

# Guide to a Smooth Rental Journey for Tenants and Landlords

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# Abstract

This guide is designed to help both tenants and landlords have a smooth and successful rental experience. It covers important topics like understanding rental agreements, maintaining clear communication, and handling repairs and maintenance promptly. A strong relationship based on respect and trust can prevent many common rental issues and create a positive living environment for tenants while protecting landlords' property.

A special focus of this guide is bond cleaning, explaining why it is crucial for tenants to secure their bond money and for landlords to keep the property in good condition. The guide also provides practical tips for moving out to make the process easier for both parties. Whether you are renting for the first time or have experience, this guide offers useful advice to help ensure a fair, respectful, and hassle-free rental journey for everyone involved.



# Introduction

Renting a home can be an exciting yet challenging experience for both tenants and landlords. A smooth rental journey depends on clear communication, understanding responsibilities, and working together respectfully. Whether you are moving into a new rental property or managing one as a landlord, knowing what to expect and how to handle common situations can make the process easier and more enjoyable. This guide is created to help both parties navigate the rental process with confidence and fairness.

In this guide, we cover key topics like understanding the rental agreement, effective communication, and handling repairs and maintenance. A special emphasis is placed on bond cleaning, which plays an important role in ensuring tenants get their bond back and landlords receive the property in good condition. We also share useful tips for moving out, so the transition is hassle-free and clear for everyone involved. By following the advice in this guide, tenants can enjoy a positive rental experience, while landlords can protect their investment and attract reliable tenants. Whether you are new to renting or experienced, this guide provides practical insights to support a respectful and smooth rental journey for both tenants and landlords.



## **Here are the key steps for a smooth rental journey:**

### **1. Understanding Rental Agreement**

A rental agreement used to be called a lease or a residential tenancy agreement. It is a contract between the renter (tenant) and rental provider (landlord). There are 3 types of rental agreements for residential properties such as houses, units and apartments.

There are different agreements for rooming houses, caravan parks, and site tenants in residential parks and villages.

## What should be in a rental agreement (lease)

Rental agreements should include:

- the amount of rent and how it is to be paid
- how rent increases will be calculated
- the length and type of agreement
- the amount of bond
- other conditions and rules
- any special terms.

You must use the 'prescribed form' when entering into a written rental agreement. A prescribed form is defined by Victorian rental law.



You can include extra terms and conditions that are not in the form, as long as they are not prohibited by the law. You must not include terms which take away any of the rights and responsibilities provided for by the law.

There is no cooling-off period for a rental agreement, so you should make sure you understand it and accept the conditions before you sign one.

## Different types of residential rental agreements (leases)

There are 3 types of residential rental agreements:



- short fixed-term agreements
- long fixed-term agreements
- periodic (month to month) agreements.

### **Short fixed-term agreements**

Most fixed-term agreements are short-term. They might be for 6 or 12 months, but they can be up to 5 years.



Short-term agreements can be written or verbal, but we recommended using written agreements.

If a short fixed-term agreement ends, and you stay in the rented premises without signing a further agreement, it will automatically turn into a periodic (month to month) agreement.

### **Long fixed-term agreements**

Long fixed-term agreements are for more than 5 years.

People might choose a long-term agreement because it offers more security and stability. It also lets people agree before they sign the agreement about things like how rent increases will be calculated and making changes to the property.

There are some different laws for long-term agreements. These include:

- **Bond top ups.** Rental providers can ask for additional bond after the renter has been living in the property for 5 years and there is a long-term agreement for another 5 or more years.
- **Renters installing fixtures and altering the property.** A rental provider and renter can agree on some changes before signing a long-term agreement. If those changes are written into the agreement, the renter does not need to get any other permission from the rental provider before making them.
- **Breaking the agreement.** Renters who leave early may have to pay one month's rent for every full year remaining on the agreement up to a maximum of 6 months.

Long-term agreements must be in writing. If not, the renter can end the agreement at any time by giving the rental provider 28 days' notice. The renter will not have to pay a penalty.



## Before moving in

Before a renter moves in, the rental provider or agent must give them:

- a copy of the rental agreement if it's in writing
- a copy of the Renters guide either as a paper copy or digitally if the renter agreed to receive documents electronically
- a phone number in case the renter needs urgent repairs done out of business hours

- the rental provider or agent's full name, a postal address for sending them documents, and an email address (if they agreed to receive notices and documents electronically)
- a set of keys for each renter who signed the agreement
- a condition report (2 copies or 1 electronic).



In conclusion, understanding a rental agreement is essential for a smooth and lawful rental experience. A rental agreement, once known as a lease or residential tenancy agreement, is a legal contract between the tenant and the rental provider. It clearly outlines key details such as the amount of rent, payment terms, bond amount, lease duration, and any specific conditions or rules. There are three main types of rental agreements for residential properties short fixed term, long fixed term, and periodic agreements each offering different levels of flexibility and commitment. It is important to know which one suits your situation before signing.

Using the prescribed form, as required by Victorian rental law, ensures all legal obligations are met. While extra terms can be added, they must not go against the rights provided by law. Since there is no cooling off period, tenants should read and fully understand all terms before signing. Landlords must also provide important documents and information before move in, such as the agreement copy, renter's guide, emergency contact details, and a condition report. By carefully reviewing the rental agreement and knowing your rights and duties, both tenants and landlords can avoid misunderstandings and create a respectful, well managed tenancy from the very beginning.

## 2. Effective Communication Between Tenants and Landlords

Effective communication between tenants and landlords is the foundation of a positive and successful rental relationship. Clear and respectful communication helps prevent misunderstandings, resolve issues quickly, and build trust between both parties. Whether it is discussing rent payments, reporting maintenance problems, or requesting repairs, being open and honest makes the process smoother for everyone involved. It is important that both tenants and landlords feel comfortable raising concerns and asking questions at any stage of the tenancy.



For tenants, communicating clearly can ensure that their needs and concerns are heard and addressed promptly. For landlords, maintaining open lines of communication helps them manage their property more efficiently and keep tenants satisfied. Simple habits such as responding to messages on time, being polite in written or verbal communication, and keeping a record of important conversations can make a big difference. In cases where misunderstandings arise, calm and respectful discussion is always more effective than arguments or assumptions. This section will highlight best practices for effective communication, ways to avoid common mistakes, and tips to create a healthy and professional relationship. When both tenants and landlords communicate well, it leads to fewer conflicts, faster solutions, and a more enjoyable rental experience for both sides.



## **A. Write a clear lease agreement**

First, having a written rental agreement that clearly defines the responsibilities of each party is essential for accountability. This agreement should cover expectations for maintenance and repairs, provide a timeline for fulfilling requests and establish a communication method for reporting repairs.



## **B. Encourage transparent and timely communication**

Transparency is key to building trust and avoiding misunderstandings. As a property owner, it's in your best interest to encourage open communication from your tenant regarding any property issues. This not only makes your tenant feel valued but also allows you to address issues promptly, potentially reducing repair costs.

Overall, effective communication is crucial for a successful relationship. Poor communication can jeopardize responsibilities for both parties and lead to misunderstandings and resentment. Consider using communication tools that facilitate respectful and timely interactions. A third-party site instead of simple texting, for example, may make it easier to track conversations.

Renters want to feel that they can easily reach their landlords and hold them accountable for property issues, while landlords want clear instructions and fair opportunities to address concerns. Whether it's through text, email or a third-party communication platform, ensure that your chosen method encourages transparent and timely communication.

### **C. Promptly address maintenance issues**

When notified of a maintenance issue, make it a priority to address it quickly. A leaky faucet may not be urgent, but a burst pipe certainly is. The faster you respond to property issues, the more likely tenants will be willing to support you in maintaining the property.

### **D. Respect the tenant's privacy**

Respect your tenant's space, especially if it is a multifamily property. Provide proper notice before entering the property for inspections or repairs. This will encourage your tenants to reciprocate by only reaching out when necessary and respecting your privacy by contacting you at appropriate times.



### **E. Be flexible with rental agreements**

Flexible landlords who accommodate reasonable tenant needs are more likely to find cooperative tenants. This may involve discussing lease terms, move-in dates, minor property modifications and extended stays.

### **F. Establish clear steps each party can take when they encounter difficulties**

Lastly, establish a clear path for conflict resolution. While it's important for property owners to protect themselves, tenants should also feel empowered to stand up for themselves. By outlining steps that both parties can take in the event of disagreement, tenants will feel heard

and less disadvantaged. Consequently, they'll be more inclined to treat you fairly by maintaining the property, paying rent on time and accommodating your needs as a landlord.



By following these tips, I believe landlords and tenants can foster a positive and fruitful relationship, ensuring a successful rental experience for both parties. As a property owner, you should always be looking for ways to motivate your tenants to take care of your properties. In the end, look to any strategies that can create a win-win situation between you and your tenants.

A strong rental relationship begins with one key element, clear and respectful communication. Whether you are a tenant or a landlord, the ability to express concerns, share updates, and respond in a timely and professional manner can make all the difference in avoiding misunderstandings and building trust. Good communication creates a foundation where both parties feel heard, valued, and fairly treated throughout the tenancy.

Writing a clear rental agreement is the first step in setting expectations. From rent payments to maintenance responsibilities, every important detail should be included. Tenants should feel encouraged to report problems early, while landlords should commit to addressing them quickly. Using tools like emails or rental platforms ensures every conversation is documented and accessible.

Respecting privacy, being flexible with reasonable requests, and setting up clear steps for conflict resolution are all key in keeping the relationship smooth. Landlords who show understanding often receive better cooperation from tenants, while tenants who communicate responsibly are more likely to be trusted.

In the end, successful renting is not just about managing property, it is about managing people. By building mutual respect and open dialogue, both landlords and tenants can enjoy a more peaceful, productive, and positive rental experience.

### **3. Importance of Bond Cleaning**

Bond cleaning, also known as end of lease cleaning or vacate cleaning, plays a vital role in the rental process for both tenants and landlords. It is a detailed cleaning of the entire property that tenants are expected to perform before moving out. The goal is to return the rental home in the same clean condition it was in at the beginning of the tenancy, except for fair wear and tear. For tenants, proper bond cleaning is essential because it directly affects the return of their security deposit, which is usually a significant amount equal to several weeks of rent.



For landlords, bond cleaning helps maintain the property's overall condition, ensuring it is ready for the next occupant without delay. A well-cleaned property not only leaves a good impression but also reduces the need for urgent repairs or additional cleaning costs. In areas like Victoria, there are strict standards around rental cleanliness, and landlords often conduct thorough inspections at the end of the lease. This section highlights the importance of bond cleaning,



what it involves, and how it benefits both parties by helping avoid disputes, protecting property value, and ensuring a smooth transition between tenants and landlords.



## **A. Bond Cleaning Importance for Tenants**

There is no denying that tenants are most concerned about bond cleaning as this job falls on them when leaving a rental property. It is more than just a regular cleaning, as returning a property to its original condition can benefit in many ways.

### **Meeting Tenancy Obligations**

Landlords in Victoria are strict when it comes to final rental inspection. They thoroughly inspect every nook and cranny, including carpets, windows, walls, floors, and outdoor areas, before passing the process. According to the tenancy agreement, it is a tenant's legal obligation to return the property in a spotless condition (except for normal wear and tear) to pass the inspection. Hiring seasoned end of lease cleaning Melbourne experts can give you peace of mind as they adhere to pre-approved cleaning checklist and the set standard.

### **Maximising the Chances of Bond Return**

Leaving windows dirty or grease-laden kitchen appliances can lead to bond deductions. Thus, it is imperative for tenants to perform a meticulous bond cleaning, which includes detailed sprucing of air vents, ceiling fans, walls, windows, carpets, kitchen appliances, cupboards, bathroom fixtures, fittings, floors and patio areas. Ensure you remove accumulated dust, dirt,

debris, soap scum and gunk from every nook and cranny to impress fussy landlord and secure your full bond money.

Tip: A landlord has the right to deduct your bond money in case of half-baked cleaning. So, be careful when conducting a cleaning task at the end of your tenancy.

### **Preventing Unnecessary Rental Disputes**

Believe it or not! Professional cleaning ensures spotless results, which helps prevent unwanted disagreements with the landlord or property manager related to dirty areas. This can save the tenant a lot of time, money, and energy. However, it is always good to take photos and videos as evidence when moving into a rental property. This can help you resolve disputes and get your full bond back.



### **Leaving Great Impression On Landlords**

Returning a rental home in a clean condition resonates with your personality and leaves a great impression on your landlord and property manager. They can even help you in future rental endeavours, as new tenants seek references from previous ones. So, improve your rental record by fulfilling your duties and responsibilities as a tenant.

## **B. Bond Cleaning Importance for Landlords**

Landlords and property managers also leverage benefits of choosing best end of lease cleaners in Melbourne. It is essential for saving their long-run investment, rental income and market reputation.

### **Preventing Damage and Preserving Its Market Value**

Thorough cleaning before the final move-out maintains the feel and condition of the property, preventing major damages. The session includes the meticulous tackling of dirt, grime, gunk and grease. It can prevent the spread of mould, mildew and other germs, protecting the property's structural condition. This approach helps maintain the market value of the property in the competitive real estate domain of Victoria while saving maintenance expenses.



### **Attracting New Tenants Without any Downtime**

A sparkling and visually appealing rental property is enough to attract potential tenants in no time. It can be advertised and occupied without any downtime, reducing vacancy periods and ensuring a regular rental income stream.

### **Adhering to Hygiene and Safety Standards**

A thorough bond cleaning ensures that the entire premises, especially bathrooms and kitchen surfaces, are clean, hygienic and safe for new occupants. Highly-trained cleaners in Melbourne thoroughly clean and sanitise every nook and cranny of the premises to meet the industry's set hygiene and safety standards.

## C. What Are the Common Challenges in Bond Cleaning?

Despite being an important aspect, this cleaning job comes with unique challenges for both parties. The common obstacles are:

- **Lack of Time:** The end of the tenancy period is the most hectic time as tenants juggle packing, moving, and cleaning chores simultaneously. Most tenants procrastinate on cleaning chores and end up losing their bond money.
- **Fail to Clean Hard-to-Reach Areas:** Landlords leave no stone unturned to hold back a part of your bond money. They thoroughly inspect the property. However, people often overlook difficult-to-reach areas like ceiling fans, walls, skirting boards, light fittings, etc. This can also lead to bond deductions and disputes.
- **Lack of Resources:** Attention-to-detail cleaning requires proper tools and products to tackle dirt and grime. Most tenants lack the necessary supplies, resulting in half-baked cleaning.



## D. Pro Tips For Effective Results: Tenant's Perspective

Here are a few things to keep in mind when conducting a bond cleaning for your bond money:

- Always refer to the property condition report before getting into the cleaning process.
- Create a cleaning checklist to prioritise important tasks and spots.



- Hire end of lease cleaning Melbourne professionals early- at least 2 weeks in advance to avoid last-minute chaos.
- Ask them to arrange eco-friendly products to tackle grime and gunk
- Focus on details like window tracks, grout lines, behind appliances, etc.



## E. Helpful Tips for Landlords

It is important for landlords to focus on these tips and reduce the turnaround time between tenancies.

- It is good to communicate your cleaning expectations to ensure peace of mind, especially related to property maintenance.
- Conduct pre-inspection before the final move out of a tenant and highlight dirty or damaged requirements.
- Focus on detailed cleaning to attract new tenants effectively.

Maintaining cleanliness at the end of a lease is more than just a routine task, it is a shared responsibility that supports a fair and smooth rental experience. Bond cleaning ensures that tenants meet their legal duties, which increases the chance of a full bond return while also leaving a positive impression for future references. For landlords, it helps protect the property from long-term damage and prepares it for the next tenants without delay. A properly cleaned space also supports hygiene and safety, both of which are essential in residential settings.

While some challenges like time constraints or lack of tools may arise, proper planning and professional help can make a big difference. Tenants should always follow a checklist and refer to the initial condition report, while landlords should communicate clearly and inspect early. When both sides approach bond cleaning with care, it strengthens the rental relationship and benefits everyone involved.



#### **4. Handling Repairs and Maintenance**

Handling repairs and maintenance is a crucial part of any rental agreement that helps ensure the property remains safe, comfortable, and well-functioning throughout the tenancy. Both tenants and landlords share responsibilities when it comes to maintaining the property, but knowing who handles what and when is key to avoiding confusion and disputes. Timely repairs prevent minor issues from becoming costly problems and keep the rental home in good condition for current and future occupants.

For tenants, reporting repair needs promptly and clearly allows landlords or property managers to address problems quickly, maintaining a healthy living environment. Landlords, on the other hand, are responsible for ensuring essential services like plumbing, heating, and electrical systems are functioning properly and complying with safety standards. This section outlines the importance of clear communication about repairs, the process for requesting maintenance, and tips for both parties to manage repair responsibilities efficiently. Proper handling of repairs fosters trust, reduces conflicts, and contributes to a positive rental experience for everyone involved.

## What is responsive maintenance?

If you need maintenance or repairs due to normal wear and tear or damage caused by your household or visitors, please contact the Housing Call Centre on 13 11 72.



The time it takes to do a repair or installation depends on how urgent or complex the work is.

## Your maintenance responsibilities

As a renter, you must look after your home and do small routine repairs like:

- Replacing light globes
- Testing smoke alarms
- Pest control
- Looking after your garden
- General cleaning.

If there is a reason why you cannot do these things (for health reasons or due to a disability), contact your local housing office.

We are not able to arrange repairs for your personal items like your television, fridge or washing machine.

## **Paying for maintenance**

We will pay repair costs caused by accident or from normal wear and tear.

You may need to pay repair costs for damage caused by you or your household members and visitors.

Before a decision is made about your responsibility to pay repair costs, we would like to talk to you to understand your circumstances. Contact your local housing office.



The department will consider reducing or waiving repair costs when factors such as family violence, a disability, a physical or mental health condition, or an unknown person (such as someone breaking into your home) contributed to the repairs needed.

## **Considering property damage**

When considering maintenance repair claims, we may need further evidence to support how your circumstances contributed to any damage or deterioration in the condition of your property. This evidence can be provided by:

- Support workers
- Treating health practitioners
- Witnesses
- Police.



Where family violence is involved, we will accept advice from your family violence worker or other relevant support worker as evidence to support your claim.



Effective handling of repairs and maintenance is essential for a smooth rental experience and a positive tenant-landlord relationship. Promptly addressing maintenance issues helps prevent small problems from escalating into costly repairs, protecting the property's value and ensuring tenant safety and comfort. Tenants play a key role by reporting any damage or malfunction as soon as they notice it, allowing landlords to act quickly and efficiently. Landlords, in turn, have a responsibility to maintain the property in good condition and comply with legal standards for safety and habitability.

Clear communication about repair requests and timelines is vital to avoid misunderstandings and frustration. Both parties should document maintenance issues and keep records of communications to ensure accountability. By working together and respecting each other's responsibilities, tenants and landlords can minimize disputes and maintain a well-functioning rental property. Ultimately, efficient repair and maintenance processes create a healthier living environment, build trust, and contribute to a successful and long-lasting rental relationship.

## **5. Tips for a Smooth Move Out Process**

Moving out of a rental property can be a stressful experience for both tenants and landlords. However, following some practical tips can help make the process smoother and more efficient. Planning ahead is crucial. Tenants should start organizing their move well in advance, including

sorting belongings, scheduling professional cleaning, and notifying the landlord about their moving date. Clear communication between tenants and landlords helps set expectations regarding final inspections, key handovers, and bond returns.

It is important for tenants to thoroughly clean the property or hire professional bond cleaners to ensure it meets the landlord's standards. Taking photos or videos of the cleaned property can provide evidence in case of disputes. Landlords can facilitate a smooth move-out by conducting a pre-inspection and providing tenants with a checklist of cleaning and maintenance tasks. Both parties should document any damages or issues to avoid misunderstandings later.

By staying organized, communicating openly, and fulfilling responsibilities, tenants and landlords can enjoy a hassle free move out experience that protects their interests and preserves a positive rental relationship.



## **Costs of moving out**

Moving out means more than just paying rent and other bills. You also need to plan for one-off moving and connection costs.

If you have a credit card or a loan, you'll have to keep up with those repayments on top of your everyday living expenses.

Here are some costs to consider:

Ongoing costs	One-off costs
rent	rental bond
utility bills including gas, water and electricity	up to four weeks rent in advance
internet and phone bills	connection fees for utilities and internet
groceries	removalist fees or van hire
transport	furniture and homewares
contents insurance	parking permits

## Work out what you can afford

Before you move out, create a budget. This will help you work out your income and expenses, and what you can spend on your new lifestyle.



## Sharing with your partner or flatmates

Sharing a place can be cheaper than renting on your own. But make sure you and your partner or flatmates agree on responsibilities at the outset.



Set the ground rules

Organise how each of you will:

- pay for bills, including rent and utilities
- pay for groceries
- withdraw from the rental lease (if one of you moves out)
- Make sure you arrange to pay your rent and utility bills on time. Not paying on time can affect your credit score and rental history. You could even be evicted.

## Moving out checklist

There's a lot to organise when you move out. Use our checklist to help make the move as smooth as possible:

<b>Budget</b>	Do a budget to work out what you can afford.
<b>Research the area</b>	Make sure the area has what you need, for example, public transport, or a supermarket, petrol station or pharmacy.



<b>Furniture</b>	Find out if the place comes furnished. If it's unfurnished, budget for new or second-hand furniture.
<b>Unwanted items</b>	Get rid of unwanted items, or sell them to raise extra money.
<b>Bills</b>	Pay off any existing bills before moving.
<b>Removalists</b>	Book a removalist, hire a van, or ask family or friends to help.
<b>Utilities</b>	Sign up for electricity, gas and water connections.
<b>Internet</b>	Sign up to an internet provider.
<b>Insurance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get online quotes if you want to insure your home contents.</li> <li>• Your new address may also change your car insurance premium.</li> </ul>
<b>Contact details</b>	Give your new address to organisations that will need to send you information like a bank statement or driver's licence.
<b>Memberships</b>	Change or cancel any memberships you won't use (for example, local clubs or the gym).



Moving out of a rental property involves careful planning and clear communication to ensure a smooth transition for both tenants and landlords. Tenants should begin preparing well in advance by organizing their belongings, scheduling professional cleaning, and informing landlords about their move-out date. Hiring expert bond cleaners helps meet landlord expectations and increases the chances of a full bond refund. Documenting the property's condition with photos or videos can prevent disputes later.



Landlords can assist by conducting pre-inspections and providing tenants with checklists outlining cleaning and maintenance requirements. Both parties should record any damages or issues to avoid misunderstandings. Additionally, moving out comes with various costs such as rent, bonds, utility bills, removal fees, and connection charges. Creating a budget helps tenants manage expenses and plan for their new lifestyle.

For those sharing rental spaces, setting clear agreements on bill payments and responsibilities is essential. Using a move-out checklist covering budgeting, utilities, insurance, and updating contact details can make the process less overwhelming. Ultimately, organized preparation and open communication protect both parties' interests and support a positive rental relationship moving forward.

## **Final Words**

A smooth rental journey is built on mutual respect, clear communication, and a thorough understanding of responsibilities from both tenants and landlords. Throughout this guide, we

have explored key aspects that contribute to a positive rental experience from understanding rental agreements and maintaining open lines of communication, to the importance of bond cleaning and handling repairs effectively. When both parties take the time to be informed and proactive, many common issues and conflicts can be avoided.

Tenants benefit by knowing their rights and obligations, ensuring they meet tenancy requirements such as timely rent payments, maintaining the property, and performing thorough bond cleaning before moving out. Landlords, on the other hand, gain from clear expectations and respectful communication that allow them to manage their properties efficiently and maintain their investment's value. Regular maintenance and prompt repairs also keep tenants satisfied and help preserve the property's condition.

Ultimately, a smooth rental journey depends on collaboration and professionalism. By setting clear agreements, addressing concerns promptly, and respecting each other's needs and rights, tenants and landlords can build a trustworthy relationship. This not only reduces disputes but also makes renting a more positive and stress-free experience. Both parties should strive for open dialogue and fairness, aiming for a partnership that benefits everyone involved. Following the guidance in this document can help ensure your rental experience is as smooth and successful as possible.

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