



residential
tenancies
authority

1300 366 311
rta.qld.gov.au

Form 17a

Pocket guide for tenants

houses and units

The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) is the Queensland Government statutory body that administers the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*. The RTA provides tenancy information and support, bond management, dispute resolution, investigation, policy and education services.

When renting...

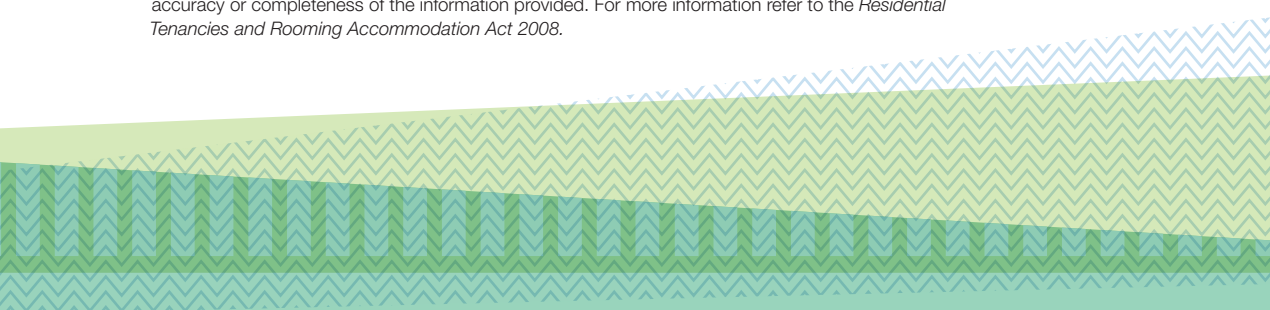
You must

- » pay the rent on time
- » keep the property clean and undamaged and leave it in the same condition it was in when you moved in (fair wear and tear excepted)
- » abide by the terms of the tenancy agreement
- » respect your neighbours' right to peace and quiet

The property owner/manager must

- » ensure the property is vacant, clean and in good repair at the start of the tenancy
- » respect your privacy and comply with entry requirements
- » carry out repairs and maintenance
- » meet all health and safety laws
- » lodge your bond with the RTA

This information is for general guidance only. It is not legal advice. The RTA cannot guarantee the accuracy or completeness of the information provided. For more information refer to the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

A decorative footer featuring a series of overlapping, wavy, geometric shapes in shades of green and blue, creating a modern, abstract design.

Welcome

to your new home

Please take a few minutes to read this guide which explains some of the basic rules of renting in Queensland.

For more information visit rta.qld.gov.au

Your tenancy details

Property owner/manager contact details:

Bond number:

--

Tenancy end date:

/	/
---	---

Emergency repairs contact/s:



Moving in

Tenancy agreement

A *General tenancy agreement* (Form 18a), also called a lease, is a legally binding written contract between you and the property owner/manager. It must include standard terms and may include special terms (e.g. keeping pets, pest control).

You and the property owner/manager must sign the agreement and you should be given a copy.

Period of tenancy agreement:

- » Fixed term agreement – has a start date and an end date and you agree to rent the property for a fixed amount of time (e.g. 12 months)
- » Periodic agreement – when you agree to rent the property for an unspecified amount of time (there will be a start date but no end date)

Bond

A rental bond is a security deposit you pay at the start of a tenancy and is lodged with the RTA. The property owner/manager must not hold your bond. Once the bond is paid the property owner/manager must give you a receipt and complete a *Bond lodgement* (Form 2) which you must sign. The property owner/manager must lodge the bond with the RTA within 10 days. You will receive notification from the RTA once the bond has been lodged.

Bond increases

Your bond can be increased if your rent is increased. It must be at least 12 months since the last increase and you must be given 1 month's notice. Extra bond money must be lodged with the RTA.

Rent

Generally you will be asked to pay rent in advance before, or when you move in. You can't be asked to pay more rent until it has been used up.

- » For a fixed term agreement: a maximum of 1 month's rent in advance
- » For a periodic agreement: a maximum of 2 weeks rent in advance

Rent increases

It must be at least 6 months since the tenancy started or the rent amount changed.

Rent cannot be increased during a fixed term agreement unless it is stated in the agreement and even then 2 months notice (in writing) must be given.

Rent can be increased in a periodic agreement by giving 2 months notice (in writing).

Rent decreases

Rent decreases may occur when there is a drop in the standard of the property, a decrease in services provided (e.g. the availability of car parking), or if a natural disaster (e.g. flooding, fire) makes the property partially unfit to live in.

Water usage

You can be charged full water consumption costs only if the property owner/manager meets a specific set of conditions. Check your tenancy agreement and our website for more details.

Electricity/gas/phone/internet

Check your tenancy agreement – in most cases you will need to arrange connection and pay for the services.

Entry condition report

The property owner/manager must give you an *Entry condition report* (Form 1a).

It records the condition of the property at the start of the tenancy and is an important document if there is a dispute about the condition of the property when you move out. You must complete it and return a signed copy to the property owner/manager within 3 days. The property owner/manager must give you a copy of the final report within 14 days.



During a tenancy

Maintenance

You are responsible for looking after the property and keeping it, and any inclusions (like the oven), clean. The property owner/manager is responsible for ensuring the property is fit to live in and in a good state of repair. They must also make sure it complies with any health and safety laws.

Repairs

You should notify the property owner/manager of any necessary repairs. They will generally carry out the repairs or organise someone to do them. You should not carry out repairs without written consent. When entering the property to fix the problem the property owner/manager must comply with the appropriate entry notice period.

If you or your guests damage the property, you may have to pay for the repairs.

Fixtures

Fixtures can only be added with the property owner/manager's written consent and they do not have to agree to the request if they give a good reason.

What to do in an emergency

If the property owner/manager or nominated repairer listed on your tenancy agreement cannot be contacted, you can arrange for a qualified person to carry out emergency repairs, to a maximum value of 2 weeks rent. If you pay the repairer you will need to give the receipt to the property owner/manager who must pay you back within 7 days. Keep copies of all receipts. Check your tenancy agreement to clarify what is meant by an emergency repair.

Smoke alarms

Property owners/managers must install and maintain smoke alarms in rental properties, in line with Queensland smoke alarm legislation. Visit Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (qfes.qld.gov.au) for more information. Tenants also have responsibilities including cleaning smoke alarms and replacing batteries. See our website for more information on your responsibilities.

Inspections and viewings

Routine inspections can be carried out every 3 months to ensure the property is well cared for and there are no maintenance or health and safety issues.

The property owner/manager may also need to enter the property for repairs or a viewing if it is being re-let or put up for sale. In most cases they must give you an *Entry notice* (Form 9) before they can enter. However, the property owner/manager may enter in an emergency or if you verbally agree with the entry. Entry must occur at a reasonable time. Visit our website for more details.

Problems

If you do something wrong

If you breach the agreement, the property owner/manager can issue a *Notice to remedy breach* (Form 11).

Example: you fall more than 7 days behind in rent or do not keep the property in the agreed condition.

If you don't fix the problem you may be given a *Notice to leave* (Form 12) by the property owner/manager.

If the property owner/manager does something wrong

If the property owner/manager breaches the agreement, you can issue a *Notice to remedy breach* (Form 11).

Example: the property owner/manager fails to keep the property well maintained or enters the property without the correct notice.



Resolving problems

Good communication is the key to resolving most problems. Find out your rights and responsibilities and try to resolve disputes with the property owner/manager directly. If this does not work the RTA's free and impartial dispute resolution service may be able to help. If it remains unresolved you may be able to take the matter to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

Extending your fixed term tenancy

If you want to stay on under a new fixed term agreement, and there are no changes other than the end date, you and the property owner/manager should sign a letter or statement that includes the new date.

If there are any changes to any of the terms of the agreement, the property owner/manager will need to prepare a new written tenancy agreement. You and the property owner/manager must sign the new agreement before the old one ends. If there is a significant change (e.g. a rent increase you think is excessive) you can dispute it, but only after you've signed the new agreement.

If the end date of a fixed term agreement goes by without any contact between you and the property owner/manager, the agreement continues as a periodic agreement.



Moving out

Ending your fixed term or periodic agreement

You cannot move out at the end of a fixed term agreement without giving notice.

If you wish to leave you must give 14 days notice in writing. If the property owner/manager wants you to leave they must give you 2 months notice.

You must continue to pay rent until you move out.

You must leave the property in the same condition it was in before you moved in, fair wear and tear excepted. You may have to pay for carpet cleaning or pest control if they are included in the special terms of your tenancy agreement.

Breaking your tenancy agreement

If you break the tenancy agreement (e.g. you decide to leave early), you may be responsible for compensating the property owner/manager for lost rent until another tenant can be found or the tenancy ends. You may also be liable for other costs such as the cost of re-letting the property and advertising. The property owner/manager must make an effort to limit your loss or expense. Visit our website for more details.

Exit condition report

You must complete an *Exit condition report* (Form 14a). It shows the condition of the property when you leave. If possible you should try to arrange a final inspection with your property owner/manager.

The property owner/manager must complete their side of the report, sign it and return a copy to you within 3 business days of receiving it.

Getting your bond back

You get your bond back at the end of the tenancy as long as no money is owed to the property owner/manager for rent, damages or other costs. You can apply on, or after, handover day to have your bond money returned. You need to provide the RTA with your contact details, forwarding address and bank account details to receive your bond refund. Bonds can only be refunded into Australian bank accounts.

If you and the property owner/manager agree on the refund amount

You and the property owner/manager must sign the *Refund of rental bond* (Form 4) and submit it to the RTA either via our website or by post. The RTA will refund the bond as directed within a few days.

If you and the property owner/manager disagree

You or the property owner/manager can submit a bond refund form. The RTA will then send the other person a *Notice of claim* and the option to submit a *Dispute resolution request* (Form 16). If the RTA does not receive a completed Form 16 within 14 days, the bond will be paid out, as directed, by whoever first lodged the bond refund form.

If they do respond, the RTA dispute resolution service will try to help resolve the disagreement. If agreement is reached, you and the property owner/manager sign the bond refund form and the bond is paid out as agreed.

If agreement is not reached, the person who lodged the dispute resolution request form can apply to QCAT for a decision. They must do so within 7 days and notify the RTA in writing of the QCAT application within the correct timeframe.

If no QCAT application is lodged within 7 days, the RTA will pay the bond as directed by the person who first lodged the bond refund form.

Visit qcat.qld.gov.au for more information.

We're here to help



Visit our website
and subscribe to our
tenant newsletter

rta.qld.gov.au



Call us
1300 366 311



Renting that works
for everyone

Hearing or speech impaired clients

Deaf, hearing or speech impaired clients can contact the National Relay Service for assistance with contacting the RTA by phone.

TTY or computer modem

t 133 677

Interpreter services

If you require an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) (for the cost of a local call) during RTA hours of business. TIS will telephone the RTA for you at no extra cost.

t 131 450

Tenants Queensland

w tenantsqld.org.au

t 1300 744 263

Contact us

w rta.qld.gov.au

t 1300 366 311

Mon–Fri: 8.30am–5pm



**residential
tenancies
authority**

Pocket guide for tenants – houses and units (Form 17a)
Information Statement

Copyright © Residential Tenancies Authority
ISBN: 978-0-9586156-1-7

First published 2013
Form 17a – v3 Feb17

