

# YOUR FIRST RENTAL

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



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## **ABSTRACT**

Renting your first home is an exciting milestone, but it can also feel overwhelming with all the steps and decisions involved. From understanding lease agreements to finding the right property and setting a budget, there's a lot to navigate. You'll need to grasp the key terms of your lease, know your rights as a tenant, and be aware of potential hidden costs such as bond payments and utility setup. It's crucial to inspect the property thoroughly, ask the right questions, and ensure the rental meets your needs before signing any agreement.



Once you've moved in, managing your rental responsibly is key to ensuring a smooth experience. This includes keeping up with rent payments, handling maintenance requests, and understanding your responsibilities when it comes to property care. When your lease ends, knowing the proper move-out procedures—such as end-of-lease cleaning and securing your bond refund—is essential. By staying informed and proactive, you can avoid common rental mistakes and make your first renting experience stress-free and enjoyable.

## **LET'S GET STARTED**

Renting your first home is a significant step toward independence, but it comes with many responsibilities and decisions. This guide covers everything first-time renters need to know, from finding the right property and understanding lease agreements to budgeting for rent and utilities. It walks you through the essentials of inspecting a rental, negotiating terms, and knowing your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. By learning how to avoid common pitfalls, like hidden fees or not understanding the lease terms, you can make informed decisions that protect your finances and well-being.

Once you've moved in, managing the rental properly is crucial for a smooth experience. This includes timely rent payments, handling maintenance, and preparing for eventual move-out tasks, like end-of-lease cleaning and ensuring you meet the landlord's requirements to get your bond back. Whether you're starting your rental journey or nearing its end, this guide provides practical advice and checklists to help first-time renters handle the process confidently and smoothly.

## **MEANING OF RENTING & IT'S TYPES**

Renting refers to the arrangement in which a tenant pays a landlord to use property or assets (such as a house, apartment, car, or equipment) for a specific period. Instead of purchasing the property outright, the renter gains access and use of the property in exchange for regular payments, typically on a monthly basis. Renting is a popular option for those who may not have the financial capacity to buy or prefer flexibility in their living or work arrangements.

**Here's a detailed look at different types of renting:**

### **1. Residential Renting**

This is the most common form of renting, where individuals or families lease homes, apartments, or rooms. Residential renting can take different forms, including:

- Long-term leases: Typically last 12 months or more, offering stability for both the tenant and landlord.

- Month-to-month leases: Provide more flexibility, allowing the tenant to stay as long as they wish without a fixed end date, with the option to terminate by giving a month's notice.

- Subletting: When a tenant rents out their rental property (with permission from the landlord) to another person for part of the lease term.

- Vacation rentals: Short-term residential leases, often for holidays or vacations, which can last from a few days to a few weeks. Platforms like Airbnb have popularized this type of rental.



## **2. Commercial Renting**

Businesses often rent spaces for their operations rather than buying, such as:

- Office rentals: Leases for corporate spaces where businesses can operate. These can range from small offices to entire buildings.

- Retail space rentals: Leases for stores, shops, or restaurants in shopping centers, malls, or commercial areas.

- Industrial rentals: Warehouses, factories, or manufacturing facilities rented by businesses for production and storage purposes.

- Co-working spaces: A flexible option where professionals rent desks or office space in shared facilities, often with short-term agreements.

### **3. Vehicle and Equipment Renting**

Renting isn't limited to real estate—it extends to vehicles and equipment as well:

- Car rentals: Short-term use of vehicles, commonly used by tourists, travelers, or those needing temporary transport solutions.

- Equipment rentals: Businesses or individuals rent specialized equipment like tools, machinery, or technology (e.g., cameras, construction tools, or medical equipment) for specific projects or timeframes.

- Furniture rentals: Common for people who need temporary furnishing solutions without buying, often used in corporate housing or short-term living situations.

### **4. Rent-to-Own**

Rent-to-own arrangements allow tenants to rent a property or item with the option to purchase it later. A portion of the rent may contribute to the eventual purchase price. This is popular in:

- Homes: Renters pay monthly for the home and can choose to buy it after a certain period, with the option to apply part of the rent towards the down payment.

- Appliances and electronics: Rent-to-own agreements for household items such as TVs, refrigerators, or furniture allow customers to use the product while making payments toward ownership.

### **5. Public and Social Housing Rentals**

Public or social housing rentals are offered by governments or non-profit organizations to low-income individuals or families at reduced rates. These properties are typically subsidized, and the tenants are chosen based on need.

### **6. Corporate Housing Rentals**

This is a type of residential rental offered to businesses or companies for their employees. Corporate housing is typically fully furnished and available for short-term stays, often for business travelers or employees relocating for work.

## **7. Co-living or Shared Renting**

In co-living arrangements, multiple tenants share a rental property, such as a house or apartment. Each tenant typically has their own bedroom while sharing common areas like the kitchen or living room. This setup is common among students, young professionals, and those seeking affordable housing in high-cost areas.

Each type of rental arrangement comes with different lease terms, obligations, and rights for both landlords and tenants. Whether you're renting for personal use, business, or temporary convenience, understanding the type of renting you're engaging in will help you navigate responsibilities, costs, and legal agreements better.

## **WAYS TO FIND BETTER RENTING HOME**

Finding a good rental home in Australia can be challenging, especially with the competitive market. However, by using the right resources and strategies, you can increase your chances of securing a great place. Here are some effective ways to find a better rental home in Australia:

### **1. Online Real Estate Platforms**

- Realestate.com.au and Domain are two of the most popular websites for finding rental listings across Australia. These platforms allow you to search by location, price, property type, and even specific features like pet-friendly homes or proximity to schools and public transport.

- Flatmates.com.au is useful for those looking for shared accommodation.

- Gumtree often has private listings where you might find rental properties directly from landlords.

### **2. Use Local Real Estate Agents**

- Real estate agents can offer valuable insights and have access to rental listings that may not be posted online. Many agents specialize in specific areas, so reaching

out to local agencies can give you a head start on finding homes in your preferred location.

- Building a good relationship with agents can also help, as they may notify you when a suitable property becomes available.

### **3. Check Social Media Groups**

- Facebook groups focused on rentals in specific cities or neighborhoods, such as “Sydney Rentals” or “Melbourne Apartment Rentals,” can be great for finding listings shared by tenants or landlords directly.

- Look out for posts by individuals seeking tenants or rentals in popular neighborhood groups.

### **4. Attend Rental Open Homes**

- Check online for upcoming open house inspections in your desired area. Attending these inspections allows you to see the property firsthand and even network with agents and landlords. Arriving early and prepared can give you an advantage, especially in high-demand areas.

### **5. Consider Short-Term Rentals**

- Platforms like Airbnb and Stayz are great for finding temporary housing if you need more time to find a long-term rental. Staying in a short-term rental allows you to explore different neighborhoods and take your time with the search.

### **6. Word of Mouth**

- Ask friends, family, and colleagues if they know of any available rentals. Word-of-mouth referrals can be one of the most reliable ways to find a rental, as these opportunities might not be advertised publicly.

- Local community boards, such as those found in coffee shops, community centers, or universities, can also have listings for rentals.

### **7. Use Rental Apps**

- Download rental apps like Rent.com.au or Flatmates App to get push notifications about new listings. These apps allow you to set search criteria and receive alerts as soon as new properties matching your preferences are listed.

- Many apps also have features that allow you to apply for properties directly through the platform, speeding up the rental process.



## **8. Drive Around Target Areas**

- Some landlords may advertise their rental properties with “For Rent” signs that are not listed online. By driving or walking around your preferred neighborhoods, you may spot these rental opportunities and inquire directly with the landlord.

- This method works well in suburban areas where properties may not always be listed on major platforms.

## **9. Consider Property Managers**

- Property managers often manage multiple rental properties, and contacting them directly may give you access to listings before they go public. They may also



offer ongoing support throughout your tenancy, helping with maintenance and lease renewals.

## **RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES TENANTS SHOULD KNOW**

As a tenant, knowing your rights and responsibilities is crucial for maintaining a positive rental experience and avoiding legal issues. In Australia, tenant laws vary slightly by state or territory, but there are common rights and responsibilities that apply across the country.

### **Tenant Rights**

#### **1. Right to a Safe and Habitable Property**

You have the right to live in a property that is safe, structurally sound, and fit for habitation. The landlord must ensure the property meets health and safety standards, including working utilities (water, gas, electricity), locks, and basic facilities like a functioning kitchen and bathroom.

#### **2. Right to Privacy**

Landlords cannot enter your rental property without giving proper notice, except in emergencies. Most states require 24-48 hours' notice before an inspection or for repairs. Tenants have the right to quiet enjoyment of the property, meaning the landlord cannot interfere with your privacy.

#### **3. Repairs and Maintenance**

Landlords are responsible for maintaining the property in good repair. This includes fixing major problems like leaks, electrical issues, or broken appliances. You should report any issues to your landlord or property manager promptly, and they are required to arrange necessary repairs within a reasonable timeframe.

#### **4. Bond Refund**

Your bond (security deposit) is held as financial protection for the landlord but must be refunded at the end of the tenancy if you've met the terms of the lease. Landlords can only make deductions from your bond for unpaid rent, damage

beyond normal wear and tear, or cleaning costs if the property isn't returned in the agreed-upon condition.

## **5. Fair Rent and Rent Increases**

Your rent cannot be increased arbitrarily during a fixed-term lease, unless your lease specifically states otherwise. For periodic leases, landlords must give notice (typically 60 days) before increasing rent. Rent increases must be fair and in line with market value.

## **6. Termination Notice**

Landlords must provide proper notice if they wish to end your lease. The required notice period varies, but in most cases, it's at least 30-60 days. If you're on a fixed-term lease, the landlord cannot terminate your lease without a valid reason before the end date.

## **7. Dispute Resolution**

If disputes arise between you and your landlord, you have the right to take the matter to your state's rental tribunal or tenancy authority. This can help resolve issues like bond disputes, rent increases, or unaddressed repairs.



## **Tenant Responsibilities**

### **1. Pay Rent on Time**

Your primary responsibility as a tenant is to pay rent by the due date outlined in your lease agreement. Failure to pay rent on time can lead to eviction or legal action. It's important to communicate with your landlord if you're facing difficulties with rent payments.

### **2. Take Care of the Property**

While the landlord is responsible for major repairs, tenants are expected to keep the property clean and in good condition. This includes performing minor maintenance like replacing light bulbs and keeping the garden or outdoor areas tidy.

### **3. Report Damage or Maintenance Issues**

If there are any damages or maintenance issues in the property, it is your responsibility to notify the landlord or property manager promptly. Failing to report issues that worsen over time may result in you being held liable for the cost of repairs.

### **4. Follow the Terms of the Lease**

You are bound by the terms of the lease agreement. This includes rules around pets, subletting, and alterations to the property. You cannot make changes, such as painting or installing new fixtures, without the landlord's permission.

### **5. Respect Neighbors and the Community**

Tenants must not disturb the peace of the neighborhood or other tenants. This means avoiding excessive noise, maintaining cleanliness in shared spaces, and adhering to building rules in apartments or complexes.

### **6. End of Lease Responsibilities**

When moving out, tenants are responsible for returning the property in the same condition as when they moved in, except for fair wear and tear. This typically

includes cleaning the property thoroughly and fixing any damage caused during the tenancy. You should also give proper notice if you intend to move out.

## **7. Understand the Condition Report**

At the beginning of your tenancy, you'll be provided with a condition report that details the state of the property. It's your responsibility to review this report, note any discrepancies, and return it to the landlord or agent. This document is crucial for determining whether deductions from your bond are justified at the end of the lease.

## **8. Comply with Health and Safety Laws**

Tenants must ensure that their use of the property does not create a health or safety hazard. This means storing rubbish properly, using appliances safely, and following fire regulations.

### **Summary of Key Points**

- **Know Your Lease:** Read and understand your lease before signing. It outlines your rights and responsibilities, including rent payment terms, notice periods, and any restrictions (e.g., pets, alterations).
- **Communication:** Keep open lines of communication with your landlord or property manager regarding rent, repairs, or any concerns. Document requests and issues to ensure there's a record of your interactions.
- **Documentation:** Always take photos of the property when you move in and when you leave. This documentation, along with the condition report, will protect your bond in case of disputes over property damage or cleaning.

By understanding your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, you can avoid common issues and ensure a smooth rental experience. If in doubt, always refer to your state or territory's tenancy laws, as each region may have slightly different regulations.

## **MOVING IN: WHAT TO EXPECT & HOW TO DO FAST**

Moving is a stressful process. Along with packing your belongings and vetting the best moving companies, there's the added stress of worrying about whether your items will get damaged in transit. Although moving to a new home isn't the easiest task, there are ways to make the process go more smoothly.



### **Preparing for Moving Day**

Preparing for your move will help set you up for success. Dedicate an afternoon to creating an action plan. A good plan will ensure your move stays on track, relieve some of your stress and help you get through the entire moving process with little to no frustration. Here are the steps to get prepared.

### **Make a Checklist**

A moving checklist may seem tedious, but it works. Writing or typing your to-do list helps commit it to memory so you do not waste precious time trying to remember what you have to do. This is especially helpful if you're moving abroad.

## **Things to put on your checklist include:**

- Contacting utility companies to schedule shut-off service
- Setting mail forwarding serves
- Ordering packing materials
- Any task or item you do not want to forget to do
- As you complete an item, stay on track by crossing it off.

## **Set Your Budget**

Moving can be expensive, but setting a budget can help you save money on your move. Your budget will help determine if you can afford a full-service move or if you need to make a DIY move. A realistic moving budget will ensure that your move will not cost you more than you can afford.

## **Hire a Mover or Plan a DIY Move**

Once you set your budget, you'll know whether or not you can hire professional movers or if you'll make a DIY move. If hiring movers, start by getting referrals from friends and family. Compare quotes from several companies before you make a decision. For different types of moves you may want to consider a specialized moving service, if you're moving 150+ miles or out of state, researching the best cross country movers will give you more options.

For a DIY move, get pricing on trunk rentals and equipment. Also, recruit friends and family members to help you pack and load. (And make sure not to forget to offer lunch or dinner!)

## **Declutter**

Moving is the perfect time to declutter. Sort through all your things and donate or throw away anything you no longer need. This step will save you packing time and give you more space on the moving truck.

## **Get Packing Supplies**

Now that you have a better idea of the amount of things that you have to move, it's time to get moving boxes and packing supplies. Get more moving boxes than you

think you will need. The last thing you want is to have to run out on packing day to find or purchase more. That will cause more stress and waste time.

There are numerous packing calculators available to help you estimate how much you will need. Unused packing supplies can be donated or sold to someone else prepping for a move.

## **Packing**

The most time consuming part of the moving process is packing. However, following these packing hacks will help make the process less stressful and more efficient.

### **Pack an Essentials Bag**

Packing day will be chaotic, so start the process by putting together your essentials bag first. Only pack the items you'll need access to during your move and right after you've arrived at your new place. Items in your essential bag should include:

- Important documents
- Medications
- Chargers
- Basic toiletries
- Changes of clothes

Anything else you may need for the first few days in your new home

### **Keep Clothing in Your Dresser Drawers**

Don't empty your drawers. The clothes and nonbreakable items inside your dresser can be easily moved with this packing tip. Wrap the dresser with shrink wrap. The plastic keeps the drawers from falling out while in transit. When you get to your new home, unwrap the packing and it's ready to go.

### **Leave Clothes on Hangers**

Leaving your clothes on hangers makes them easy to move and set up in your new home. Group them by five or six hangers (depending on how bulky the clothing is) and wrap them in large garbage bags.

Alternatively, use a wardrobe box, which includes a metal hanging bar, to hold several hangers with clothes. Then, when you get to your new home, move your clothes straight into your new closet.

### **Pack Your Bags**

Luggage is made for packing and carrying, so use it to your advantage. Use suitcases to pack items that are not easily transported in boxes, or to keep valuables and bulky items safe.

### **Use Towels and Linens as Packing Material**

Save money on packing materials by using your linens and towels as padding. Bubble wrap is expensive, and you will need a lot of it. Instead, use your towels and linens to wrap breakables such as dishes, frames, lamps and more.

### **Take Pictures**

Snap photos of the complex wiring on the back of your entertainment systems so you remember how to set it up once it's moved. The same goes for anything you have to disassemble for the move. Also, it's a great idea to take photos of anything fragile or valuable just in case it goes missing or gets damaged while in transit. The images will be invaluable when you need to make an insurance claim.

### **Color Code Boxes**

Save time setting up your new home with a little bit of planning. You can use makers or different colored stickers to color code your boxes. Start by assigning a color for each room. Then, label the boxes as you pack. When you get to your new home, you'll be able to quickly identify where each box belongs.

## **5 COMMON MISTAKES TENANTS MAKE WHEN NEGOTIATING WITH THEIR LANDLORDS**

### **1. Not Doing Research on Rental Prices**

- Mistake: Failing to research current rental market rates before negotiating rent can leave tenants at a disadvantage.



- Solution: Always compare similar properties in the area to understand the fair market price and use this information to support your negotiation for lower rent or better terms.



## **2. Being Unprepared with Documentation**

- Mistake: Approaching negotiations without the necessary paperwork, like proof of income or references, weakens your position.

- Solution: Bring supporting documents like bank statements, rental history, and references to show that you're a reliable tenant.

## **3. Neglecting to Negotiate Other Terms**

- Mistake: Tenants often focus only on rent and overlook other negotiable terms like lease duration, repairs, or maintenance responsibilities.

- Solution: Consider asking for concessions like a longer lease, updated appliances, or free parking to enhance your rental experience without directly lowering rent.

#### **4. Not Maintaining Professionalism**

- Mistake: Being too casual, emotional, or aggressive during negotiations can damage your relationship with the landlord.

- Solution: Approach the discussion professionally, respectfully, and with clear, reasonable requests. Focus on creating a win-win situation for both parties.

#### **5. Accepting the First Offer Too Quickly**

- Mistake: Accepting the initial offer without questioning or negotiating can result in missing out on better terms.

- Solution: Politely counter-offer or ask for time to consider the proposal. Landlords often expect some negotiation, so don't be afraid to ask for improvements or adjustments.



### **MOVING OUT OR ENDING A LEASE OR RENTAL AGREEMENT**

End of lease and moving out refers to the process tenants go through when their rental agreement is coming to an end. It involves giving proper notice to the landlord, packing and vacating the property, and returning it in good condition. Tenants are typically responsible for cleaning the property thoroughly, addressing

any damages beyond normal wear and tear, and ensuring all personal belongings are removed. The goal is to meet the terms of the lease to get the bond (security deposit) refunded. It's a critical part of the rental process, requiring adherence to legal notice periods and property condition expectations.

A rental agreement can end for several reasons. Some common reasons are:

- the renter has decided to move out
- the agreement has reached its end date
- the rental provider wants to move in, sell the property or do major repairs
- the renter has stopped paying rent, is putting others in danger, has badly damaged the property or is breaking the rules of the agreement.

### **END OF LEASE CLEANING CHECKLIST FOR FIRST-TIME RENTERS**

First-time tenants approaching the end of the tenancy may get confused and worried about the impending tasks. They have to pack up everything in the house and transport it to the new living space. They also have to get the address changed on documents and make the family adjust to the change. Besides all these tiring chores, they have to ensure they clean the rental property thoroughly before moving out. Tenants must understand that end of lease cleaning in Melbourne is an obligation that must be met effectively to get the bond back.

The landlord has the right to claim the bond if the tenant leaves the property dirty or damaged. The tenant must leave the property reasonably clean, barring fair wear and tear. These conditions are also mentioned in the lease agreement, which is a legally binding contract. So, here is an end of lease cleaning checklist for first-time renters concerned about their bonds. The list will help them clean the property according to industry standards and meet the requirements of the landlord.

#### **End of Lease Cleaning Preparation**

Since DIY end of lease cleaning is extremely strenuous and time-consuming, tenants must set aside a few days for the chore. They must remove all the furniture and possessions from the property to clean the house or apartment without obstructions. Tenants must have the required tools, such as vacuum cleaners, dust

pans, mops, brushes, scrubbers, microfiber cloths, dusters, gloves, garbage bags, spray bottles, etc.

The cleaning duration depends on the property's size and condition. If the rented house is large and filthy, it is better to hire end of lease cleaners Melbourne for the task. Professionals have access to state-of-the-art tools and know the right techniques for cutting through grime and removing dust. They can complete the task quickly and get the bond back for you.



### **Bedrooms and Living Room Cleaning**

- Start from the top by cleaning the ceiling fan and removing the cobwebs
- Clean the walls and dust the shelves and lampshades
- Wipe the doors, skirting boards, doorknobs, air vents, light switches, and sliding door frames
- Dust the cupboards and wardrobes from inside and outside
- Clean the windows from outside and inside and dust the blinds
- Vacuum the accumulated dust from the floors and carpets and mop the hard floors.

## **Bathroom Cleaning Tasks**

- Begin with the removal of cobwebs from the corners and cleaning the exhaust fan blades and frame
- Wipe the tiles on the walls and dust the shelves and light fixtures
- Clean the basin, countertop, vanity and cupboards
- Remove hard water stains from the faucets and polish the towel rails
- Eliminate soap scum and limescale from surfaces and clean the showerhead and curtain or glass door without leaving streaks
- Scrub the soap dispensers, toilet bowls, and bathtubs to remove all marks and stains. Hiring end of lease cleaners Melbourne can help achieve the best results for bathroom cleaning and help to get the bond back.
- Polish the mirror and wipe the door, doorknob and light switches
- Clean the grout and then vacuum and mop the floor.

## **Kitchen Cleaning Requirements**

- Remove the cobwebs from the ceiling and dust the top of the shelves and cabinets
- Clean the cupboards, drawers and cabinets from inside and outside thoroughly
- Wipe off greasy layers from the countertop, tiles and the stovetop
- Scrub the sink and polish the faucets while sanitising the garbage disposal and cleaning the drain.
- Clean and sanitise the dishwasher according to the manual, and follow the same process for the oven and refrigerator. Make sure to wash the removable parts with dishwashing soap to remove all stains and grease.
- Clean the rangehood underside and the filter to get rid of the grunge
- Wipe the door, doorknob, lampshades and light switches.
- Vacuum and mop the hard floor

## **Hallways and Stairs Cleaning Checklist**

- The common areas must be cleaned effectively by removing the cobwebs from the ceiling and dust from the walls

- The windowsill, glass, handles and frames must be cleaned carefully without creating marks
- Wipe the skirting boards, handrail, and the steps. If the stairs are covered with carpets, vacuum them to remove all the dust and particles.
- Dust all the lampshades and wipe the light switches



### **Outdoor Area Cleaning Checklist**

- Start with removing cobwebs in the garage, followed by removing marks from the walls.
- Dust the doors and clean the cupboards and shelves.
- Vacuum and mop the floor to maintain environmental health
- Mow the lawn and dust the patio furniture. If this seems too demanding, you can hire end of lease cleaners Melbourne to enjoy a relaxed move.
- Remove weeds from the garden area and prune the plants to give them a neat look
- Sweep the pathway and vacuum the porch to satisfy the landlord during the inspection

## Wrapping Up

End of lease cleaning can be challenging for tenants who are undertaking the responsibility for the first time. They must use the checklist given above to clean every part of the property and get their bond back without hassles.



## CONCLUSION

Renting your first home can be an exciting yet challenging experience, but with the right knowledge, you can navigate the process smoothly. Understanding the rental market, your budget, and the details of your lease agreement are essential first steps. By doing thorough research and asking the right questions, you can secure a rental that suits your needs and avoid common pitfalls. Whether it's choosing the right location, negotiating terms, or understanding your rights and responsibilities, being well-prepared will make your rental experience far less stressful.

As a tenant, it's important to maintain a good relationship with your landlord, ensure timely rent payments, and keep the property in good condition. By fulfilling your obligations and being mindful of the lease terms, you'll not only enjoy your rental experience but also avoid complications when moving out. Following the

guidelines in this guide will help you confidently handle your first rental, ensuring a positive and smooth experience from the beginning of your tenancy to the end.



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