

Ace Your Move-Out: **A GUIDE TO PASSING YOUR RENTAL INSPECTION**

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Abstract

Prepare for your rental inspection in Sydney with confidence. Our guide offers essential tips and insights to ensure your property shines. From decluttering and deep cleaning to minor repairs and staging, discover the strategies to impress landlords and secure a smooth inspection process, making your rental experience seamless.

1. Introduction

Master the art of passing your rental inspection in Sydney effortlessly. Our comprehensive guide equips you with insider tips and expert advice tailored to the local rental market. Learn how to spruce up your space, address maintenance issues, and present your home in its best light, ensuring a successful inspection every time.

2. Ending a Residential Tenancy

General information

A tenancy agreement in Sydney is a legally binding agreement that can only be ended in certain ways.

A tenancy will usually be terminated by the landlord or the tenant giving notice to the other party, with the tenant vacating by the date specified in the termination notice.

The landlord or the tenant will need to give the other party a written termination notice with the applicable notice period to end a tenancy.

In some cases, the landlord or tenant can apply directly to the Tribunal for a termination order without needing to issue a termination notice.

Minimum notice period

The notice period in Sydney depends on the type of agreement (fixed-term agreement or periodic agreement) and the reasons for termination.

These notice periods are designed to give tenants enough time to find another rental property, and landlords enough time to find a tenant.

A landlord and tenant can agree to end the tenancy at any time.

Termination notice

A termination notice must:

- be in writing
- be signed and dated by the party giving the notice
- include the address of the rented property
- state the day the tenancy agreement is terminated (and by which the tenant will need to move out), and
- include the reasons for termination (if applicable).

Termination notices can be given at any time and do not have to line up with the rent payment cycle.



After a landlord gives a termination notice, they can give another notice on different grounds if necessary.

For example, if a landlord gives 90 days notice to terminate a periodic tenancy without a reason, and the tenant then doesn't pay rent for 14 days, the landlord can give a termination notice for the non-payment of rent.

Serving a notice

When serving a termination notice in Sydney, it's important that the correct procedures are followed. Visit serving notice to tenants for more information.

Breaking a fixed-term agreement early

When a tenant signs a fixed term agreement, they are committing to stay for the full term.

If a tenant wants to move out before the end of the fixed term, there could be costs involved.

There are some situations where a tenant can end a fixed-term agreement without penalty.

A tenant should give the landlord as much notice as they can if they need to end the agreement early.

A tenant should also make it as easy as possible for the landlord or agent to show the property to potential new tenants.

Breaking a fixed-term agreement signed before 23 March

The former rules apply and parties should check their agreement under 'Additional terms' to see if the agreement includes the optional break fee clause.

Breaking a fixed-term agreement without penalty

In some circumstances, a tenant can break a fixed-term agreement early without penalty.

A tenant can give 14 days' written notice to end an agreement early without penalty if:

- they have accepted an offer of social housing (e.g. from DCJ Housing)
- they need to move into an aged care facility or nursing home (not a retirement village)
- a landlord has put the property on the market for sale during the fixed-term, and the tenant was not told before signing the agreement that the property would be sold
- if the property becomes listed on the Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation register during the tenancy or was previously listed without the landlord or agent disclosing that information to the tenant.

A tenant still needs to pay the rent until they hand back possession of the property.

Ending a tenancy due to hardship to the landlord or tenant

A landlord can apply to the Tribunal to end the agreement on hardship grounds if there are special circumstances.

A tenant can also apply to the Tribunal to end the agreement on hardship grounds if there are special circumstances and they are within the fixed term of the agreement. No prior notice is required.

A landlord can apply the Tribunal to end the tenancy on hardship grounds at any stage of the tenancy.

A tenant can apply to the Tribunal to end the tenancy on hardship grounds if tenant is under a fixed term agreement. A tenant can ask for an urgent hearing but will need to keep paying the rent.

It is up to the party claiming hardship to explain the situation and provide evidence to the Tribunal to prove that there are grounds for ending the agreement.

The Tribunal may make a termination order if it is satisfied that the party claiming hardship would suffer undue hardship if the tenancy continues.

Ending a tenancy because of domestic violence

A tenant can end their fixed-term or periodic tenancy immediately, without penalty, if the tenant or their dependent child is in circumstances of domestic violence.

A tenant or their dependent child is in circumstances of domestic violence if they:

- were the victim of a domestic violence offence during the tenancy
- are protected by an in-force provisional, interim or final Domestic Violence Order (DVO)
- are protected against family violence by an in-force family law injunction
- have been declared by a 'competent person' (a professional who can make a declaration) to be a victim of domestic violence perpetrated by the relevant domestic violence offender during the current tenancy.

To end a tenancy in circumstances of domestic violence, a tenant will need to give:

- the landlord or the landlord's agent a domestic violence termination notice and attach one of the following permitted forms of evidence:
- certificate of conviction for the domestic violence offence
- family law injunction
- provisional, interim or final Domestic Violence Order
- declaration made by a competent person in the prescribed form.

each co-tenant a domestic violence termination notice.



A minimum notice period is not required. The termination notice must include a termination date, which can be on the same day that the notice is given or a date after the notice is given.

A domestic violence termination notice does not need to be given in person.

Who can make a domestic violence declaration?

Previously, only registered medical practitioners were allowed to complete a domestic violence declaration.

From 11 December 2020, a wider range of professionals (competent persons) may provide a declaration.

Registered health practitioners who hold either general or specialist registration under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW), in one of the following health professions:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice
- Chinese medicine
- chiropractic
- dental (including the profession of a dentist, dental therapist, dental hygienist, dental prosthetist and oral health therapist)
- medical
- medical radiation practice
- midwifery
- nursing
- occupational therapy
- optometry
- osteopathy
- paramedicine
- pharmacy
- physiotherapy
- podiatry
- psychology

social workers who are a member of the Australian Association of Social Workers,

employees of a NSW government agency that work in child protection,
employees of non-government agencies that receive government funding to provide services relating to domestic violence/sexual assault or refuge/emergency accommodation, and
approved counsellors under the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013.

This declaration is one of 4 acceptable forms of evidence a tenant can use to attach to their termination notice, to end their tenancy without penalty.

The declaration has been made available in response to concerns that many victims of domestic violence do not feel comfortable going to the police or engaging with the justice system.

Moving out

Condition of property

At the end of a tenancy, the tenant is responsible for leaving the property as near as possible to the same condition as when they started living in it.

The tenant is responsible for negligent, irresponsible or intentional actions that cause damage to the property.

However, the tenant is not responsible for 'fair wear and tear'.

The property's original condition should be set out in the condition report.

At the end of the tenancy, the landlord or agent and the tenant must carry out a final inspection of the property.

The original condition reports should be completed by the landlord or agent, and the tenant.

The landlord or agent must give the tenant a reasonable opportunity to attend the final inspection.

However, if the other party does not show up, the report may be filled out without them.

Bond refund or claim

A tenant must pay the rent up to and including the day their termination notice period ends and they vacate the property.

If a tenant does not owe the landlord money at the end of their tenancy and there is no damage to the property, the bond paid at the beginning of the tenancy should be refunded in full.

If the landlord or agent believes the tenant owes money, they can make a claim against the bond.

Goods left behind

Tenants are responsible for ensuring that their belongings are removed from the property at the end of the tenancy.

If goods are left behind, landlords and agents must follow the correct process for dealing with them. See uncollected goods for more information.

Dealing with goods left behind

How a landlord deals with goods left behind depends on the goods.

In some cases, the landlord needs to give the former tenant notice that they are holding the tenant's goods and will dispose of the goods after a certain time if they are not collected.

Disputes about ending an agreement

Where possible, landlords, agents and tenants should try to resolve disputes about ending a tenancy and reach an agreement between themselves.

The best place to start is to carefully read the terms of the agreement.

For assistance in resolving rental problems, visit the resolving rental problems page.

Tenancy databases

Tenancy databases hold information about tenants that agents use to screen prospective tenants.

The databases can only be used by members who pay membership fees.

There are a number of tenancy databases that operate in NSW, including TICA, National Tenancy Database and Trading Reference Australia.

These databases are run by private companies, not by the Government or the Tribunal.

3. Rental Inspection Checklist: Tips to organise your home

Due for an inspection in Sydney? Rental inspections are a standard part of most tenancies, but they're often a cause of stress for renters who don't know what to expect.

Impress your property manager/landlord during their next visit and stay on top of basic expectations with this rental inspection checklist.

What is a routine inspection all about?

Your property manager or landlord in Sydney may conduct a routine inspection to ensure that your rental property is being well-maintained and any necessary repairs are being reported.

These inspections are standard in Australia and typically occur multiple times throughout the year.

As part of their responsibility to the property owner, property managers conduct visits to:

- Ensure proper care of the rental property; and
- Report any maintenance issues.

According to the law, your property manager or landlord must give you sufficient notice before inspecting your home and cannot tell you they're coming around the next day. Each state and territory has its own rules.

No matter where you live, agreeing on a convenient inspection time with your property manager or landlord is important.

In most cases, you're not required to be present during an inspection, but you're welcome to attend.

An inspection will typically include the following checks:



- Ensure the property is being maintained and is in a clean and tidy condition;
- Check the grounds are being kept in a clean and tidy condition (things like mowing, weed removal and lawn watering);
- Ensure the property hasn't been damaged in any way;
- Confirm there are no more people living in the home than what you specified on the rental agreement;
- Make sure no pets are living at the property unless they're allowed to; and
- Identify any maintenance issues

What is the purpose of a routine rental inspection?

During rental inspections in Sydney, the purpose is not to judge how clean your home is. Rather, the main goal is to identify any issues that need maintenance or repair and ensure that the property is being taken care of.

The property manager will take a walk-through of the rental property and note any problems they encounter, which they will review and document on the property condition report.

They will take note of any new damages they observe on the property or anything that could go against your rental agreement, such as hiding a cat when your agreement prohibits pets.

What steps should I take to prepare for a routine rental inspection?

To ensure a smooth rental inspection in Sydney, there are a few simple things you can do.

- Keep your property manager informed of any changes to your contact details, such as your mobile number, email address or bank details. This will ensure that you are kept up-to-date, and any issues that arise before or after the inspection can be easily communicated to you.

- If you have pets, make sure they are securely contained during the inspection or alternatively take them out while the inspection is taking place.
- It's also a good idea to check for any maintenance or repair issues in the months leading up to the inspection and to fill out the necessary maintenance request forms.

Prepare your home with this routine rental inspection checklist

To make the most of your next rental inspection, it's important to have a critical eye when examining your home.

Rent.com.au has created a helpful checklist to assist you in this process and ensure you're fully prepared for your inspection.

Use this routine rental inspection checklist to help you succeed and get the most out of your rental property.

Your living room

Lights

Do all your lights work? Switch them on and off to double-check. Give all light switches a once-over with a cloth to remove residue or leftover prints. Consider looking at the light fittings for loose cables and make a note if you spot anything. Don't forget to check for dust on any light pendants too!

Walls

The condition of your walls is important. Look along the bottom edging of your wall for any rising dampness. If you're renting, minor 'wear and tear' -style cracks shouldn't worry you, but note them down so you're not hit with any surprises.

Floorboards

While they're a nice alternative to carpets, floorboards can quickly show signs of wear and can be expensive to fix. Check for creaks by walking over your floor, but also see if your floorboards have started coming up at the edges.

Your kitchen and bathroom

Sinks and plumbing

Checked your taps recently? It might seem harmless, but a dripping tap can add extra (unwanted) costs to your utility bills. It could be as simple as replacing a washer if you have a dripping tap. When you turn the taps on, listen for any strange sounds. It wouldn't hurt to check under your sink for possible leaks.

Kitchen appliances and fittings

No one likes to clean their oven, but it's a key spot your agent will check. Open your stove, run your finger over the range hood and give the stovetop an extensive scrub.

If there's built-up grease around these areas, your property manager will probably tell you about it in your inspection report. If your microwave and fridge were included in your property, open them and check they're clean.



Tiles and surfaces

It's all about the shine when it comes to your next inspection. Clean away any residual debris and scrub hard. The same goes for your sink, mirror, shower and bathtub.

The toilet

Do an extra check around the toilet and bin areas. It'll give you an idea of how much love you're giving that area (and what needs improvement!).

The cupboards The hinges of your cupboards and joints of your shelves in your kitchen and bathroom can catch food residue and grime.

Your bedroom

Walls and floorboards

Just as you did in the living room, look at the state of your walls and floorboards. This will give you a good indication of how much love your bedroom needs. Consider giving them a little extra TLC where you can.

Windows and doors

Open your windows and doors and let the air in. Check the handles and locks on everything where appropriate. Sliding doors and windows can easily fall into disrepair.

General clean-up

Your landlord or property manager isn't likely to poke around in your bedroom too much, but giving it a good once-over, throwing away any rubbish and wiping down exposed surfaces will give a good impression during your routine inspection.

Your property's exterior

Cobwebs

Cobwebs can be a nuisance, but you must clear them before the inspection. Sweep around the exterior of your property and remove any cobwebs.

Entrance doors

Are the locks and handles functioning properly? How's the fly screen looking? Dust or wipe down the doors if they need it

Garage

If your property comes with a garage, check the doors. Do they work properly? Ensure the whole space is kept relatively clean and well-organised.

Gates and garden

Now's the time to look for any non-human residents your home might be housing. If your property has gates or a garden, look over them. Make sure your lawn is watered and that any weeds are removed.

4. A Complete Guide for Deep Cleaning Every Room in Your Home

There comes a point in a home where every room needs more than a quick cleaning to remove visible dust, dirt, and clutter. You can call it deep cleaning, spring cleaning, or "company's coming" cleaning—whatever the name, it should be done at least yearly.

You can hire a cleaning service in Sydney to tackle the tasks or follow our checklist of how to deep clean every room in your home. Read on for our guide on deep cleaning your home, room by room.

How to Deep Clean Your Kitchen

Deep cleaning the kitchen requires thoroughly cleaning the countertops, floors (tile, laminate, or vinyl), walls, and appliances.

Clean the Oven, Stovetop, and Microwave

Whether you have a self-cleaning oven or an oven you must clean yourself, remove grease and grime. Don't forget to clean the glass door, if you have one.

Clean your gas, electric coil, or ceramic stovetop correctly. If you have drip pans, clean or replace them.

Remove odors and food splatters in your microwave.

Clean the Refrigerator

Empty and clean your refrigerator.



Don't forget to move it away from the wall so you can vacuum the fan and coils on the back to help it work more efficiently.

Clean the Dishwasher, Garbage Disposal, and Sink.

Thoroughly clean the dishwasher including the filter and drain.

Clean and freshen the garbage disposal.

Bring your stainless steel or copper sink back to its original shine.

Clean the Pantry

Empty the pantry of all food and supplies.

Clean the shelves, walls, and floor.

Dispose of expired foods and donate unwanted purchases to a local food bank.

Clean and Declutter Cabinets and Drawers

Empty every cabinet and drawer.

Divide the contents into three piles: Keep, Donate, and Trash.

Clean the interior and exterior of the cabinets. Reline shelves and drawers with fresh liners.

Deep Clean the Living Room

Clean Upholstered, Leather, and Wood Furniture

Upholstered couches and chairs should be deep cleaned to remove stains and odor.

Clean and condition leather furniture.

Dust and remove grime from wood furniture.

Clean the Carpets, Area Rugs, and Flooring

Deep clean carpeting and area rugs to remove stains and odors. This can be a DIY process or you can hire a carpet cleaning company.

Bring solid wood floors back to a shine.

Clean laminate, LVP, and tile floors correctly.

Dust and Declutter

As you dust bookshelves, mantles, and tables, take the time to declutter and donate unused items.

Dust and clean electronics.

How to Deep Clean Your Bathroom

Remove Soap Scum

Soap scum should be removed from every surface including countertops, shower stalls, bathtubs, and shower curtains.

Clean the Bathroom Fan

Remove dust and grime from the bathroom fan.

Declutter and Clean Every Surface and Fixture

Follow a 5-step method to declutter and clean the bathroom.

Remove Mold and Mildew

If there is pink or green or black mold growing in your bathroom, clean it away from ceilings, wood, and grout.

Clean the Toilet

Clean the toilet and toilet tank thoroughly.

Don't forget to clean the toilet brush and toilet brush holder.

How to Deep Clean Bedrooms

Wash Pillows and Bedding

Wash foam, feather, and polyester fiberfill pillows correctly.

Wash all the bedding including mattress pads, sheets, blankets, comforters, and quilts.

Clean the Mattress

Clean and remove stains and odors from the mattress.

Clean the mattress topper.



Empty and Clean the Closet and Storage Drawers

The best way to deep clean a closet or dresser drawer is to empty each one completely.

Vacuum and clean the closet and inspect for insects.

Sort clothing and make three piles: Keep, Donate, and Toss.

Fold or hang each piece of clothing correctly before putting it back in the closet, drawers, or storage bins.

Clean Under the Bed

Remove everything that is stored under the bed.

Vacuum the flooring and the underside of the bed frame.

Donate or toss unwanted items.

Use closed storage for items you are returning to the space under the bed.

5. How To Tackle Tough Stains During End Of Lease Cleaning

Are you planning to move out of your current rental property and need to get your bond back? A rental bond is the security deposit you pay at the beginning of your tenancy to assure your landlord that you will maintain the property. Your landlord must return this amount when you leave the rental property and can only hold back the bond if you have not paid your rent on time or have not maintained the property well. Thus, it is important that you either hire end of lease cleaning Sydney professionals to

scrub every nook and corner of your home or do an intensive cleaning of your home on your own. This intensive cleaning must also tackle any tough stains and spills in your home that require extra elbow grease to remove.

Here are some ways you can tackle tough stains during your end-of-lease cleaning using only natural and eco-friendly solutions: You must deep-clean your home before you move out so that you can pass your landlord's inspection and get your bond back. The maximum rental bond you will have to pay in Sydney is four weeks. This is a huge sum of money and you must ensure you get this bond back by deep cleaning your home and removing stains using the following expert tips:

1. Pet Urine Stains: Sprinkle Baking Soda As A Deodoriser

If you discover pet urine stains on your carpets or rugs, you should remove them as soon as possible so that the urine does not soak into the fabric and cause a foul smell. To get rid of this stain and smell before your landlord comes for an inspection, first:

Blot the area with a white microfiber cloth to remove as much of the stain as possible.

Next, end-of-lease cleaners in Sydney recommend mixing 1 cup of distilled white vinegar with 1 cup of water in a spray bottle and using this on the stain.

Slowly rub the solution with a soft-bristled brush and let it dry so the acetic acid can lift the urine stains.

Once it dries, sprinkle baking soda on the stain so this alkaline solution can remove foul smells and make your carpet smell fresh.

Lastly, mix ½ cup of hydrogen peroxide with two cups of water and spray it on the baking soda solution.

This will remove any discolouring and marks and brighten your carpets and rugs.

Once the solution dries, vacuum the area to remove any remaining solution.

Tip You can also use baking soda as a green cleaner in these five ways.

2. Coffee Stains: Use Dishwashing Detergent To Wipe Off The Stain

If your carpets and sofas have coffee and tea stains all over them, this can create a bad impression on your landlord. To get these stains out, you can hire end-of-lease cleaners in Sydney to remove them or use dishwashing detergent to remove the stains. First, blot the stain immediately to remove the colouring and then mix two cups of dishwashing detergent with 2 cups of water in a bowl. Dip a clean cloth in this solution and then slowly scrub the stain from the outer corners towards the middle so it does not spread. Next, use a clean cloth, in the same way to remove the soapy solution so that it does not attract dirt and grime. Once you have removed the solution, let the carpet air dry and then vacuum the area to keep the fibres intact. Tip Here are some other ways you can clean coffee and tea stains.

3. Mould: Scrub Off The Stains Using A Soft-Bristled Brush

Next, one of the biggest factors that can cost you your bond is mould spots in your home. The first thing you should do is to wear protective gear like rubber masks and gloves while dealing with mould. Next, make a thick paste of baking soda and water and apply it to the mould stains and leave it on the stains for 30 minutes. Once the abrasive baking soda has lifted the mould spores, scrub the area with a soft-bristled brush and then rinse the area with hot water to prevent the mould spores from returning.



4. Wine: Spritz Hydrogen Peroxide To Bleach The Stains

If you have accidentally spilled wine on your carpets and upholstery or discovered an older stain, dab the area with water and hydrogen peroxide. Hydrogen peroxide is a natural alternative to chlorine bleach and can help lighten stains and remove dirt and grime. Dip a cloth in a solution of equal parts of 3% hydrogen peroxide and water, then blot the stain with this solution. Once the stain has lightened, clean the area with a white microfiber cloth and let it air dry or vacuum it.

5. Ink Stains: Blot The Area With Rubbing Alcohol

Lastly, ink stains can make a mess on your carpets, stone flooring, and countertops. To remove these tough stains, you should use a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol and then gently swab the stain. The rubbing alcohol will lift the ink immediately, and you can keep replacing the cotton swabs to prevent the stain from spreading. Once the stain has come off, professional end-of-lease cleaners in Sydney suggest you wash the area with plain water to prevent the alcohol from drying on the surface. Tip You can also use these other tips to remove stubborn stains.

The above natural solutions can help you remove tough stains during your end-of-lease cleaning so that you can get your bond back. However, if you have stains that won't come off, it is best to hire professional cleaners who use eco-friendly and advanced cleaning solutions to remove even the toughest stains from every corner of your home.

6. How to Get Your Security Deposit Back When Moving Out of an Apartment

Many apartment complexes or landlords in Sydney require that tenants pay their first month's rent, last month's rent, and a security deposit upon moving into a unit. The security deposit is a sum of money the landlord can use toward any repairs for damage caused by the tenant.

"The condition of the apartment can cause the landlords to withhold a portion of the tenant's security deposit, such as holes in walls, appliances not working, and pet stains," says James J Cosenza, a real estate agent with the Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Green Team. "It's important to clean the apartment before you give the keys back and take lots of pictures."

You can get all of your deposit back, some of it, or none of it, depending on a few factors.

"Clear communication and documentation are key to ensuring a smooth and successful return of the tenant's security deposit," says Elisabeth Quick, licensed real estate broker in Sydney. "In order to avoid any miscommunications or inconsistencies, it is important the tenants understand the terms of their lease agreement as it relates to their security deposit."

What Is a Security Deposit?

A security deposit is money that your landlord collects from you before you move in to protect against damages. Think of the deposit as collateral for keeping the unit in good shape.

"In NYC, a security deposit is equivalent to one month's rent. It is held by the landlord in an account and given back within 14 days of when the tenant moves out. If there is any damage beyond normal wear and tear, a landlord could deduct from the security deposit to cover the costs," says Jacqueline Kurtz, a real estate broker at Coldwell Banker Warburg.

Those standards will vary by state and even by city, though, depending on what regulations your region has regarding renters' rights and security deposits.

"Your state has specific requirements and laws regarding your security deposit—and for good reason," says Drew Deeter, senior account executive at Comprise Agency. "That's your money up until the point that you either don't pay rent, abandon property in the unit, or cause excessive damage. Having a contractual agreement outlining what your money can be used on gives you peace of mind and a better understanding of how to keep your hard-earned cash when moving out."

Security Deposit Deductions

When you move out in Sydney, your landlord performs a walkthrough and notifies you of the reasons for any deductions from the security deposit.

"You must receive an itemized list of charges if there are damages or unpaid fees," Deeter says. "If you don't receive that list from your landlord, ask for it. It's possible that an administrative mistake was made—but at the very least, you'll better understand where your security deposit went and how to keep more of it the next time."

Rules vary by state, but most require that the security deposit be returned in full within 15 to 30 days of the end of the lease if there is no damage or unpaid fees. There are other reasons a landlord may keep some or all of your security deposit, though.



“Your security deposit can be withheld for nonpayment of rent, abandoning property, or, more commonly, to cover damage beyond expected wear and tear. Normal wear and tear, like the thinning of carpets or hard-water buildup, is your landlord’s responsibility to fix. Excessive damage, like burns on the carpet or a broken bathroom mirror, falls on you,” Deeter says.

Move-In Precautions

The steps you take when you move into your apartment can set you up for success when it comes to getting your security deposit back down the road.

Before you move in (or bring any of your belongings into the unit), walk through the entire apartment. Pay close attention to walls, floors, ceilings, windows, doors, appliances, fixtures, and any existing damage or issues, Quick says. Bring these concerns to your landlord’s attention and also document them with photos.

“Start by taking wide-angle shots of each room from different angles to provide an overview of the room’s condition,” Quick says. “For any damages or issues you come across, take close-up shots to clearly document the problem.”

Time-stamp the photos or send them so your landlord knows when they were taken.

“Most smartphones automatically time-stamp photos, but if yours doesn’t, note the date and time of each photo,” Quick adds. “Once you’ve completed the photo documentation, send an email to your landlord or management company. In the email, attach the photos and describe any existing damage or issues you’ve discovered. Be polite and professional in your communication. Save a copy of the email and any responses you receive from your landlord or management company as proof of communication.”

Properly recording any preexisting damage can save you from having to pay for repairs on features you didn't damage when it's time to move out.

Follow the Rules

Your deposit is typically used to repair any damage, but it also serves as an incentive for you to follow the rules.

Before signing a lease, make sure you understand all the rules regarding your security deposit.

"Tenants should ensure the conditions of your deposit are clearly outlined in writing in the lease agreement and signed by you and the landlord," Deeter says. "Understanding exactly where and how your security deposit can be spent makes it easier for you to maintain your landlord's expectations. When that language is clearly spelled out and agreed upon by both parties, the move-out process has fewer snags—meaning you can get your security deposit back more quickly."

Be a Good Tenant

Being a good tenant in Sydney for the duration of your lease also goes a long way when it comes time to get your deposit back, Deeter says.

"Pay your rent on time," Deeter says. "Paying your rent on time helps you maintain a positive relationship with your landlord. Being a reliable tenant makes the move-out process smoother since you won't risk sacrificing your security deposit for missed rent."

You should also follow the rules when it comes to furry friends.

Where Pets Fit In

"Know the pet policy and stick to it," Deeter says. "For as much as they bring us joy, it's important to remember that even the best-trained pet can cause property damage. If you follow the pet policy, you're less likely to end up with excessive damage—and your landlord will have a better idea of what to expect."

If you break the rules, you could face fines and see less of your deposit returned.

"If they evaluate your unit, thinking you only had one adult cat but you had an adult cat and three golden retrievers, they may be shell-shocked by the increased, unexpected damage, and charge you accordingly," Deeter says.

Before Moving Out

Before you move out of your apartment, take a few steps that might limit deductions from your security deposit.

Clean Up

When moving out of your apartment, perform a thorough cleaning. The unit should look like it did when you moved in.

"Basically, do not give the landlord a reason to not return your deposit. I tell my renters to always do a deep clean: the stove, the microwave, the refrigerator, sweep, mop, vacuum, clean the bathroom, the tub or shower, toilet and sink," Cosenza says

Be sure to get into the cracks and crevices you likely didn't clean for the duration of your lease.



“Clean everything, including cabinets and closets, thoroughly before you leave. Most landlords have some kind of cleaning process to prep the rental between residents,” Deeter says. “By cleaning everything thoroughly when you move out, you reduce the risk of incurring additional costs from the cleaners, which would be subtracted from your security deposit.”

Remove Personal Belongings

Leave no personal belongings behind for other tenants or the landlord to move or dispose of. Remove any temporary add-ons you installed in the space.

“Make sure you remove all personal items unless otherwise stated by your landlord,” Deeter says. “As a good rule of thumb, if you bring something to a rental property, you need to be the one to remove it. Leaving behind personal items can be considered abandoning your personal property. Your landlord will then charge you to remove the items, which eats into your security deposit.”

Attend the Move-Out Walkthrough

One way to ensure you get your deposit back is to check with your landlord about the condition of your apartment before you move out. Request or plan to attend your move-out walkthrough.

“Walking through the unit with your landlord lets you see where your security deposit might get dinged,” Deeter says. “You may be able to fix those issues before you leave, saving you money in the long run. On the other hand, if your move-out inspection is flawless but you later receive an itemized bill, you’ll be in a better position to have a productive conversation with your landlord.”

“I always tell my renters to leave the apartment or home better than when they rented it,” Cosenza adds.

Contesting Any Deductions from Your Security Deposit

Rules vary by state, but most require that the security deposit be returned in full within 15 to 30 days of the end of the lease if there is no damage or unpaid fees.

“If a tenant lives up to the lease agreement and leaves the rental unit in good condition upon departure, and the landlord refuses to comply with returning the security deposit, the renter should submit a complaint in writing to the landlord,” Deeter says. “If that doesn’t solve the issue, legal action can be taken.”

The photos you took before moving into your apartment make contesting the outcome of your security deposit refund easier.

“As a renter, documentation is your best friend; taking pictures before moving in and when you leave is critical,” Deeter says. “Depending on how long your lease is, you might not remember if something was an issue when you moved in. If you can’t prove you didn’t cause the damage, you might have to pay for it—even if it wasn’t your fault. Having time-stamped images that prove the property’s condition helps you and your landlord evaluate it more accurately.”

If you didn’t take pictures before moving in, you might still have some legal recourse. If you choose to go that route, keep track of your communications.

“Always communicate [with your landlord] in writing, and as an added measure of documentation, use certified mail,” Cosenza adds.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, mastering the art of passing your rental inspection in Sydney is within reach with the right knowledge and preparation. Additionally, presenting your home in its best possible light through thoughtful staging and attention to detail can make a significant difference in impressing your landlord or property manager. With these insights at your disposal, you're well-equipped to ace your next rental inspection and enjoy a seamless renting experience in Sydney.

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