

January 2023

Moving Out:

Complete Steps To Take When Leaving A Rental In Brisbane



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Abstract

A tenant has decided to move out or has been told by the property owner to vacate. Now, the property needs to be inspected, keys collected and the security deposit returned, as well as a bunch of other tasks that need to be completed. This checklist will ensure that you are completing each necessary step in the tenant move-out process and updating Appfolio accordingly to maintain data integrity.



Getting Started

The comprehensive tenant move-out checklist below will guide you through the entire process and ensure that you don't overlook anything important when vacating the rental property – so that you can get your security deposit back and part on good terms with your landlord.

I. Most Common Reasons Why Tenants Move Out Of A Rental Property

Tenants move out of their current rental for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons are out of their control, while others are a matter of preference. Here are ten of the most common reasons renters leave, as well as tips to avoid a vacancy at your rental property.



1. Cannot Afford the Rent

A renter may move out because the apartment has become too expensive for them. Their income may have gone down through a job loss or their expenses may have gone up from a large medical bill.

Offer Relocation:

If you have another vacant unit available that is cheaper than the tenant's current unit, you can offer them the chance to move into that unit.

Reduce Rent:

Another option may be to reduce the tenant's monthly rent. If reducing rent by \$50 dollars a month will get the tenant to stay, it may be worth it because you may spend more trying to fill the vacancy.

2. Apartment Too Small

A renter may move because they need more space. Marriage, childbirth, pet adoption or starting a home business are all reasons a tenant may need an extra bedroom, an extra bathroom, a larger kitchen, more storage space or a backyard.

Offer Larger Unit:

if you have larger apartments available let the tenant know they have the option of moving into one of them.

Offer Upgrade:

Even if the unit is smaller than the tenant would like, you may be able to get them to stay by offering to upgrade their apartment. Swapping out carpet, retiling a shower or adding stainless steel appliance may be enough to get the tenant to overlook the tighter space for a while longer.

3. Apartment Too Large

A tenant may move because they want something smaller. Empty nesters or the newly single may not want the responsibility of maintaining a larger unit.

Offer Smaller Unit:

If a smaller unit is available which might fit the tenant's needs, let your tenant know.

Offer Incentive:

You can offer the tenant an incentive, such as reduced rent, a free parking space or a new kitchen backsplash to try and convince them to stay.

4. Job Change/Relocation

Some tenants move because of a job change. This new job may come with a higher or lower income and they want to find a suitable rental.

Job relocation can force a tenant to move. This is a good thing if the relocated tenant is looking to rent from you, but a bad thing if it is one of your current tenants who must relocate quickly.

Job Relocation:

Unfortunately, there is little you can do if a tenant is moving due to a job relocation. In this case, you must work to find a new tenant to fill the vacancy.

Job Change- Higher Salary:

If a tenant gets a raise, and is looking for a nicer rental, you can offer to make upgrades to their apartment in exchange for a slight increase in rent.

Job Change-Lower Salary:

For tenants who have changed jobs, causing their income to drop, you can offer to reduce the tenant's rent or you can offer to let them move into a cheaper apartment if you have another vacancy available.

5. Maintenance Issues

Maintenance issues can cause a tenant to move. They may be tired of dealing with clogged drains, leaky roofs, or pest problems. The good news is, if you stay on top of the maintenance at your property, you will not have to deal with this issue.

Regular Maintenance:

Periodic maintenance can help prevent problems from occurring.

Fix Problems Quickly:

If an issue does come up, addressing and resolving the issue quickly will usually be enough to keep the tenant happy. You should also have an easy way for tenants to contact you to make repair requests, whether it is email or a dedicated phone line.

6. Problems With Neighbors

Some tenants will move due to issues with neighbors or other tenants. They may have noise complaints, feel unsafe around a neighbor or constantly butt heads with another individual. A tenant wants to be able to enjoy their home in peace so will leave if they are uncomfortable

Tenant Screening:

While you cannot control the next-door neighbors, you can control the type of tenant you put into your property. It is so important to put quality tenants in your rentals. One bad tenant could quickly cause good tenants to move out of your property.

Quiet Hours Policy:

You should also have a quiet hours policy in place. If a tenant continues to violate this policy, they will be faced with eviction.

7. Want to Change Neighborhood

A tenant may want to move to a different neighborhood. They may feel that their current neighborhood has become unsafe, they may want to experience a new location or they may want to switch school districts.

Offer Incentives:

If a tenant wants to leave the area, it can be hard to convince them to stay. You can offer incentives to see if that will change their mind.

Offer Different Location:

If you are lucky enough to have a rental in their desired new neighborhood or even a different location than your current property, you can see if the tenant might be willing to move there instead.

8. Separation/Divorce/Marriage

Some tenants will move due to changes in their relationship status. A separation or marriage might have changed their financial status or they may simply want to start fresh. Those undergoing a separation or divorce may be looking to downsize, while those getting married may be looking to move to a larger place.

Avoid a Vacancy:

Offer any available rentals you may have. Offer incentives such as a free parking space.

9. Renter's Market

Many renters relocate when the market becomes a renter's market, meaning there are more units available than there is demand for units, so the tenant may be able to get a larger apartment or one with better amenities, for a cheaper price.

Reduce Rent:

You can try to avoid a vacancy by reducing a current tenant's rent.

Offer Upgrades:

Instead of reducing rent, you can offer upgrades to the apartment such as granite countertops, new carpeting or appliances, in the hopes that they will renew their lease.

10. Change in Voucher Status

A tenant who is on a government voucher may see their voucher amount increase or decrease, meaning they will be looking for a larger or smaller unit.

Offer Available Units:

Let the tenant know immediately if you have any other vacancies available.

II. Your Rights And Responsibilities

The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) looks after the laws which protect the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords/agents.



Avoiding problems

Some general tips to avoid problems with your tenancy include:

- paying your rent on time
- taking good care of the property
- not disturbing the peace, comfort or privacy of your neighbours
- speaking with your landlord/agent if you have any concerns with your tenancy, including changing who will be living with you
- keeping all documents about the tenancy (e.g. entry condition report, tenancy agreement, letters and receipts) together in a safe place.

Tenancy agreements (leases)

A tenancy agreement (also known as a lease) is a legally binding, written agreement between a tenant and a property manager/owner.

An agreement must be used even if it is between family or friends.

A tenant without a written agreement still has legal protection.

A tenant must be given the tenancy agreement before paying any money or being committed to the tenancy.

Tenancy agreements

- General tenancy agreement (Form 18a): houses, townhouses, units and houseboats
- Moveable dwelling agreement (Form 18b): caravans, caravan sites and mobile homes

- Rooming accommodation agreement (Form R18): renting one or more rooms and sharing other rooms or facilities with others. Special terms may apply for residents with impaired capacity in rooming accommodation.

A tenancy agreement must include:

- name and address of tenant and property manager/owner
- start and end dates (or state if it is periodic)
- the rent and how it should be paid (e.g. direct deposit)
- standard terms (what the tenant and property manager/owner can and cannot do)
- any special terms (these should be agreed in advance, e.g. that dogs are allowed but must be kept outside)

Moving out

Move-Out Checklist

A tenant move-out checklist is a form that landlords should attach as a rider (also called an addendum) to the original lease agreement. This checklist provides instructions for the tenant on the procedures and the tasks they need to complete when they vacate your property.

Every landlord's move-out checklist can be different. Some like to break down detailed procedures by room, while others only provide general terms of what is expected.

Why It's Important

Move-out checklists are especially important when it comes to the security deposit. Security deposit disputes are a big issue between landlords and tenants. If the tenant understands the proper procedures for move-out, including the condition they are supposed to leave the rental property in, it will help minimize these issues. Following these instructions, and adhering to the terms of their lease, will help ensure the tenant receives their security deposit back in full.

Tailor your checklist to meet your own specific needs and the specific needs of your property.

Information for Queensland public housing tenants

Before you move out

Complete the following tasks before you move out of your home:

- Contact your nearest Housing Service Centre at least 14 days before you leave and tell them you want to move out. If you don't, you might have to pay rent after you leave.
- Complete a Notice of intention to leave (form 13).
- Pay any rent you owe up to the handover day (the agreed date you're leaving).
- Tell us your new address or an address where we can contact you.
- Make sure your home (including the yard) is clean and tidy and take all of your belongings with you.
- Complete a Form 14a Exit condition report. This is your record of the condition of your home when you leave.
- Contact your nearest Housing Service Centre to arrange a joint pre-occupancy inspection of your home. We can help you complete the Form 14a Exit condition report and talk to you about the condition of your home before you leave. This may help reduce or prevent charges for repairs (other than fair wear and tear), cleaning or rubbish removal.
- Hand the keys in to your nearest Housing Service Centre on handover day with the completed Form 14a Exit condition report. If you don't return the keys, we take possession of your home and change the locks. You would have to pay for the new locks, and we would charge you rent until we took back the property.

Read your rights and responsibilities in the Information statement (form 17a), which you received when you signed the state tenancy agreement.

After you move out

Once you move out, we will:

- Inspect your home to see if any repairs, cleaning or rubbish removal is required. We will also check if you have left any belongings in your home (see Goods left behind).
- Finalise your rental account up to the handover day (or the day we take possession if you don't return the keys to us).
- Send you a letter to let you know if there are any outstanding charges for rent or maintenance.
- Send you any money left in your account (if you have more than \$5 credit) if you've given us a forwarding address. This takes 6 weeks

Final property inspection

We will inspect your home again after you leave. During the final inspection, we compare the condition of your home when you left with the condition when you moved in. To do this, we look at the Form 1A Entry condition report that you completed when you moved in.

This helps us see what repairs are needed because of fair wear and tear. We don't charge you for this type of repair.

We do charge you for any repairs needed due to damage as well as cleaning or rubbish removal.

Goods left behind

Items left behind will either be disposed of or stored for 30 days. If your items are stored and you do not collect them within 30 days, we will apply for an order from Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal to dispose of them. You may be charged for costs to store or dispose of your goods.

If you leave anything in your home when you leave, please contact your nearest Housing Service Centre as soon as possible.

Debts for rent or maintenance

We will send you a letter to let you know if you owe any rent or maintenance and contact you to make a repayment arrangement.

Maintenance charges can include repairs (other than fair wear or tear), cleaning, rubbish removal and costs relating to goods left behind (storage and/or disposal). Read more about maintenance debt.

Getting a reference

If you would like a rental reference ask your nearest Housing Service Centre.

Who to tell when you're moving

Use this list to make sure the right people know you're moving and your new address.

- Electricity, phone, internet, and gas service providers
- Insurance providers: house contents, health, life, and car
- Employer
- Bank, credit union or building society
- Interest-free finance services
- Services Australia – Centrelink, Medicare, and Child Support
- Australian Electoral Commission

- Child/family day care
- Dentist and doctor
- Paper deliveries and magazine subscriptions
- Car registration
- Driver's licence
- School or university
- Superannuation funds
- Car breakdown service (e.g. RACQ)
- Vet
- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Australian Tax Office
- Pet registration (local council)
- Pet Microchip Registry
- Linkt (tolls)

You can pay Australia Post to redirect mail from your old address to your new address.

Getting your rental bond back



To get your bond back, you must apply to the RTA after your tenancy has ended.

Bond refunds

A bond refund request should be completed and sent to the RTA when the tenancy has ended.

Tenants or property managers/owners can submit a bond refund form online using RTA Web Services or the paper-based Refund of rental bond (Form 4) on or after the tenancy end date or handover date has occurred. You cannot apply before this date and penalties may apply for providing false and misleading information.

The quickest and easiest way to get a bond refund is for all tenant/s listed as bond contributors and the property manager/owner to reach an agreement about how the bond is to be paid out.

It is essential that you update your details with the RTA, including your forwarding address, contact details and bank account when you leave the rental property. Bonds are refunded into Australian bank accounts.

If you have provided the RTA with an email address, we will send you updates on the progress of your bond refund.

Agreed refunds

- There must be an agreement on how the bond should be paid.
- Tenants or property managers/owners can request and agree to a bond refund online using RTA Web Services
- Alternatively, everyone listed on the bond must sign the paper Refund of rental bond (Form 4) request and submit it to the RTA.

On average you will receive your bond refund within 2-3 days of the RTA receiving your completed form. We encourage customers not to call until this timeframe has passed.

Disputed refunds

A disputed refund is when:

- not everyone signs the same bond refund form, and/or
- there is no agreement about how the bond should be paid

When this occurs the RTA:

- releases any undisputed amounts
- holds any disputed amount/s, and
- sends a Notice of claim to the people whose signature/agreement is missing from the request. They will have 14 days to disagree with the request or submit a Dispute resolutions request (Form 16) to the RTA.

Understanding the disputed bond refund process in detail

The RTA encourages all parties to try and resolve any issues in the first instance.

The RTA will process the first bond refund request made (Party A). If the other person (Party B), whose signature/agreement is missing, disagrees with Party A's refund request, they can dispute the claim within the timeframe stated to prevent payment.

The RTA will send Party B a Notice of claim and Party B can disagree digitally via Web Services or submit a Dispute resolution request (Form 16) to the RTA by the due date.

If the RTA does not receive a digital response via Web Services or a completed Form 16 from Party B within the 14 day period as stated on the notice, the bond will be paid out, as directed on Party A's bond refund form.

If Party B disagrees on the bond refund through the above process, it will commence the dispute process with the RTA's dispute resolution service where a conciliator will try to help resolve the disagreement. If agreement is reached, both parties will need to sign a bond refund form and the bond is paid out as what is agreed in this process.

If agreement is not reached, Party B (the person who disputed the refund 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 by Party B within the 7 day timeframe, the RTA will pay the bond as directed on Party A's bond refund form.

Bond loans

The RTA will deduct the amount owing on the bond loan from the tenant's refund and pay it directly to the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy.

Property maintenance and cleaning

As a tenant, you are responsible for keeping the property/room clean and in good condition. Find out information about:

- maintenance and repairs
- fixtures and structural changes
- inclusions.

According to the tenancy laws in Queensland, tenants or renters are responsible for the property's condition. This means they must return it in a clean and well-maintained state, or they can lose the entire bond money.

Landlords usually inspect every nook and cranny and have all the right to withhold your deposited security if they find stains on carpets, mould on bathroom walls or grease inside kitchen appliances. It is important to know your duties as a tenant and look for a company that specialises in meticulous bond cleaning Brisbane.

Professionals can help you in the cleaning process according to the REIQ-approved checklist.



However, finding the right company is crucial as many people fall prey to cheap offers or scams. Understanding the red flags is important and hiring the most reliable company that offers bond cleaning in Brisbane for your cleaning needs.

How To Choose A Good Bond Cleaning Company

Here is a complete guide that will help you choose an experienced, trained and certified bond cleaning company in Brisbane, QLD:

1. Referrals And Recommendations Can Work

This is one of the best ways to find a reliable and trusted company at the end of your tenancy. Ask your friends, relatives, colleagues or neighbours if they have hired a bond cleaning company.

You can gather detailed information about them from people you trust a lot. They can recommend you some good companies that can help you get the cleaning done without a hint of stress. You can find out different types of cleaning services that can help you choose the ideal one when you are at the end of your tenancy.

Contact them and gather details as much as possible.

2. Online Customer Reviews

In today's era, you can rely upon online customer reviews to find out the company's authenticity. You can search for good companies in your area via Google maps or search engine platforms and check their genuine reviews.

Look for trustworthy comparison websites and consider reviews of previous customers. Do not fall for sugar-coated reviews in comments. It will make it easy for you to narrow down your options, and you can make the right decision.

Follow your instincts and consider genuine reviews that can help you discover more about companies and their services.

3. Experience Matters

You can't overlook the importance of choosing an experienced bond cleaning company in Brisbane. This can make a huge difference because this type of cleaning requires expertise and years of experience to achieve desired results.

So, look for a company that has at least 5 years of experience in the industry. They can tackle dust, dirt, and stains with perfection and help you get the fun bond back with ease.

4. Compare Quotes

It is always good to check the pricing policy of companies you have shortlisted. This will help you in the comparison phase. You should compare estimated quotes of at least three companies. Break down their quotes and see how much they charge on an hourly basis. This will make it easy for you to make the right decision depending on your estimated budget.

Make sure you won't ask to pay hidden charges in the middle of the process. So, clear your doubts by asking relevant questions related to the prices, services and additional charges.

5. Check Inclusions And Exclusions

Make sure you check for the bond cleaning exclusions because every company have their own policies and inclusions. So, ask the company to provide you with a complete end-of-lease cleaning checklist.

Usually, a checklist includes all rooms, vacuuming of carpets, dusting surfaces, spot cleaning, scrubbing, and sanitisation. However, you need to hire professionals separately for steam cleaning for carpets, pressure cleaning, mould removal, etc. Some companies are expert in removing hard water stains, rust stains, built-up grease and much more.

So, have clarity before making the final decision.

6. Check Whether They Have The Proper Tools

When looking for a professional team of cleaners, make sure you find out what type of cleaning tools or products they are using. A good company always use cutting-edge equipment and environmentally-safe products to handle stains, grime, and grease.

Do not choose a company that uses chemically-laden products because these are harmful to the environment and human beings.

7. Choose A Licensed Cleaners

It is always good to choose a fully insured and licensed cleaning company in Brisbane so that you can get high-quality service with a 100 per cent bond back assurance. A licensed company always focuses on fulfilling the custom-made solutions of customers and won't cause any harm to the property. This will give you peace of mind.

Finding a good and reliable bond cleaning company in Brisbane becomes easy with these tips and tricks. Make sure you do proper research and look for options that can help you get the full bond back without any dispute. Make sure you check the initial condition report and plan your end of lease cleaning accordingly to pass the rental inspection.

Resolving disputes

Rental disputes may occur when:

- there is poor communication
- the terms of the tenancy agreement are not met
- people do not understand their rights and responsibilities.

Resolving disputes

The best way to avoid disputes is for the people involved to talk to each other as soon as an issue arises. You also need to be aware of your rights and responsibilities when renting.

If your landlord or rental agent or manager breaches the tenancy agreement, you can issue them with a Notice to remedy breach.

To resolve problems during a tenancy, you can:

- phone the Residential Tenancies Authority on 1300 366 311 and use the Dispute Resolution Service
- phone the Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service on 1300 744 263
- apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

The Final Words

Each of these steps is necessary to perfecting a simple move-out process, but that doesn't make the individual steps easy. It takes time and dedication to create a process that not only works smoothly, but also keeps you out of major legal or financial trouble down the road.

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