

Guide to Understanding Final Inspections and Bond Claims

Prepared by
Lily James



Abstract

This guide offers a clear and practical overview of final rental inspections and how they affect bond claims. Designed for tenants preparing to move out, it explains what landlords or agents look for during inspections, how to prepare the property to meet expectations, and what steps to take if deductions are proposed. From understanding fair wear and tear to documenting your efforts and knowing your rights in disputes, this guide helps renters avoid common pitfalls and secure their full bond refund. Whether you're a first-time tenant or experienced mover, this resource provides valuable tips and insights to help you complete your tenancy on the right note with confidence and clarity.

Getting Started

Moving out of a rental property involves more than just packing your belongings. One of the most important steps is the final inspection, which determines whether you'll receive your bond money back in full. Many tenants lose part of their bond simply because they weren't aware of what landlords expect at this stage.

This guide is designed to help you navigate the final inspection process with confidence. We'll walk you through what property managers check, how to prepare your home properly, and what to do if there's a disagreement about the condition of the property. Whether you're renting for the first time or moving again, this guide will help you avoid costly mistakes and take control of your bond return.

1. What Is a Final Inspection and Why Is It Important for Your Bond?

When your tenancy comes to an end, one of the final and most crucial steps is the final inspection of the rental property. This process is carried out by the property manager or landlord to assess the overall condition of the home compared to how it was when you moved in. The main purpose of this inspection is to determine whether the property has been maintained appropriately and whether any part of the bond deposit (also known as a security deposit) should be withheld for damages, uncleaned areas, or unresolved issues.

Understanding how the final inspection works and why it's so important can make the difference between a full bond refund and losing hundreds of dollars unnecessarily.

What Happens During a Final Inspection?

The final inspection is typically done after you've vacated the property, removed all your belongings, and completed the required cleaning and repairs. The property manager uses the



original Entry Condition Report (which documents the property's state when your tenancy began) to compare how the home looks now.

- They will walk through each room, checking areas such as:
- Flooring and walls for damage or marks
- Windows, blinds, and screens
- Kitchen surfaces, oven, stovetop, and sink
- Bathroom fixtures and tiles
- Laundry and outdoor spaces
- Cleanliness of carpets and floors
- Signs of neglect, pests, or improper maintenance
- Even small oversights—like dust on ceiling fans or an uncleaned oven—can be flagged during this process.

Why Does It Matter for Your Bond?

The final inspection directly influences how much of your bond you'll get back. In most Australian states, your landlord can make a claim against your bond for:

- Unpaid rent
- Damage beyond normal wear and tear
- Cleaning if the property isn't left in a reasonably clean condition
- Removal of items left behind
- Repairs that were your responsibility

If the inspection report finds that the property is not in acceptable condition, the landlord can lodge a claim to deduct the cost of cleaning or repairs from your bond. These deductions can range from minor cleaning fees to significant repair costs, depending on the situation.

How to Prepare for a Successful Final Inspection

To avoid disputes and ensure your bond is returned in full, preparation is key. Here's how you can get ready:

- **Review Your Entry Condition Report:** This document is your reference for how the property looked when you moved in. Match it room by room.
- **Clean Thoroughly:** Bond cleaning is more detailed than regular cleaning. Everything from skirting boards to kitchen appliances should be spotless.
- **Fix Minor Damage:** Repair things like nail holes, broken fittings, or scuffed walls where possible.
- **Remove Rubbish and Personal Items:** Leaving anything behind may result in removal fees.
- **Take Photos:** Document your cleaning and the condition of the property before handing over the keys.

What If You Disagree with the Outcome?

Sometimes, landlords make claims you may feel are unfair. In such cases, you have the right to dispute bond deductions. If an agreement cannot be reached, you can take the matter to a tenancy tribunal or your local consumer affairs authority. This is why taking before-and-after photos and keeping receipts for any work or cleaning done is so important—they serve as your proof if a dispute arises.

The final inspection isn't just a formality it plays a direct role in whether you get your bond back in full. By understanding how it works, knowing what landlords expect, and preparing properly, you can avoid unnecessary stress and expenses. With the right steps and attention to detail, your exit from the property can be smooth, fair, and financially secure.

Let this guide serve as your preparation checklist so you walk into your final inspection with confidence and leave with your full bond returned.

2. What Do Property Managers Look for During the Final Walkthrough?

Getting ready to move into a new home? The final walk-through is your last chance to ensure everything's in working order before move-in day. Having a final walk-through checklist is an important step that can save you from unexpected headaches and expenses once you're in your new home.

We've created a detailed checklist to guide you through the final walk-through process, covering everything from testing light switches to making sure the HVAC system is good to go. We also answer common questions like who should join you, how much time you'll need, and what to do if something's amiss.



Whether you're a first-time homebuyer or an experienced homeowner, our checklist can help you ensure your new home is move-in ready before you—or a professional moving company—arrive with your belongings.

Final Walk-Through Explained

The final walk-through is an important step in the home-buying process that should not be overlooked. It provides the homebuyer with one last chance to inspect the property and ensure that everything is in working order. During the final walk-through, the homebuyer and their real estate agent walk through the home together.

- **What Happens During the Final Walk-Through?**

During the final walk-through, the homebuyer and their real estate agent will inspect the property one last time to ensure that everything is functional and that any agreed-upon repairs have been made. This includes ensuring all appliances, fixtures, and systems work. You should also check that any items that were included in the sale, such as appliances or window treatments, are still present and in good condition.

The final walk-through is also an opportunity to check for any new issues that may have arisen since the initial home inspection. For example, if the home has been vacant for a period of time, there may be new signs of pest or water damage. You should also check that any repairs that were made are up to your satisfaction and have been completed to a professional standard.

- **When Should It Take Place?**

Ideally, the final walk-through should take place a few days before closing to give you enough time to identify any issues and resolve them before the sale is finalized. However, final walk-throughs often occur within 24 hours of closing—sometimes on the way to the closing office. This is an especially convenient option if you need to coordinate a cross-country relocation with long-distance movers because it eliminates the need for you to make an extra trip.

Note that the timing may vary depending on the purchase agreement and local regulations. Your real estate agent or attorney should be familiar with the specific requirements in your area.

- **Who Should Come?**

The homebuyer should always attend the final walk-through with their real estate agent. This holds true for both local and long-distance moves. In most cases, the seller will have already vacated the property, and the final walk-through will be conducted in their absence. If the seller has not vacated, they and their real estate may be present.

Since the final walk-through is not a home inspection, a professional home inspector is not typically present. However, if you have concerns about the property's condition, you may want to schedule a separate appointment with a qualified inspector.

- **How Long Does It Take?**

Generally, a final walk-through can take anywhere from 30 minutes to a few hours. The length of time will vary depending on the size of the property, the complexity of the systems being inspected, and the thoroughness of the inspection.

Rushing through the final walk-through can lead to missed issues, resulting in costly repairs or replacements after the sale is finalized—adding to your total moving costs. With that in mind, be sure to leave yourself enough time for a thorough inspection.

- **What Should You Bring?**

To ensure you are fully prepared for the final walk-through, you should bring the following things with you:

- Any written agreements regarding repairs
- Camera or phone to take photos or videos of any issues
- Checklist of things to look for
- Copy of the purchase agreement
- Flashlight

- Home inspection report
- Notepad or mobile device for documenting issues
- Phone charger to check the outlets
- Tape measure to ensure that new furniture or appliances will fit

What To Look For During the Final Walk-Through



During the final walk-through, it's important to be thorough, inspecting both the interior and exterior of the home. We've provided specific checklists of what to look for below.

Home Interior

When conducting the final walk-through, pay close attention to the property's interior. In particular, inspect the following:

- Appliances: Check all appliances, including the refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, microwave, washer, and dryer.
- Exhaust fans: Test any exhaust fans in the kitchen or bathrooms.
- Flooring: Check the condition of the flooring and baseboards and look for issues that a vacuum, broom, or mop will not fix.
- Walls and ceilings: Look for signs of new damage on the walls, ceilings, and crown molding and verify that any agreed-upon repairs have been completed.
- Doors and windows: Open and close all the windows and doors and check the locks on each one. Ensure no doorknobs, window screens, or blinds have been removed since the initial home inspection.
- Plumbing fixtures: Test all plumbing fixtures, including faucets, toilets, and showers.
- HVAC system: Regardless of the temperature outside, temporarily adjust the thermostat to test the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

- Electrical system: Test the circuit breakers and use a phone charger or another small plug-in device to test electrical outlets.
- Lights: Check the condition of light fixtures, ceiling fans, and light switches. Unless otherwise specified in the final contract, the seller should not take these types of fixtures with them.
- Water pressure: Check the water pressure in all sinks and showers. You may also want to run hot water to test the water heater settings and functionality.
- Built-in features: Check other built-in features, such as garbage disposals and sprinkler systems.
- Pests: Look for evidence of pests, such as rodents or termites. Red flags include droppings, gnaw marks, and nests.
- Water damage: Look for evidence of water damage. Stains on the ceilings or walls, musty odors, or dampness can all be bad signs.

Our checklist may not be all-inclusive, so be mindful of any items or issues specific to the home or your negotiations with the seller. For instance, you may need to verify that a certain repair has been completed satisfactorily.

As you conduct your final walk-through, remember that most real estate contracts simply state that the home should be “broom clean.” A few scratches or a little dirt is not worth stressing over. Just plan to do your own deep clean once you’re moved in—or add the cost of hiring a professional cleaner to your moving budget.

Home Exterior

In addition to the interior, be sure to inspect the home’s exterior to identify any issues that need to be addressed before closing.

- Roof and gutters: Check the roof’s condition and gutters and downspouts from the ground. Also check for proper drainage around the home’s foundation.
- Garage doors: Test the functionality of garage doors and openers.
- Siding: Check the condition of the exterior siding or stucco. Look for any cracks or damage.
- Deck and patio: Check the condition of the deck, patio, or any other outdoor features.
- Mailbox: Check the condition of the mailbox. Ensure it opens and closes without issues, and look for holes that could expose your mail to rain.
- Doorbell: Test the functionality of the doorbell.
- Water damage: Look for signs of water damage, including stained siding or foundation cracks.
- Pests: Look for signs of rodent activity, such as holes, droppings, and insect nests.
- Trash: Ensure the previous owner has not left behind trash or other items in the yard, such as old paint cans or scrap lumber.

3. How Can You Prepare Your Property to Pass the Final Inspection?



Before you start negotiations, it's important to arrange property inspections. This allows you to understand the property's condition and factor in any future costs when making an offer. Make sure you know exactly what the inspection report covers. You should also inspect the property a few days before settlement to confirm its condition.

The main types of property inspections are:

- building inspections
- pest inspections
- swimming pool inspections
- solar system inspections.

If you can't arrange inspections early, you can still have them done before settlement day. You will need to write terms into the contract to let you cancel the sale if the property gets poor inspection reports.

Building and pest inspections

You can get a combined building and pest inspection. Make sure the inspector holds a current licence from the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.

Swimming pool inspections

If your property has a swimming pool, you must arrange for a licensed inspector to check that it's safe.

They will make sure that it:

- follows safety regulations, such as signs and fences
- meets construction standards.

Inspectors must be licensed.

Solar system inspections

If the home has a solar system, you should consider having a professional inspect it to ensure it is performing efficiently and safely.

Make sure any work involving direct or close contact with the installation is carried out by a licensed electrician.

Check the installer's accreditation status.

You should also ask the sellers to provide the documents they have in relation to the system.

This could include a warranty document (which may be useful in the event of any faults or repairs), and maintenance schedules as set out by the installer at the time of purchase.

Find out more about solar system inspections and maintenance.

Pre-settlement inspection

You should inspect the property 2–3 days before settlement. Make sure it's still in the same condition as when you signed the contract. In particular, check anything you specifically included in your contract.

Ask your solicitor if all other conditions of the contract have been met before settlement day.

4. What Happens If Issues Are Found During the Final Inspection?

Keeping your rental property in good condition is important for maintaining property value, tenant retention and avoiding costly future repairs. Implementing a routine inspection schedule is critical to ensure that properties are kept in optimal condition.

Inspection specifics and intervals will vary depending on the type of property, the lease term of your tenants and the amount of time you have to dedicate to preventative maintenance. But, in all cases, full property inspections should be done at least every six months, and drive-by external inspections more frequently.

Before scheduling or performing property inspections, make sure to check with local laws and ordinances, as most jurisdictions require landlords to provide at least 24 hours' notice before entering a property.

Preventative Maintenance



Regular property inspections allow landlords to identify potential issues before they become significant problems. This proactive approach can save money and time in the long run by catching problems early and helping to save money on repairs and replacements.

Inspections also allow property managers to take note of things that are experiencing wear and tear and will need to be replaced or repaired in the future. Proper planning assures more accurate budgets and money savings. Plus, regular inspections and repairs can extend the lifespan of property assets like HVAC, electrical and plumbing systems and reduce the need for premature replacements.

In addition, well-maintained properties retain their value better over time. Keeping the property in good condition can attract better tenants, improve the property's salability and may even increase rental value.

Legal And Lease Compliance

By stipulating inspection schedules in the lease agreements, both property managers and tenants understand the expectations and requirements. When tenants know that the property will be regularly inspected, they are more likely to adhere to lease rules and to better care for your property.

Regularly inspecting the property allows property managers to check that the rules of the lease are being followed, no unauthorized tenants are occupying the property, and that there are no insect or rodent problems that need to be addressed with the tenants.

A well-documented inspection record can protect property managers and owners from liability in the event that something does happen to the property. Regular inspection reports demonstrate a dedication to maintaining the safety of tenants on the property.

Tenant Retention And Relationship Management

Routine preventative maintenance checks and property inspections help to build a good relationship with tenants. Regular visits and unrequested maintenance work demonstrate the landlord's commitment to property maintenance and tenant safety. This can lead to higher tenant satisfaction and retention rates, which are beneficial for steady rental income.

Inspections also provide an opportunity for the property manager and tenant to communicate about the condition of the property, ongoing maintenance issues or concerns, and talk through any disputes that have arisen since the last inspection. Being available to tenants and addressing their issues promptly enhances tenant satisfaction.

Type Of Inspections

There are a variety of property inspections that may be appropriate for the property you are managing. In most cases, not all of these will be necessary, but more frequent and thorough inspections are beneficial for keeping up with the property's condition and your tenant's needs.

Move-In And Move-Out Inspections

At the beginning and end of a tenancy, detailed inspections are vital. Documenting the property's condition through photos and videos creates a benchmark, which is invaluable when assessing any damages incurred during the tenancy. Both tenant and landlord should agree and sign off on these records to avoid future disputes.

It is important that the move-out inspection is as detailed as it was at move-in. This is the inspection that you will use to determine how much of the tenant's security deposit is returned. Remember that some wear and tear is normal and cannot legally be deducted from the deposit.

Periodic Inspections

Conducting inspections every three to six months allows landlords to check the property's condition and perform any necessary maintenance. This frequency helps detect issues early like unauthorized occupants or deterioration of critical systems such as plumbing or electrical wiring. Schedule periodic inspections based on what makes the most sense for your property. Large, multifamily properties likely need more frequent inspections to evaluate each unit in addition to the common areas and community spaces.

Seasonal Inspections

Seasonal inspections can be beneficial for properties in areas that have extreme weather or temperatures or for properties that have seasonal facilities, like swimming pools or balconies. Seasonal inspections can include checking the heating system and insulation before winter to prevent unexpected issues or emergencies. Similarly, ensuring that outdoor areas are maintained for summer use can enhance tenant satisfaction and safety.

Drive-By Inspections



Regular exterior inspections or drive-bys are less intrusive and can be a good way to monitor the property without scheduling a full inspection. These can help identify obvious issues such as external damages or unauthorized occupants.

Consider drive-by inspections as frequently as monthly. These don't take much time but can help to keep your properties on your radar and allow you to see obvious issues.

Areas Of Focus During Inspections

- Moisture and mold: Check for signs of water damage and potential mold growth areas

- Windows and doors: Ensure seals are intact and frames are free from damage
- Structural Integrity: Inspect the foundation, external walls, and roof for any signs of damage
- HVAC Systems: Check heating, ventilation and air conditioning units to ensure they are functioning efficiently
- Pest Control: Look for evidence of rodents or insects as part of ongoing pest management
- Safety Features: Verify that smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and exit signs are in place and functional.

By integrating these practices into your property management routine, you can increase the lifespan of your property and improve tenants' living conditions and overall satisfaction. Regular property inspections can help ensure that both the property and its occupants are well-cared for, leading to a more profitable and less stressful investment.

Need Help Getting Your Property Inspection-Ready?

Final inspections can be stressful, especially if you're short on time or unsure what's expected. Hiring experienced professionals can take the pressure off and help you avoid costly bond deductions.

If you're in Birtinya, check out our trusted bond cleaning service, Bond Cleaning in Birtinya offers tailored cleaning solutions to help you meet rental standards and secure your full bond.

Check out to know more: <https://www.bondcleaninginsunshinecoast.com.au/birtinya/>

6. How Are Bond Claims Processed After the Inspection?



Once the final inspection of your rental property is completed, the next step in ending your tenancy involves the bond refund process. This is when your landlord or property manager reviews the condition of the property and decides whether to release your full bond or claim a portion of it for issues such as cleaning, damage, or unpaid rent.

Understanding how bond claims are processed helps tenants know what to expect and how to respond, especially in cases where there's a disagreement.

Step 1: Final Inspection Review

After you move out and the final inspection is completed, the landlord or agent will compare the current state of the property with the Entry Condition Report and any supporting documentation. If the property is in the same or better condition, they are likely to agree to a full bond refund.

However, if the inspection identifies issues such as excessive dirt, damage beyond normal wear and tear, missing items, or unreported maintenance problems, the landlord may decide to claim some or all of the bond to cover these costs.

Step 2: Submitting the Bond Claim

Once the landlord decides to make a claim, they must submit a bond claim form to the appropriate authority in your state or territory. In most cases, this is done through a residential tenancy authority, such as:

- RTA in Queensland
- NCAT in New South Wales
- VCAT in Victoria
- Consumer and Business Services (CBS) in South Australia
- ACT Rental Bonds Office
- WA Bond Administrator in Western Australia

The bond claim can be for the full amount or a partial deduction, depending on what was identified during the final inspection.

Step 3: Tenant Notification and Agreement

If a bond claim is made, tenants will be notified and asked to agree or disagree with the amount. This process usually involves filling out and submitting a form or logging into an online portal to respond.

If both parties agree to the claim, the bond will be refunded accordingly—either in full or with agreed deductions taken out. The money is then transferred to the tenant's nominated bank account.

Step 4: Disputing a Claim



If you do not agree with the proposed bond deductions, you have the right to dispute the claim. This process usually involves:

- Responding to the bond authority within a set time frame (often 7–14 days)
- Providing evidence to support your position (such as photos, cleaning receipts, or the original condition report)
- Attending a hearing or mediation session if required

Tenancy dispute resolution is usually handled by a tribunal or similar body in your state or territory. The tribunal will review both sides of the case and make a legally binding decision about the bond.

Step 5: Final Bond Refund

Once the dispute is resolved or both parties come to an agreement, the bond authority will release the funds. In cases where the tenant wins the dispute, the full bond may be refunded. If

the landlord's claim is upheld, deductions will be made, and the remaining balance will be returned to the tenant.

Final Thoughts

The bond claim process is designed to be fair to both tenants and landlords. To protect yourself, make sure you:

- Clean thoroughly before moving out
- Document the condition of the property
- Respond promptly to any claim
- Understand your rights and state-specific procedures

Being informed about how the process works helps you avoid unnecessary delays and ensures you receive the amount you're entitled to.

Bottom Line

Final inspections and bond claims are key parts of ending a rental agreement. Understanding how they work can help you avoid losing money unfairly. This guide has outlined what to expect during the final inspection, how to prepare your property, your rights as a tenant, and how the bond process unfolds.

Taking the time to clean properly, fix minor issues, and document everything gives you the best chance of getting your full bond back. Whether you're renting for the first time or moving after years, being informed makes the process smoother and less stressful. With the right preparation and awareness, you can confidently complete your tenancy and protect your bond.

References

What Is a Final Inspection and Why Is It Important for Your Bond? | Final Inspection And Returning The Property, From,

<https://fastercapital.com/topics/final-inspection-and-returning-the-property.html>

What Do Property Managers Look for During the Final Walkthrough? | Final Walk-Through Checklist: What To Look For, Retrieved 8 July, 2025, From,

<https://www.thisoldhouse.com/moving/final-walk-through-checklist>

How Can You Prepare Your Property to Pass the Final Inspection? | Property inspections, From,

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/housing-and-neighbours/buying-and-selling-a-property/buying-a-home/making-an-offer-on-a-home/inspections>

What Happens If Issues Are Found During the Final Inspection? | Protect Yourself And Your Property With Regular Property Inspections, Retrieved 6 June, 2024, From,

<https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2024/06/06/protect-yourself-and-your-property-with-regular-property-inspections/>

How Are Bond Claims Processed After the Inspection? | Tips: The easy way to claim your bond, From,

<https://www.tenants.org.au/resource/easy-way-claim-your-bond>