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Rooming houses: information for residents

A rooming house agreement is used where a person rents a lockable room in a property in which there is accommodation for three or more people. You (the resident) might rent your room on your own or with a friend. The owner (proprietor) might also live in the property or just visit to provide meals, to clean the common areas, or just to check that all the residents are abiding by the house rules.

The owner must display the house rules in a place where all residents can see them.

Bond and rent

At the start of the agreement, the most you can be asked to pay is one week rent and a bond of no more than two weeks rent.

The proprietor must lodge the bond with Consumer and Business Services within 2 weeks (or within 4 weeks if the proprietor has an agent). The proprietor must give you a receipt within 48 hours.

At the end of your tenancy, you should arrange for the bond to be refunded. If there is no damage, rent owed or other liability, the bond can be refunded to you.

Charges

A proprietor may require you to make payment for rates and charges for water, electricity etc, but must inform you in writing of the basis on which charges will be made prior to making them available. Proprietors must give each resident an itemised account for their proportional use of the relevant facilities or service.

Security

A proprietor must provide and maintain locks and other devices so that your room can be kept secure. You are entitled to a lockable cupboard, or similar, to securely store personal property within your room.

Neither you nor the proprietor should remove or alter a lock or security device without the consent of the other party, or unreasonably prevent the alteration or removal of such a device by the other party.

Cleanliness

The proprietor must ensure that all shared facilities are kept clean. You will be responsible for cleaning your own room.

Maintenance

Both individual and shared facilities should be well maintained and kept in a reasonable state of repair (considering their age and character).

If shared areas such as bathrooms or laundries need repair, to avoid inconvenience or disruption, a temporary substitute facility may be required.

14 days' notice for any renovations must be provided to residents.

General

- As a resident you are entitled to quiet enjoyment, peace and access to your room, facilities, toilet and bathroom. A proprietor can only access your room in a reasonable manner and only stay in the room as long as necessary to achieve the purpose of entry.
- A proprietor must not keep your property as compensation for unpaid rent. However, if the rent has not been fully paid for 2 weeks, then the proprietor can give you two days notice to pay your rent, or you may be evicted.
- Proprietors will be able to claim compensation if you leave before the end of a fixed term agreement that is for 6 months or more.
- Proprietors must store any of your belongings that you have left behind for 14 days, after you have left the premises.

Sale of property

Proprietors must inform you if they intend to sell the premises. They must do this no less than 14 days after they have signed a contract with a real estate agent to sell the property.

If the property is sold, the proprietor must give you written notice of the name of the purchaser and the date from which rent is to be paid to them.

Resolving a dispute

If you have a dispute with the proprietor, contact Consumer and Business Services. We can provide information about your rights and responsibilities and recommend options to help resolve the dispute. If a suitable outcome is not found, you can apply to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT). SACAT will make a decision and issue a binding order.

For more information:

Consumer and Business Services
Tel: 131 882

Renting information is available at www.sa.gov.au/tenancy/renters

The information provided on this sheet is of a general nature only and should not be regarded as a substitute for legal advice and/or reference to the appropriate legislation.