

Rooming house residents guide

Keep this information. You might need it while living at the rooming house, or when you move out.

For more information, including for rooming house operators, visit consumer.vic.gov.au/renting.

See renting information in other languages: consumer.vic.gov.au/languages.

See renting information in Easy English: consumer.vic.gov.au/easyenglish.

Bond

The rooming house operator may ask you to pay a bond before you move in. The bond amount must not be more than 14 days' rent (or 28 days' rent if you have a fixed-term rooming house agreement).

The operator must lodge the bond with the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA) within 10 business days of receiving the bond. The RTBA will then send you a receipt. If you do not receive a receipt within 15 business days of making payment, you may notify the RTBA.

More information: consumer.vic.gov.au/lodgingbond.

Condition report

If you pay a bond, the rooming house operator must give you a condition report. They must fill in their part of the report, sign it and give you 2 copies (or 1 copy electronically) before you move in.

Inspect the property and add your own notes on its condition, including any damage. Take photos if you can. Give 1 copy of the completed, signed report to the operator within 3 days of moving in.

Important: Keep your copy of the condition report. You might need it if there is a dispute about who should pay for cleaning, damage, or replacement of missing items.

Repairs

The rooming house operator is responsible for all repairs. However, you may be asked to arrange and/or pay for repairs if you caused the damage. You must continue to pay rent while waiting for repairs to be done.

Urgent repairs

Urgent repairs may include the following:

- a blocked or broken toilet
- a dangerous electrical fault
- a gas leak
- a serious water leak, or flooding
- a fault that makes the property or your room insecure. For example, a broken lock
- breakdown of an essential service or appliance provided by the rooming house operator. For example, a hot water system.

See the full list of urgent repairs at consumer.vic.gov.au/rentalrepairs.

What to do: Tell the rooming house operator as soon as possible. They must respond without delay. If they do not, contact Consumer Affairs Victoria for information and advice.

If the operator does not respond quickly enough and you have to pay for an urgent repair yourself, the operator must pay you back, up to a limit of \$2,500.

More information: consumer.vic.gov.au/rentalrepairs.

Non-urgent repairs

Non-urgent repairs are anything not on the 'Urgent repairs' list at consumer.vic.gov.au/rentalrepairs.

What to do: Give the rooming house operator a 'Notice to operator of rooming house' form telling them what needs to be repaired. The operator must respond within 14 days. If they do not, contact Consumer Affairs Victoria for information and advice.

More information: consumer.vic.gov.au/rentalrepairs.

Minimum standards

Rooming house operators must ensure their properties meet minimum standards that relate to privacy, security, safety and amenity. The minimum standards cover residents' rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, dining facilities in a common area, shared laundries, gas and electrical fittings, lights and locks.

For more information visit consumer.vic.gov.au/minimumstandards.

Safety and privacy

You have a right to privacy, peace and quiet. This means that you must not unnecessarily disturb other residents. The rooming house operator must also respect your right to privacy, peace and quiet.

An operator can give a resident or their visitors a 'Notice to leave', effective immediately, if they are being violent or are putting others in danger. This notice prevents the resident or visitor from returning for two business days. Alternatively, an operator can issue a 'Notice to vacate' on the same day if a resident or their visitors endangers the safety of other residents, neighbours, the operator, their agent or employees. For more information, visit consumer.vic.gov.au/roomsafety.

For information on your renting rights if you are affected by family violence, visit consumer.vic.gov.au/rentingfv.

Operator entry to your room

If the rooming house operator wishes to enter your room, they must give you:

- 48 hours' notice, for a general inspection
- 24 hours' notice, for any other reason.

For more information, visit consumer.vic.gov.au/roomentry.

Rent increases

If the operator wants to increase the rent, and you have not asked for additional services, they must give you at least 60 days' notice using a form provided by Consumer Affairs Victoria. Your rent cannot be increased more than once every 12 months. For more information, visit consumer.vic.gov.au/rentincreases.

Extra fees and costs

The operator must give you certain forms and publications when you start living at the rooming house. This includes a notice outlining the fees for any extra services the operator provides. For example, room cleaning, linen or meals. If you use these extra services, the operator must give you an itemised account detailing their use.

Bond claims

Before you move out, you and the rooming house operator should:

- try to agree on how the bond will be finalised
- set out the agreed division in the bond claim form.

The operator can claim part or all of the bond for specific things, such as:

- damage caused by you or your visitors (but not fair wear and tear)
- cleaning expenses, if you have not left the property reasonably clean.

Only sign the bond claim form if it shows the amount you will receive.

If the operator agrees, the RTBA can release your bond up to 14 days before the end of your agreement.

For more information, visit consumer.vic.gov.au/bondclaims.

If you cannot agree on the bond

You can submit a bond claim form to the RTBA. The RTBA will then contact the rental provider, who has 14 days to apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to dispute the claim.

- If the rental provider does nothing, the RTBA will pay the bond to you.
- If the rental provider applies to VCAT within 14 days after the rental agreement ends, VCAT can make an order about how the bond should be divided.

More information: consumer.vic.gov.au/bonddisputes.

Discrimination

Rooming house operators must not unlawfully discriminate (or tell their agent to unlawfully discriminate) against you. For example, they must not discriminate against you because of your sex, age, disability, race or religion when deciding whether to rent you a room.

For more information, visit consumer.vic.gov.au/rentingdiscrimination.

Pets

You can only keep a pet with the operator's permission.

Resident disputes

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria can hear disputes between residents and help them reach agreement. For more information, visit disputes.vic.gov.au.

Threat of eviction

A rooming house operator cannot evict you for exercising your legal rights or saying you will do so. They can only end your agreement for specific reasons. They must give you the required amount of notice and use the correct 'Notice to vacate' form.

If you are worried about getting a notice to vacate or getting evicted, contact Consumer Affairs Victoria for information and advice.

Useful contacts

Organisation	When to contact	Phone number	Website
Consumer Affairs Victoria	If you have questions about renting agreements, bonds, rent increases or repairs If you are being evicted	1300 55 81 81	consumer.vic.gov.au
Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA)	To look up your bond, transfer a bond or arrange a bond refund	1300 137 164	rentalbonds.vic.gov.au
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)	To apply for a hearing about a renting dispute	1300 01 8228	vcat.vic.gov.au/renting
Tenants Victoria	If you need help from a support worker	03 9416 2577	tenantsvic.org.au
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)	If you are an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person and need legal help	1800 064 865	vals.org.au

Housing Victoria (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing)	To apply for a bond loan If you have nowhere to stay	1800 825 955 (24 hours)	housing.vic.gov.au
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