

Rooming Accommodation generally covers residents who rent a room, but share facilities like a kitchen or bathroom. See *Do you rent a room?* fact sheet for more information. The *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (the Act) is the law that covers tenants and lessors as well as residents and providers in Queensland.

Paying rent

It is your responsibility to pay your rent. Your rooming accommodation agreement should state:

- how much rent you pay;
- when you should pay your rent; and
- how you should pay your rent.

You may be asked to pay your rent in any of these ways:

- cash;
- cheque;
- deposit to a nominated account;
- credit card;
- EFTPOS; or
- deduction from pay, pension or benefit.

If the provider wants you to pay your rent in a way that is not listed here you do not have to agree. If you are asked to pay in a way not listed (e.g. rent card) then you should be given a notice:

- stating the costs associated with the other way of paying rent (e.g. rent card); and
- with the choice of at least two additional ways to pay your rent from the list above.

Rent apportionment

Your rent accumulates day to day. This means that you only pay rent for the days that you have possession of your room.

At the end of your agreement if correct notice has been given and you vacate your room in the middle of a week you have paid rent for, your provider must refund the rent for the days during the week you no longer lived there.

Alternatively, if you know that you will be leaving in the middle of a rent week and you've given the correct

notice, you only need to pay rent for the days you will stay there for, instead of for the whole week.

If you can't agree with your provider about rent apportionment you can use the free dispute resolution service of the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA).

Rent in advance

The provider must not ask you to pay more than two weeks' rent in advance. If you paid rent in advance then you don't have to pay rent again until the rent you have already paid is all used up.

For example, if you pay your two weeks' rent in advance on a Monday, you cannot be asked to pay rent again until Monday two weeks later, when all the rent you paid in advance has been used up.

Rent receipts

Make sure you get a receipt if you pay your rent by cash or cheque. If you pay your rent personally in cash, you should get a receipt when you pay your rent. If you pay your rent in cash, but drop it off (i.e. don't give your cash to a person), you should get your receipt by the end of the next working day.

If you pay your rent by cheque, the provider must give you a receipt within three working days if you ask for one.

Keep your receipts because this will be your record that you have paid your rent.

The provider is the person who is providing you with your room. Unless otherwise stated, 'provider' can be taken to include 'provider's agent'. A resident is a person who rents a room in rooming accommodation.

If you pay your rent in another way (i.e. other than cash or cheque) the provider must keep a written rent record of all rent payments. You can ask for a copy of this record in writing and the provider must give you a copy within seven days.

Your rent receipts or the provider's payment record must include:

- your name;
 - the address of the rental premises;
 - the number or identifier for your room;
 - the date the payment is received;
 - the time for which the payment is made;
 - the amount of the payment;
 - that the payment is for the payment of rent; and
- the individual amounts for each of the following services provided (if any):
- accommodation;
 - food service; or
 - personal care service .

Rent increases

The provider must give you four weeks' written notice of a rent increase. This notice should state the amount of the rent increase and when you need to start paying the increase. You are not required to pay a rent increase unless your provider notifies you of the rent increase as the Act requires.

During a fixed term rooming accommodation agreement, the provider can't increase your rent unless your agreement allows for a rent increase and states how much the increase will be or how the increase will be worked out.

Rent Arrears

Rent arrears is very serious and must be dealt with quickly, otherwise you may lose your room.

Your provider is allowed to increase your rent if your rooming accommodation agreement is changed to give you another service (e.g. getting your room cleaned).

Rent decreases

If you and your provider make an agreement regarding a rent decrease, make sure you get the agreement in writing and keep a copy.

Rent decrease when you lose a service or amenity

You may want to request a rent decrease from your provider if:

- a service that you normally get (e.g. cleaning your room) is no longer available, or the quality of the service decreases; or
- your room or common areas become partly unfit to live in, or their standard decreases.

If you or one of your guests have caused damage your room, the common areas or caused a service to stop or get worse, you will not be entitled to a rent decrease.

If you and your provider can't agree on a rent decrease, you can use the RTA's free dispute resolution service to resolve the dispute.

Rent decrease when you are away

If you receive a personal care or food service at your residence and you don't use the service because you are away, you may be entitled to a rent decrease.

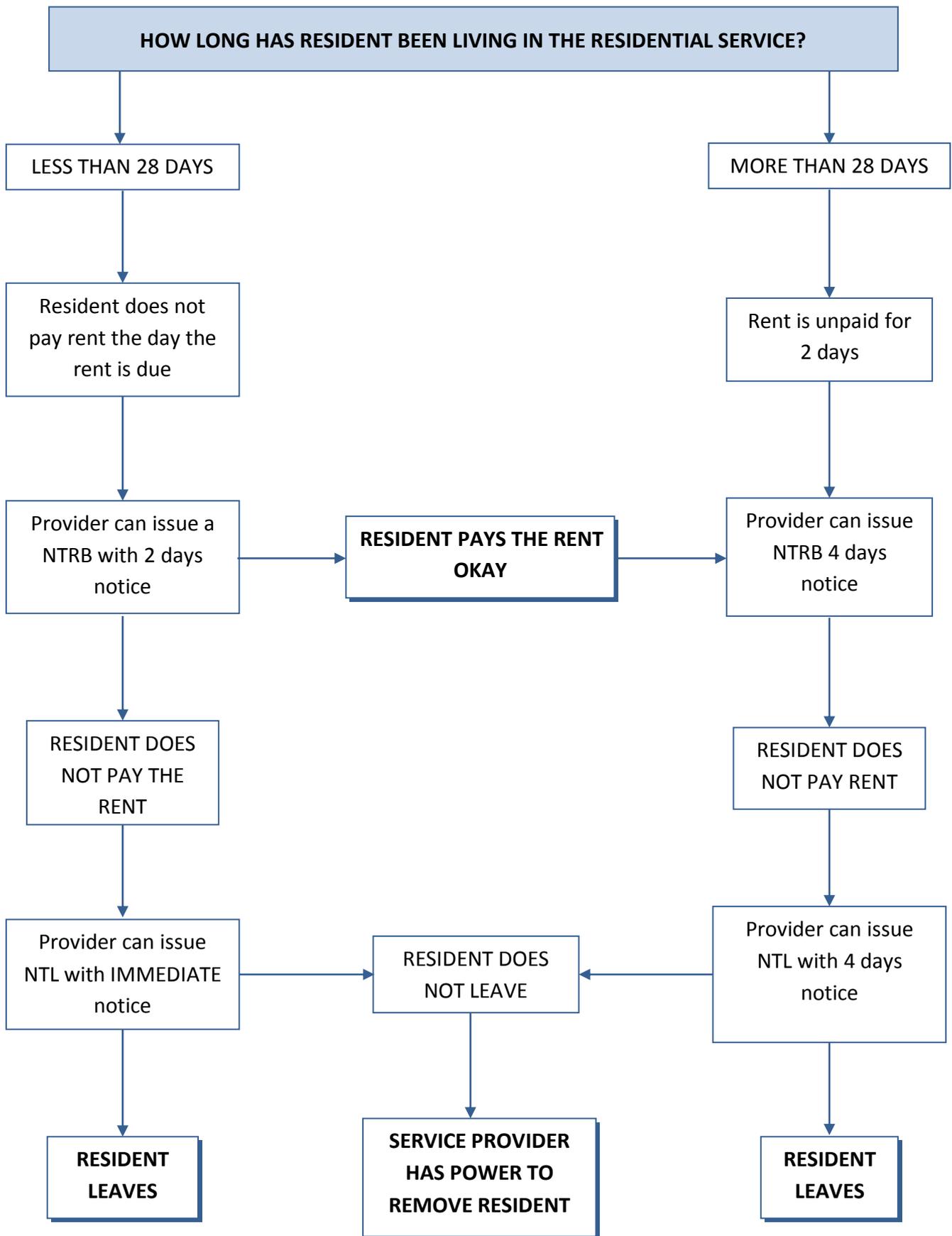
If you have a food service, you must be away for two or more continuous weeks before you can ask for a rent decrease.

If you use a personal care service, you can ask for a rent decrease as soon as you are away from the premises.

If you know you are going to be away, it is a good idea to tell your provider, and try to negotiate a rent decrease. It is also a good idea to re-read your rooming accommodation agreement as it may have special terms about rent decreases.

If you reach an agreement about a rent decrease with your provider make sure you get the agreement in writing and keep a copy.

RENT ARREARS FLOW CHART



Resolving Disputes

In any dispute about rent, it is a good idea to try to negotiate with your provider. Make sure you put any agreements you make into writing and keep a copy. This will be important evidence if you have a dispute about the agreement you made.

If you can't reach an agreement with your provider, you can send a Dispute Resolution Request (Form R16) to the RTA. The RTA provides a free Dispute Resolution Service that can help you and your provider reach an agreement about your residency dispute. If you reach an agreement you should ask the RTA for a written copy of the outcome.

If you and your provider can't reach an agreement during conciliation, you will be issued with a Notice of Unresolved Dispute (NURD).

You can then apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) for a final decision about your dispute. In QCAT you and the provider will have a chance to present evidence to the member or adjudicator who will then make a final order about the dispute.



Rent decreases

If the dispute relates to a rent decrease because of your absence from the premises, QCAT must consider:

- any special term of your agreement in relation to the matter;
- the reason why you were away;
- the amount of time you were away;
- whether you gave the provider notice of your absence;
- whether you were able to give the provider notice of your absence;
- if you gave the provider notice of the absence - the length of the notice; and
- any impact a reduction of rent would have on the provider or other residents.

QCAT can make any order it thinks is appropriate about the rent decrease.

For free tenancy advice & further information call:

Tenants' Union of Queensland (TUQ)

1300 744 263 – Statewide advice line

www.tuq.org.au

Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services (TAAS)

Look under "T" for tenancy advice in the telephone directory for a local TAAS.

Further information:

Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA)

1300 366 311

www.rta.qld.gov.au

The Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (Queensland) is administered by the Queensland Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) funded by both the Residential Tenancies Authority from interest earned on bond lodged with the Authority, and by the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services).