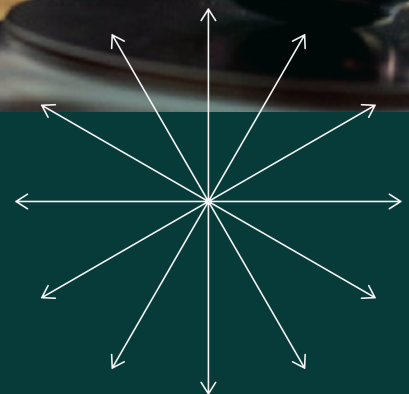

RENTING A HOME: YOUR RIGHTS AS A TENANT



ABSTRACT

As a renter, you're bound by the terms and responsibilities in your lease or rental agreement. At the same time, federal, state, and local laws protect you against unlawful landlord practices. Here's what you need to know about your rights as a tenant—under normal circumstances.

As a tenant, you have rights that protect you from unlawful landlord practices and help to ensure that your rental home is safe. Keep in mind that while there may be some flexibility in your lease terms, your tenant rights are always non-negotiable.

INTRODUCTION

As a tenant, you have the right to live in a safe, secure and quiet environment that is managed in accordance with the law.

You also have a responsibility to take good care of the property, pay the rent on time, and adhere to the terms of your tenancy agreement. If you are thinking about renting, learn about tips and support available to help you find the right home for you.

I. Choosing a rental property

What sort of home do you need?



When choosing a rental property there are many things to consider, including:

- How much rent can you afford?
- What kind of home do you want to live in—a house, unit, townhouse, room with shared facilities or caravan?
- How many bedrooms do you need?
- Do you need a well-fenced yard where pets are allowed?

- Do you want to look after a yard and/or mow a lawn?
- Do you prefer to park your car on the street or in a garage?
- Do you want a property with gas, electricity or either?
- Do you want to pay for water use?
- Where do you want to live—close to family, friends, work, school or public transport?
- Would you consider a moveable dwelling (caravan) park? If so, can you afford extra site costs?
- Would traffic or other surrounding noise be an issue for you?
- What types of locks and security do you require for your safety and contents insurance?
- Does your mobile phone have reception inside the property?
- Does the property have the facilities you need, for example, a telephone and/or internet connection?

Services and facilities nearby

The National Health Services Directory helps you find services in and around Queensland communities.

Check what facilities and services are available in areas where you may like to rent:

- local councils sometimes have information on facilities and services.
- education, cultural and health facilities
- transport services.

Searching for a place to rent



There are many ways to find a place to rent in the private market, including:

- searching websites online
- property listings in newspapers

- contacting local real estate offices.

When you start looking, make a list of all properties you're interested in and the landlord or agent's contact details. Use this list to keep track of the properties you have asked about, inspected or applied for.

Real estate agent offices

- Look for 'to let' or 'for rent' displays in the office windows of real estate agencies.
- Look for 'to let' or 'for rent' signs outside properties in areas where you want to live.
- Speak to your local real estate agent—leave your contact details with them so they can contact you if a suitable place becomes available.
- Look on the noticeboards at TAFE colleges, universities, shopping centres, supermarkets, local shops and cafés for shared accommodation (university websites may be useful for shared accommodation).

You can also ask friends and family to let you know if they hear of something that might be suitable.

II. Tenancy agreements and other rental documents: a checklist for private renters

Tenancy agreements, inventories, deposit and insurance documents... If you rent, here's what you need to know about what to sign and when



Tenancy agreements, inventories, deposit-related paperwork...When you're renting a flat or a house, there is a raft of documents and paperwork that you will need to sign

and possibly retain. Here's all you need to know about the documents you need to have in place when you're renting.

Read on, then jump to our beginner's guide to renting to find out what else you might need to know.

Get your id and bank details ready

The landlord or letting agent will want to check that you are who you say you are and are a trustworthy tenant who can afford the rent.

You'll need to show photo ID – either a passport or driving licence – plus, if you're not a relevant immigration documents proving that you have the right to be in the country and rent a property here. You may also be asked for a copy of your employment contract, a reference or a letter from your employer confirming that you work there and recent bank statements as evidence of your income.

Many landlords run credit checks to find out if you've had financial problems in the past, and need your written permission to do so.

Find out more about how to be a good tenant in our guide.

Sign the tenancy agreement

You'll have to sign two copies of the tenancy agreement or contract: one for you and the other for the landlord. Don't feel pressured into signing before you've read it through carefully and completely understand both parties' rights and responsibilities. If anything's unclear or seems unfair, now's the time to point it out, and you can get advice from Shelter or Citizens Advice.

With the many recent changes made to renting, notably the extended notice periods landlords must give tenants, make sure that the tenancy agreement the landlord is using is up to date. If it isn't, don't hesitate to ask that they use a different, up-to-date one.

Find out what to ask your landlord before you move in so that there are no misunderstandings after the fact.



Pay the deposit

A deposit – of no more than five weeks' rent on properties where rent is under £50,000 a year, and six weeks when it's over that – acts as insurance in case a tenant damages the property or does a runner. The money must be lodged in a government-backed tenancy deposit scheme and returned to you when you move out. Ask for a receipt once it's paid.

Checking the inventory

Ideally, you should be present when the landlord or letting agent compiles the inventory, which lists everything in the property including fixtures, fittings, flooring, furniture and kitchen equipment, together with a note of each item's condition. If not, go through it carefully and if anything is damaged or missing, inform the landlord or agent in writing and only agree and sign once you're happy with it.

As a precaution, when you move in take photos of any existing stains or damage to avoid being held responsible for them later on. Likewise, make a note if the landlord removes anything from the property while you're living there.

Find out what to ask the letting agent about the property you're renting before you move in.

Sort contents' insurance

The landlord's insurance policy won't include your personal possessions, so you must take out your own contents' cover. List everything, work out the approximate cost of replacing them, and shop around for a suitable policy. Some companies insist on minimum security measures such as specifying the type of door lock, which may require negotiation with the landlord.



Find out about home insurance in our guide and check out these sensible home security measures.

Take contact details

By law, a landlord has to provide a name and address. Make sure these are correct, and that you have a phone number to call in case of an emergency. Information the landlord or agent **must** give you at the start of the tenancy includes:

- Details of the tenancy deposit protection scheme your deposit is lodged with, including the amount paid, a leaflet explaining the rules, how to get your money back at the end and what to do if there's a dispute;
- This info has to be provided in writing within 30 days after the deposit's paid;
- A copy of the government's How to Rent guide([opens in new tab](#)), in writing or emailed as a pdf;
- A gas safety certificate covering all gas appliances. This needs to be renewed annually;
- An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). New tenancies require a minimum band E rating;
- A record of any electrical inspections;
- Evidence that smoke and any carbon monoxide alarms are working.

III. Living in the property

Rental law changes introducing minimum housing standards will come into effect for new tenancies from 1 September 2023, and for all tenancies from 1 September 2024.



All parties should be aware of their rights and responsibilities so they can make informed renting choices and help avoid problems during the tenancy.

Entry to the property

When a tenant is renting a property or room, it is their home. The property manager/owner may need to enter for an inspection, repair or a viewing, but it is important that the tenant's privacy is respected. Know where you stand regarding entry to the property.

Fixtures and structural changes

There are rules about the fixtures attached to, or installed in, a rental property and tenants must seek agreement from the property manager/owner before considering making any changes to these. Find out the requirements for attaching fixtures or making changes to a rental property.

Inclusions

Inclusions are everything supplied with the property for the tenant's use and will vary from property to property. Find out your obligations for rental property inclusions.

Renting with pets

A tenant must seek approval from the property owner/manager to keep a pet and is responsible for all damages and nuisance caused by the pet. The property owner/manager must respond to a tenant's pet request in writing within 14 days and provide reasons for their approval or refusal of the pet. Understand your rights and obligations around renting with pets.



Routine inspections

Routine inspections are carried out to ensure the property is well cared for by the tenant and to check if there are any repair, maintenance or health and safety issues. Find out your obligations for routine inspections.

Quiet enjoyment

A tenant is entitled to reasonable peace, comfort and privacy, and must be able to make full use of their property. Find out your rights and obligations to quiet enjoyment.

Rules and changing site in a caravan park

A property manager/owner can make rules about the use, management and control of a caravan park. Find out your rights and obligations when it comes to caravans, moveable dwellings and sites in Queensland.

House rules in rooming accommodation

When the tenant signs the agreement for rooming accommodation, they are also agreeing to the house rules. If they break a house rules, they are breaking the agreement. Find out your rights and obligations for house rules in rooming accommodation.

IV. 10 Must-Do Tasks For Your Rental Property's Spring Cleaning

But, I like to have my rental properties well run without much daily oversight... so it has to get done!

For much of the country, the warmer weather sparks a renewed motivation in homeowners to tackle tasks that may have been pushed aside during the shorter days and colder temperatures. If you are managing your rental properties on your

own, it may be a good time to do some spring cleaning. Being proactive with maintenance responsibilities can also prevent calls from your tenants. Equally as important, it can also provide insight on how your tenant is treating your property.



Here are 10 maintenance tasks to knock off your to-do list this spring:

Interior

Change furnace filters: Completing this task is an easy way to ensure the heating system is running at top performance. Furnace filters are inexpensive, ranging from \$10-\$20 each. If you have more than one unit to maintain with similar filter sizes, buy them in bulk to save time and money.

Replace smoke & carbon dioxide detector batteries: The recommended standard is to change batteries in your smoke detectors in the spring and the fall at Daylight Savings Time. The reasons are obvious: change the batteries to ensure your tenants are safe; no one wants a lawsuit due to non-functioning detectors. Depending on your tenants, it could be beneficial to change them on the off chance that your tenants are inclined to break the detector instead of replacing it to stop the chirping when the battery is dead.

Ensure that lint from the dryer vent has a clear path to the outside: Obviously this is applicable to units that have interior washer-dryers. Also, if the complex has shared amenities, it's wise to check the dryer vents. Start by checking the lint holder in the dryer to ensure it's free of lint; if there is a large amount of lint, it may indicate that the lint holder is not emptied regularly enough (each time the dryer is used). Remove the hose that attaches to the back of your dryer and check for any build up. If you see any, use a vacuum to remove it. Also check to make sure there are no holes in the vent system.

Flush the water heater: This task may be slightly more involved, but it is vitally important to the longevity and efficiency of your water heater. The water tank tends to hold sediment at the bottom of the tank, and by flushing the water heater, it

removes the sediment. Doing this yearly will maintain the efficiency of heating water. I recommend reading this article on the Family Handyman website to learn how best to flush your water heater.

Clean sinks: Clogged drains can be landlord's archenemies. By cleaning them during the spring, you help eliminate calls about clogged pipes. An inexpensive cleaning method is to use half a cup of baking soda, and let it sit for five minutes. Then add one cup vinegar and a pot of very hot water; let it sit covered for five minutes and then run hot water through it for 30 seconds.

Exterior



Clean gutters and remove leaves: Depending on the size of your property, this task may be manageable yourself, or it may be something you contract out. Either way, it is important to make sure that the gutters are clear and drain water properly. Leaves on the ground in the spring can be mowed over using a mulching mower serving a dual purpose — improving the appearance of the yard and fertilizing the grass.

Check siding and roofing for visible signs of problems: Walk around the home and check for any damage or potential problems. Wind can cause branches to damage the siding and roofing shingles.

Check sump pump and make sure it's still operational: A sump pump can be a true money saver if there is water from excessive rainfall or melting of snow. You want to make sure the outdoor drain is not clogged or block. Inside, you want to make sure the sump pump turns on when it needs to. Check out this article for specifics.

Trim landscaping: Cleaning up the landscaping has many advantages. Trimming branches that might be encroaching on your home keeps the window screens protected. It also removes dead branches that could break off during strong winds. Additionally, the neighbors might see you and take the opportunity to speak with you

and provide feedback on your tenant's behaviors. And above all else, it will make your property look nice, which can attract ideal tenants if the property becomes available for rent.

Inspect the crawl space; look for bugs and water leaks: It may not be the most fun chore, but it can save you money if you catch a small problem before it destroys a month of cash flow. Go into the crawl space and see if there are any creatures that may have made it their winter home. Also check to see if any of the wood shows indications of water damage.

Some of these may or may not be applicable to your properties depending on the size and style, but hopefully they have reminded you of the benefits of preventative maintenance.

By doing regular maintenance you keep a close eye on your property. The preemptive maintenance work fosters trust from your tenant by demonstrating that you are concerned about the upkeep. It is also an opportunity to connect with the tenant and see if they are happy with the unit or if they are planning to leave anytime soon. A little bit of preventative maintenance can save money and potentially headaches in the future.

V. Follow Our Apartment Cleaning Checklist to Simplify Move-Out Day

The last of your belongings are packed, but there's one box you can't tape up just yet: cleaning supplies. A dirty apartment or condo can be a deal-breaker for getting your deposit money back, but you don't have to hire a cleaning service to get the job done. Our complete apartment move-out cleaning checklist has everything you need to deep-clean your space before you head out and turn in your key. Now grab your cleaning tools, turn on your favorite playlist, and get cleaning!

Apartment Move-Out Cleaning Checklist

When cleaning an apartment, always work from the top (ceiling fan, windows, walls) to the bottom (floors, baseboards, carpet). This allows dust and dirt to fall to the ground as you clean, so you don't have to sweep or vacuum multiple times throughout.

1. Clear Cobwebs from Ceiling

You might have abandoned this step throughout your entire lease, but remember to clean the ceiling before moving out. Use a broom or vacuum to help pull down cobwebs. Have a popcorn ceiling? Roll a damp high-nap paint roller over the ceiling

to pick up dust and cobwebs. It won't knock down pieces of the popcorn finish as a broom might.



2. Dust Blinds

Grab an old pair of socks and put one on like a glove. (Trust us, this cleaning hack seriously works!) Dip it in water until it's damp, then run your hand across each rung to rid the blinds of dust. This method works great to clean heaters, too!

3. Wash Windows

Use a window or glass cleaner to wash your windows. Simply spray the solution onto the window and wipe quickly with a lint-free cloth to avoid streaks. Make sure to dust off the handles, locks, and between the sliding tracks if your windows have them.

4. Remove Any Nails and Patch Walls

The gallery wall looked great while it lasted, but now it's time to patch up your walls. Use commercial putty and paint in the same color as your wall (sometimes your landlord will provide this) to restore it to its original state. Be sure to use a putty knife to properly apply the product.



5. Check Lights

Check if any lightbulbs have gone out, and replace them as necessary. Dust the fixtures, and use a cleaning wipe to sanitize light switches. A duster with an extendable arm (\$11, Target) will help you reach tall ceiling lights.

6. Check Smoke Detector

If your smoke detector is beeping, the battery likely needs to be replaced. But even if it's not, you should ensure all smoke alarms have working batteries, especially if they came that way when you moved in. Most come with a test button you can press to indicate battery life; a weak or nonexistent signal means it's time for new batteries.

7. Clean Walls and Baseboards

Use the brush attachment on your vacuum to remove any dust lingering on your baseboards or trim. If you have stains on your walls, grab a microfiber cloth and wash the walls using an appropriate cleaner for the paint finish.

8. Clean Carpet

Carpet stains are bound to happen. Remove them by applying commercial carpet cleaner (\$5, Walmart) and letting it sit for a few minutes. Use a microfiber cloth to blot the stain away. Some common carpet stains require a specific solution for removal, so be sure to use the right product for your apartment carpet cleaning.



9. Vacuum and Mop Floors

Last but not least on your apartment move-out cleaning checklist: Vacuum and mop the floors. Save this one for last as dust and chemicals have likely fallen while cleaning elsewhere. Let family members know not to walk on the floor until completely dry, and keep pets in another room.

Room-by-Room Apartment Cleaning: Kitchen

Your kitchen is one of the hardest working rooms in your home, but it's also a magnet for grease, crumbs, and stains. Make sure to give your apartment kitchen a deep clean before your move-out inspection.

1. Clear Out Cabinets and Pantries

Start by removing everything from your cabinets and pantries (this is a great time to toss expired foods, too!). Remove any shelf liners and wipe down the shelves with a damp cloth. You can also save time by using the brush attachment on your vacuum to suck up any crumbs in a snap.

2. Wipe Down Fridge

First, remove all fridge contents and throw away any expired items. Pack food into a cooler until you're finished cleaning. A spray bottle with one part baking soda and seven parts water will work wonders for cleaning your refrigerator interior and exterior. Be sure to wipe the drawers, doors, and handles using the DIY cleaning solution, too.

3. Clean the Oven

Look to the auto-clean setting on your oven to do the dirty work while you knock other items off your apartment cleaning checklist. Prefer to clean the oven yourself? Combine water and baking soda to form a paste, then brush the mixture onto the inside of the oven, avoiding the coils. Once dry, spray distilled white vinegar on any remaining residue and wipe clean. Make sure to wash the grates and racks, too.



4. Sanitize the Sink, Drain, and Disposal

Clear out a slow drain with the help of one part baking soda and two parts white distilled vinegar. First, add the baking soda to your disposal, then slowly pour in the vinegar. Let the bubbly mix sit for at least 15 minutes, then rinse it out with hot water.

Next, clean the kitchen sink basin with a little dish soap and hot water. Dry with a microfiber cloth.

5. Clean the Dishwasher

Use a sanitizing wipe to rid your dishwasher's door of any soap scum and hard water spots. Then follow our handy dishwasher cleaning guide to learn how to scrub the accessories and tub.

6. Sanitize Countertops

A simple sanitizing wipe or all-purpose cleaner will make easy work of cleaning countertops. If you have stains or discolored grout, make a paste of baking soda and vinegar and apply it to the area. Let it sit for a few minutes before using a scrubbing brush to help restore countertops to their original state. Wipe clean with a warm, damp cloth or paper towel.

Room-by-Room Apartment Cleaning: Bathroom

Before cleaning your bathroom, box up all cosmetics, toiletries, and towels that you don't use on a regular basis. Keep only the items you'll need for your final days before moving out.

1. Polish Mirrors

Yes, your landlord will notice if you leave your mirror covered in streaks and fingerprints. To polish a bathroom mirror, spray an ammonia-based glass cleaner (\$3, Walmart) directly on the mirror, then use a dry lint-free cloth to wipe the surface from top to bottom. Wiping in a circular motion will ensure your mirror is streak-free!

2. Sanitize the Vanity

Use an all-purpose spray to wipe down the surface of your bathroom vanity. If the faucet has water stains, spray distilled white vinegar directly on it and wipe dry using a microfiber cloth to polish. If applicable, wipe out any drawers or cabinets within your vanity.

3. Disinfect the Toilet

Visible toilet rings are a definite no-no when it comes time to move out. Get rid of them using an all-purpose bowl cleaner, or try one of our surprising toilet cleaning hacks. Once you've finished scrubbing the toilet bowl, wipe down both sides of the

seat and the tank with a bleach-based cleaning spray. Be sure to open a window or turn on your bathroom fan when cleaning with bleach.

4. Scrub the Shower or Bath

Vinegar and dish soap are your best friends when it comes to cleaning the bathroom, especially if you've got a grimy tub or shower. Follow our bathtub cleaning how-to to get rid of buildup and mold, and don't forget to clean under shampoo and conditioner bottles, where soap scum builds up fast. If you have a shower, squeegee the surround after you've used it when dirt and grime have loosened up.

5. Dust the Vent

Remember the bathroom fan! If you don't have access to the circuit breaker, use a stepladder and a can of air to dust off your exhaust fan. For a more thorough clean, remove the cover and dust the interior following our steps for cleaning a bathroom fan.

6. Mop the Floor

Once you've finished cleaning all bathroom surfaces in your apartment, focus on the floor. First, pick up any loose items, and clean up debris using a vacuum or broom. Then, mop bathroom floors with soapy water.

Optional: Balcony and Outdoor Space

If your apartment or condo has access to a private outdoor patio or balcony, make sure to remove all personal furnishings before you begin cleaning.

1. Clean Sliding Door

Leaves and dirt have likely made their way into the tracks of your sliding door. Use a vacuum to quickly pick them up or a broom to help brush them away. Removing any dirt or debris will help sliding doors easily open and close.

2. Clean Balcony

Apartment and condo balcony cleaning is a simple but necessary move-out task. First, sweep off the space using a stiff-bristled broom. Then, spot-clean your balcony with an all-purpose cleaner as needed until the surface is clean of stains or residue. Wipe down any railings.

Optional: Laundry Room

Clean Washer and Dryer

If you have a washer and dryer in your unit, you'll want to make sure any lint or detergent spills are removed. Scrub laundry messes away using a damp microfiber cloth dipped in warm water.

Once you're familiar with all the necessary apartment cleaning tasks, run through this move-out cleaning checklist before you leave. After these chores are done, you'll be officially ready to move out!

VI. How Long Does An End Of Lease Clean Take?

Tenants in Brisbane are responsible for maintaining cleanliness while living on rented premises. Additionally, they need to move out after ensuring the property is in the same condition it was in at the start of the tenancy. End of lease cleaning is vital to vacate a rental property successfully and get 100% of your bond back. You can manage the task if the house/unit doesn't require extensive cleaning or isn't heavily soiled.



However, when you perform bond cleaning yourself, there is no guarantee you will get a complete bond refund. Many renters hire professional Brisbane bond cleaners to ensure their rental properties are ready for the final inspection.

If you choose to do the same, plan your move accordingly because bond cleaning differs from regular house cleaning. It requires time, and to help you estimate it correctly, here is your complete guide outlining what end of lease cleaning includes and how long it takes.

End Of Lease Cleaning Inclusions

You only perform end of lease cleaning when your tenancy ends, and you have served the notice to vacate the rental property. Managing it like a regular house cleaning is a mistake because bond cleaning is deep sanitation of every area in the house/unit. Listed below are things it includes.

- Cleaning lights, fans and other fixtures.
- Removing cobwebs from ceilings.
- Spot cleaning walls and wiping the baseboards
- Cleaning the carpets
- Washing windows and blinds
- Cleaning window/door tracks and frames
- Sanitising wardrobes, cabinets and other storage units
- Wiping mirrors and glass surfaces
- Descaling and cleaning showerheads, faucets, bathtubs, sinks and toilets.
- Cleaning the oven, microwave and stove.
- Sweeping and mopping the floors.
- Mowing the lawn and cleaning outdoor areas such as the deck, garage, etc.

If your rental property requires additional cleaning like wall-washing, pressure washing, carpet shampooing etc., you can get them with the end of lease cleaning service in Brisbane. Most reputed bond cleaning companies in Brisbane offer multiple services to give bond back guarantee.

How Long Does An End Of Lease Clean Take?

Doing bond cleaning yourself can take days because you don't have the expertise and experience of professional bond cleaners in Brisbane. If you want to declutter your home before cleaning, it can take a week to sort your things and sanitise the rental property.

To increase your speed and complete the final sanitation in time, make an end of lease cleaning checklist to list everything you need to do and clean your house in the correct order. Get more tasks completed in time by dividing them among household members and setting deadlines.

If you plan to hire professional end of lease cleaners in Brisbane, it can take them two-eight hours depending on the property's condition and size, the number of cleaners, and additional cleaning requirements. However, here are the usual timelines.

- It should take 1-2 hours for experienced bond cleaners in Brisbane to deep clean a 1bhk property.

- If you have a two-bedroom and two-bathroom home, 2-3 professional cleaners can sanitise it thoroughly within 3-6 hours.
- For bigger homes with 3-4 bedrooms and bathrooms, the cleaning time can easily be eight hours or more with 2-3 cleaners.

Bond cleaning can take additional hours if you have pets, pests or mould in the house. Since the professionals need to apply more elbow grease, use special equipment and put in extra hours, be prepared to pay additional charges.

What To Do After The End Of Lease Cleaning?

Whether you perform the end of lease clean yourself or hire professional bond cleaners in Brisbane, here is what to do after completing the task.

- Look at your copy of the entry condition to ensure the property is as clean as it was at the start of the tenancy.
- Take photos and videos to document the state of the property. Add these proofs to the exit condition report.
- Complete the exit condition report, sign it and get it signed by the property owner/manager.
- Make sure you don't have any possessions on the property before vacating it.
- Update your forwarding address with the Residential Tenancies Authority and add it to the rental bond refund form.
- If your landlord is lodging the refund claim form, ensure it has your details and sign it after reading the completed form thoroughly.
- Reach an agreement on the bond refund amount with your landlord before filing the claim to avoid disputes.
- In case of disagreement, you can file a bond refund claim with the RTA, and it will notify the landlord to await their response. Either the RTA will resolve the dispute, or you can do it yourself to get the bond money.

End of lease cleaning, also known as bond cleaning, is important to get your security deposit in full. You cannot vacate a rental property without bond cleaning, which is why knowing how long it takes is important to plan your house move.

Thus, use the insights shared above, whether you manage the cleaning yourself or hire professional end of lease cleaners in Brisbane.

CONCLUSION

Tenancy is a kind of ownership over the property. A tenant is someone who is permitted to occupy the property of another person, by signing a lease or rental agreement. The rental agreement empowers the tenant in some ways but also

restricts them from taking overall legal ownership of the property. With the agreement in place, both, the tenant and the landlord know their roles, rights and responsibilities.

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