

APRIL 2022

# THE TENANT MOVE-OUT PROCESS



A GUIDE TO  
EVERYTHING  
YOU HAVE  
EVER WANTED  
TO KNOW



Tenant Move-Out  
Process

PROPOSED BY  
ETHAN PEREZ

## Abstract

Moving can be an exciting but stressful time. Planning for your move and what you need to do before, during and after moving will ensure you don't miss any steps along the way. This helpful guide can assist you in ensuring a smooth process to finalise everything in your current place and move to your new home.



## Getting Started

When moving out of a rental property, you're certainly looking to the future – a new life, in a new place (maybe one to call your own this time), with new friends, and new experiences... You need to get ready for the big change, organize your move, and overcome all kinds of challenges – the last thing on your mind is the rental property you're leaving (it hardly ever felt like home anyway). And yet, you surely want the move-out to go smoothly, without any conflicts and hassles. To achieve this, you need to comply with all your tenants' responsibilities when moving out, give your landlord a proper move out notice, and leave the rental in good condition.

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

### I. 10 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. Here are ten of the most common reasons renters leave, as well as tips to avoid a vacancy at your rental property.



## 1. Cannot Afford the Rent

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

Offer Relocation:

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

Reduce Rent:

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

## 2. Apartment Too Small

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

**Offer Larger Unit:**

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

**Offer Upgrade:**

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

### **3. Apartment Too Large**

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

**Offer Smaller Unit:**

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

**Offer Incentive:**

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

### **4. Job Change/Relocation**

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

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

**Job Relocation:**

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

**Job Change- Higher Salary:**

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

**Job Change-Lower Salary:**

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

## **5. Maintenance Issues**

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

Regular Maintenance:

Periodic maintenance can help prevent problems from occurring.

Fix Problems Quickly:

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

## **6. Problems With Neighbors**

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

Tenant Screening:

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

Quiet Hours Policy:

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

## **7. Want to Change Neighborhood**

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

Offer Incentives:

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

Offer Different Location:

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

## **8. Separation/Divorce/Marriage**

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

Avoid a Vacancy:

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

## **9. Renter's Market**

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

Reduce Rent:

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

Offer Upgrades:

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

## **10. Change in Voucher Status**

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

Offer Available Units:

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

## **II. Your Rights And Responsibilities**

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



### **✚ Avoiding problems**

Some general tips to avoid problems with your tenancy include:

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

### **✚ Tenancy agreements (leases)**

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

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

A tenant without a written agreement still has legal protection.

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

Tenancy agreements

- General tenancy agreement (Form 18a): houses, townhouses, units and houseboats
- Moveable dwelling agreement (Form 18b): caravans, caravan sites and mobile homes
- Rooming accommodation agreement (Form R18): renting one or more rooms and sharing other rooms or facilities with others. Special terms may apply for residents with impaired capacity in rooming accommodation.

A tenancy agreement must include:

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

## **Moving out**

### **Move-Out Checklist**

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

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

#### ***Why It's Important***

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



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

Information for Queensland public housing tenants

### **Before you move out**

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

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

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

### **After you move out**

Once you move out, we will:

- Inspect your home to see if any repairs, cleaning or rubbish removal is required. We will also check if you have left any belongings in your home (see Goods left behind).
- Finalise your rental account up to the handover day (or the day we take possession if you don't return the keys to us).

- Send you a letter to let you know if there are any outstanding charges for rent or maintenance.
- Send you any money left in your account (if you have more than \$5 credit) if you've given us a forwarding address. This takes 6 weeks

## **Final property inspection**

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

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

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

## **Goods left behind**

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

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

## **Debts for rent or maintenance**

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

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

## **Getting a reference**

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

## **Who to tell when you're moving**

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

- Electricity, phone, internet, and gas service providers

- Insurance providers: house contents, health, life, and car
- Employer
- Bank, credit union or building society
- Interest-free finance services
- Services Australia – Centrelink, Medicare, and Child Support
- Australian Electoral Commission
- Child/family day care
- Dentist and doctor
- Paper deliveries and magazine subscriptions
- Car registration
- Driver’s licence
- School or university
- Superannuation funds
- Car breakdown service (e.g. RACQ)
- Vet
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs
- Australian Tax Office
- Pet registration (local council)
- Pet Microchip Registry
- Linkt (tolls)

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

### **Getting your rental bond back**



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

## **Bond refunds**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Agreed refunds**

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

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

## **Disputed refunds**

A disputed refund is when:

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

When this occurs the RTA:

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

## **Understanding the disputed bond refund process in detail**

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

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

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

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

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

If agreement is not reached, Party B (the person who disputed the refund form) can apply to QCAT for a decision. They must do so within 7 days and notify the RTA in writing of the QCAT application within the correct timeframe.

If no QCAT application is lodged by Party B within the 7 day timeframe, the RTA will pay the bond as directed on Party A's bond refund form.

## **Bond loans**

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

## **Property maintenance and cleaning**

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

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

Moving out of a leased property can be arduous and back breaker for the one who is doing it for the first time. From packing household belongings to moving heavy furniture, you have to manage everything before your final move out. Another thing you need to do is a thorough bond cleaning.



### ***What Is Bond Cleaning? How Is It Important?***

Bond Cleaning is an obligation on the part of the tenant to clean the leased house or unit at the end of the lease term. Besides fair wear and tear, the property should be in the same condition in which it was at the time of leasing. If the landlord finds any dirty spaces or unclean areas in the house, it can lead to substantial cuts from the deposit.

Losing the bond and ending the relationship with the landlord on a sour note after breaking your back cleaning the house is the last thing you need when you are moving. Thus, most tenants look for bond cleaning Brisbane to thoroughly clean the leased property that covers every room from top to bottom.

The professionals know the tricks of the trade and are experts in the field. They provide services to commercial and residential tenants, making them highly knowledgeable and skilled in flawless cleaning. They make every

effort to bring the property back to its original condition so that the tenants can get their bond back in full without any dispute or trouble.



## **What Is Bond Cleaning?**

According to the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) in Queensland, bond cleaning is the responsibility of the tenants. They need to leave the property in the same condition as it was at the time of leasing, barring fair wear and tear.

To understand the original condition of the house or unit, they must check the entry condition report, which is prepared at the time of leasing, to note down any existing damages.

It includes photographs to ensure that the landlord does not cut the deposit unfairly and is aware of the pre-existing problems on the property. The tenant must have a copy of the entry condition report that should be kept safely until the time of vacating the house.

The property manager or the landlord inspects the house or unit after the cleaning to examine the condition. If they identify areas that lack appropriate cleaning, they have the right to cut the amount for the same from your bond. All tenants must pay a security deposit that is sent to the RTA.

At the end of the tenancy, a bond refund request must be submitted to the RTA by the owner or the tenant to claim the amount. Both the parties should agree on the way the bond will be paid out. In case of a dispute, the RTA holds back the disputed amount and releases the undisputed amount.

## **The Importance Of Bond Cleaning**

The myriad advantages of bond cleaning in Brisbane make it essential for the tenant and the landlord. Let us look at some of them to understand their significance.

### **1. Cleanliness And Hygiene**

Besides an obligation, bond cleaning is necessary to leave a neat and tidy house behind at the end of the tenancy. It makes sense to clean up your own mess and leave a positive impression on the property owner. Hiring professionals will ensure that there will be no disputes and your last meeting is friendly and blissful.

So, clean up immaculately and let others know that you value cleanliness and hygiene. Also, you will get the level of cleanliness that you desired but were not able to achieve yourself when you were living in the house. Moreover, a satisfied landlord would be happy to offer a reference to the new lessor when you are on good terms, and you will not find it hard to find a new place.

### **2. Get Your Bond Back In Full**

The end of the tenancy period is filled with several expenses, and it can be challenging to stay within the budget. You must pay the deposit for the new place, pay for the utilities, pay the removalists and the bond cleaners.

Thus, it is vital to get the deposit back in full so that you can manage the finances perfectly and enjoy moving into a new house. It goes without saying that losing money because of an unclean window or dirty tiles in the bathroom can ruin your plan and mood. Hiring professionals make sure that all the dirtiest places in the house are spruced up.

### **3. Save Time And Effort**

As a tenant at the end of the tenancy, you have myriad responsibilities. You need to find removalists, get your stuff sorted and packed, sign the lease for the new house, get your deposit refunded and pay for the new deposit, get the address changed at various places, get the kids admitted into a new school, etc.

Thus, you have little time on hand to undertake comprehensive cleaning that satisfies the owner on the day of the inspection. It needs a lot of time and patience, and you lack it when moving out. You need the energy to run



around and get things done. Thus, it is advisable to hire bond cleaners in Brisbane for the job.

#### **4. Peace Of Mind**

The thought of cleaning the whole property with precision and undergoing inspection can leave you distressed. Many tenants go through sleepless nights when they reach the end of their tenancy because of this reason. However, when you hire a reputed bond cleaning company in Brisbane to clean the premises, the tensions and worries fade away automatically.

Bond cleaners are proficient and trained in their job and carry an REIQ approved cleaning checklist, which ensures that none of the nooks and crannies is missed. They clean as per the recommendations of the Institute and know their task well. Thus, you can have a peaceful end of the lease period.

#### **5. Easier To Find New Tenants**

For the property owners, the end of the tenancy is the period when they start looking for new tenants. The potential lessee will visit the house to evaluate the place. If the property is dirty and unhygienic, people visiting the place will not be interested in leasing it.

Thus, the chance of finding the right tenant becomes bleak. So, the landlord needs to inspect the property thoroughly and get it ready for the new tenants.

#### **6. Organised Cleaning**

When amateurs try to clean the house, they are not sure about the procedures and processes that can help them to remove the grime in the kitchen or the muck in the bathroom. They usually end up doing a shabby job that is somewhere in the middle of unclean and clean. Naturally, such cleaning is not approved by the property manager.

However, with professional bond cleaners, you do not have to worry about the kitchen sink or the toilet bowl. They clean everything flawlessly with tested methods that work like magic. They have well-organised checklists and a plan to cover the whole property. Also, they use organic products to complete the tasks, so the environment is not affected during the clean-up.

#### **7. Save Money**

When you are cleaning on your own, you must buy the best cleaning products and equipment if you do not have them. From sponges, mops, dusters, and washcloths to wipers, gloves, toilet cleaners, and other cleaning liquids, you will have a long shopping list.

You will also need vacuum cleaners and dusters with extendable rods that can reach the ceiling fans and blinds for detailed cleaning. On the other hand, when you hire professionals for the task, you need not buy anything and save this amount.

Whether you are a tenant or a landlord, the importance of bond cleaning in Brisbane cannot be challenged. It is as critical for the lessee as it is for the lessor. Thus, you should not compromise on the quality of cleaning and hire professionals for meticulous and in-depth scrubbing, dusting, wiping, and vacuuming.

### **Resolving disputes**

Rental disputes may occur when:

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

### **Resolving disputes**

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

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

To resolve problems during a tenancy, you can:

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

### **The Final Words**

All of the aforementioned items need to be done **PRIOR** to your move-out inspection so that you can **RECEIVE YOUR FULL SECURITY DEPOSIT BACK**

(less any withholding from earlier tenancy). Any and all repairs, repainting, trash removal, cleaning, and/or any other expenses that are attributed to restoring your home to its condition prior to your tenancy will be deducted from your Security Deposit.

If additional money is needed to restore said home, Landlord will send Tenant a bill and/or file legal suit for said money in court. Your Security Deposit will be mailed within 30 days of your move-out inspection to the address you provide Landlord (if no new address is given, any remaining Security Deposit money will be mailed to the current mailing address and the Post Office will be responsible for forwarding any/all mail to your new listed address). Please also note the replace/repair cost(s) for items you leave in disarray.

Please remember to deliver your home in the same condition it was in prior to your tenancy. This will ensure YOU RECEIVE THE MOST MONEY POSSIBLE!

Good luck with your move.

## References

By Erin Eberlin. (2021) | 10 Common Reasons Renters Move | The Balance Small Business, Retrieved April 04, 2022, From

<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/reasons-tenants-leave-rental-2125040>

Moving out checklist | Queensland Government, Retrieved April 05, 2022, From

<https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/public-community-housing/public-housing-tenants/ending-your-tenancy/moving-out-checklist>

Vacating a property | Residential Tenancies Authority, Retrieved April 04, 2022, From

<https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/ending-a-tenancy/vacating-a-property>

By Angelina | What Is Bond Cleaning? How Is It Important? | Bond Cleaning in Brisbane, Retrieved April 05, 2022, From

<https://www.bondcleaninginbrisbane.com.au/what-is-bond-cleaning-how-is-it-important/>

A Checklist for Landlords With Tenants Moving Out | The Balance Small Business, Retrieved April 05, 2022, From

<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/sample-move-out-checklist-for-landlords-and-tenants-212500>

By Brigitte Yuille. (2021) | 5 Tips For Renting Out Your Home | Investopedia, Retrieved April 05, 2022, From

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/mortgages-real-estate/10/renting-out-home.asp>