

The Tenant's Guide to Moving Out Smoothly



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Abstract

Moving out of a rental property can be stressful, especially when you're trying to make sure everything goes right from giving proper notice to getting your bond back in full. This guide is designed to make that process easier for tenants in Sydney and across New South Wales. Whether you're leaving your first rental or you've done it before, this step by step resource covers everything you need to know for a smooth and stress-free move. We'll walk you through your rights and responsibilities, help you plan your move, explain the cleaning and inspection process, and make sure you're prepared to leave your rental in top shape. With practical checklists, government resources, and expert tips, you'll feel confident every step of the way.

Getting Started

Before you dive into boxes and bubble wrap, it's important to understand what's expected of you as a tenant when moving out. Many renters lose part of their bond simply because they weren't aware of key responsibilities like giving proper notice, completing a condition report, or arranging professional cleaning. This guide brings together trusted information from official NSW government sources to help you avoid common mistakes. It also provides helpful tools and external resources, including how to choose reliable cleaning services, how to prepare for the final inspection, and what to do if there are any disputes.

Understanding Your Rights & Obligations When Moving Out



Learn about moving out of a rental property, including notice periods, final inspections, getting your rental bond back, and what to do if there is a dispute.

Major changes to rental laws started on 19 May 2025

The changes include requiring landlords to give a reason to end a tenancy and making it easier to keep pets in rental homes.

Laws to limit rent increases to once per year and to prevent extra charges at the start of a tenancy started on 31 October 2024.

Ending a tenancy is only permitted in certain ways. A tenant or landlord will usually end a tenancy by giving a termination notice. Notice periods will depend on the kind of rental agreement, who is giving notice, and the ground for the end of the tenancy. You should leave the property empty by the specified date.

Steps to moving out

Understand the correct amount of notice needed

Make sure you understand the minimum notice period that applies to your rental situation. If you are ending a tenancy early, check what costs may apply, such as a break fee. In certain cases, there will be no break fee.

Give notice and move out by the specified date

Send a termination notice to your landlord or agent. Make sure you have moved out by the date specified on the notice. You should also return all keys and other security devices.

Leave the property clean and empty

Make sure you have:

- removed all your belongings
- left the property in a similar condition to when you moved in
- repaired, or paid the cost of repairing, any damage that is not reasonable wear and tear.

The condition report you completed when you first moved in can help if you have any disputes about the condition of the property at the end of your tenancy.

Conduct a final inspection of the property with the landlord or agent

Your landlord or agent will carry out a final inspection of the property once it's empty. The landlord or agent must give you a reasonable opportunity to attend the final inspection.

However, if you don't show up, the condition report may be filled out without you.

Arrange to get your bond back

Make arrangements for getting your bond back. Your landlord or agent can make a claim against part or all the bond if the property is not left in a similar condition to

when you moved in. They can also make a claim for certain other costs and amounts owing.

Change your address once you've moved

When you move out, you can update your address details for a range of services at Service NSW, including:

1. driver's licence or vehicle registration
2. e-toll account
3. electoral roll
4. concession and support cards
5. Opal card
6. pet registration, if you own a dog or cat.

Notify a change of address at Service NSW. Note that you will need:

- a MyServiceNSW Account – you can create one before changing your address
- the service(s) you wish to update added to your MyServiceNSW Account – see How to add services to your MyServiceNSW Account

What if things go wrong?

Find out what to do if:

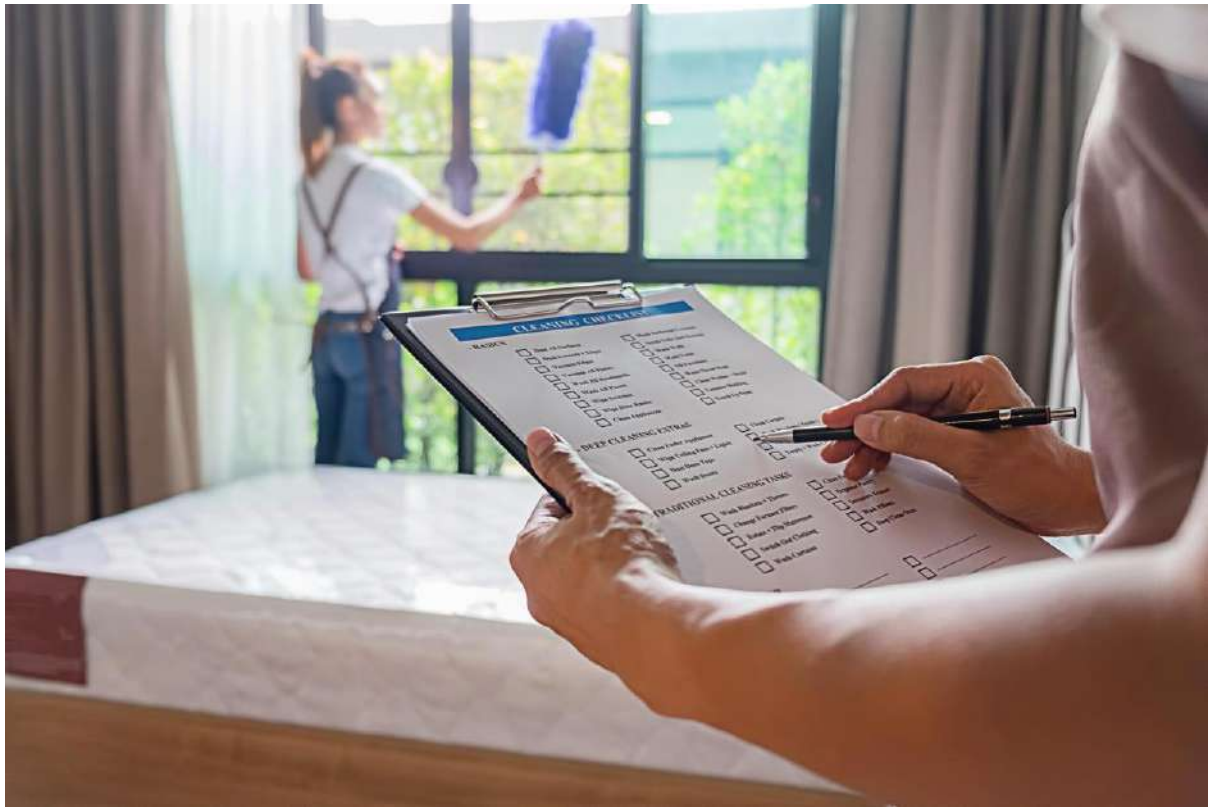
- you're ending the lease early, and the costs involved
- there's a disagreement about the return of the bond with your landlord or agent
- you need to end a lease due to family or domestic violence
- you're facing eviction
- you're listed on a tenancy database.

Get help and support

You can get help or lodge a complaint with NSW Fair Trading.

The Tenants' Union of NSW has resources available or you can use their search tool to find your local tenants' advocacy and advice service.

Timeline & Checklists: What to Do Before You Leave



Moving out of a rental property requires careful planning to ensure everything is done on time and nothing important is missed. Starting early and following a clear timeline can help reduce stress and increase the chances of getting your full bond back.

At least four weeks before your lease ends, you should notify your landlord or agent in writing of your intention to move out. This is important as giving proper notice is a legal requirement in New South Wales.

Two to three weeks before moving, begin packing non-essential items and sorting out what you want to keep, donate, or discard. It's also a good time to contact utility providers like electricity, gas, water, internet, and phone companies to arrange disconnection or transfers of service. Remember to set the date for these changes close to your moving day to avoid paying for services you won't use.

One to two weeks before the move, schedule any necessary repairs and start a thorough cleaning of the property. End of lease cleaning is often required to meet landlord standards and avoid deductions from your bond. A few days before leaving, conduct a pre-inspection with your landlord or agent if possible. This allows you to identify any issues that need fixing before the final inspection. Make sure you have copies of condition reports and take photos as evidence of the property's condition.

Following this timeline and checklist will help you stay organized and increase the likelihood of a smooth move and full bond refund.

Clean and Repair

The first thing that you should do before the start of a tenancy is to clean and ensure the property is in good repair. This includes fixing any broken fixtures, repairing any damages, and basically just ensure that everything is in good working condition.

If you have had a tenant in the property previously, most rental agreements state that the outgoing tenant is responsible for cleaning the property before vacating. Asking the outgoing tenants to have the property professionally cleaned is not legally enforceable but they must leave the property in the same condition in which they received it upon move-in.

Whilst having the property professionally cleaned isn't a legal requirement, it's usually a good investment. Deep cleaning and getting across those big-ticket items like the carpets, windows and walls will not only make the property more attractive to potential tenants but will also ensure that it's safe, habitable and move-in ready.

Conduct a thorough Inventory

Before any tenant moves in it's important to conduct a thorough inventory of the property, which is typically known as the Condition Report.

The process of the Condition Report includes documenting the condition of the property and any furnishings or appliances that are included in the rental. Taking photos and notes of the state of the property will help protect you in case of any disputes over damages or repairs.

The Condition report is a legal requirement at the start of every tenancy, and you are also required to provide a copy of the report to the tenant to fill out in the first week of moving into the property.

Condition Reports & Final Inspection

As a tenant you have rights under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019. This factsheet outlines the law in NSW about starting a tenancy including the form of the residential tenancies agreement, what information you can expect the landlord or agent to provide, what costs you can be asked to pay, and the rules about the condition report.

What is a residential tenancy agreement?

A residential tenancy agreement is a contract. It sets out the tenant's and landlord's rights and obligations. It is also commonly known as a lease.

Tenancy agreements are usually in written form. They can also be oral (e.g. a conversation with the landlord), or partly written – partly oral. All agreements must follow the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 ('the Act').

A landlord should provide the tenancy agreement in writing. If not, then during the first 6 months of the tenancy, they cannot increase the rent and cannot end the tenancy without a legally specified reason.

There are two types of agreement:

- fixed term – for a specified period (e.g. 12 months)
- periodic – ongoing, no fixed term is specified

At the end of the fixed-term, a residential tenancy agreement automatically becomes periodic (ongoing), unless it is ended by one of the parties.

Additional terms

The landlord may include additional terms in the standard tenancy agreement but they are only valid if:

- both you and the landlord agree to them
- they do not conflict with the Act or any other laws
- they don't conflict with the terms of the standard residential tenancy agreement

If there is a conflict between additional terms and the Act, other laws or the terms of the standard agreement, the additional terms are invalid.

Tenancy agreements in share housing

If you rent part of the premises from another tenant, it is in your interest to have a written tenancy agreement with them. See Factsheet: Share Housing and Factsheet: Transfer and sub-letting.

What information does the landlord/agent have to provide?

Before signing a tenancy agreement

A landlord/agent must state a fixed amount of rent in the advertisement or offer for the rental property. Any attempt to solicit a higher amount than the advertised amount is prohibited.

If a landlord decides to enter into a tenancy agreement with you, they (or their agent) must not knowingly hide any of these 'material facts' from you:

- the premises have been subject to serious flooding or bushfire in the last 5 years
- the premises have significant health/safety risks that are not apparent on inspection
- the premises have been the scene of a serious violent crime in the last 5 years
- council waste services will be different from others in the council area

- you cannot get a free residential parking permit (in an area where only paid parking is available)
- the premises have a driveway or walkway that others can legally use
- the premises was the scene of a drug offence under the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 in the last 2 years
- the premises is listed on the Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation (LFAI) Register maintained under the Home Building Act 1989
- if you are renting in a strata scheme – any scheduled repairs to common property during your fixed term

If your rented home is in a building where the building's external combustible cladding needs rectification, the landlord/agent must tell you if any of the following have been issued:

- fire safety order / notice of intention to issue a fire safety order
- a building rectification order or notice of intention to issue a building rectification order
- a development application or complying development certificate application for rectification of the building

The landlord (or their agent, if the agent is aware) must also tell you if either of the following apply:

- they propose to sell the premises (if they have prepared a contract for sale of the premises)
- a mortgagee has started court proceedings to enforce a mortgage over the premises

You may be able to terminate your tenancy if your landlord fails to disclose any of these material facts to you. See also Factsheet: How do I end my tenancy?, Resource: Mortgagee repossession, Factsheet: Mould, and Factsheet: Asbestos and lead.

Landlord's information statement

A landlord must sign an acknowledgment on the tenancy agreement that they have read and understood the contents of the NSW Fair Trading landlord information statement which sets out the landlord's rights and obligations under the law.

Real estate agents signing this acknowledgement must first obtain a written statement from the landlord that the landlord has read and understood their rights and obligations as set out in the information statement.

Social housing providers (including Homes NSW, community housing providers and the Aboriginal Housing Office) are exempt from signing this acknowledgment.

On signing a tenancy agreement

The landlord/agent must give you a NSW Fair Trading tenant information statement. If you are renting in a strata scheme, they must give you a copy of the strata by-laws within 7 days, and inform you if a strata renewal committee is currently established for the scheme.

Landlord's/agent's contact details

Before or when you sign the tenancy agreement, the landlord/agent must give you these contact details in writing (or include them in the tenancy agreement):

- the name, phone number and business address of the landlord's agent (if any) and the name and phone number or other contact details of the landlord, or
- (if there is no agent) the business or residential address and phone number of the landlord, or
- (if the landlord is a corporation) the name and business address of the corporation.

End of Lease Cleaning & Repairs



Moving out of a rental property comes with a long list of activities, the most essential of which is end of lease cleaning. It is the final step before returning the keys, and doing it correctly is crucial if you want to obtain your bond refund. Some renters try to clean the house themselves, believing that it will save money. However, DIY cleaning typically fails to meet the landlord's strict standards, perhaps leading to bond deductions.

That's why hiring a professional end of lease cleaning Sydney is a smart choice. But with so many options available, how can you pick the right one? This blog will show you how to choose the best end of lease company with confidence. Keeping these important considerations in mind will help you discover a provider who ensures a smooth and hassle free transition.

1. Check Their Reputation and Reviews

When putting your trust in a company for something as important as your bond, reputation matters. A search on the web will inform you about how trustworthy a cleaning business is. Google, Facebook, and reliable review websites specifically for the cleaning industry allow former customers to share their experiences. Look for companies that have consistently earned great customer feedback describing complete cleanliness, professionalism, and punctuality.

Word of mouth is also an excellent way to examine a company's reputation. If any family members, friends, or coworkers have recently moved and used a cleaning service, ask them about their experience.

2. Look for a Bond Back Guarantee

The most important reason for securing end of lease cleaning Sydney professionals is to guarantee your bond refund. An excellent company should offer a bond back guarantee, indicating that they will reimburse the cleaning in case the landlord is not satisfied with the work done.

Some companies offer limited guarantees that only cover a specific time period or areas of cleaning. Before booking, read the terms & conditions to discover what is included. A true bond back guarantee provides security by ensuring that you will not be charged extra for a second cleaning.

3. Ensure They Cover a Comprehensive Cleaning Checklist

End of lease cleaning is far more comprehensive than regular house cleaning. Landlords require a deep clean that touches on areas regularly overlooked in the course of everyday cleaning. A good cleaning company should adhere to a comprehensive checklist that complies with real estate standards. Key areas that must be cleaned include:

- General Areas: Dusting walls, skirting boards, and light fixtures
- Carpets and Floors: Vacuuming, mopping, and steam cleaning (if needed)
- Kitchen: Cleaning inside and outside of cupboards, oven, range hood, and stovetop
- Bathrooms: Scrubbing sinks, toilets, showers, and mirrors
- Windows and Doors: Cleaning glass panels, frames, and tracks

Before hiring a cleaning company, obtain a cleaning checklist. If they do not respond directly when asked to detail the necessary actions, they may not be suitable. A complete cleaning method ensures that nothing is overlooked.

4. Compare Pricing Without Compromising Quality

Pricing is often a major consideration when choosing a cleaning service, but the cheapest option is not necessarily the best option. Some low cost providers make corners, leaving sections incomplete or failing to meet landlord standards. This can result in bond deductions or the need to hire another cleaner at an additional cost.

Instead of choosing a cleaning service based on price alone, it's important to focus on value for money. In comparing quotes, consider what is covered in the service. Is the steam cleaning of carpets covered in the price? Are the walls and blinds covered? Will there be a separate charge for specialised services? A company providing reasonable prices and no hidden charges is more reliable. While a slightly higher price may appear to be an additional expense, investing in thorough cleaning can save you money in the long run by ensuring that your bond is fully refunded.

5. Check Their Experience and Equipment

Experience is what one needs when it comes to end of lease cleaning. To clean an entire house to bond cleaning standards, you need experience, attention, and the necessary equipment. One must grasp what the landlords expect and ensure that the minor areas of the house are clean.

It's also worth inquiring whether they employ professional grade cleaning equipment such as high powered vacuums, steam cleaners, and eco friendly cleaning products can have a dramatic impact on quality. A company that invests in the right tools is more likely to achieve outstanding results.

6. Confirm Their Availability and Flexibility

Moving out takes cautious scheduling. Many tenants are on a tight schedule and require cleaning services just before their final inspection. An efficient cleaning agency should offer different booking options to suit your moving schedule. Check if they are available; do they provide short notice options? Are they available on weekends or out of hours? A company that is flexible and responding to customers' needs is always the better choice.

Additionally, check their cancellation and rescheduling policies. If you need to make last minute changes, will they accommodate you, or will there be extra fees? A customer friendly policy is a sign of a professional and reliable business.

7. Look for Insurance and Licensing

Accidents might occur during cleaning, thus a competent firm should be adequately insured. Insurance protects both you and the cleaners in the event of any damage or accidents on the job.

When hiring, make sure that they have public liability insurance and also check if they are professionally trained cleaners. A licenced and insured company gives you with added security and confidence in their professionalism.

8. Consider Eco Friendly Cleaning Options

The majority of tenants prefer green cleaning products, particularly those with pets, allergies, or environmental concerns. Some cleaning companies use strong chemicals for cleaning that leave an unpleasant smell or cause allergies. If this is a problem for you, ask if the company has green cleaning supplies.

Eco friendly cleaning is just as effective as chemical based cleaning but without the harmful side effects. Choosing a company that prioritises sustainability can be a win win for both you and the environment.

Getting Your Bond Back & Handling Disputes



One of the most important steps when moving out of a rental property is ensuring you get your bond back in full. The bond is a security deposit paid at the start of the tenancy to cover any unpaid rent or damage beyond normal wear and tear. Understanding the process for claiming your bond, what deductions are allowed, and how to handle disagreements with your landlord can save you time and stress.

In New South Wales, tenants can apply to get their bond refunded through the Rental Bond Board once the tenancy ends. However, landlords can request deductions for unpaid rent, cleaning costs, or repairs if the property is not returned in good condition. Using detailed condition reports and photographic evidence taken at

the start and end of your tenancy is essential in protecting your bond and resolving any disputes fairly

If you and your landlord disagree over bond deductions, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) can help mediate and make a binding decision. Being prepared with clear documentation and understanding your rights can make this process smoother.

How it works

Your main residence (your home) is generally exempt from capital gains tax (CGT).

Usually, a property stops being your main residence when you stop living in it. However, for CGT purposes you can continue treating a property as your main residence:

- for up to 6 years if you used it to produce income, such as rent (sometimes called the '6-year rule')
- indefinitely if you didn't use it to produce income.

During the time that you treat the property as your main residence after you stop living in it:

- It continues to be exempt from CGT (the same as if you were still living in it, even if you start renting it out after you leave).
- You can't treat any other property as your main residence (except for up to 6 months if you are moving house).

Eligibility

If the property was continuously your main residence, the usual rules for the main residence exemption apply. The property must have:

been your main residence first – you can't apply the main residence exemption to a period before a property first becomes your main residence (for example, if you rented out your home before you lived in it)

Partial main residence exemption

If you use the property to produce income, you may be entitled to a partial main residence exemption from CGT. Examples include when you:

- run a business
- rent the property out (and the main residence exemption doesn't apply to the period you rent out your home)
- 'flip' the property (buy it to renovate and sell at a profit).
- For more detail, see Using your home for rental or business.

stopped being your actual main residence and not used for income – that is, you stopped living in it.

Updating Your Address & Other Post Move Out Formalities



When you change your address and contact details, use this list to update your NSW licences, registrations, permits, certificates and more.

Change address with NSW government

- Update your MyServiceNSW Account by adding these services and you can change your address in one go:
- driver licence and vehicle registrations
- boat licence and vessel registrations
- RSA/RCG competency card and other liquor and gaming records
- Seniors/Senior Savers Card.

Note: Your compulsory third party (CTP) insurance is linked to your vehicle registration so when you change the address for your vehicle, your CTP details are updated automatically.

Vehicle registration, licences and tolls

- Change address (driver licence, vehicle registration or other road licence records)
- Change address and contact details (boat licence, vessel registration or other maritime licence records)
- Change the details of your garaging address (individual)
- Change the details on a conditional vehicle registration

- Change the details of a heavy vehicle
- Change the customer details on a personal E-Toll account
- Change address and contact details on a private mooring licence
- Change address as a holder of a passenger exemption letter

Mail

- Apply to redirect personal mail online
- Apply to redirect personal mail as a concession card holder
- Apply to redirect business mail

Electoral roll

- Change electoral enrolment details

Concession, support and ID cards

- Change the details registered with EnableNSW
- Change the details on a NSW Seniors Card
- Change your pensioner or concession details on maritime products
- Change address and contact details on a transport concession entitlement card
- Replace your photocard

Travel cards

- Change the address linked to your Opal card
- Change address and contact details on a transport concession entitlement card

Worker checks

- Change details on a Working with Children Check registration
- Update your National Disability Insurance Scheme Worker Check (NDISWC) details

Business and trade licences

- Home building
- Change the contact details on a company or partnership contractor licence
- Change address and contact details on a qualified supervisor certificate
- Change the details on a tradesperson certificate
- Change the details on an Owner-Builder Permit
- Change address and contact details on an individual contractor licence
- Change details on a high risk work licence
- Change details on a general construction induction card

Taking care of these final tasks may seem minor compared to the big job of moving, but they're essential for closing out your tenancy properly. By updating your address,

settling your bills, and returning keys on time, you protect yourself from unnecessary issues down the track and ensure a smooth handover. A few final steps now can save you a lot of trouble later.

Conclusion

Moving out of a rental property can feel like a big task, but with the right information and a little planning, it can be a smooth and stress free experience. From understanding your rights and giving proper notice to handling cleaning, inspections, and getting your bond back, each step plays a key role in wrapping up your tenancy the right way. By following the guidance in this guide and using the checklists and resources provided, you can avoid common mistakes, protect your finances, and leave your rental on good terms. Whether you are moving into a new home or taking the next step in life, being organised and informed will help make your transition easier and more successful.

References

Understanding Your Rights & Obligations When Moving Out

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-construction/renting-a-place-to-live/ending-a-residential-tenancy/moving-out-of-a-rental-home>

Timeline & Checklists: What to Do Before You Leave

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/moving-house>

Condition Reports & Final Inspection

<https://www.tenants.org.au/factsheet-02-starting-a-tenancy>

End of Lease Cleaning & Repairs

<https://www.bondcleaning.sydney/choose-the-best-end-of-lease-cleaning-company/>

Getting Your Bond Back & Handling Disputes

<https://www.ato.gov.au/individuals-and-families/investments-and-assets/capital-gains-tax/property-and-capital-gains-tax/your-main-residence-home/treating-former-home-as-main-residence>

Updating Your Address & Other Post Move Out Formalities

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/guide/moving-house>

