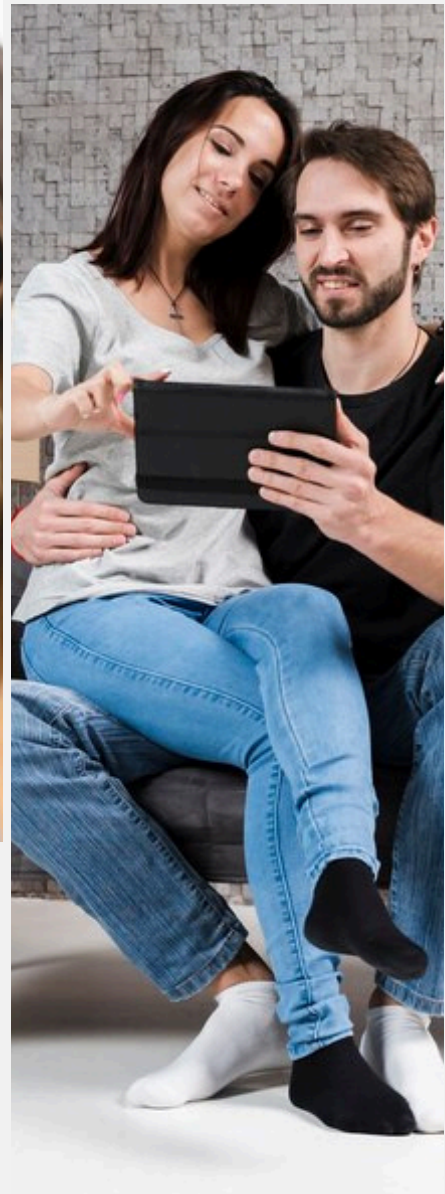
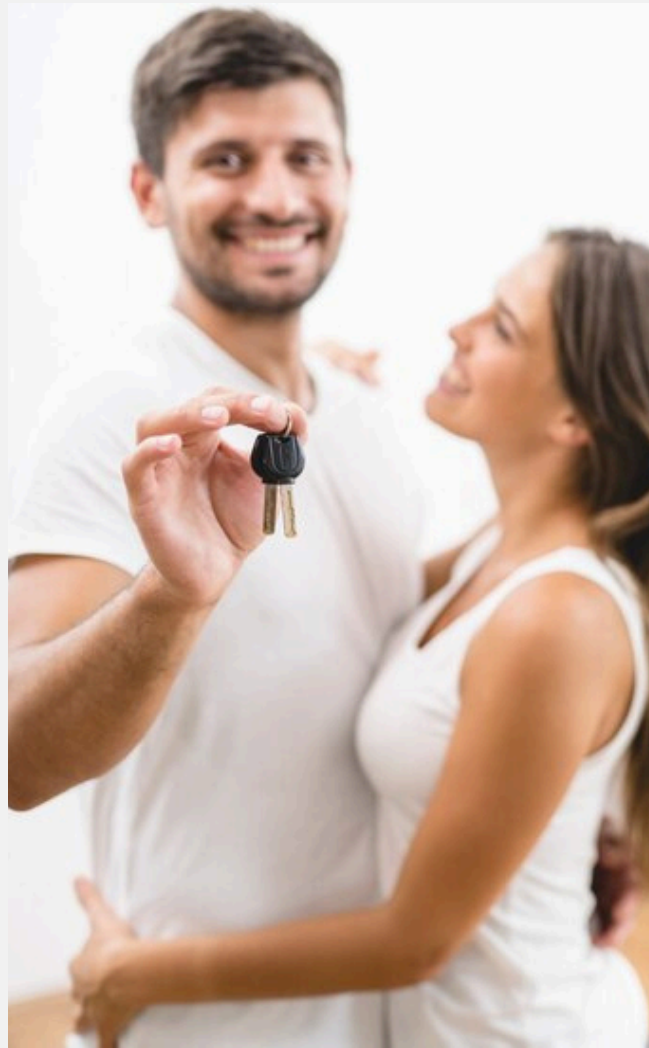


FIRST-TIME RENTER?

ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR NEW TENANTS IN ADELAIDE



Abstract

Renting a home in Adelaide as a tenant offers a range of opportunities, from enjoying the city's vibrant culture to accessing its beautiful suburbs. Adelaide provides a variety of rental options, from charming heritage homes to modern apartments. Tenants should be aware of their rights and responsibilities, including understanding lease agreements, maintaining the property, and addressing any issues with the landlord promptly. It's also important to budget for additional costs like utilities and insurance. With its friendly neighborhoods and thriving community, renting in Adelaide can be a rewarding experience if you stay informed and prepared.

1. Introduction

Are you a first-time renter in Adelaide? Navigating the rental market for the first time can be both exciting and overwhelming. Our essential guide for new tenants is designed to simplify the process and help you make the most of your rental experience. From understanding lease agreements to handling maintenance issues and knowing your rights, this guide covers everything you need to get started. Whether you're looking for a cozy apartment in the city or a spacious house in the suburbs, our guide will equip you with the knowledge and tips to ensure a smooth and successful renting journey in Adelaide.

2. Rental Rights and Responsibilities

As a tenant in Adelaide, you have certain rights, but you also have responsibilities – as does your landlord.

The responsibilities of each party are set out in the Residential Tenancy Information Brochure. It is the responsibility of your landlord or property manager (if the property is being leased through an agency) to provide you with a copy before you sign your rental lease.

Lease agreement

A lease agreement (or tenancy agreement) is a legally binding, written contract signed by both the tenant and landlord. It specifies a range of obligations such as the amount, frequency and method in which rent should be paid; type and duration of tenancy (fixed-term or periodic); and other conditions that detail the rights and responsibilities of both parties. The terms of the lease agreement cannot be changed, unless both parties agree to the change. This includes the amount of rent, unless a specific condition is included in the agreement before it is signed.

More information about what should be included in your lease agreement is available on sa.gov.au.

Extending and ending leases

Towards the end of a rental lease period (usually six or 12 months), the landlord can issue a notice of lease extension or you can enter a new lease agreement if both of you are happy for a rental arrangement to continue. If you or the landlord don't wish to extend the lease, written notice must be given. Notice must also be provided by the tenant or landlord to end a periodic lease.

Details on the amount of notice that must be provided and the circumstances in which it is required are available on sa.gov.au.



If you're ready to move out and move on, use this moving out checklist to avoid end of tenancy disputes, unexpected costs and affecting your ability to secure rental accommodation in future.

Maintaining your rental property

Landlords and tenants in Adelaide share the responsibility for repairs and maintenance of rental properties. When maintenance or repairs are needed you must ask the landlord to fix the problem, which they are required to do within a reasonable time frame.

Your landlord must give you at least 48 hours' notice to enter the premises to carry out the repair, unless the repairs are needed urgently, for example to ensure the safety of tenants (e.g. a gas leak).

Rental properties must meet minimum housing standards in South Australia. If you are concerned about your property because of problems such as plumbing not working properly, doors not locking, large cracks in the walls, then the Housing Safety Authority or SA Health and can assist you.

Insurance

While it is the landlord's responsibility to pay for building insurance in Adelaide, you will need to have your own contents insurance to cover you for the damage or loss of your personal belongings at your rental home.

Making changes to your rental property

You cannot make changes to a rental property without prior written consent from your landlord.

Examples of changes that need to be approved include:

painting (inside or outside)

removing trees or plants from the garden

installing a new air conditioner

inserting picture hooks into a wall.

If you make changes without your landlord's permission you may be asked to return the property to the original condition at your own cost before the tenancy ends.

Solving disputes

There are tenancy advocacy groups such as RentRight SA that can assist you to sort out disputes with your landlord, including problems with your lease or bonds, property maintenance and unpaid rent.

3. Tenant Responsibilities

The tenant rents a residential premises from a landlord. The tenant is given possession of the premises as the tenants home in Adelaide, with the same rights to privacy, peace and quiet enjoyment as a homeowner would expect. The tenant is also subject to the requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 1995. The tenant must therefore pay the due rent on time, keep the premises and grounds clean and tidy, repair damage caused by themselves or guests in accordance with their Residential Tenancy Agreement (RTA) and report any maintenance issues.

You must notify GEH of any damage, defects or deterioration to the property. Early notification will help us to maintain the property in good condition during your tenancy. Maintenance requests are processed, and a tenant must facilitate reasonable access to contractors.

Government tenants are asked to be considerate of neighbours and attempt to develop and preserve a harmonious neighbourhood. They must also observe local government regulations and By-laws including those relating to pet control, backyard burning and rubbish collection. Many Strata Corporations also have restrictions about the keeping of pets and making additions or improvements to each property.

Tenants in Adelaide must obtain permission from the landlord before making any modifications or additions, including hanging pictures, to the residence. The landlord may require the tenant to restore the residence to its pre-modification condition at the tenants cost.

Please refer to the Residential Tenancies Act for further information.

Tenants can be held liable for:

Damage to walls and doors, scarring, wall posters or careless picture hanging/removal.

Damage to toilet pans and hand basins which is not considered fair wear and tear.

Damage to floor coverings, blinds/curtains or furnishings by burns, stains etc.

Breakage of fixed glass (unless obviously caused by structural movement or by proven vandalism as confirmed by a Police Report.)

Cost of clearing blocked drains, should it be found that the drains are blocked by tenant misuse.

Electrical fuses or circuits damaged by the tenant using faulty electrical appliances, or negligent overloading.

Eradication of household pests and vermin such as mice, cockroaches, ants, fleas, pigeons or possums, unless as a consequence of local infestation.



Damage to water pipes, cables and garden taps caused by a tenant's vehicle, lawnmower, pet etc.

Any puncture to underground pipes caused by digging.

Damage to fly screens caused by tenant misuse (including pet damage).

Upkeep of lawn and garden areas, including mowing, weeding and watering.

Replacement of lost keys and change of locks as a result of lost keys.

Damage or loss of any furniture supplied by GEH.

The cost of repairing any damage, blockage, breakage or defect in and around your house which is not the result of fair wear and tear, is generally your responsibility. You may engage a qualified tradesperson at your own expense to make the repairs of this damage. Alternatively, you may log the job with the Maintenance Helpdesk after consulting with your Housing Officer, and the repairs will be carried out through Facility Services.

****The presence of a few spiders, ants or cockroaches is not unusual when housing is located in regional locations. and occasional occurrences are not regarded as infestations****

*****Where tenants cause/allow an infestation and do not attend to this and subsequent damage to the property is caused (i.e. chewed electrical cables), the tenants will be held liable*****

******In the event a tenant reports pest control to the GEH Maintenance Helpdesk which is a tenant's responsibility, the costs incurred by GEH will be passed onto the tenant******

Painting & Floor Coverings

GEH endeavour to carry out painting and renewal of floor coverings on a programmed basis.

Hanging Pictures

Please consult your Housing Officer prior to hanging pictures to obtain permission and ascertain the construction material of your dwelling.

Landlord Responsibilities

The landlord rents a residential premises to tenants. The landlord is subject to certain requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act. One of these requirements is that the landlord must ensure the premises comply with health, safety and housing standards. The landlord must provide the premises in a clean and reasonable state having regard to its age, character and location, and must maintain it to an acceptable standard. The landlord is to keep the promises made in the tenancy agreement and to supply agreed services.

4. Renting Mistakes to Avoid Before Signing a Lease

Finding the perfect property to rent can be daunting in Adelaide. Experts advise steering clear of these five things before signing a lease.

The apartment-hunting process in Adelaide can be daunting, but don't jump on a listing just to get it over with. Whether you're renting a room, an apartment, or a whole house, it's important to make your selection with care. This will help you avoid a situation where rent is due before you get paid each month, or a landlord that doesn't respond to maintenance requests. You don't want to be stuck in a lease you're not satisfied with.

Jack Gross, broker and owner of Better Homes in Adelaide, is sharing five factors future tenants should avoid when looking to rent an apartment or house. Before you sign your next lease—no matter how perfect the unit may seem—consider these details before you put a deposit down.

1. Unclear Expectations

While some lease agreements may be quite lengthy, Gross warns tenants to avoid skipping the fine print that often contains important information.

"One of the largest areas where tenants make mistakes is in the fact that tenants don't read their lease, and they don't realize certain obligations that might be in there," Gross says.

Common information found in an apartment lease includes rent cost, when rent is due, late fee costs, lease duration, pet restrictions, and other obligations agreed upon between the landlord and the tenant. When renting a house, a lease will also include expectations about maintenance. If they aren't included in the lease, Gross suggests clarifying who will be shoveling snow, cutting the grass, and taking care of the house's exterior. Ask your landlord to include these things in the lease—before you sign—so you have the expectations in writing.

Before you sign [the lease], make sure you read it, and make sure you understand it," Gross says. "And make sure you clarify any questions up front before signing the lease."



2. Poor Communication with Your Landlord

Another factor to consider when renting is the flow of communication with your landlord. Are they professional and easy to reach? Or is the landlord difficult to contact? Poor communication with a landlord is something all renters should avoid.

Gross advises if you are not satisfied with the communication with your landlord, you should follow up every contact in writing, whether that be email or text message. "If you're not feeling like [your business] is being handled properly, keep it in writing," Gross says.

3. A Deal That's Too Good to Be True

Gross warns future tenants to be wary of deals that seem too perfect—especially because rental scams, where property owners fraudulently advertise low-rent properties, are more prevalent than ever.

"If the rent seems really too good to be true, it probably is," he says. Because of the high rental scammer rates, Gross suggests always meeting the landlord and exchanging security deposit money face-to-face. Do not, under any circumstances, pay your security deposit over the phone or online, Gross warns.

4. DIY Maintenance Issues

While there are plenty of DIY projects that are renter-friendly, Gross says maintenance issues should always be left to the professionals. "Tenants should never take responsibility for doing repairs," he says. "Those should be done by the owner and only the owner."

Gross advises leaving maintenance to the owner in case a DIY project goes awry. For example, if a tenant tries to repair a leaky sink and accidentally causes further damage, they could be liable for the

original cost of the item, plus the cost of the added damage. Leaving the heavy lifting to the landlord will ultimately save time and money for the tenant.

If your lease allows it, there is no problem with perking up your space through DIY projects, like adding peel-and-stick tile or creating a gallery wall—just make sure to leave the maintenance fixes to the landlord.

5. Settling for Less

"Just because you're renting, don't think it's not as important as when you're buying," Gross says. He recommends treating the apartment hunting process with the care and responsibility you would have if you were purchasing a house. While renting a property is temporary, Gross says it's still important to do your due diligence before and after you sign the lease. Make sure to keep your options open and do extended research into the property.

If you're looking into an apartment complex, Gross recommends talking to current tenants about their experience at the property and with the landlord. He also suggests viewing the property at different times to see what the community and surrounding area are like throughout the day and night.

Gross' best advice? Don't settle on what you want in an rental or lease agreement. If you are a pet owner, make sure pets are allowed. If you are looking for a year-long lease, don't settle for month-to-month—which often comes with a higher rate. You're investing in a lifestyle, and your living space will set the tone for your day-to-day life.

5. Four Steps To Establish A Successful Landlord-Tenant Relationship

Finding a tenant, signing a lease and having someone move into your property seems rather simple. It should be the beginning of a wonderful, win-win relationship. Yet so often, this is not at all the case. Why do rental investments have such a difficult reputation? Setting clear expectations and demonstrating mutual respect from the outset are the essential keys to a long-lasting, professional relationship where everyone comes out ahead.

There are a number of steps to ensure both parties understand and are in agreement with how the many aspects of the rental cycle will be managed. Further, it is critical that a conversation to review every aspect of the rental occurs before your tenant ever moves into the property. Unfortunately, some landlords often lack the experience to know themselves what to expect, let alone set clear expectations and mutual responsibilities for their tenants upfront. This lies at the root of many of the well-worn landlord headaches. There are a few critical essentials professional property managers recommend covering at the outset.

1. Review The Lease With The Tenan

One would hope that the tenant has read the entire document prior to signing, however, in this age of one-click acceptance of terms and conditions, it's no longer assumed. To safeguard that both owner and tenant are clear on the finer points of the document, it is very helpful if you review the lease together. This also gives you an opportunity to answer any questions or provide clarification on items so you can both move forward without ambiguity.



Be sure to review the contract with the tenant in its entirety and ensure all concerns are addressed. At the same time, they can provide a buffer to ensure things remain professional between owner and tenant.

2. Set Clear Guidelines For Communication

Do you have a consistent tenant communication plan once the lease is signed? How do you want them to contact you with maintenance issues? What if they have questions about how to use an appliance? How will you arrange scheduled inspections or entry for exterminators or other service calls? No one wants that 2 a.m. phone call demanding an immediate fix for a broken A/C in a heatwave. On the other hand, you don't want to find out about a pipe leak in the basement hours after it happened.

These are just a few examples of the different types of communication that will need to occur while your property is occupied. Prior to move-in, it is critical that you discuss the various types of interaction that will be necessary throughout the lease and agree on how any information exchange will be handled in detail. Specify what method — text, email or phone call — is to be used based on the urgency of the situation.

There are more sophisticated systems to manage this process, including 24/7 maintenance lines and online portals. It is critical to invest in systems to manage communication, but that investment could be in a smartphone as much as a complex owner and tenant portal.

3. Respond Quickly With Respect

We have all been in situations where we have sent some sort of communication, only to have to wait several days to hear anything back. By the time you finally do get a response, the tone has been set. You begin feeling frustrated — and both parties are already on the defensive.

Whenever your tenant reaches out to you with a question or a concern, always respond as quickly as possible. Even if you do not have an immediate answer. The utilization of a tenant portal can be

invaluable in these instances, as the tenant can check for updates without having to call or email anyone — and any new management activities or regular reminders are reported in real-time in their account.

In addition to responsiveness, it is also especially important to be respectful of your tenant's time and privacy. Then, work with your tenant respectfully when scheduling vendors to ensure that you do not disrupt the quiet enjoyment of the property for which they are paying.

4. Provide Technological Conveniences

Even before the pandemic, we had all grown more dependent on technology over face-to-face interactions. Tenants now expect their landlords to offer them no-contact and 24/7 methods of interaction. For example, paying rent online or from a mobile device is becoming the norm over dropping off a check, using the mail or going into a bank. Communication portals for owners and tenants discussed above are also becoming more standard technological expectations.

Tenants want to view properties virtually, submit maintenance requests online and receive fast online responses to their questions. This can be a particular challenge for self-managers or inexperienced rental owners, yet is critical for a safe, clear and respectful relationship in this era.

From the first showing, establishing clear expectations with your tenant will be the key to the success of your rental property.

Ensure your own peace of mind and the success of your investment by remembering these basics:

- Set expectations by walking through the lease with your new tenant.
- Develop clear communication guidelines and provide timely responses.
- Work with your tenant respectfully to schedule convenient vendor visits.
- Do not overwhelm them with a parade of contractors.
- Offer no-contact technological alternatives to face-to-face interactions and 24/7 information.
- Facilitate a foundation of trust by keeping your commitments to the tenant.

If you take these initiatives at the outset of your partnership with your tenant, you will immediately increase your return on investment. Content tenants take better care of a rental property and are more likely to keep the terms of their lease. Happy tenants are also significantly more likely to remain in the property and extend their leases, which eliminates the risk and cost of vacancy days, turnover costs and marketing expenses.

6. Simple Fixes to Prevent Costly Deductions at End of Lease

It is a fact that houses are quite popular properties to rent in Australia. Due to the high prices in many cities, most people have no choice but to rent. This typically means that rental bonds need to be paid

Unluckily, few people have felt the wrath of precisely what a rental bond was established to do: safeguard the landlord and protect the property. Basically, a rental bond serves as a form of financial protection for the landlord in the event of any breach of the agreement.



In case there is any breach, there will be deductions when the tenant is nearing the end of tenancy and needs the bond money back. It can happen from things like property damages, unpaid rent, remaining utility charges, etc. To get your bond money back in full, you will need to do some important things, such as hire expert end of lease cleaners Adelaide.

Here are the simple fixes to prevent costly deductions at the end of lease. They will help you get the most of your bond money back.

Handle Damaged Fixtures

Leaving the fixtures in damaged or broken condition won't help your situation when leaving your rental property. You will need to replace them. The fixtures include blinds, light bulbs, cabinet hardware, curtain rods, etc. Confirm that all the faucets, lights, and appliances are in adequate working condition. If you spot any issues, handle them immediately.

Remember to tighten the loose bolts, screws, or handles to reduce the chances of further damage and guarantee stability. Proactively dealing with repair work and maintenance tasks will be ideal if you want to minimise the deductions from your bond money.

Deep Clean the Home

Although many tenancy agreements have mentioned that the residence must be cleaned professionally before vacating, many tenants still forget about it. An untidy and dirty home is the simplest way to allow your landlord to deduct money from your rental bond. Here are some issues that will have a negative impact:

Stained countertops and carpets

Dirty appliances and stovetops

Scuffed walls

Showers with scum

Dirty cabinets and light switches

There are many more such problems that you must tackle. Fortunately, you do not have to handle all the hectic tasks by yourself as you can hire professionals who do budget bond cleaning Adelaide. Ensure the one you hire will use green cleaning products and have the necessary skills and experience required for the job.

Ensure the Walls are in Good Condition

It is best recommended to utilise patching paste or putty to fill any cracks or holes in the walls, guaranteeing a smooth surface. Next, sand down these patched areas till they merge smoothly with the nearby wall. If needed, you can also repaint it so that it matches the original colour and texture.

To achieve a professional finish, using the highest quality paint would be best. Dedicating adequate time to repair wall damage correctly will help you reduce the chances of deductions from rental bonds. Additionally, during the professional end of lease cleaning Adelaide, make sure the walls have been cleaned as well.

Maintain the Outdoor Areas

Outdoor areas hold major importance when it comes to the appearance of a property. So, you should keep them tidy at all times.

Mow the lawn

Eliminate weeds from garden beds

Trim the overgrown vegetation

Doing these things will be helpful. Also, do not forget to sweep the driveways and walkways to get rid of leaves, debris, and other litter. Trimming bushes is also essential to stop overcrowding and foster healthy growth. It is also recommended to plant colourful flowers for aesthetics. Keeping outdoor areas well-maintained will help you further reduce the chances of rental bond deductions.

Look for Pest Infestations

Check the entire property for signs of pests, including nests, dropping, or chewed wires. Keep the entry points or cracks sealed to stop the pests from entering the property. You can either use weatherstripping or caulk as required.

Get in touch with a licensed pest control professional if you find any conclusive evidence of pest infestation, including rodents, ants, or termites, to handle the issue effectively. Promptly dealing with pest issues is always the best thing to do, and in this situation, it will help you increase the chances of getting your bond money back in full.

Pay the Remaining Utility Bills and Rental Payments

In many cases, this should not be a problem, but it is still worth mentioning since many homeowners fall victim to it. Before you hand the property's keys to the landlord or property manager, ensure all the bills are paid, such as electricity, gas, water, and internet bills. Also, let all these concerned parties know that you won't be living at this property anymore.

Finally, you will need to make all the remaining rent payments. Doing this and making sure your home is clean with the help of cheap bond cleaners Adelaide will help you get your bond money back in full.

When you are nearing the end of your tenancy, the biggest concern will be whether or not you will get your rental bond back. Not keeping your property in great condition won't help at all. Follow the tips mentioned in this article to prevent costly deductions at the end of lease.

7. Conclusion

As a first-time renter in Adelaide, having the right knowledge can make all the difference in ensuring a smooth and enjoyable rental experience. By understanding your lease agreement, knowing your rights and responsibilities, and being prepared for maintenance and other challenges, you can navigate the rental market with confidence. Remember to communicate openly with your landlord and stay organized to avoid common pitfalls. With this essential guide, you're now equipped to embark on your renting journey in Adelaide. Enjoy the vibrant lifestyle and diverse neighborhoods this city has to offer, and make the most of your new home.

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