

## Fact Sheet 7: Starting a tenancy

### Sign the General Tenancy Agreement

The General Tenancy Agreement (formerly the Residential Tenancy Agreement) is a legal contract. You and the lessor/agent agree to the conditions listed when you sign it. The agreement states:

- who is renting the property and who can live there
- when the agreement starts and ends
- the amount of rent to be paid per week, and how often and which method you will use to pay the rent (for example electronically, weekly or fortnightly)
- standard and special terms of agreement.

Before signing the tenancy agreement, make sure you read and understand it. Ask someone you trust to go through it with you.

You must sign and return the agreement **within 5 days** of receiving it.

When you sign the tenancy agreement, the lessor/agent must give you:

- a signed copy of the [General Tenancy Agreement \(Form 18a\)](#)
- a signed copy of the [Entry Condition Report](#) (Form 1a), completed by the lessor/agent (see below)
- the booklet [Renting a house or unit in Queensland \(Form 17a\)](#), [Renting a caravan or moveable dwelling in Queensland \(Form 17b\)](#).

You should keep these documents in a safe place.

### Pay the bond and rent in advance

- **What is a bond?** Money you pay at the start of your tenancy that the lessor/agent can claim if you breach the agreement and owe money for rent, damages or other costs at the end of the tenancy.
- **How much bond will I pay?** If your rent is \$700 a week or less, the maximum bond a lessor/agent can charge is equal to 4 weeks rent. The lessor/agent can charge any amount as bond if the weekly rent is more than \$700.
- **What happens to my bond money?** The lessor/agent must lodge your bond money with the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA), where it is held in trust while you live in the property. The RTA sends you an official receipt with your Rental Bond Number on it. Keep this receipt in a safe place, such as in a folder with the copies of your rental agreements.
- **What if I don't have enough money for the bond?** If you cannot afford to pay the full rental bond, ask the lessor/agent if you can pay in installments and/or check if you may be eligible for a Department of Communities Bond Loan. Information on how to apply for this bond loan is available at your nearest Housing Services office or at <http://www.housing.qld.gov.au/loans/bond/index.htm>

## Refund of Rental Bond

- **How can you get your bond back at the end of your tenancy?** When you are about to leave the tenancy, **you** should apply to the Residential Tenancies Authority to get your bond back by completing a Refund of a Rental Bond (Form 4), as soon as you return the key to the lessor/agent. You should send this completed form direct to the Residential Tenancies Authority. It is best if everyone (all the tenants and the lessor/agent) sign and agree on the bond refund amount.

## For more information

This fact sheet is part of a series of fact sheets, including:

- Fact sheet 1 – [\*Identifying your housing needs\*](#)
- Fact sheet 2 – [\*Documents you need to rent a property\*](#)
- Fact sheet 3 – [\*Finding a property to rent\*](#)
- Fact sheet 4 – [\*Making a good impression\*](#)
- Fact sheet 5 – [\*Inspecting a property to rent\*](#)
- Fact Sheet 6 – [\*Applying for a tenancy\*](#)
- Fact Sheet 8 – [\*Moving In\*](#)
- Fact Sheet 9 – [\*Where to get help when renting\*](#)
- Fact Sheet 10 – [\*Tenancy databases\*](#)

## Contact us

Visit <http://www.housing.qld.gov.au/contact/offices/index.htm> for the contact details of your nearest Housing Services office.