

# Paying your rent

Your tenancy agreement will say how much rent you must pay, when you must pay the rent (or example each week or each fortnight), and the way you will pay the rent.

You must pay your rent on time and you cannot miss any of your rent payments. If you fail to pay the rent your lessor can take steps to end your renting agreement and you can be given a notice to move out.

## What if I rent in public or community housing?

If you rent from the Department of Housing, or a Community Housing organisation, the amount of rent you pay is based on the income of all the people who live in the place. This is called the household income.

If the household income goes up or down, your rent will go up or down. Let your housing provider know if your income changes, or people move in or out of the place, as this may change your household income and the amount of rent you must pay.

## Keeping track of your rent

Always keep track of your rent payments so you know if you are up-to-date with your rent payments.

Your lessor, agent, or housing provider must also keep a record of your rent payments. This is called a Rent Payment Record (or rent ledger).

If you ask your lessor or agent for a copy of the rent payment record, or write and ask them for a copy, they must give you a copy within 7 days.

## If you pay rent in cash

If you pay your rent in cash you must be given a written receipt. The receipt must state who you paid the rent money to, how much rent you have paid, and the dates the rent is for. Keep a copy of your rent receipts as they are evidence you have paid the rent.

## Paying rent via Centrelink or bank deductions

You may agree to pay your rent by direct debit from your bank account, or have your rent money deducted from your wages or Centrelink payments (Centrepay).

Direct debit is when you sign a form telling your bank to pay the rent each rent day, directly from your bank account into the lessor or real estate agent's bank account.

If you pay rent by direct debit make sure you have enough money in your bank account on the day your rent is due to be paid.

### What if I am late with my rent?

If you cannot pay your rent on time, talk to your lessor or agent to let them know you have a problem. Let them know when you can pay the rent.

If you are behind on the rent you can make an offer to pay extra money each week to catch up the rent you owe.

Only offer to pay what you can afford as you must stick to this agreement. If you have more problems talk to the lessor about this.

If you make an agreement with the lessor or agent to catch up the rent, put this agreement in writing.

### What if I don't pay my rent?

It is important to pay your rent on time. If you fall behind with your rent (more than 7 days) this is a breach of your renting agreement. If this happens your lessor can give you a **Notice to Remedy Breach** (Form 11) that gives you 7 days notice to pay the rent you owe.

If you get a Notice to Remedy Breach you must respond by the due date on the notice. You must pay the rent you owe, or make an agreement with the lessor or agent to catch up the rent (put any agreement in writing).

If you do not fix the rent problem by the due date on the Notice to Remedy Breach, your lessor can give you a **Notice to Leave** (Form 12) for an "unremedied breach". This notice can give you just 7 days to move out.

If you have paid your rent, or have an agreement to catch up your rent, you can dispute the Notice to Leave, if you think the notice is not fair and reasonable. Contact an advice service for help with this.

### What about other renting costs?

Your lessor or agent can only use your rent money for rent. They cannot use your rent money to pay other bills you owe, such as repairs or water bills. If you owe money for other bills, they must give you a copy of the bill and give you at least 1 month to pay.

### Important points to remember

- Keep copies of ALL paperwork between you and your lessor.
- Your rent must be paid on time and kept up to date.
- Keep track of your rent payments and keep copies of your rent receipts.
- If you have a problem paying your rent, talk to someone and get help to sort out the problem.
- If your lessor says you owe rent money, ask for a copy of the rent record so you can see how much you owe and when you fell behind.

**For advice and help with renting problems call the Tenants Queensland free QSTARS advice service on 1300 744 263**