



**YOUR ULTIMATE
GUIDE TO RENTING:
ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR
TENANTS**

ABSTRACT

Renting a property is a significant milestone, but it comes with challenges that can be navigated with the right knowledge. This guide provides essential tips for tenants, covering every phase of the rental process—from finding the ideal property to signing a lease and moving in. Key topics include understanding rental agreements, managing deposits, handling maintenance, and building positive relationships with landlords. Whether you're a first-time renter or experienced tenant, this guide offers practical advice to help you make informed decisions, protect your rights, and enjoy a smooth rental experience.

INTRODUCTION

The decision to rent a property often signals a new chapter in life, filled with opportunities for independence, flexibility, and personal growth. Yet, the renting process can also be complex, with legal, financial, and practical considerations to address.

Understanding the essentials of renting is crucial for tenants who wish to avoid common pitfalls, protect their rights, and create a comfortable living situation. This guide aims to equip tenants with the knowledge they need to navigate the rental market effectively, from the initial property search to lease negotiations, budgeting, and communication with landlords.

By outlining practical steps and sharing tips for each stage of the rental journey, this guide provides tenants with a comprehensive resource to simplify the process and enhance their renting experience.

I. Renting and Occupancy Laws

The Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (the Act) is the law that governs renting in the ACT. It provides a balanced framework that gives tenants strong protections, so they feel secure in their homes, while respecting the legitimate rights and interests of landlords in their property. The law also provides for fast, independent and informal resolution of disputes through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.



The Act also sets out the law on occupancies. Occupancies are an alternative form of legal agreement for housing to tenancies. People who live in student accommodation, crisis accommodation, a caravan (or mobile home) park, a room in a club, or a boarding house, will usually be occupants. Occupants are also protected under the Act with minimum guaranteed rights and access to dispute resolution options to enforce them.

Access to secure and stable housing is fundamental to well-being. The information on this page is intended to help landlords, tenants, occupants and grantors to know their rights and obligations. This allows the parties to tenancy and occupancy agreements to make informed choices, manage their relationship with confidence, minimise and constructively resolve disputes, and as necessary enforce their rights.

The information on this page is to help you understand the law in general terms. It is not a substitute for legal advice on your individual circumstances.

Renting Book: A handbook for tenants

What is the renting book?

The Renting Book is a guide to rental laws in the ACT. It is primarily written for tenants, to explain their legal rights and responsibilities. It may also help landlords and real estate agents to make sure that properties are managed in accordance with the law. The law requires landlords to provide a copy of this Renting Book to the tenant (or tell the tenant where it can be found) before the tenancy starts.

The Renting Book covers the main issues that may arise before, during and after a tenancy. It is a guide only. It does not cover every aspect of the Act or every situation. The Act is also amended from time to time. You should always read your tenancy agreement closely, check the Act and seek legal advice if you are unsure about your rights or obligations.

The Standard Residential Tenancy Terms, which by law form part of all tenancy agreements in the ACT, are contained in Schedule 1 of the Act. There are also additional Standard Residential Tenancy Terms that may apply to tenancy agreements in certain circumstances. These are contained in Schedule 2 of the Act.



II. ACT Tenant's Rights and Obligations during Tenancy

During the agreement, the tenant has a number of general rights and obligations. It is important for both landlords and tenants to read this section to understand their roles.

This guide covers landlords (or head-tenants) and tenants (or sub-tenants) in a Residential Tenancy. This applies to the majority of share accommodation and residential property rental situations. To confirm it covers your situation visit [What is my share accommodation situation?](#)

What are the tenant's rights?

Tenants have a number of rights owed to them by the landlord during the tenancy. These include:

Right to a copy of the tenancy agreement

The landlord must give the tenant a written copy of the residential tenancy agreement after it has been signed by both parties. The copy must be given within 3 weeks of the agreement being signed and received by the landlord.

Legal right to occupy premises as a residence

The landlord must ensure that there are no legal impediments to using the premises as a residence. Legal impediments to occupation could include:

- rezoning of the area to non-residential
- if the premises has been compulsorily acquired by government
- if the landlord does not have the right to let the premises

Right to non-interference by the landlord

The tenant has the right to not live at the premises without interference by the landlord. This means the landlord has an obligation to avoid any actions that interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort, or privacy of the tenant.

Although there is no set list of what constitutes an interference with peace, comfort, or privacy, some examples may include:



- unnecessarily frequent requests for entry to the premises
- entering the premises under unlawful circumstances (see the section on landlord's entry rights for more information)
- not maintaining the premises in a way that allows the tenant to live there comfortably
- constantly making phone calls to the tenant or arriving at the premises unannounced
- harassing, threatening, or assaulting the tenant

Right to sub-let with landlord's consent

A tenant can sub-let part or all of the rented premises, but only if the landlord gives prior written consent.

The landlord can give consent for sub-letting at any time.

What are the tenant's obligations?

Tenants also have a number of obligations during the tenancy. These include:

Must not damage premises

The tenant must not intentionally or negligently damage the premises, or allow damage to occur.

Notify landlord of any damage

If any damage occurs to the premises, regardless of who or what caused it, the tenant must notify the landlord as soon as possible. If the tenant does not notify the landlord as soon as possible, they may be liable for part of the repair cost if the problem has become worse because of the delay.



Take reasonable care of premises and contents

The tenant must take reasonable care of the premises and its contents. This generally means that the tenant must take care not to damage or destroy the premises or any inclusions. The tenant should also ensure that any guests or occupants take similar care when using the premises and its contents.

Leave premises clean and in close to original condition

When the agreement is over, the tenant must leave the premises in a clean condition and remove all their belongings. The premises must be left in substantially the same condition as it was at the beginning of the tenancy, allowing for fair wear and tear.

This means that the premises should be left almost the same as it was when the tenant moved in, with natural or normal deterioration allowed.

Must comply with strata rules

If the rented premises is a flat, unit, or apartment subject to strata rules or owners corporation's rules, the tenant must comply with those rules.

To allow the tenant to comply with strata rules, the landlord should supply a tenant with a copy at the beginning of the tenancy.

Must not use premises for illegal purpose

The tenant must not use the premises for any illegal purpose, such as drug production or manufacture. The tenant must also prevent any other person from using the premises for an illegal purpose.

Must only use premises for residential purposes

Unless the tenant and landlord agree otherwise, the rented premises must only be used by the tenant for residential purposes. This means, for example, that the tenant cannot use the premises for business or commercial purposes unless the landlord has agreed beforehand.

Must not create a nuisance

The tenant must not cause (or allow someone else to cause) a nuisance to anyone. Examples of nuisances can include excessive noise, violence, unpleasant smells, rubbish, car parking, criminal activity, harassing neighbours, or other offensive behaviour.

Must not interfere with the quiet enjoyment of neighbours

The tenant must not cause or permit interference with the quiet enjoyment by neighbours of their premises. Although there is no set list of interferences with neighbours' quiet enjoyment, they can include:

- excessive noise, especially if late at night
- trespassing on neighbours' land
- unpleasant smells emanating caused by the tenant
- bright lights shining onto the neighbour's property
- any violence or threats directed toward neighbours

Is the tenant responsible for the actions of guests at the premises?

The tenant is responsible for any breaches of their obligations that are caused by a person at the premises with the tenant's consent. This includes visitors, guests, other occupants, and anyone who the tenant has allowed to come into the premises.

The tenant is not responsible for the actions of people at the premises at the request of the landlord (e.g. tradespeople sent by the landlord), or anyone else at the premises without the tenant's consent. For example, a tenant is not liable for the actions of a burglar who has broken into the premises.

III. Renting Out Your Home? 5 Things You Need To Know



What does renting your home enable you to do? For one, it will help finance your vacation, especially if you plan to be away for a month or so. Provided the people you rent to are responsible -- and you price your home fairly -- that's one financial worry off your table.

Taking that longer vacation also takes the pressure off of trying to see everything you can in a short period of time. You'll have some breathing room to explore.

In Jacobs's book, she was able to soak up the culture of France and Spain, engaging in things like a Loire Valley grape harvest; an "exuberant chili pepper festival" in Spain's Basque Country and the *pintxo* bar crawl in San Sebastian, where she developed "an affinity for sheep's milk cheese and cultivated new friendships."

There's a lot you need to know before you rent out your home, though. Finding the right tenants is key, along with contracts that will protect you from bad ones. Here's what Jacobs suggests:

-- **How to List Your Home.** "We listed our house on three platforms, the most important of which were HomeAway (VRBO) and Airbnb. Over the past several

years, I have spent at least 40 hours perusing comparable properties on these sites, taking photographs of my own house in various seasons, writing promotional copy and updating our listing to cut down on inappropriate inquiries.

-- **Write a Strong Listing.** For the description, I believe in full disclosure. I play up what makes our house appealing, and to some extent our listing is a work in progress. For example, one evening, when our dining room table was set for company, I took a picture of it and added it to our existing listing on sharing economy sites.

-- **Pricing it Right.** With pricing, I look at what owners in other desirable New York neighborhoods are charging and adjust accordingly. For example, we can charge as much as people get for a small two-bedroom apartment close to tourist attractions in Manhattan. With our house, renters get a lot more space for the money and proximity to Prospect Park (which attracts families).

-- **Emphasizing Amenities.** These are all advantages for renters: Desirability of location and proximity to public transit (if applicable); Flexible sleeping accommodations for more than four people; Washer/dryer on the premises; Air conditioning and free parking.

-- **Full Disclosure is Important.** Though I work hard to show the house to best advantage, I don't try to hide anything. For example, our house does not have a bathroom on the first floor, and I say so in the listing. It also has a lot of stairs, and I want people with young children to understand that."

Of course, you're bound to receive some inquiries that won't result in suitable arrangements. That means you should review several offers and be able to say no if they don't pass the smell test.

Jacobs had to turn down "movie producers who wanted to use it not only as lodging while they were on location, but also as a place where a staff could work during the day while they were shooting in New York. I also make it clear that we don't rent for less than a month, though we still get inquiries from short timers who seem to think that's negotiable."

IV. 10 ways to impress a rental property manager

Ever wondered why your rental applications keep getting rejected? There's nothing more disappointing than traipsing around the open houses and inspections, filling in all the paper work and still ending up empty handed.



You might have your heart set on renting a stylish apartment, classic city terrace or country cottage, and either way, being prepared and making a good first impression can help you seal the deal. Brad Jacobs from Boutique Property Agents has offered his insider knowledge and tips to get your application to the top of the pile.

1. be prepared

Download or request an application form prior to the open – most agents will have this available on their website or will be happy to email it to you. A lot of Sydney agents are using the website 1form.com for applications, speak to the agent prior to see if they will accept it.

2. fill it in

Ensure your application form is completed in full so if you're happy at the inspection, you can submit it straight away. Don't forget to check the required documents and 100 points ID as your application cannot be considered without these elements.

3. have backup ready

Ask your current agent for a copy of your rental ledger to provide with your application and a reference letter if they are happy to provide one to submit with your application.

4. don't hesitate

Make your start date is as close to the availability date as possible. Even if you can't move on that specific day – the cost of a few days or even a week of paying double rent is minimal in the big scheme of things.

5. don't forget anyone

Make sure all tenants/occupants put in an application. The more income coming into the property the better and also makes everyone responsible. Many think more people will reflect badly but it's the opposite as long as the property will not be over occupied.

6. give your reference a heads up

Advise your employer they will be getting a call to confirm your employment. Sometimes the HR team need written approval from the employee, and if they don't have it, it can delay the confirmation of your employment.

7. give it a year

Applying to rent for 12 months or a longer lease is always better than 6 months.

8. supporting docs

Provide good quality supporting documents to support your application. These include, a copy of your Passport (and potentially a visa if you're a non-resident), Driver license or photo ID, recent bank statements or savings accounts with balance of funds, employment contract and a minimum of two recent payslips.



9. don't dally

Get your application in as soon as possible.

10. first impressions

Present yourself well at the open house and make sure you meet the agent on site!

V. 10 apartment maintenance tips for tenants

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Whether you're moving into a luxury building with lots of amenities or something modest that you're sharing with a roommate (or perhaps even two), maintenance issues are a fact of life for apartment dwellers. Whether it's something simple like a garbage disposal that just stops working, a light bulb that flickers or doesn't turn on, or cracked paint — all apartments have maintenance issues.

However, if you're new to apartment life, you might not know how to handle these issues. Are there some things you can fix yourself? Can you prevent major issues before they start or at least nip them in the bud? How do you know when to call your landlord?

Here are ten apartment maintenance tips you need to need to know about. From what to do to get your security deposit back, to essentials you should keep on hand, and how to know when to call for help. You might just want to screenshot these.

1. Take photos when you move in

When move to your new apartment, there is no way everything will be 100 percent perfect. From cracked tiles to carpet stains — document any issues when you get in and notify your landlord. This will save you time, money, and energy when you move out.

2. Know how to unclog a drain

Handyman and Task Rabbit spokesperson Dustin Houston tells me it's crucial to know how to unclog a drain yourself. "The most common maintenance occurrences I see in apartments are usually clogs or drain issues," Houston says.

"Sometimes it's as simple as using a plastic disposable drain snake to remove hair and debris from the drain, but sometimes it's more complicated than that. For instance, drainage issues like clogs or leaks in the tub or sink can be related to a failing hardware piece, which may need to be replaced by the landlord."

If plunging or snaking a drain doesn't work, notify your landlord.

3. Don't neglect maintenance issues

We are all busy and stressed. So while it might be tempting to ignore a broken garbage disposal or some other problem — this isn't a smart idea explains Houston.

"Neglecting normal maintenance issues (especially water-related) can cause a lot of damage that isn't always visible at first," says Houston.



"While these issues are usually for the landlord to address, failure to communicate the issue to the landlord can substantially increase the extent of repairs and time needed to fully fix."

4. Know where your shutoff valves are

"You absolutely need to be aware of where the breaker box is located, where the shutoff valve is for the water, and where the gas shut off is," Kat Christie, handywoman, licensed contractor, and founder of She Fixed That LLC tells me.

"If you are blow-drying your hair and blow a fuse, you're going to want to be able to switch that back on, so you need to know where the breaker box is. And, if you are running the dishwasher or washing machine in-unit and the water starts to flow, you're going to want to know how to shut that valve off before it becomes a true flood and causes a lot of damage."

5. Don't flush anything that isn't toilet paper

Clogged toilets might not feel like a big deal, but if your toilet breaks and you only have one in your apartment, it can be a complete nightmare. So be careful about what you're flushing. "You absolutely cannot flush anything down the toilet that isn't toilet paper — even those wipes which say they are flushable, are not," says Christie.

"These can cause clogs, and clogs can cause flooding or other issues down the line. I've seen countless people have issues clogging their toilets, and in an apartment,

when you can't always get someone quickly to unclog, it can be an issue. I highly recommend getting drain covers to cover any sink, shower, and bath drains so that hair can't so easily go down the drain and become clogged.”

6. Purchase a fire extinguisher

While many landlords provide fire extinguishers and are legally required to do in some states, you should have your own as well.

Buy a new one, like this highly-rated Kidde fire extinguisher available on Amazon, and keep it under the kitchen sink because many fires start in kitchens.

7. Put new batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

It's always a good idea to ask your landlord to replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors when you move in because you don't know when they were last replaced. After all, you don't want these devices to fail in an emergency.

8. Clean your dryer's lint traps

If your apartment has a washer and dryer, it's important to clean your lint trap after every use. Not only will this help your clothing dry more efficiently, but it can also potentially save you money on your energy bill.

Lastly, a build-up of lint can cause your dryer to break — or worse, start a fire. Fortunately, it takes less than a minute to do this.

9. Clean hvac filters regularly

Ask your building's maintenance person or your landlord to have your HVAC filters changed. Most people don't know to do this and it's likely they haven't been changed for years.

New filters will also make your machine run more efficiently, likely lowering your electric bill. Don't forget to change filters at least seasonally or more often if you use your air conditioner year-round.

10. Make sure the fridge has a new water filter

Does your refrigerator dispense water? Much like the HVAC, it's unlikely that the filter has been replaced in a while.

No matter where you live, you want to assure your water is as clean as possible. Better yet, it's far less expensive and more convenient than buying bottled water.

VI. How To Clean Blinds And Curtains For A Bond Clean

Bond cleaning is one of the intense tasks carried out by tenants at the end of their tenancy in Canberra. In this process, all rooms and important spots are thoroughly cleaned according to the pre-approved checklist. However, most people forget to clean their window blinds and curtains and lose a part of their hard-earned bond money.



These are some key spots where dust, grime, and other allergens accumulate and cause indoor pollution. These allergens can even trigger allergy and asthma symptoms in susceptible individuals. **Here are some great tricks to help you clean window blinds and curtains before the final rental inspection.** The best part is that all cleaning products mentioned below in this article are chemical-free, affordable and super-effective. **Let's Get Started!**

What it is Important to Clean Blinds and Curtains?

Whether you are moving out of your rental property or not, make sure you regularly spruce up your window treatments for the following reasons:

- Blinds and curtains accumulate in thick layers of dust and allergens that can cause various health hazards. Keeping them clean will automatically improve the indoor air quality.
- Dirt and stains on window treatments can ruin the clean look of the entire house. You may find difficulty in getting your bond back.

- Dust can affect the functionality of your blinds, and you end up replacing them with a new one.
- The clean look of windows, blinds and curtains leave great impression on the landlord and help you pass the rental inspection.

Instead of doing it yourself, book budget end of lease cleaning Canberra and get your windows, blinds, curtains and other key areas cleaned in no time. They can help you secure the full bond money without any dispute. If you want to do it yourself, consider the following guide and clean all types of blinds and curtains like a pro:

Steps to Clean Plastic or Metal Blinds

You can easily clean these blinds using basic tools and products. Here is a step-by-step cleaning guide and always include your blinds in deep cleaning house checklist for better results:



- **Close your blinds** so that each slat can be cleaned with ease.
- **Get rid of accumulated dust, debris, pollens and allergens** from each blind using a Swiffer Duster. You can use an extendable handle to reach the blinds at a certain height. If you don't have this tool, use a microfiber cloth and achieve great results.
- **Prepare a cleaning solution** using mild dish soap and white vinegar with hot water.
- Dampen the sponge and **wipe down each slat** from top to bottom.

- Reverse them and repeat the process.
- If blinds are greasy and stained, **soak them in soapy hot water** for half an hour and scrub them with gentle hands using a sponge.
- **Dry all your slats** using a clean microfiber cloth.

Quick Tip: Plastic and metal blinds should be cleaned once or twice a month. If you are preparing them at the end of your tenancy, use eco-friendly multi-purpose cleaner and get rid of dust and stains.

Steps to Clean Wood Blinds

Wooden surfaces are prone to damage due to abrasive scrubbing and excessive moisture. So, you need to be extra careful when tackling stains and grime:

- Close the blinds and dust each slat using a soft cloth.
- Vacuum them using a brush attachment. This will help you eliminate remaining debris, cobwebs and grime with ease.
- Prepare a mild dish soap or wood cleaning agent in a bowl and dip a clean cloth in it.
- Wring out excess solution and wipe down each slat. Cover both sides properly.
- Take a clean cloth, dampen in clean plain water, wring out it and wipe it down again to get rid of soap residue.
- Dry them using a clean cloth.

Quick Tip: You can also hire seasoned end of lease cleaners Canberra for the entire property, including window treatments and get your rental bond back.

Steps to Clean Window Curtains & Drapes

Curtains are the most overlooked things when sprucing up your rented property for the final rental inspection. The stains and dust on your drapes and curtains can ruin the entire look and feel.



- Remove weights and hooks from your curtain.
- Vacuum them using a hose attachment to fetch dust specks and pollen. Regular cleaning with a HEPA-filter vacuum machine can help you create an allergy-free home with ease.
- Check the washing instructions on your curtains and clean them according to the fabric type.
- If there are no instructions, hand wash them in cold water using mild dish washing soap.
- Do not wring out or abrasively rub them.
- Dry your curtains in the air or run through the dryer on a low heat.
- Meanwhile, you can clean window sills, frames, tracks, and rods using vinegar, soap and warm water solution.

Read on the complete guide on DIY window cleaning for sparkling results.

Quick Tips for Non-Washable Curtains

- Some fabrics are non-washable, and that's why it is important to avoid the usage of excess water and cleaning solution
- Prepare a cleaning solution of warm water and soap to clean stains and smells. Use your favourite essential oil to banish the bad smell.
- Steam clean your curtains using a steamer with an upholstery attachment.

You can follow these simple yet effective cleaning tips and tricks to keep your window treatments clean, dust-free and shiny for a bond clean. It is also advisable to

book trained people for a quality end of lease cleaning Canberra to help you pass the rental inspection without letting you face any rental disputes.

CONCLUSION

Renting a home is a journey that requires both preparation and awareness, yet the rewards are well worth the effort. By following the essential tips outlined in this guide, tenants can navigate the rental process with greater confidence and ease.

Understanding one's rights and responsibilities, budgeting carefully, and maintaining open communication with landlords are key elements to a successful tenancy.

Ultimately, by making informed choices, tenants can create a secure and enjoyable living environment that meets their needs and supports their lifestyle.

With this guide as a reference, renters are better equipped to find, secure, and thrive in the ideal rental property.

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