

# **Tenancy Handbook**

## **Your Introduction and Guide to Renting with (your company name)**



**Your Office Name  
Your Office Phone Number  
Your Office Fax Number  
Your Office Address  
Your Office Email Address**

## TENANCY HANDBOOK CONTENTS

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Getting started- What You Must Do First!</b>	<b>6</b>
Utility Connections	6
Wanting us to get you connected?	6
Power and Gas	6
Telephone and Internet	6
Important Condition – Intact telephone Line	6
<b>Getting Ready for your Tenancy Induction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Moving into Your Rental Property</b>	<b>9</b>
Changing Address	9
Contact Details	9
Keys	9
Payments and Lodgement of your Bond	9
Property Condition Report	9
Tenant Contents Insurance	10
<b>During Your Tenancy</b>	<b>11</b>
General Repairs	11
Emergency Repairs	11
Routine Inspections and Photos	12
Inside the Property- Routine Inspections	12
Outside the Property- Routine Inspections	12
If you have an Approved Pet- Routine Inspections	12
Rent Reviews	13
Lease Renewals	13
Landlord Mail and Contact	13
<b>Your Rent Payments</b>	<b>13</b>
Zero Tolerance Policy for Late Rentals	13
The National Internet Tenancy Database – Rent Default	14
Dishonoured Cheques	14
Paying Your Rent into the Office	14
Calendar Monthly Payments	15
Understanding ‘Rent in Advance’	15

<b>Taking Care – Inside the Property</b>	<b>16</b>
Misplaced Keys	16
Property Damage	16
Noise/Disruption	16
Heat Pumps	17
Fireplaces	17
Pot Plants	17
Aquariums	17
No Smoking Policy	17
Tenant Painting	17
Fixtures and Fittings	18
Smoke Alarms	18
Picture Hooks	18
Washing Curtains	18
House Cracking and Movement	18
General Cleaning	19
Carpet Cleaning	19
<b>In the Kitchen</b>	<b>20</b>
Chopping Boards	20
Bench-top Joins	20
Grouting/Tiling/Taps	20
Oven and Stove Tops	21
Exhaust Fans/Vents and Range Hoods	21
Cupboards/ Drawers	21
Dishwashers	22
<b>In the Wet Areas – Bathroom, Toilet and Laundry</b>	<b>22</b>
Shower Screens	22
Blocked Sinks/drains	22
Foreign objects down drains	22
Loose Tiles	22
Wall water damage	22
Taps Leaking	22
Toilets Leaking	23
Hot water cylinder leaks	23
<b>Taking Care – Outside the Property</b>	<b>23</b>
Watering Systems	24
Weeding and Shrub Trimming	24
Supplied Hoses/Fittings	24
Rubbish	24
Oil Drillage	24
Parking on Lawns and gardens	25
 <b>Swimming Pools and Outdoor Spas</b>	 <b>26</b>
Pool/Spa Cleaning	26
Supply of Chemicals	26
Pool/Spa covers, accessories, equipment and pool furniture	26

Pool/Spa Fences and Gates	26
<b>Pets at the Property – Right Expectations</b>	<b>27</b>
Bond – Changing Tenants	28
Sub-letting	28
Property for Residential Use Only	28
 <b>Your Safety – Being Aware</b>	 <b>29</b>
 <b>Saving Power – Some Tips</b>	 <b>30</b>
Keeping Warm and Saving Power	30
Other Useful Power Saving Tips	30
 <b>Strata Title/Body Corporate</b>	 <b>31</b>
Common Property	31
Parking	31
Noise and Disturbance	31
Taking Responsibility for your Visitors	31
 <b>Vacating the Property</b>	 <b>32</b>
Notice in Writing	32
Ending a Fixed Term	32
Ending a Non-Fixed (Periodic) Term	32
Breaking a Fixed Term	32
Getting Your Bond Back Quickly – Criteria	33
Outstanding Rent	33
Cleaning	33
Carpet Cleaning	33
The Final Inspection	34
Outstanding Monies/Damages	34
Eviction	34
National Internet Tenancy Database	34
 <b>Getting the Property Ready for Vacating – Checklist</b>	 <b>35</b>
Inside the Property	35
Outside the Property	37
If you have a Pet	37
 <b>Trades Guide – Get Some Help to Get Property Ready</b>	 <b>38</b>
Who we use and recommend	38

## **Welcome to Renting with (Company Name)**

Congratulations on your tenancy approval. You have been approved because we are confident that, like all our tenants we believe you will be able to pay the rent on time, keep the inside clean, and maintain the property, lawns and gardens.

We have created this guide to assist you with being prepared for your tenancy induction, and also to assist you with having the right expectations during your tenancy with us.

We believe that a smooth relationship can only occur when we all have the right expectations and work diligently to ensure we fulfil our tenancy obligations.



## Getting Ready For Your Tenancy Induction

To ensure you have the right expectations regarding the start of your tenancy and the induction process, we ask you to observe the following important points:

- a) **Keeping Your Appointment Time** - the time you have been allocated for your tenancy induction has been specifically allocated amongst our other appointments, which are usually 'back-to-back'. This means it is crucial you are on time for the appointment because if you are late, our induction time may have to be allocated several hours later until the next complete time slot is available.

Avoid being inconvenienced! Therefore to avoid unnecessary delays and inconvenience please ensure you are on time for your appointment. If you believe you will be delayed, even by 10 minutes, please call us ahead so we can confirm if another appointment time will need to be made to accommodate your change in appointment circumstances.

- b) **Appointment Time Allocation** - as we need to explain all your tenancy details thoroughly, please allocate up to 45 minutes for your tenancy induction.
- c) **All Persons to be Present** - all tenants approved on the application will need to be present (people who will be legally responsible and signing the lease).
- d) **No Cash Policy** - we have a no cash policy! Therefore could you please supply us with a bank cheque or New Zealand Post money order. We regret that we are unable to accept a personal or a company cheque, and due to security reasons, we are unable to accept cash. You may also arrange with us to pay your first payment of rent and bond by EFT, however this must be previously agreed to and arranged with enough time for the funds to transfer to our account before the start of tenancy.

**e) Bank Cheques/Money Orders to be made out to** (enter your trust bank account name)

**Possession Granted** - please note that possession will be granted once the following has been fulfilled-

- a) **Tenancy Start Date** - your tenancy start date has commenced, as per your tenancy agreement
- b) **Let Fee** – your let fee of 1 weeks rent plus gst has been received by our agency
- c) **Rent** - your first weeks rent has been received by our agency.
- d) **Bond** - your full bond payment has been received by our agency.

## Tenant Contents Insurance

**It is crucial that you take out your own tenant contents insurance.**

It is important to note that should your goods be damaged or destroyed by circumstances affecting the owner's property (i.e. fire, storm damage, power outages etc) then your goods and possessions are **not insured** by the owner.

**Example One:** An electrical fault in the building starts a fire and the property is destroyed. Your possessions will not be covered by the owner's insurance.

**Example Two:** You are away on holidays and the power cuts out due to an electrical fault in the building. Your return home to find your fridge/freezer goods spoilt. The owner's insurance will not cover your fridge/freezer goods.

**Example Three:** A storm blows a tree onto the house and in the process, your belongings are damaged. The owners insurance will not cover your possessions.

**Example Four:** In places like Christchurch, you must check with your insurer if your tenant contents policy will cover you for damage and loss from events like earthquake. The Building Insurance will not cover you for this type of loss or damage.

In the cases specified in the above first three examples, quality tenant contents insurance should cover your goods. However please check with your insurer however for the cover they can provide you- this is your responsibility to ensure you have adequate cover for your possessions against loss and damage.

You need to ensure that all your goods are adequately insured and the owner/agent will not be liable for damaged or destroyed tenant possessions.



Fire damage to your possessions is not covered by the owner's building or landlord insurance. You need to ensure you have adequate tenant contents insurance cover.

## During Your Tenancy

### General Repairs

We insist that all repairs are lodged in writing. You can lodge written repair requests by downloading a repair request form from **(enter your agency website address)** or use the provided repair request forms handed to you at tenancy start. You can lodge your repair requests by fax or post.

### Emergency Repairs

Emergency items are generally those that could cause injury to the tenant or damage to the property, and may include:

- **Water pipes** have broken or burst
- **Blocked or broken toilet** (if a second toilet is not available)
- **Serious roof leak or gas leak**
- **Dangerous electrical fault**, dangerous power point, loose live wire etc;
- **Flooding, rainwater inundation** inside the property, or **serious flood damage**
- **Serious storm, fire or impact damage** (i.e. impact by a motor vehicle)
- **Failure or breakdown** of the **gas, electricity or water supply** to the premises
- **Failure or breakdown** of an **essential service** or appliance on the premises for water or cooking
- **Hot water service failure** on a weekend, or long weekend (this would not be considered an afterhours emergency if this occurs on a week night)
- **Fault or damage** that makes premises **unsafe or insecure**
- **Fault** likely to **injure** a person, cause **damage** or **extreme inconvenience**

**Afterhours emergency repairs.** Should an emergency repair be required after hours then you need to (place instructions of your afterhours/emergency repair procedure).



It is always important to know if a repair is an emergency or a general repair. Getting this wrong may be costly to the tenant if the repair is conducted afterhours!

## Rent Reviews

Rent reviews generally occur at lease renewal time and are adjusted in accordance with market conditions. Please also note that a rent review may occur during a 12 month fixed term lease, as long as this is indicated with a clause in the tenancy agreement terms and conditions.

## Lease Renewals

Provided that your rent has been paid on time, and the property has been kept clean and undamaged, the grounds well maintained and the landlord is happy to continue your tenancy, you can expect to receive an invitation of renewal.

Once your invitation is received, it is important that you let us know whether you accept the renewal invitation or you wish to vacate. We need this advice in writing from you as soon as possible.

## Landlord Mail and Contact

Should you receive any mail addressed in their name (the landlord name is on your tenancy agreement) please forward this mail to us as soon as possible. It is important also to know that under no circumstances can the landlord be contacted directly. As the duly appointed agent the landlord can only be contacted through us. We are employed as the acting landlord of the property.

Please email us on [email@emailaddress.com](mailto:email@emailaddress.com) should you have any queries to bring to the landlord's attention.

## Your Rent Payments

### Zero Tolerance Policy for Late Rent Payments

We pride ourselves in our careful tenant qualification and screening processes. Applications are approved ONLY on the grounds that we are confident that the rent will be paid on time, every time. However a minority of tenants still get behind in their rent, despite all of our tenant screening procedures. As we do not know who this will be when we sign tenancy agreements, we need to advise each tenant our Zero Tolerance policy for late rent payments.

Follow-up involves phone calls and persistent personal contact. This has caused some people upset, embarrassment and also resentment. However we cannot apologise for such action as **we believe that the rent must be paid on time...all the time!** We make it clear that our clients who own the rental property have taken out a mortgage. This person has approved your application ONLY on the grounds your rent will be paid on time...**every time!**

Therefore if you believe you may be late with a rent payment, **you must notify us at least 3 working days beforehand** so we can inform the landlord to prepare and make other arrangements with their mortgage payments, should this be required. In some cases we ask you to do all that you can do to borrow the money from other sources (i.e. your family, friends, employer, bank, credit cards,

## Taking Care - Inside the Property

### Misplaced Keys

If you have misplaced your keys during business hours you may come to our office, pay a deposit of \$XX and borrow our office set. The deposit will be refunded once all keys have been returned.

If you have misplaced your keys after hours, you may call a locksmith to assist you back into the property. This is at the tenant cost.

**IMPORTANT!** Most modern window flyscreens can only be removed from the inside of the property. Attempting to remove them from the outside will result in damage to the flyscreen frame work, and will result in the flyscreen having to be repaired or replaced at your cost. This may cost more than what it would cost to have a locksmith attend the property to allow you access back in.



This flyscreen frame was damaged when the tenant had locked their keys inside and tried to take off the screen from the outside to get through the window!

### Property Damage

If property damage has occurred you are obligated to let us know immediately, or on the next business day if occurring on a weekend or public holiday.

### Noise/Disruption

It is important to note that the utmost care must be taken to ensure that you do not infringe on disrupting your neighbours with noise. Loud music, parties or otherwise can disrupt a neighbour's right to peace and the quiet enjoyment of their residence.

In the case of units and apartments, particular care must be taken with respect to noise due to the close proximity of other properties, usually located on the other side of the wall. This also includes your obligation to ensure that your visitors are not disrupting neighbours when walking from your premises to their parked vehicles.

## Taking Care - Outside the Property

### Watering Systems

Please ensure that all watering systems are working properly, and are checked regularly throughout the tenancy to ensure they continue to work effectively. Watering systems can only be used should current water restrictions allow.

### Weeding and Shrub Trimming

Weeding of gardens beds, inside lawns, paths, paving and other outside areas are the responsibility of the tenant. Trimming of bushes and shrubs in and around the garden are also the responsibility of the tenant.

### Lawn Maintenance

Please ensure that lawns are regular mowed and edged, keeping them neat and tidy. Should you wish to have someone regularly mow your lawn, let us know and we would be happy to recommend a service to you. This is at tenant cost.

### Supplied Hoses/Fittings

Supplied hoses, fittings and accessories must be kept in good condition and please ensure that everything is returned and in place upon vacating of the property, free of any damage.

### Rubbish

Please ensure that all rubbish is removed from the property, including but not limited to, car parts, tyres and things like lawn cuttings, garden waste, household waste, etc. Items not considered rubbish or general junk.

Formal household rubbish and waste must be removed weekly from the property, or otherwise as required. This cannot be allowed to accumulate.

Please log onto **(enter your council website showing bin days)** for details of bin collection for your area.

### Oil Drillage

Any cars parked on driveways, under carports and garages must have a drip tray placed underneath. Only if the vehicle does not drip any oil at all is a drip tray not required. Please also note that any visitor's cars must be parked off the premises if they drip oil. Should oil drillage occur at anytime, this must be cleaned up immediately to prevent oil seeping in and permanently staining. Please note any permanent staining will result in compensation being charged to the tenant.

## **Parking on Lawns/Gardens**

It is important that at no time can cars or any type of vehicle be parked on any lawns, gardens or any area not created for, or designated as a vehicle parking area. Damage to lawns and landscaping can be costly. Engine oil drippage to gardens and lawns will also create permanent damage to the soil area, being costly to rectify. Any damage of this type will be charged to tenants in full.



Please do not park on lawns or garden areas. Also oil stains are difficult to remove from driveways. Prevention is always better than costly cleaning and repairing lawns and gardens!

## Swimming Pools and Outdoor Spas

If the property you are renting has a swimming pool and spa please pay attention to the following.

### Pool/Spa Cleaning

Pool/spa cleaning and maintenance, unless it is agreed that the landlord will be supplying a regular cleaning and maintenance service as per your tenancy agreement, this will be a tenant responsibility.

Please note that if regular cleaning does not occur by the tenant, high costs can be incurred to bring it back to its original clean state. If this occurs, this will be at tenant cost. It is also a tenant responsibility to ensure that the pool/spa is kept topped up with water, and must not empty the pool/spa without written approval from us.

### Supply of Pool Chemicals

Supplying of pool treatment chemicals will be a tenant responsibility, at tenant cost.

### Pool/Spa covers, accessories, equipment and pool furniture

It is the responsibility of the tenant to maintain and keep in good condition any accessories, cleaning and maintenance equipment. This also includes any outdoor/pool furniture supplied. Pool cleaning/equipment must be kept out of the sun and stored responsibly. Supplied pool/spa covers must be neatly rolled or folded up and stored away out of the weather when not in use to preserve its lifespan and usefulness.

### Pool/Spa Fences and Gates

We must be notified immediately if fences and gates are not functioning correctly, and the gate fails to self-close promptly when opened. New Zealand pool/spa regulations must be kept at all times.

These regulations can be found at **(insert appropriate website for your state pool fencing regulations)**



Pools and spas must be kept regularly clean at all times, unless a pool cleaning/maintenance service has been agreed to and provided by the landlord.



Irrigation and lawn damage caused by a pet



Doorway and flyscreen damage caused by a pet



## **Bond Changing Tenants**

Should permission be granted for tenants to change/transfer during a tenancy agreement, then the outgoing tenant must liaise and arrange with the incoming tenant to be paid their share of the bond lodged. Please ensure that you then liaise with us for any transfer of names required on the original bond lodged with the bond authority.

## **Sub-Letting**

Subletting is not permitted without written approval from us. This includes assigning the tenancy over to a third party, or allowing other occupants to move in without our express permission. Permission usually involves a formal application being completed and submitted by the prospective tenant/occupant.

## **Property for Residential Use Only**

The property is for residential use and can only be used a place of dwelling unless otherwise agreed in writing by us. The property cannot be used for commercial, industrial or illegal purposes. The use of the property cannot breach local council zoning regulations and also cannot be in breach of the law.

## Your Safety - Being Aware

The highest priority always must be for your safety, and the safety of your children, occupants and your visitors.

**Some things to be aware of include:**

- Exposed wiring
- Faulty power points and switches
- Gas smell or odour
- Damage to paving and pathways that could cause someone to trip
- Suspicious or dangerous plants in the garden that are poisonous/toxic or that you may be allergic to them
- Bee swarms coming onto the property mainly during spring, especially if someone is allergic to bee stings
- If you need to clean a property with high ceilings or light fittings that are hard to reach, please do so with care and use the appropriate equipment and do not do anything considered unsafe
- Loose floorboards that could cause someone to fall through them and cause injury
- Loose balcony railings, steps or decking woodwork
- Loose or faulty locks, in particular entry doors and screen doors
- Broken or cracked windows, and broken/loose window locks



A loose switch to a power point needs repair as soon as possible



This broken soap dish in the shower could cause injury and needs to be replaced.

## Saving Power- Some Tips

### Keeping Warm and Saving Power- Some Tips

**Use electric blankets** - instead of warming a room before going to bed, just heat your bed with an electric blanket then switch this off before going to bed.

**Close doors** - keeping doors closed is one way to keep heating centralised to certain living areas, conserving heat and power.

**Door snakes** - ensure gaps at the bottom of doors are blocked up by door snakes to stop cold drafts and help keep rooms warm.

**Exhaust fans** - close doors with rooms that have exhaust fans like bathrooms and the kitchen, as cool air will enter the home through these vent holes.

**Extra clothing** - wear extra clothing when it gets cold, and throw an extra blanket on the bed.

**Use a thermometer** - purchase a thermometer and keep your temperature between 18 and 21 degrees. For every degree warmer, this will add approx 10% to your power bill to maintain. Want it warmer? Put on an extra jumper!

### Other useful Power Saving Tips

**Use cold water** - use cold water for your washing machine instead of warm or hot water.

**Drying clothes** - if it's sunny hang your clothes to dry outside instead using the clothes dryer.

**Lights** - switch off lights after use and do not leave lights on in rooms if not being used.

## Vacating the Property

### Notice in Writing

When you intend to vacate the property, in all instances we require your notice in writing

### Ending a Fixed Term

If you are leaving at the end of your current fixed term lease, we require at least **X days notice** in writing. Please note that this amount of notice needs to commence when we have received your notice, not when it was posted.

### Ending a Non-Fixed (Periodic) Term

If you are leaving on a non-fixed term (periodic) lease, we require at least **X days notice in writing**. Please note that this amount of notice needs to commence when we have received your notice, not when it was posted to us.

### Breaking a Fixed Term

**Should you wish to leave during a fixed term lease, we require your notice in writing. We are unable to accept your intention verbally.**

**In the case of breaking a fixed term lease, the following costs will be incurred:**

- (a) Rent** until a tenant approved by the landlord takes possession, or the lease expires (whichever occurs first).
- (b) Reletting fees and advertising costs** to relet the premises. This is payable pro-rata depending how much of the lease remains when a new tenant is secured.
- (c) Should the premises be vacant before a new tenant is secured, it is also your responsibility to ensure the grounds are watered and maintained for this period.**

### The Final Inspection

Only once the property has been made ready and you are aware of the final inspection time, we can commence our final inspection. If possible, please rearrange another appointment if the property is not 100% ready.



Once the property has been made ready with keys returned and the final inspection time has been confirmed, please call us as soon as possible to rearrange another appointment if the property is not 100% ready.

We do not wish to travel to the property if it is not 100% ready.

**In some cases we may need to charge a fee should we not be able to complete the inspection and no communication received by you to transfer the appointment time.**

## **Outstanding Monies/Damages**

It is important to note that if you vacate with outstanding monies and damages, your details will be lodged on a national internet tenancy database. Even if your monies are eventually paid, this doesn't mean your details will be withdrawn from the database. **It is important to know your details may still be lodged for 5 years after your debt has been cleared, indicating there was originally a problem.**

Therefore due to the serious nature of these databases and how they can affect your future renting prospects, it is best that all monies owed be paid as soon as possible so no monies are owing.

## **Eviction**

Should an eviction occur, your details will be lodged on the national internet tenancy database.

## **National Internet Tenancy Database**

The national internet tenancy database is a collection of tenancy information on an internet website lodged by real estate agents, mostly regarding tenant default action like property damage, outstanding monies and eviction. All agents use this database to lodge tenant details. However, when agents are processing application forms, this database is also cross-checked. We are confident that should an agent checking an application find tenant default details lodged; the application will be promptly declined.

So we urge all of our tenants to ensure they pay their rent on time, keep the property clean, maintain the grounds and ensure the tenancy is finalised satisfactorily with no monies left owing, to avoid an unfortunate lodgement of their details.

For specific details regarding the database we use, see **(enter tenancy database website address)**

## Outside the property

- ☐ **Lawns** - freshly mowed and edged (best done a couple of days before the tenant takes possession).
- ☐ **Gardens** - remove any weeds, any rubbish and built up leaves etc.
- ☐ **Guttering** - please ensure that the gutters are freshly cleaned of any dirt/silt and leaves/twigs.
- ☐ **Rubbish** - remove any rubbish that you have placed at the property. Be sure to check behind sheds, under shrubs and trees. This includes lawn clippings piled and compost left.
- ☐ **Sweep** paths and paving areas.
- ☐ **Oil spillage removal** – check and clean carport and garage floors, paths and driveway. If you have used a barbeque, check for any grease spots and spillages etc.
- ☐ **Cigarette butts** - if there are cigarette butts lying around - please pick up and remove.
- ☐ **Garages and tool sheds** - please remove any items from inside and behind garages and tool sheds that belong to you, including rubbish.

## If you have a pet

- ☐ **Pet droppings** - please remove from gardens, lawns and any out of the way areas. Please dispose of in the bin – please do not bury them.
- ☐ **Dog urine** - remove/clean where your pet may habitually urinate (Base of walls, verandah posts etc.)
- ☐ **Dog stains** - to outside walls. Check where your dog regularly lies down, there might be 'tell tale signs' on walls etc.
- ☐ **Dog/Cat claw damage** - check screen doors, flyscreens and curtains. Please replace the screen wire if required.
- ☐ **Dog chew damage** - please ensure watering systems are free of dog chew damage and are repaired accordingly.
- ☐ **Pet hair** - please ensure any visible pet hair inside is removed.
- ☐ **Fumigation** - if your lease stipulates fumigation, please ensure this is arranged.

## Trades Guide - Get Some Help to Get the Property Ready

Getting the property ready on time for inspection can be exhausting and sometimes employing some extra help is a smarter and better way to go.

The tiredness factor when moving out to another property and then having to return to the original rental property to clean and get the grounds and garden ready can be a real headache. That is why so many tenants cut corners and not do a thorough job. **This only then delays the bond refund process.**

Therefore to get your bond back quickly here are some tradespeople we trust, use and recommend on a regular basis. We use them also because of their reasonable rates.

### Who we use and recommend-

**Professional Cleaning** - we use and recommend (your cleaner name and phone number)

**Window Cleaning** - we use and recommend (your cleaner name and phone number)

**Carpet Cleaner** - we use and recommend (your cleaner name and phone number)

**Lawn Mowing/Gardening** - we use and recommend (your cleaner name and phone number)

**Driveway Sprayer/Cleaner** - we use and recommend (your cleaner name and phone number)

**Rubbish Removal** - we use and recommend (your cleaner name and phone number)

**Handyman** - we use and recommend (your cleaner name and phone number)

**Pest Controller/Fumigator** - we use and recommend (your cleaner name and phone number)

