



# **GUIDE TO RENTAL BOND CLAIM AND REFUND PROCESS IN ADELAIDE**

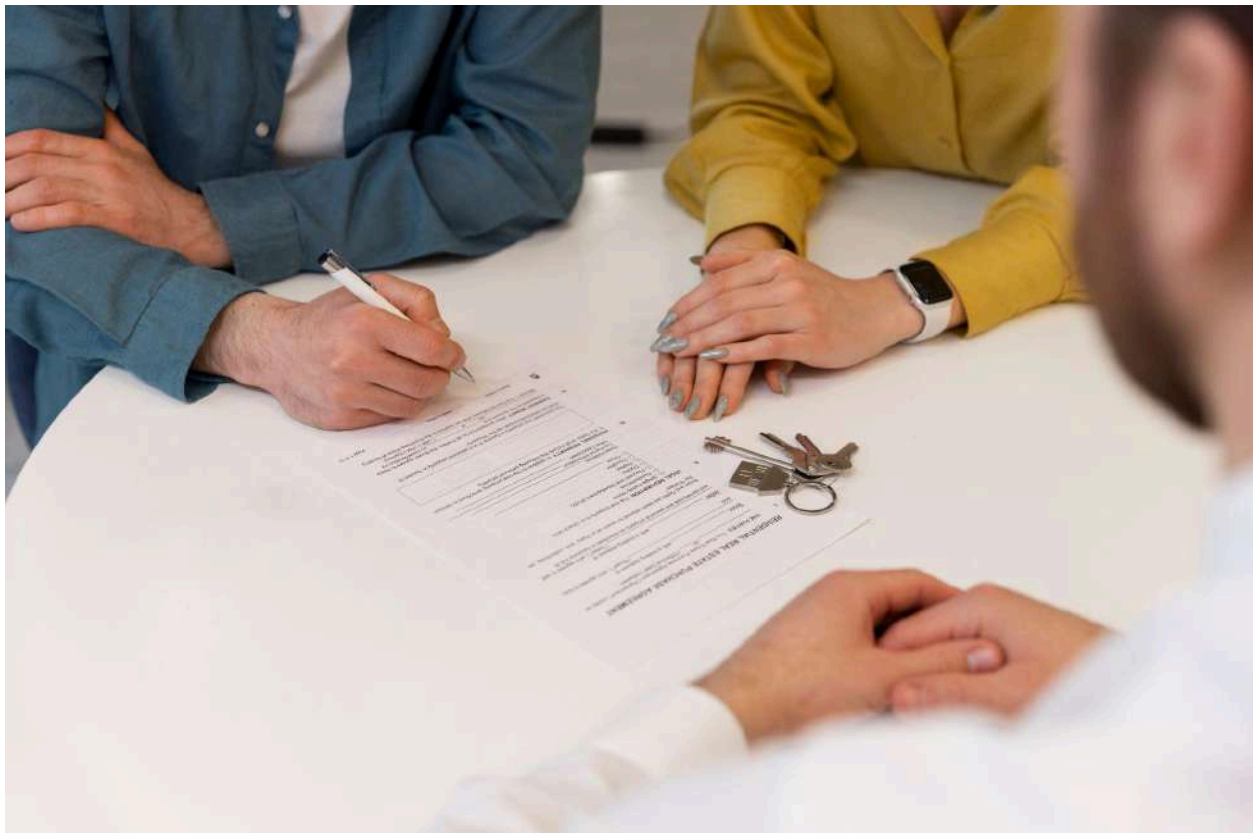
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# Introduction

Moving out of a rental property is a big step, and getting your bond back is one of the most important parts of the process. Many renters in Adelaide are not sure how the bond system works or what they need to do to receive their full refund. This guide has been created to help you understand the rental bond process in a simple and stress-free way.

A rental bond is money you pay at the beginning of your lease. It acts as a safety deposit for the landlord in case anything goes wrong during your stay. If the property is damaged, left unclean, or if rent is unpaid, some or all of the bond may be kept by the landlord. But if everything is in good shape when you leave, you should receive the full amount back.

This guide explains the full journey, from paying the bond when you move in to getting it back when you move out. You will learn how to prepare your home for the final inspection, what forms to fill out, how to avoid common mistakes, and what to do if there is a disagreement with your landlord. With clear steps and helpful examples, the entire process is broken down into manageable parts.



One of the most useful parts of this guide is a step-by-step approach to getting your rental ready before the final check. With helpful tips and tools, including a full checklist for cleaning and preparing your home, you can make sure nothing is missed. This preparation can make a big

difference when it is time to claim your bond. It also explains where the bond is lodged in Adelaide, who handles the refund, and how long it usually takes to receive your money.

Whether you are a first-time renter or someone who has moved many times, this guide will give you the knowledge and confidence to handle the bond refund process smoothly. You will understand your rights, your responsibilities, and what to expect at each stage. The more you know, the easier it becomes to move out on good terms and get your full bond back without delays.

Start reading and take the guesswork out of getting your bond back in Adelaide. Let this guide help you move out with peace of mind and money back in your pocket.

## **The following points explain the bond claim and refund process in Adelaide:**

### **1. What Is a Rental Bond?**

A rental bond is the security deposit you pay to your new landlord before you move in. The bond amount is usually equal to four weeks of rent.





A rental bond is money that a tenant gives to the landlord or property manager at the start of a rental agreement. This money is held as a form of security during your stay at the property. It is not an extra fee or a payment towards rent. Instead, it is kept safe and returned to you at the end of your lease if everything is in good condition.

To get your bond back, you'll need to:

- pay your rent on time
- cause no damage to the property
- have your bond receipt
- have a detailed condition report



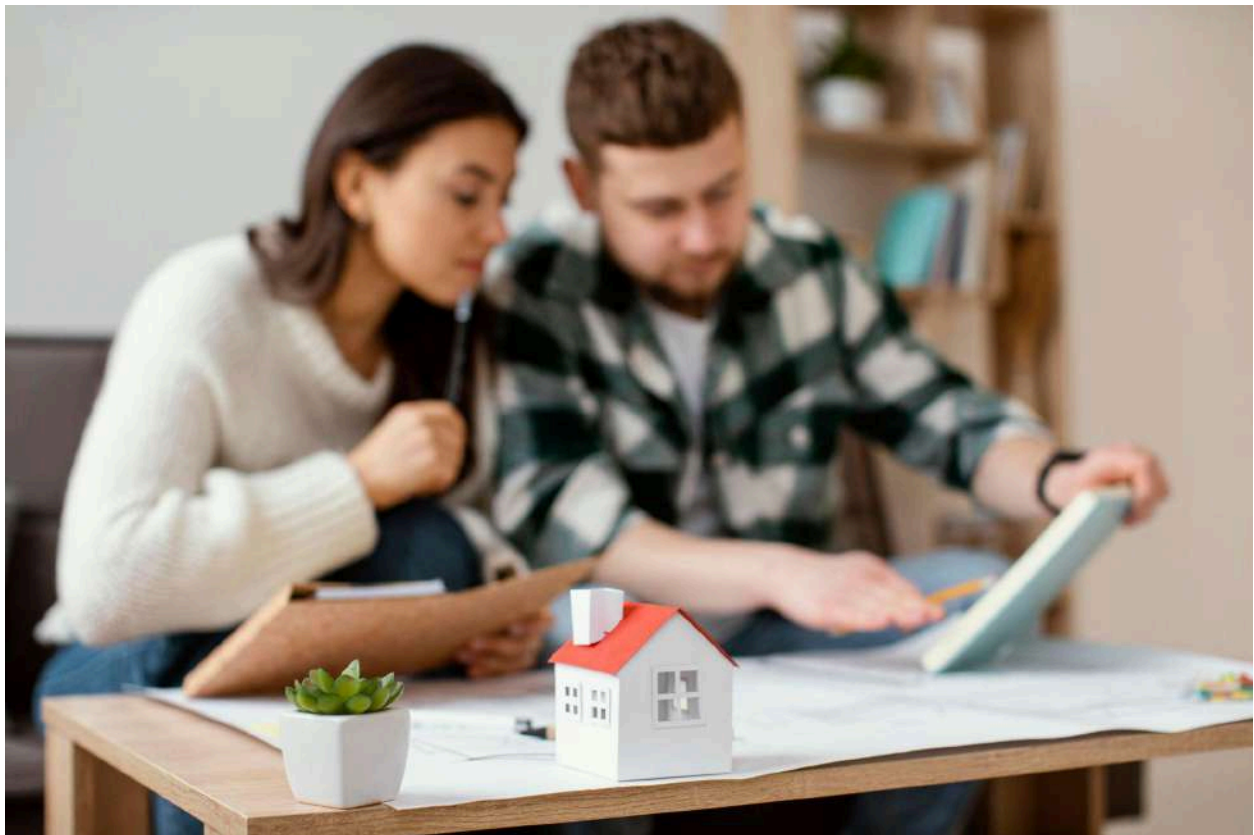
The main purpose of a rental bond is to protect the landlord in case something goes wrong. For example, if you leave without paying your rent or cause damage to the property beyond normal wear and tear, the landlord may use some or all of the bond to cover those costs.

In most places, the rental bond is lodged with a government agency or a bond authority. This helps ensure that the money is safe and can only be used for the right reasons. You will usually receive a receipt or confirmation when your bond is lodged.

At the end of your lease, the landlord or agent will inspect the property. If the property is clean and there is no damage or unpaid rent, you can apply to get your full bond back. This process can take a few days to a few weeks.

It is important to take care of the property, keep records of your rent payments, and report any maintenance issues on time. Taking photos when you move in and out can also help avoid problems later.

A rental bond gives peace of mind to both tenants and landlords. Tenants know they will get their money back if they follow the rules, and landlords have some protection if things go wrong. Always read your lease agreement carefully and ask questions if you are unsure about the bond process.



## **2. What is the process of bond refunding?**

The process of bond refunding begins when your lease ends, and you move out of the rental property. The landlord or agent will inspect the property to check for any damage, unpaid rent, or cleaning issues. If everything is in good condition, both parties can agree to release the bond. You then submit a bond refund form to the rental bond authority. If there is a disagreement, the matter may go to dispute resolution. Once approved, the bond is returned to your bank account. Keeping records, receipts, and photos can help ensure a smooth and quick refund process.

### **A. What do you need to do?**

Make sure you have:

- paid your rent to and including end of your notice period or your moving date if breaking lease early.
- cleaned your rental property to match its original condition.
- removed all your personal things.
- repaired any damage that was beyond 'fair wear and tear'.
- signed off on the condition report with your landlord.
- returned all keys and other items given to you for the property when you moved in.
- Now you can claim your refund using Rental Bonds Online. Your landlord or agent has up to 14 days to accept your claim.



#### **B. You need to get the bond back before end of your tenancy**

You can only claim a bond refund before the end of a tenancy if:

- you have a written agreement from your landlord or agent to submit an earlier claim, or
- you are directing the full bond to go to your landlord or property agent.

There are very specific legal reasons to end a tenancy early. Otherwise, you could breach the terms of your tenancy agreement.

### **C. You need to claim your bond refund on paper**

If you don't have a Rental Bonds Online account, you can fill in a 'Claim for Bond Refund' paper form from NSW Fair Trading.

1. Download the Claim for Bond Refund form.
2. Sign the completed form with the landlord or agent.
3. Return the form to NSW Fair Trading by
  - post (address on form)
  - email [bondclaims@customerservice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bondclaims@customerservice.nsw.gov.au)
  - or in person (details of where to lodge are on the form).

Fair Trading will give the landlord or agent written notice that you have made a claim.

If your landlord or agent fails to sign the form, you can still submit it. They are given 14 days to dispute your claim.

If the landlord or agent doesn't dispute your claim, Fair Trading will pay your claim after 14 days.

Your money will be deposited into your bank account.





The bond refund process is an important final step in ending your tenancy and should be approached with care and preparation. Once you move out, your landlord or agent will conduct a final inspection to assess the condition of the property. If the property is clean, undamaged, and rent is fully paid, both parties can agree to release the bond. Submitting the bond refund form to the appropriate bond authority, such as Rental Bonds Online or NSW Fair Trading, is the next key step. Your refund is then processed and deposited into your nominated bank account.

To ensure a smooth and quick refund, tenants should follow essential steps like cleaning the property thoroughly, repairing any damages beyond normal wear and tear, returning all keys, and finalising the condition report. Keeping receipts, photos, and records of communication can support your claim and help avoid disputes.



You may also claim your bond before the end of the tenancy if you meet specific legal conditions and have written agreement from the landlord. If you cannot use Rental Bonds Online, a paper form is available, which can be lodged by post, email, or in person. Even if the landlord does not sign the form, you can still submit it, and they will have 14 days to respond. If no dispute is raised, your bond will be refunded.

Being well-prepared and understanding your rights can make the bond refund process straightforward, helping you move forward with confidence and your full bond amount in hand.



### 3. How should tenants prepare for the final inspection?

To prepare for the final inspection, tenants should begin by giving the entire property a thorough clean. This includes scrubbing the kitchen, bathroom, windows, floors, and any outdoor spaces. All personal belongings and rubbish must be removed, and appliances, carpets, and walls should be left in the same condition as when the tenancy began. Make sure to complete any small repairs you are responsible for, such as replacing light bulbs or fixing minor marks or holes in the walls.

It is helpful to compare the current state of the property with the original condition report. Take clear photos of each room for your records. If you use professional cleaners, keep the receipt as proof. Also, ensure all rent is paid and return all keys, garage remotes, and access cards. Being well prepared and organised will help the final inspection go smoothly and improve your chances of receiving your full bond refund without any issues.



#### A. What is the purpose of the final property inspection?

At the end of a tenancy, there are certain issues that need to be dealt with to finalise the tenancy.

**Inspection of premises:** Both the tenant and the landlord (or the landlord's agent) should inspect the premises at the end of the tenancy. Using the inspection sheet from the commencement of the tenancy, both parties should compare the present state of the

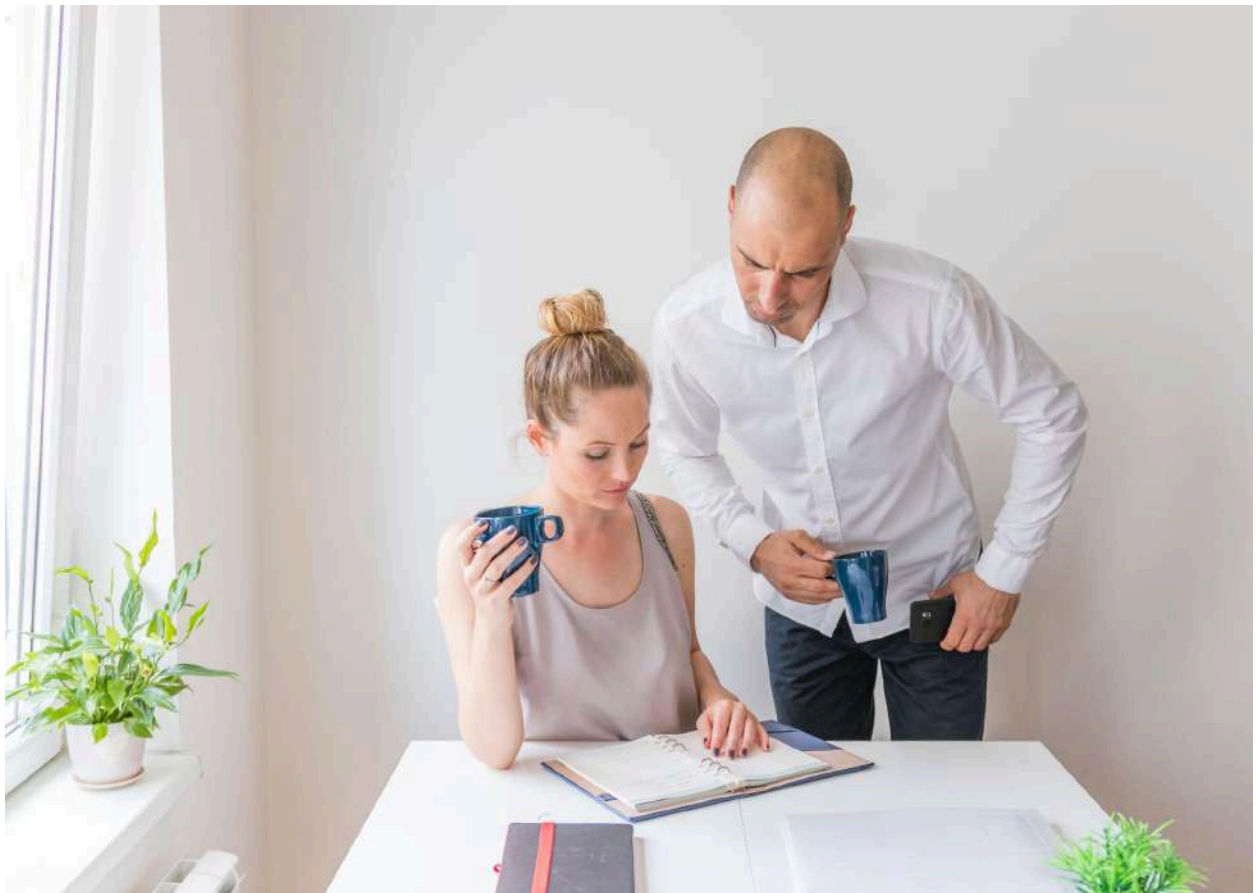
premises with the state they were in when the tenancy began [see Residential Tenancies Regulations 2010 (SA) reg 4]. If there is a dispute about the condition of the premises, either party may contact Consumer and Business Services on 131 882 for information and advice.

**Keys:** All keys must be returned to the landlord or the landlord may be able to have new locks fitted at the tenant's expense.

**Bond:** When a tenancy ends the security bond can be claimed through Consumer and Business Services' Residential Bonds Online portal. If both the tenant and landlord agree, the bond is paid as agreed.

Where an agreement cannot be reached and one party requests a refund or makes a claim, the Commissioner will post a notice to the other party giving that person 14 days to dispute the application [Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA) s 63 and Residential Tenancies Regulations 2010 (SA) reg 10].

If the application is disputed, the Tenancies Branch will attempt to conciliate and if it cannot be conciliated may refer it to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. If the application is not disputed within the 14 days, the Commissioner will pay the security bond to the applicant [s 63].



From 1 July 2024, a full bond refund must be paid to co-tenants in equal shares unless each co-tenant consents to unequal shares. Where a balance of the bond is due after an amount going to the landlord, both co-tenants must consent to repayment in unequal shares and at least 1 of the co-tenants must consent to repayment in equal shares [s 63(14)].

The final property inspection is done to check the condition of the rental before the tenant moves out. Its main purpose is to ensure the property has been well looked after and is clean, undamaged, and in a similar state to when the lease began, except for normal wear and tear. The landlord or agent uses this inspection to decide if the tenant should receive their full bond back or if any money needs to be used for cleaning, repairs, or unpaid rent. It helps protect both parties and ensures a fair end to the rental agreement.



## **B. How can tenants prepare the property before moving out?**

Most tenants are aware of the importance of end of tenancy cleaning. The primary motivation for this daunting task is the reward of getting the bond back after the clean-up. However, it is not just about retrieving the deposit. It is also about complying with the lease agreement, which clearly mentions that it is the responsibility of a tenant to clean the property at the end of the tenancy.

As per the rental agreement, renters should leave the property in the same condition as it was when their tenancy started. This includes taking care of any maintenance and repair

issues. After fixing the damages, focus on cleaning as soon as possible since it takes a lot of time.

Hiring professionals for the best end of lease cleaning Adelaide is a useful option. Conversely, for DIY cleaning, using a checklist can be helpful to streamline the procedure. Here is the checklist for preparing your rental property for end of lease inspection. Professionals often use it to achieve the desired results.



- Bathroom Cleaning Checklist

Deep cleaning a bathroom means ensuring no corner of this space is left unchecked. Dealing with major issues like mould and mildew is one of the primary move-out cleaning tasks while sanitizing this space. Cleaning everything thoroughly is recommended. Here is the checklist to follow:

- Get rid of hard water stains
- Clean taps and fittings
- Scrub the soap dispensers before rinsing
- Eliminate limescale
- Scrub the toilet bowl

- Cleaning Checklist for Kitchen



Kitchen cleaning is definitely one of the biggest tasks during end of tenancy, which is why many renters prefer hiring end of lease cleaning Adelaide experts. Since it is the most used space, it can accumulate dust and dirt easily. So, complete the following tasks to make the cooking space clean and hygienic:

- Clean the interior of drawers, cupboards, and shelves
- Wipe all the surfaces, such as the countertops
- Get rid of limescale buildup
- Eliminate stains from the grout lines
- Clean wall tiles

- **Bedroom Cleaning Tips**

Bedroom cleaning is also essential before the final property inspection since it might also have dust and dirt buildup. Ideally, tenants should inspect every corner and tackle the tasks accordingly. Here are the tips individuals can follow:

- Remove dust from all reachable surfaces, including cupboards, shelves
- Wipe the top of the doors and picture frames
- Get rid of dirt and cobwebs from ceilings and corners
- Vacuum both sides of blinds and curtains
- Get dirt off curtain rails



- **Living Room Cleaning Tasks**

Usually, renters spend most of their time in the living room, making it a high-traffic area. Thus, dust and dirt accumulation are common, and the space requires regular and thorough cleaning. To prepare your living room for the final inspection, end of lease cleaning Adelaide professionals recommend utilising this checklist:

- Get rid of any marks, spots and cobwebs from the corners and walls
- Vacuum or steam clean the carpets and upholstery
- Wipe away the dirt on switches
- Dust and clean doors, door handles and frames
- Clean the shelves

- **Cleaning Checklist for Outdoor Area**

According to experts who provide cheap end of lease cleaning Adelaide, it is not wise to overlook the outdoor area during move-out cleaning since it significantly impacts how your rental property looks. This includes garden maintenance. Complete a few basic tasks to enhance the visual appeal of the house. Here is the checklist to follow for outdoor area cleaning:

- Pick up the leaves, litter or branches
- Sweep the decks and patios to remove dust and dirt
- Get rid of weeds with a weed killer to make the area look better
- Take out the trash before cleaning and disinfecting the bins
- Remember to sweep the concrete surfaces



Besides fixing the damages, it is vital to maintain a clean rental property. It will help ensure that the tenants get their rental bonds back. By following a checklist such as the one mentioned in this article, renters will have an easier time preparing the property for end of lease inspection.

Preparing for the final property inspection is a vital step in securing your rental bond refund. It involves more than just tidying up it's about returning the property in the same clean and damage free condition it was in at the beginning of your tenancy, apart from reasonable wear and tear. A detailed cleaning of all areas, including the kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms, living areas, and outdoor spaces, is essential. Completing minor repairs, removing all personal belongings, returning keys, and settling rent payments are also crucial tasks before inspection day.



The purpose of the final inspection is to ensure that the property has been well maintained and that no damage or cleanliness issues have occurred beyond what is considered fair use. This inspection protects both tenants and landlords and plays a major role in determining if the bond should be fully refunded. By using a condition report and cleaning checklist, tenants can accurately prepare and avoid disputes.

For tenants unsure about how to tackle end-of-lease cleaning, professional services are available, offering thorough and efficient results. However, with careful planning and attention to detail, a do-it-yourself approach can also be successful. Comparing the current property



condition with the original inspection sheet, documenting everything with photos, and keeping records can support your claim.

In summary, being organised, proactive, and informed ensures a smooth final inspection. It not only increases your chances of receiving a full bond refund but also helps you end your tenancy on good terms and with peace of mind.



#### **4. Where is the rental bond lodged in Adelaide?**

A bond is a security deposit a tenant gives the landlord - or a resident gives the proprietor of a rooming house or residential park - before they move in. The bond is lodged with Consumer and Business Services (CBS) in a trust account and cannot be used by the landlord during the tenancy.

The bond is returned to the tenant or resident when they move out, unless some or all of the money is claimed for extra cleaning, outstanding rent or other legitimate costs.

##### **Using RBO to lodge a bond:**

RBO allows each person to manage their part of a bond payment, lodgement, management and refund. It can be used by:

- tenants and park residents
- landlords, proprietors, park managers



- real estate agents and property managers.

For example:

- Tenants and residents can pay their bond using a debit or credit card when they lodge a bond through their RBO account.
- Real estate agents must use RBO. This includes for SA Housing Trust bond guarantees.
- Landlords who self-manage their rental can manage bond lodgement and refund processes by creating an RBO account.

## Tenants and residents

An identity check by the national Document Verification Service is required. Check you can provide the correct type of identification documents when signing up.



### Link your account to your bond

You'll also need the details of the person or business managing our property, and the date your tenancy will start and end.

This information might have already been filled in by the person managing your property so could mean you only need to check it is correct.

In Adelaide, all rental bonds must be lodged with Consumer and Business Services (CBS), the official government body responsible for handling residential tenancy bond transactions in South Australia. This process is designed to ensure that the bond money is securely held in trust and cannot be accessed by the landlord during the tenancy. The main purpose of this system is to protect both tenants and landlords, providing a fair and transparent process for managing bond payments, lodgements, and refunds.

The most common and efficient way to lodge a bond is through Residential Bonds Online (RBO). This is a secure and user-friendly online platform where tenants, landlords, real estate agents, and property managers can manage all bond-related tasks. RBO allows tenants to pay their share of the bond using a debit or credit card. For landlords who self-manage their properties, RBO offers full access to bond lodgement and refund processes by simply creating an account. Real estate agents and property managers are required to use RBO for all bond transactions, including those related to SA Housing Trust bond guarantees.



Before using RBO, tenants must complete an identity check through the national Document Verification Service. They also need to link their account to the bond by entering details such as the name of the person or business managing the property and the start and end dates of the tenancy. In many cases, the managing party will have already entered this information, so tenants may only need to review and confirm its accuracy.

Once the bond is lodged, CBS provides a confirmation and a unique bond number for the tenant's records. When the tenancy ends, if the property is returned in good condition and all rent has been paid, the bond can be quickly refunded. If there is a disagreement, CBS offers dispute resolution services to help both parties reach a fair outcome.



Lodging your bond with CBS through RBO ensures transparency, legal protection, and peace of mind. It gives tenants confidence that their money is safe and guarantees that any claims made at the end of the tenancy will be handled fairly and according to South Australian rental laws.

## **5. What documents are needed to claim a bond refund?**

A lessor can request that the lessee pay a security bond of up to three months' rent as per the Retail and Commercial Leases Act 1995(external site) (the Act).

If a bond is requested, the lessor or agent must:

- Pay the amount of the security to the Small Business Commission SA (SBC)
- Lodge the bond within:
  - 28 days of receiving the payment if a registered agent; or
  - 7 days of receiving the payment in any other case.



- Use the Retail and Commercial Lodgement of Security Bond Form, signed by both parties, to lodge the funds.
- ensure the 'Details of Bond' section on page one of the above-mentioned form is completed in full. If this section is not completed in full, the SBC will assume non-compliance with Section 19 (5) (b) (ii) of the Act and agencies/landlords could face penalties (maximum penalty: \$1,500)



An application must be made to the SBC for the refund of a security bond, and can be made by either one or both parties. If:

- both parties agree on who should receive the bond, they can lodge a Retail and Commercial Security Bond Refund Form with the SBC.
- one party does not agree to the application for refund, that party may dispute the refund. If a security bond refund is disputed, the SBC must refer the dispute to the Magistrates Court for determination.

To claim a bond refund, tenants need to provide certain documents to ensure the process goes smoothly. The most important document is the Bond Refund Form, which must be completed and signed by both the tenant and the landlord or property manager. This form includes details like the bond number, names of the tenants, and the refund amount requested.



Tenants should also have a copy of the original condition report, which shows the state of the property at the beginning of the lease. This report can help resolve any disputes about damage or cleanliness during the final inspection. Photos of the property taken before moving out can also support your claim.

It's also important to provide a valid bank account number for the refund to be processed. If there is a disagreement about the bond, you may need to submit evidence such as rent receipts, cleaning invoices, and communication records with the landlord.

Having all these documents ready helps make the bond refund process faster and smoother. In South Australia, the bond is refunded through Consumer and Business Services (CBS), and if both parties agree, the refund can be processed quickly. Good preparation helps avoid delays or disputes.



## **6. How long does it take to receive a bond refund?**

The time it takes to receive a bond refund depends on whether both the tenant and landlord agree on the refund amount. In most cases, if there is no dispute and the bond refund form is completed correctly, the money is usually returned within two to five business days after processing. The refund is transferred directly to the tenant's nominated bank account. However, if there is a disagreement about damages, cleaning, or unpaid rent, the process may take longer. In such cases, the matter may go through a dispute resolution process, which can add extra time to the refund.

Tenants can request their bond back after exiting the property. This is called claiming the bond.

If the bond refund is not disputed, a refund can be processed through RBO within 5 working days.

Payment Method	Estimated Time
Electronic funds transfer (EFT)	24 - 48 hours
Cheque	5 -10 business days
International money transfer	Varies, depending on the country, and may be affected by additional fees and exchange rates.



If you have not received your bond refund, and the refund was not disputed, login to your RBO account first to check your bank details are correct. If you are still unsure, contact CBS via Bonds' general enquiry form(external site) or phone 131 882 for assistance.

In conclusion, the time it takes to receive a bond refund can vary depending on the agreement between the tenant and the landlord. If both parties agree on the condition of the property and

the refund amount, the process is usually quick and straightforward. Once the bond refund form is correctly completed and submitted to the relevant bond authority, such as Consumer and Business Services (CBS) in South Australia, the money is typically transferred within two to five business days. This timeline may vary slightly based on the banking process or public holidays.

However, if there is a disagreement such as unpaid rent, damage to the property, or cleaning issues the process may take longer. In such cases, the bond authority may hold the refund until the dispute is resolved. This may involve formal dispute resolution or tribunal proceedings, which can extend the waiting period by a few weeks or more.



To avoid delays, tenants should ensure the property is clean and undamaged, return all keys, and communicate clearly with the landlord. Keeping records like the condition report, receipts, and photos can also help. Being well-prepared and cooperative makes the bond refund process smoother and helps ensure you receive your money back as quickly as possible.

## Final Words

Understanding the rental bond claim and refund process is important for every tenant in Adelaide. This guide has been carefully created to help you understand each step clearly. Whether you are starting a new tenancy or preparing to move out, being informed about how the rental bond system works can save you time, stress, and money. From learning what a



rental bond is and why it is required, to knowing how and where it is lodged, each part of the process is designed to protect both the tenant and the landlord.

Your rental bond is a form of financial security held by the government to cover any damage, unpaid rent, or cleaning required at the end of your lease. If you meet all your responsibilities and leave the property in good condition, you should receive the full bond amount back. This guide has explained how to prepare for the final inspection, what documents you need to submit your bond claim, how to avoid common mistakes, and what to do if there is a disagreement with your landlord.



We have also included helpful tips, such as using cleaning checklists, making small repairs, and keeping detailed records. These steps will make the final inspection smoother and reduce the chances of your bond being withheld. The guide also outlines what happens during the inspection, how to fill in the bond refund form, and how long the refund usually takes. It also explains how the bond can be claimed online or by using a paper form if needed.

All information in this guide is supported by trusted sources, including SA GOV AU, Consumer and Business Services, and tenancy support websites. These sources ensure that the advice is accurate, up to date, and relevant to current rental laws in South Australia. Tenants are encouraged to keep copies of their condition reports, rent receipts, cleaning invoices, and any communication with their landlord to support their claim if a dispute arises.

Whether you are renting for the first time or have done it before, this guide is a helpful tool to make the bond refund process simple and stress free. By following the advice and being well prepared, you can ensure that you meet your responsibilities and receive your bond refund without unnecessary delays.



Use this guide as your go to resource during your tenancy journey in Adelaide. With the right knowledge and preparation, you can move out with peace of mind and your full bond back in your pocket.

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