

# Successful Renting

To rent a property successfully there are essential skills and information you need to know. These are your rights and responsibilities when renting a property. Responsibilities include paying rent, keeping your property clean, reporting and getting repairs done and ensuring visitors don't behave in such a way that would impact negatively on your tenancy.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Tenants and real estate's/landlords both have rights and responsibilities during a tenancy agreement. Understanding what the general renting rules are will avoid problems.

General **tenant** responsibilities:

- Pay rent as directed by real estate/landlord
- Keep your property clean- keep neat and tidy, no excess rubbish and belongings
- Be mindful of your neighbours quiet peace and enjoyment
- You are also responsible for visitors, the same responsibilities apply to visitors

General **property managers/landlords** responsibilities:

- Respect tenants privacy
- Keep the property in good repair
- Lodge a bond with relevant bond authority

## Need more information on your rights and responsibilities?

Tenants Union Victoria  
03 9654 7389  
<https://www.tuv.org.au/>

Consumer Affairs Victoria  
1300 558 181  
<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/>

Victorian Tenants Help  
<http://tenanthelp.com.au/vic/>

Housing Justice Bendigo  
(03) 5445 0990  
<http://www.housingjustice.org.au/>

## Paying rent

### Ways to pay rent

#### **Direct debit from Centrelink payments**

You can have your rent taken from your fortnightly Centrelink payments automatically. This is called the Rent Deduction Service. It's free and your rent will always be up to date. When you sign your tenancy agreement, you can automatically be signed up for this service. You can cancel it at any time if you don't want to use it.

#### **Direct debit from your bank account**

You can have your rent paid automatically from your bank account. Some banks might charge a fee for this, so check with your bank.

#### **B-pay**

Your real estate/landlord may provide b-pay as a rent payment option, get details from real-estate/landlord.

## What should you do if you are having trouble paying rent?

If you are having issues paying rent ask for help early. Places to get advice might be your support worker, a financial counsellor or an emergency funding agency.

It is important to communicate with your real estate/landlord if you know you are going to fall behind in your rental payment. **Communication is the key.**

Financial hardship can happen to anyone. Real estate's/landlords will do their best to find satisfactory resolution to the arrears so long as you communicate with them early i.e. payment plan, so that you are able to repay your rent.

Failure to pay your rent could result in legal action against you to recover the rent and other costs which could result in being evicted.

## Need some financial advice?

Here are some suggestions:

St Luke's  
47 High Street, Bendigo VIC 3550  
(03) 5448 1000  
[http://www.stlukes.org.au/Pages/Our\\_Services/Financial\\_Counselling.aspx](http://www.stlukes.org.au/Pages/Our_Services/Financial_Counselling.aspx)

Bendigo Family & Financial Services Inc.  
8 Myers St, Bendigo VIC 3550  
(03) 54415277  
<http://www.bendigofamilyandfinancialservices.org/index.html>

## Need help talking to the real-estate/owner?

Here are some suggestions:

Consumer Affairs Victoria  
1300 558 181  
<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/>

Housing Justice  
54 Mitchell Street, Bendigo VIC 3550  
(03) 5445 0990  
<http://www.housingjustice.org.au/>

## Keeping your property clean

### The Residential Tenancies Act 1997, states:

A tenant must keep the rented premises in a reasonably clean condition except to the extent that the landlord is responsible under the tenancy agreement for keeping the premises in that condition.<sup>2</sup>

Here's some tips to assist you in keeping your home clean to meet your responsibilities as a tenant:

### Outside

- Make sure you mow lawn and weed garden beds on a regular basis eg. every 2-4 weeks.
- Remove excess rubbish from outside your property.
- Do not store old or damaged belongings outside your property.

**TIP** If excess rubbish and belongings are visible from the street this may cause concerned neighbours or members of the community to notify council or real estate/landlord.

### Inside

- Vacuum carpets and sweep and wash floors regularly, eg: every 2 weeks.
- Clean bathrooms: showers, toilets, baths and vanities regularly eg: every 2 weeks at a minimum.
- Wipe down all kitchen surfaces and clean over, grill and stove top with cleaning products regularly.
- Take out rubbish and recycling at least weekly.

**TIP** Wiping down surfaces regularly makes it easier to clean and prevents surfaces from becoming stained or attracting ants and rodents.<sup>3</sup>

### Struggling to keep on top of things?

Contact your support worker to get help (eg: Community Mental Health Worker) if you have one.

Advice on tenancy rights and responsibilities:  
Housing Justice [www.housingjustice.org.au](http://www.housingjustice.org.au)

Emergency relief funding:  
Haven, Home, Safe [www.havenhomesafe.org.au](http://www.havenhomesafe.org.au)

## Repairs

Real estate's/landlords have a duty under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to ensure your property is clean and things are kept in good repair while you live in your home. Tenants also have a responsibility to report any maintenance issues.

There are 2 types of repairs urgent and non-urgent repairs. Urgent repairs must be carried out immediately (ie within 2-3 days). When you start your tenancy you should be provided with contact numbers to phone in the event of an emergency.

### For more information on urgent and non-urgent repairs go to

[www.tuv.org.au/advice/getting-repairs-done/](http://www.tuv.org.au/advice/getting-repairs-done/)

**Or contact** Consumer Affairs Victoria 1300 558 181 for further advice.

**TIP** Under no circumstances can you stop paying your rent if you are having difficulties getting repairs done, if you do so this can place your tenancy at risk. Seek advice immediately.

## Inspections

Make yourself available for routine inspections. Making it difficult for the real estate/landlord to inspect your property may lead them to believe you are hiding something.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to an inspection, give the property a good clean inside and out. Make sure rubbish and clutter has been removed and dishes done and put away.

### This routine inspection checklist might help you be more prepared for inspections:

Checklist to be completed	Tick
Entries and exits are clear	
Floors vacuumed	
Floors swept and mopped	
Rubbish removed from home	
No excess dishes	
Benches clear	
No excess rubbish outside house	
Lawns mowed	
Written list of repairs to be done	
Other:	

## Neighbours

You have the right to peaceful enjoyment of your home, as does your neighbour.

If you have a problem with your neighbours, or they with you, it's important to try to resolve it as early as possible.

The best first step is to talk to them.

If this doesn't work there are people who can help and places to go for advice.

### Behaviour that would not be considered acceptable:

- Noise
- Intimidation or harassment
- Aggressive and threatening language or behaviour
- Vandalism
- Nuisance caused by vehicles such as where they are parked or the way repairs are being carried out
- Nuisance caused by pets
- Abuse or harassment

### Be considerate towards your neighbours:

- When you are doing something noisy, let neighbours know before you start and try to avoid making noise when people are likely to be sleeping
- Co-operate if a neighbour asks you to reduce noise
- Be tolerant to your neighbours if they have a different lifestyle from yours
- Don't use your property for illegal purposes such as drug dealing
- Don't harass people in any way
- Don't use violent or abusive language or behave in such a way.

### What to do if you're experiencing problems with neighbours?

- Try talking calmly to them first
- Talk to your real estate/landlord.
- Call the police if you feel threatened or unsafe.

### Get help to talk to your neighbour from an independent mediator:

Dispute Settlement Centre  
60 Mitchell Street  
Bendigo VIC 3550  
(03) 4433 3100  
[www.disputes.vic.gov.au](http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au)

## Pets

The Residential Tenancies Act 1997, which sets out the legal rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, doesn't say anything about keeping pets on a rental property.

However, many leases have a 'no pets' clause that prohibits tenants from keeping pets. If you have a pet or intend to get one, you should make sure your real estate/landlord agrees to this before you rent the property or permission is given prior to getting an animal is already living in your home.<sup>4</sup>

Not notifying the real-estate/landlord can place your tenancy at risk.

## Domestic Violence

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) is an immediate cause of homelessness for many victims. Often victims feel that they have no option but to leave their home in these situation, this is not always correct. There are laws that exist to protect victims of domestic violence in their home.

DFV can also place your home at risk due to effects of domestic violence examples: damage, noise etc.

### Need more information?

Go to [http://www.tuv.org.au/articles/files/resources/Family\\_Violence\\_and\\_Your\\_Tenancy\\_Rights\\_FS\\_R\\_062009.pdf](http://www.tuv.org.au/articles/files/resources/Family_Violence_and_Your_Tenancy_Rights_FS_R_062009.pdf)

## Are you a victim of family and domestic violence and need support?

Centre for Non Violence  
18 Forest Street, Bendigo VIC 3550 - (03) 5430 3000  
<http://www.cnv.org.au/>

1800RESPECT

1800RESPECT is the national family violence and sexual assault counselling service. It is a free, confidential service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 1800 737 732 to speak to a professional counsellor.<sup>5</sup>

Worksheets available as word template at  
[www.housingjustice.org.au](http://www.housingjustice.org.au)

- Routine inspection checklist

<sup>1</sup><http://sarina.ljhooker.com.au/about-us/Blog/the-importance-of-paying-rent-on-time?post=55c943267cd7196f2e000209&tag=&author=Tarsi%20Hynes&page=1>

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/edfb620cf7503d1aca256da4001b08af/C7F3C6D8118D4BCACA256E5B00213C3D/\\$FILE/97-109a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/edfb620cf7503d1aca256da4001b08af/C7F3C6D8118D4BCACA256E5B00213C3D/$FILE/97-109a.pdf)

<sup>3</sup><http://www.starhousing.org/>

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.tuv.org.au/articles/files/resources/Pets\\_FS\\_R\\_062009.pdf](http://www.tuv.org.au/articles/files/resources/Pets_FS_R_062009.pdf)

<sup>5</sup><http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/domestic-and-family-violence>