

RENTING A SHAREHOUSE

A WORKERS GUIDE TO LIVING IN AUSTRALIA

Finding a rental property

When you rent a home, you receive a tenancy agreement or a lease. This is a legal document with information about what the tenant (you) or landlord (the homeowner) can do and cannot do. It will tell you how much rent to pay, how and when to pay it.

By signing the lease, you agree to pay rent from the start date until the finish date of the lease.

Before signing a lease, it is important to understand exactly what you are agreeing to. If you have questions, ask someone you trust to explain it to you. Remember to ask these things before you sign a lease. You can take this document with you as a guide when you are viewing properties.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Lease period and payment

- how long is my lease?
Note: this often is 6 months or 12 months but can be shorter or longer.
- how many people can be included on the lease?
- how much is the weekly rent?
- how much is the security deposit (bond)?
- when do I have to pay rent?
- what is included in the rent?
(for example, water bills, gas, electricity)

Maintenance, repairs and furniture

- who do I contact for maintenance and repair issues?
- who is responsible for maintaining the garden and lawn areas?
- does the accommodation come with furniture or appliances, or do I supply these myself?

Real estate agents

With some rental houses, the landlord pays a real estate agent to look after the home. In this case, you will pay your rent and communicate with the real estate agent instead of the landlord.



IMPORTANT WORDS

TENANCY AGREEMENT: a legal document with information about your new house. You will need to sign this document and understand what is written in it.

LEASE: another word for the tenancy agreement (above).

RENT: the money you pay to live in the house.

LANDLORD: the person who owns the home you are living in.

REAL ESTATE: sometimes, the landlord pays a real estate agent to look after the home. You might pay your rent to the real estate instead of the landlord.

ENTRY CONDITION REPORT: a document saying if anything in your house is damaged or not working before you move in.



Before moving in

Once you have signed your lease, there is one final step before you can move into your new home.

Before moving in, check the property for any problems or issues. You will receive a piece of paper called an **entry condition report** (see example below) from the landlord or real estate agent.

This shows the condition of your rental property at the time you sign the lease. For example, the condition report will state if the walls, floors or windows are marked, if the lights are not working, or if the curtains are broken.

The condition report is important because it can be used as evidence if there is an issue about who should pay for cleaning or damage, particularly at the end of a tenancy.

The landlord or real estate agent must sign the condition report and give you two copies before you move in.

REMEMBER

- read the condition report carefully, and check if it is correct. If something in a report is wrong, you can change it.
- take photos of the property before you move your belongings in, particularly of any damage and keep those photos with your condition report.
- keep one copy of the condition report for yourself and return one copy to your landlord or agent within three business days of moving in.

Entry condition report – general tenancies (Form 1a)					
<small>Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (Section 65)</small>					
Insert Y /✓ = Yes	Insert N /X = No			Lessor/agent	Tenant/s
		Clean	Working	Undamaged	Comment on lessor/agent report
				Comments (if any)	
Entry					
Doors/walls/ceiling					
Windows/screens					
Blinds/curtains					
Fans/light fittings					
Floor/floor coverings					
Power points					
Lounge room					
Doors/walls/ceiling					
Windows/screens					
Blinds/curtains					
Fans/light fittings					
Floor/floor coverings					
TV/power points					
Air conditioner					



BOND MONEY

At the end of the tenancy the property manager wants to keep part of the bond money for a crack in the door. The tenant shows this was listed on the entry condition report and provides photos (with the date) as evidence that the door was already damaged. As a result, no money is taken from the bond.



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How to be a good housemate

Sharing a home is a fun and positive experience if you are respectful, you talk about problems as they arise, are honest and contribute to the agreed chores roster. By doing this, your home can feel more positive and relaxed.

Please see the below **THE HOUSEMATES' CODE** for some tips on how to create a good living environment.

THE HOUSEMATES' CODE

FOOD



Decide how groceries will be purchased and make it clear what food is shared. Avoid eating food that isn't yours or for sharing.

GUESTS



If you want friends or family to visit and stay over, talk to your housemates first and agree how long they can stay and where they will be sleeping.

CLEANING



Create a cleaning roster. You will be responsible for cleaning up after yourself in shared areas (bathroom, kitchen, living area).

RENT



Pay rent on time to the right person. You might be paying rent to a team leader or making individual payments to the real estate agent or landlord.

BILLS



Plan how bills will be divided and paid. If one person is generally responsible for managing bills, make sure they are paid on time to avoid housemate disputes.

MOVING OUT



If you decide to move out, find out how much notice you need to give your landlord or real estate agent. You should also notify your case worker and your employer.



HOW TO BE A GOOD TENANT

By being a responsible tenant, you will be less likely to have issues with your landlord or housemates. This will help you cope with your everyday living and make it easier to feel safe and comfortable each day.

You should

- pay rent on time and keep copies of rent receipts

- keep the property clean and tidy

- respect your neighbours

- keep noise to a minimum

- take rubbish out regularly. Check what day your bins are collected.

- keep your lawns mowed and garden tidy

- do not cause damage to the property

- report urgent repairs immediately. This includes:
 - » blocked or broken toilet
 - » gas leak
 - » dangerous electrical faults
 - » burst water pipe
 - » flooding or serious water damage
 - » serious storm or fire damage



STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

YOU CAN:

- talk to other workers or your team leader
- talk to your employer
- talk to someone in your community e.g. at your church or sporting club
- call the Pacific Labour Facility 24-hour hotline: 1800 51 51 31.