

## Do's and Don'ts of Renting

### DO:

- Rent through real estate agencies.
- Always inspect the property in person, or have a friend in Australia do so
- Clarify if the landlord is the owner or a head tenant
- Ask for the landlord's contact details, including phone number and email address
- Research market prices, location and the company you're renting from
- Register your bond with Fair Trading
- Keep receipts when you pay anything
- Have a written lease agreement
- Have all communication with your landlord in writing

### DON'T

- Rent at boarding houses – they offer less legal protections
- Pay anything before you've inspected the property and received the keys
- Pay bond directly to the landlord – first ask to pay through Rental Bonds Online
- Find accommodation through sites like WeChat, Gumtree or Facebook
- Pay more than 2 weeks of rent in advance – this is illegal.
- Be pressured into paying money or signing the agreement immediately, take your time!

## Checklist

- ☐ I've researched the property, location, agency, market price
- ☐ I've inspected the property
- ☐ I know who my landlord is and their address and mobile number
- ☐ I have a written copy of the lease agreement and have read it
- ☐ I have the condition report or will take photos of the condition of the property when I first get there
- ☐ My bond is registered with NSW Fair Trading
- ☐ I have receipts for my bond/any payments I have made thus far
- ☐ My rent is being paid weekly or fortnightly

## Where do I go if I have a tenancy issue or need legal advice?

- (UNSW Students only) Arc Legal
- (UNSW Global Only) Accommodation Officers
- Eastern Area Tenant's Union
- Kingsford Legal Centre
- Tenant's Union



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



## A RENTER'S GUIDE TO STARTING A TENANCY

[arc.unsw.edu.au/legal](http://arc.unsw.edu.au/legal)



## Avoiding scams

The first thing about renting is learning how to avoid rental scams. For example a common scam for international students is paying for accommodation before arriving in Sydney, and then finding out the property doesn't exist! It's important to know how to avoid them. Common signs of scams include:

- Low quality photos
- Very low rent
- Asking for large amounts of rent in advance
- Not allowing an in-person inspection of the property
- Charging you for excessive fees such as pest control, cleaning etc.
- Excessive bond (Bond can only be 4 weeks of rent maximum)
- Being pressured into paying or signing the lease agreement immediately
- No way to contact the landlord/agency
- Never pay anything before having seen the property in person

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## Know your rights! Starting a Tenancy

For tenants, there is a standard lease agreement form that should be used from Fair Trading. Make sure to read the lease agreement. Don't feel pressured to sign if you don't feel comfortable and avoid oral agreements. Your landlord must give you a condition report before you start your tenancy, and if you don't have one make sure to take pictures of any damage that was there before you moved in. Your landlord also has to give you an address and phone number so you can contact them.

If you are a sub-tenant (someone who is renting from another renter) it is very important that you have a written agreement, or you might not be covered by the legislation that gives us most of our rental rights

## Bonds

Bond is money held as security for damage to property, unpaid rent and other costs. Your landlord is only allowed to request 4 weeks' rent as bond, and you should lodge the money with the Rental Bonds Online. Landlords cannot keep rental bond during a tenancy. It's extremely important your bond is lodged. If you've already given the bond to your landlord, ask them to lodge it with Fair Trading. This means when you end the tenancy, the landlord can't simply hold your bond money. Bond disputes are one of the most common tenancy issues for students.

## Holding Deposit

A landlord is allowed to request a deposit once you intend to enter an agreement. The deposit cannot exceed one week of rent, and must go towards the rent once the tenancy starts. When the landlord receives the holding deposit, they are required to give you a receipt.

## Common Misconceptions about renting:

- My visa might be in trouble if I complain about my landlord!

This is false – tenancy disputes will generally not affect your visa status.

- My landlord can come over whenever they want because it's their house.

False – tenants are entitled to their privacy, and landlords can only make general inspections with 7 days written notice without your consent.

- I have to pay for any urgent repairs

It is the landlord's responsibility to pay for urgent repairs such as broken toilets, plumbing, leaks etc. If you've already paid for any repairs, you may be liable for reimbursement up to \$1000.

\*Note that much of the following information applies exclusively to tenants – to see if you're a tenant, visit our website.