

Your rental bond

What is a rental bond?

A rental bond is money your lessor or agent may ask you to pay as a security deposit when you rent a place. A rental bond is usually equal to 4 weeks rent. The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) looks after your bond money during your tenancy.

When you move out you can apply to the RTA to get your bond money back. If you have met your renting responsibilities you should get all your bond money back.

Your lessor or agent may claim money from your bond if you break the agreement, owe rent, damage the place, or move out and do not leave the place clean and in a similar condition to when you moved in.

What happens when I pay a rental bond?

- Ask for a written receipt. This is evidence you paid a rental bond to someone.
- The lessor or agent must send your bond money into the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA). You can lodge bond money online with the RTA, or you and the lessor can sign a Bond Lodgment Form 2 and they can send the money to the RTA.
- When the RTA get your bond money, they will send you a letter or email notice with your bond lodgment number. Contact the RTA if you don't get this notice.

What should I do when I move out?

- Remove your goods and leave the place clean and in a similar condition to when you moved in (except for everyday wear).
- Have evidence to show you have met your renting responsibilities. Photos, cleaning receipts and your Exit Condition Report comments are good evidence.
- Use an Exit Condition Report to write down what each room is like when you move out. Give the agent a copy when you return the keys. They have 3 business days to inspect the place and let you know if there are any problems.
- Apply to the RTA to get your bond back. You can apply for your bond refund online or fill in a Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4) and post it into the RTA. You can get forms from the RTA website or call the RTA on 1300 366 311.
- Never sign a blank Bond Refund Form. Always write the bond refund amounts on the Form before you sign it.
- Let the RTA know your contact details so you can be notified about any claims.

How do I get my bond money back after I move out?

When you move out you can apply directly to the RTA for your bond refund. The RTA will act on the first bond claim they receive. The RTA can release the bond if everyone agrees with an online bond refund claim, or if everyone signs an agreed Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4) and sends it into the RTA.

If you agree the lessor can have some bond money, write the amount on the Form 4 when you sign it. Confirm with the lessor or agent this bond amount is in full payment of all tenancy claims. Write this on the form. Keep a copy.

When can my lessor or agent claim money from my bond?

When you move out, your lessor or agent may claim money from your bond if you leave owing rent, damage the place, or do not leave the place clean.

However, you are not responsible for reasonable wear and tear from everyday use. For example, if carpet is worn, or curtains and blinds are old and need repair.

You are also not responsible for routine maintenance or damage that was there before you moved in (this should be written on your Entry Condition Report).

You are also not responsible for damage done by someone else in an act of domestic violence towards you. It is good to have evidence of this.

What if I disagree with the claims against my bond?

If your lessor claims some of your bond money, ask what amounts they are claiming and why. You can also ask for evidence, such as photos and receipts, to see if their claims are reasonable.

If you don't agree with the lessor's claims, gather evidence to show you met your renting responsibilities and the lessor's claims are not reasonable.

Your evidence may include

- Photos or receipts to show you left the place clean and in good condition.
- Copies of your Entry Condition Report and Exit Condition Report.
- Evidence you paid the rent.

What if I get a Notice of Claim letter from the RTA?

After you move out, if someone else applies first to the RTA to claim your bond, the RTA will send you a Notice of Claim. If the RTA sends you a Notice of Claim, and you do not dispute the claim, the RTA will refund the bond according to the first bond claim. If you disagree with the claim you have 14 days to fill in a Dispute Resolution Request (Form 16) and send it into the RTA.

When you send the RTA a Form 16 the RTA Dispute Resolution Service will contact you and your lessor by telephone, to help you share information about the bond claims and see if you can reach an agreement about the bond refund.

If you and your lessor reach an agreement, you can fill in a new Refund of Rental Bond (Form 4) and send it into the RTA to release the bond as agreed.

If you don't reach an agreement, the RTA will send you a letter that gives you 7 days to apply to the QCAT tenancy tribunal for a hearing about the bond refund.

What if QCAT send me a notice about a tenancy tribunal hearing?

If you (or your lessor) apply to QCAT for a tenancy tribunal hearing, QCAT will send you a letter with the date, time, and location of the hearing. If your lessor applies for a hearing QCAT will send you a copy of their application. It is important to attend the tribunal hearing to have your say and show your evidence.

At the QCAT tribunal hearing the Adjudicator can look at the evidence provided by each side and make a final decision about how the RTA should refund the bond.

For tenancy advice call Tenants Queensland QSTARS on 1300 744 263