheets that address specific aspects of residential tenancies law. The latest and most up-to-date versions of all the fact sheets available can be downloaded from the RTA's website [www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)

## Fact sheets referred to in this booklet:

'Abandoned premises'  
'Allowing time when serving notices'  
'Continuing a fixed term tenancy agreement'  
'Domestic violence – information for tenants'  
'Entry and privacy'  
'Goods and documents left behind'  
'Rent payments and holding deposits'  
'Share homes, co-tenancies and sub-letting'  
'Smoke alarms'  
'Ending a tenancy agreement'  
'Water charging'