



END OF TENANCY: A COMPLETE GUIDE TO MOVING OUT SMOOTHLY

Abstract

Moving out of a rental home doesn't have to be stressful. "End of Tenancy: A Complete Guide to Moving Out Smoothly" offers easy-to-follow steps to ensure a hassle-free process. This guide covers everything you need to do, from inspecting your property and fixing any damage to thoroughly cleaning your space to secure your full security deposit. It also provides practical tips on managing utilities, updating your address, and completing final paperwork.

With clear checklists and straightforward advice, this guide helps you handle each task efficiently, making your move-out experience as smooth and stress-free as possible. Perfect for anyone wanting a trouble-free end to their tenancy.

Getting Started

Moving out at the end of your tenancy can be both exciting and overwhelming. Whether you're relocating to a new city or just across town, the process involves a myriad of tasks that can easily become stressful without proper planning. From organizing your belongings to ensuring your rental property is in top condition, there's a lot to consider to avoid any last-minute surprises. This complete guide is designed to help you navigate the moving-out process smoothly, offering practical tips and advice on everything from decluttering and packing to understanding your responsibilities as a tenant.

By following these steps, you can ensure a hassle-free move and increase your chances of getting your security deposit back in full. Let's dive into the essentials of a successful end-of-tenancy transition.

Common Reasons Renters Move



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.

From having problems affording the rent to issues with the broader rental market, here are ten of the most common reasons renters leave, as well as tips to avoid a vacancy at your rental property.

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 a month will get the tenant to stay, it may be worth it because you may spend more trying to fill the vacancy.

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 appliances may be enough to get the tenant to overlook the tighter space for a while longer.

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 a Smaller Unit:**

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

- ❖ **Offer Incentives:**

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.



Job Change or 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 for 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 rent increase.

❖ **Job Change for 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.

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 by email or a dedicated phone line.

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. Tenants want to be able to enjoy their home in peace so they 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.

Want to Change Neighborhoods

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.



Separation, Divorce, or 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.

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.

How To Tell Your Landlord You're Moving Out Or Give Notice To Vacate



If you're coming to the end of the term of your rental lease, your landlord is expecting you to do one of two things: Sign a new lease or move out. If you are choosing to do the latter, though,

you must still communicate your intentions to your landlord in writing. After all, a lease is a legal contract.

Yours likely indicates you are required to submit to your landlord a letter known as a notice to vacate. Read on to learn more about how to write and when to submit this simple yet important document.

What Is a Notice to Vacate?

A notice to vacate is a letter written by a tenant to a landlord, stating that they will not be seeking to renew their lease at the end of the lease term.

The letter usually indicates why the tenant is moving out and when they will vacate their apartment. It also includes the tenant's cell phone number, email address and a postal forwarding address so the landlord can remit the security deposit, if applicable, as well as remain in touch should there be any questions or concerns after the tenant vacates the premises.

When Should I Write My Notice of Intent to Vacate?

Typically, you'll want to write your notice 30 days before you move out of your rental. This will give your landlord enough time to find a new tenant. Although one month is the standard amount of time to give notice, the terms of your lease may require more or less time. Make sure to check the lease agreement to ensure you can vacate without any issues.

Why Should I Write a Notice of Intent to Vacate?

The main reason you'll want to give your landlord notice is so you don't violate your lease agreement. Checking whether your lease requires notice of intent to vacate will protect you from any legal trouble. Moving, especially long-distance moving, is already a stressful process—reading over your lease agreement before you leave can help prevent any hiccups.

Additionally, giving your landlord notice will give them plenty of time to find a new tenant for their rental property, and this courtesy can go a long way in maintaining a positive relationship. In the future, you may need letters of reference from former landlords to move into new rental properties.



Step by Step Guide to Writing a Notice to Vacate

❖ **Read Your Rental Agreement**

Rental agreements are required reading before you sign them, but it's equally important to read them when you're getting ready to end them, too. The moment you think you might be moving, read your rental agreement to learn the window of time you have to inform your landlord of your intent to vacate at the end of the lease term.

Are you moving out sooner? Keep in mind that if you are vacating with months to go on your lease term, you'll likely have to pay a penalty—this is for the landlord to recoup rental income loss in case they cannot rent out your apartment soon after you vacate it.

❖ **Put Your Notice to Vacate in Writing**

Even if you have had a conversation with your landlord about moving out at the end of your lease, you should still put your notice to vacate in writing and send it to them. This is to avoid any misunderstandings; it is easy to dispute a conversation between two people, but not a letter shared between the same parties.

❖ **How to Deliver the Letter**

In the digital age, you might be wondering if you even need to print out your notice of intent to vacate on paper and mail it, or whether email will suffice. While email is an acceptable form of professional communication, you should still confirm with your landlord which is the best method of correspondence to reach them. If it is by email, send the letter as an attachment, not in the body of the email. This way, the landlord can easily print or save the letter for their records separately from their email inbox..

❖ **Keep Records**

This could be as simple as making a copy of the letter you've mailed or saving the email you sent to the landlord. To save time digging through the sent folder in your email—and to have

some assurance that the email was indeed sent—add your email to the CC or BCC field of the email. Then, when it pops up in your inbox, you can flag it for future reference.

The Ultimate Moving Checklist and To-Do Timeline



Whether your last move was across the country or across the street, it probably ended with two words: "Never again!" But you don't always have the luxury of staying in the same place forever. Sooner or later, you're bound to find yourself surrounded by cardboard boxes and packing tape—again.

To make things smoother this go-around, look no further than this moving to-do list that details not only what needs to get done, but the right time to do different tasks to minimize stress. Print it out, check every item off week by week, and maybe the two words that end your next move will simply be "I'm home."

Two Months Before

❖ **Sort and purge**

Go through every room of your house and decide what you'd like to keep and what you can get rid of. Think about whether any items will require special packing or extra insurance coverage. Think about decluttering before you move, it can help streamline the process and your life!

❖ **Research movers**

Start investigating moving company options. Do not rely on a quote over the phone; request an on-site estimate. Get an estimate in writing from each company, and make sure it has a USDOT number on it. This certifies that the company is registered with the U.S. Department of Transportation and bound by its safety standards.

❖ **Set a Moving Budget**

Make note of your upcoming moving expenses like boxes, moving companies, renting a van, repurchasing necessities like toilet paper for your new place, etc. Also, remember that you'll be taking time off work (most likely) and that could result in a change in your monthly income. Some companies will cover moving costs, now's the time to check if yours does.

❖ **Create a moving binder**

Use this binder to keep track of everything—all your estimates, your receipts, and an inventory of all the items you're moving.

❖ **Organize school records**

Go to your children's school and arrange for their records to be transferred to their new school district.

Six Weeks Before

❖ **Order supplies**

Order moving boxes and other supplies such as tape, Bubble Wrap, and permanent markers. Don't forget to order specialty containers, such as dish barrels or wardrobe boxes.

❖ **Use it or lose it**

Start using up things that you don't want to move, like frozen or perishable foods and cleaning supplies.

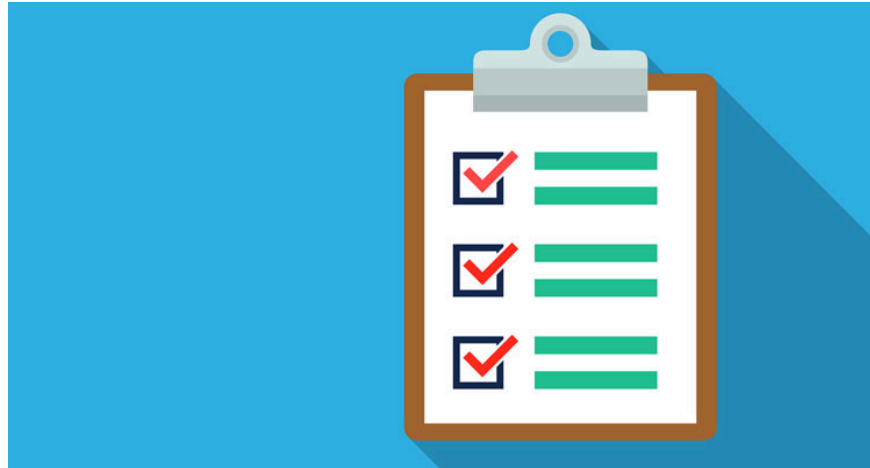
❖ **Check in with friends and family**

If you're moving far away, or even just down the street, now's the time to reach out to your close friends and family. Keep them informed of your moving date, schedule, and the plan to make it all happen and be sure to remind them of important dates if they're forgetful. In addition to spending quality time, they might want to pitch in and help you move! It's also a great opportunity to get rid of some unneeded items, gift your cousin that old coffee pot you never use!

❖ **Take measurements**

Whip out those measuring tapes and make sure to check room dimensions at your new home, and if possible, check that your larger pieces of furniture will actually fit through the door. You don't want any more added stress than trying to squeeze a couch in that is just too big!

Moving out of your rental property



End of tenancy checklist

- Give your landlord the proper written notice that you will be ending your lease agreement
- If your lease agreement is for a fixed term, plan to move out on the end date of your agreement. If you move earlier, you might be responsible for costs related to breaking your lease
- If you are leaving the premises, but others are staying, make sure that your landlord is aware of this. You may need to sort out whether your name needs to be removed from the agreement and bond
- Make sure your rent is paid to the end-date
- Clean and tidy the property, including gardens. Repair any damage you have caused to the property
- Check the condition of the property against the original property inspection sheet. Complete and sign the inspection sheet and keep a copy for yourself. You can also take photos of how you left the property
- Don't leave any rubbish or unwanted items behind or you will be charged for removal. Contact your local council to find out how to get rid of unwanted items
- Tell your energy suppliers that you are leaving and organise final meter readings
- Hand the keys back, including all copies you were given at the start of the lease
- Make sure you change your address and arrange to have your mail forwarded.
- If you have a bond guarantee from SA Housing Trust, make sure you respond to the email they send at the end of a lease and tell them you are not extending the lease.
- Give your forwarding address to the landlord or property manager. Make sure Consumer and Business Services (CBS) have your forwarding address for correspondence.
- Ask your landlord for a reference. A reference might help you secure accommodation in the future.

- Discuss your bond refund with your landlord and claim your bond.

Ending a fixed term lease early

A tenant cannot end a fixed term lease early - at their choice - without being responsible for costs to relet the property. But the landlord can agree not to claim these costs. Make sure any agreement not to claim costs is in writing.

The tenant is breaking the lease if they move out of the property before the end of a fixed term agreement. This means the landlord can claim costs for:

- loss of rent - there are maximum timeframes tenants are liable to pay rent when terminating fixed term tenancies early - see further information below.
- advertising
- reletting – fee charged to the landlord by an agent.

Some of these costs may be claimed even if the tenant leaves after a breach notice (238KB PDF) for rent arrears is served.

Reletting the property

When a tenant, under a residential tenancy agreement, leaves a property before the lease ends, the landlord could claim for the loss caused. A claim may not be made if the landlord doesn't try to relet the property as soon as possible – this is called mitigating the loss.

The tenant can assess if the loss is being mitigated by asking:

- Is the property:
 - being advertised appropriately?
 - being shown to prospective tenants?
- Has demand in this area dropped and should the rent be reduced? When trying to relet, the landlord should review the rent amount regularly.
- If the property has been advertised at a higher rent, has this delayed the property being leased?

The landlord doesn't have to advertise before the tenant gives back possession of the property. If the date the tenant will leave is unclear, the landlord should be cautious about advertising as there is still a binding lease agreement.

Formulas developed by the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) must be applied to all advertising and reletting costs. It is recommended that tenants seek advice on applying the formulas, as they could differ if the tenant:

breaks their lease in the first quarter of the lease term

pays rent to the end of their fixed term lease, as lease obligations may have been met.



Eviction and breaking the lease agreement

A tenant or landlord is in breach of the lease agreement if a term or condition of the agreement is not met.

Where there is a breach, a specific notice must be served on the other party giving them the opportunity to fix the problem before the tenancy can end.

A notice that is not completed and served correctly is invalid.

Only include full days when working out dates to include in the notice. For example, if the notice is:

hand delivered, the next day is the first full day
posted, allow for postage delivery times.

Make sure you keep a copy of the notice for your records.

How To Prepare Your Home for Move-Out Cleaning in Adelaide

Moving out of a rental property is easier said than done. The process can be taxing and time-consuming because you must pack the entire house into boxes and move them to a different location.

Besides the backbreaking packing and transportation, you must ensure the house is spick-and-span when you leave. It is the only way to get your bond back in full, so you cannot neglect this aspect of moving out.

Since packing and moving eats up all the time of tenants, they prefer hiring professional bond cleaners in Adelaide to ease their burden. It can cost them a few dollars but gives them much-needed peace of mind. However, if you decide to clean the house yourself, you must make arrangements for it.

Here is a move-out cleaning checklist that will help you prepare for the move. It will ensure you cover everything and get your bond back as well.

❖ **Declutter and Pack Up Everything**

When you are moving into a new house, it is best to donate or resell the items you do not need anymore. It helps to reduce the packing load and organise the move efficiently. Begin the process by getting rid of unnecessary stuff or things you have not used in the last year.

The next step is to carefully pack all necessary items in labelled boxes to avoid damage. Pack the breakable items with extra cushioning and label the boxes fragile. Keep essentials in a separate box that will be opened first in the new house to avoid confusion and chaos.

❖ **Remove Furniture and Boxes**

After the packing is over, move the furniture, boxes, and appliances to the new house. Prepare the appliances for the move by unplugging them and taking out the removable parts to be packed separately.

❖ **Start Cleaning From the Top**

Use the original boxes of the appliances and disassemble heavy furniture for easy moving. Stack everything carefully in the moving truck and gather the cleaning supplies for the next task.

Following the right cleaning method or technique is crucial when preparing your rental property for the final inspection. It is always good to clean one room at a time and cover all nooks and crannies. So, begin the process from the ceiling and then come down to the windows, shelves, cabinets, doors, and finally, the carpets and floors.

This can be a physically-exhausting process, especially if you want to juggle between different move-out tasks. So, it is good to hire experts for a cheap end of lease cleaning Adelaide. They follow a pre-approved cleaning checklist to clean all surfaces, hidden spots and hard-to-reach areas using proper tools and methods. They can help you secure the full bond money without any dispute.

❖ **Cover Areas That Get Neglected**

Some parts of the house often get neglected because of the placement of furniture or appliances in the rooms. So, make sure you clean light switches, skirting boards, doorknobs, ceiling fans, windows from outside, cupboards from inside, lamps, air ducts and vent covers and marks on the walls.

Professional end of lease cleaning Adelaide service providers are equipped with the right tools and supplies to take care of every surface. The meticulous cleaning of experts ensures the satisfaction of the property manager on the inspection day.



❖ **Pay Attention to the Kitchen**

The kitchen is one of the dirtiest spaces in the house because of the constant splatters, oily grease on appliances and grunge stuck on the granite and tiles. The kitchen cabinets, sink, and garbage disposal are equally filthy. Daily frying, chopping, grinding, boiling and eating make the place stained, greasy and filthy.

Thus, you must use baking soda like eco-friendly bond cleaners in Adelaide to cut through the grime and shine up the surfaces. Use vinegar and lemon juice to spruce up the oven, refrigerator, stovetop, and dishwasher. Don't forget the range hood and the faucets. Wipe everything with a clean cloth to remove marks and increase shine.

❖ **Sanitise the Bathrooms**

Besides the kitchen, the bathrooms are the filthiest spaces in the house. Usually, renters get their bond cut because of dirty toilets and shower areas. Thus, you must clean the showerheads, shower glass, mirror, cabinets, tiles, lights, faucets, and tank.

Use baking soda to remove stains and odour from the toilet bowl, washbasin and bathtub. Scrub the floor and clean the grout to remove all dirt. Sanitise the bathroom to make it ready for use by the new tenants.

❖ **Clean the Garage, Patio and Garden**

Most renters forget about the garage and outside areas. However, the property manager notices these first. Cleaning the property from inside and outside in a limited time can be arduous. Thus, hiring budget end of lease cleaners in Adelaide can reduce the workload and ensure the bond is returned.

However, if you wish to complete the task on your own, sweep the garage and clean the walls and shelves. Get rid of weeds and dried leaves from the garden and mow the lawn after pruning the plants. Sweep the patio and wipe the furniture for a clean outward appearance.

Tenant terminating a tenancy



Where there is a breach by the landlord

If a landlord has breached a tenancy agreement and it is possible for the landlord to remedy the breach, the tenant may give the landlord a notice of the breach (using Form 11). If the breach is not remedied within a specified period (at least 7 days) then the tenancy is automatically terminated by force of the notice after the expiration of at least a further 7 days [Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA) s 85].

However, section 85 also allows that a landlord may, before the date of termination fixed in the notice or the date the tenant moves out, apply to SACAT for an order refusing termination if the landlord was not in breach or has remedied the breach, or reinstating the tenancy [s 85(2)].

A tenant can apply to SACAT to end a fixed term tenancy or a periodic tenancy where the landlord has committed a serious breach of the agreement [s 88]. Note that a fee usually applies

unless you apply for an exemption (available to concession card holders and full time students) or waiver (due to financial hardship).

Where there are repeated breaches by the landlord

A tenant may terminate a tenancy by giving the landlord a notice (using Form 12) where the landlord has breached the tenancy agreement and has already breached the same provision on 2 previous occasions in the last 12 months [s 85AA]. The notice must specify the breach and give at least 7 days notice of termination [s 85AA(2)].

Where the premises do not comply with minimum standards or safety

A tenant may terminate a tenancy by giving the landlord 7 days notice (using Form 14) [s 85B]:

if the premises do not comply with prescribed minimum housing standards under the Housing Improvement Act 2016 (SA)

if the premises are totally destroyed or to an unsafe extent, or
in other prescribed circumstances.

❖ **Where there is domestic abuse**

A tenant may terminate a tenancy by giving the landlord notice (using Form 15) if [s 85D]:

there is an intervention order in force against a domestic associate who normally resides in the premises for the protection of the tenant or another domestic associate of the tenant who normally resides at the premises [reg19B(1)], or

in the opinion of an authorised professional, there are circumstances of domestic abuse [regs 19B(2) and (4)]

A copy of the intervention order or signed report from an authorised professional must accompany the notice of termination and the notice must specify a termination date [s 85D(2)].

SACAT may also terminate a tenancy due to reasons relating to domestic violence. For more information, please refer to Intervention orders and tenancy agreements.

❖ **Where there is undue hardship**

A tenant can apply to SACAT to end an agreement if the continuation of the residential tenancy agreement would result in undue hardship [Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA) s 89]. SACAT may also make an order compensating the landlord for loss and inconvenience resulting, or likely to result, from the early termination of the tenancy.

❖ Where there is no breach

Periodic tenancies

At any time during a periodic tenancy a tenant can give written notice that they are going to leave the premises (using Form 16). The period of notice must be 21 days or a period equivalent to a single period of the tenancy (whichever is longer). The notice must specify the premises and the date on which the tenant intends to leave. No reason need be given. Even if the tenant does not give notice, the landlord cannot claim any re-letting or advertising costs, although in this case the tenant may for instance, be liable for three weeks rent in lieu of the 21 days notice [Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA) ss 86].

Fixed term tenancies

At the end of a fixed term tenancy a tenant can give written notice that they are going to leave the premises (using Form 17). The period of notice must be 28 days [s 86A].

If a fixed term has not expired but the tenant no longer wants to occupy the premises, the tenant should approach the landlord and attempt to come to some arrangement. The landlord might agree to allow the tenant to leave as long as the tenant gives certain notice and pays the re-letting costs, or if the tenant can find someone suitable to take over the remainder of the term of the agreement. If the tenant simply moves out and assumes that the landlord will re-let the premises and so relieve the tenant of liability to pay, the landlord can sue the tenant for the rent due under the tenancy agreement and for other costs.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, a smooth transition out of your rental property involves careful planning, organization, and attention to detail. By following the steps outlined in this guide—such as notifying your landlord in advance, thoroughly cleaning the property, and addressing any repairs—you can ensure that your move is stress-free and that you receive your full security deposit back. Remember, the key to a successful end of tenancy is communication and preparation. With these strategies in place, you'll leave your old home on good terms and be ready to enjoy your new space with peace of mind.

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