

INFORMATION FOR TENANT

WHAT YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT YOUR TENANCY

At the start of your tenancy you must be given the following by the lessor or the property manager of the premises:

- a copy of this information statement
- a copy of your residential tenancy agreement
- 2 copies of the property condition report (must be received within 7 days after you have entered into occupation of the premises)
- a bond lodgment form for you to sign (if you are paying a security bond), so that it can be lodged with the Bond Administrator
- keys to your new home.

UPFRONT COSTS

You are not required to pay:

- more than 2 weeks rent in advance (see "ESSENTIALS FOR TENANTS" below for more information)
- more than 4 weeks rent as a security bond (if the rent is less than \$1 200 per week)
- more than \$260 for a pet bond (if you are allowed to keep a pet on the premises)
- any other amount.

ESSENTIALS FOR TENANTS

Follow these useful tips and pieces of information to help avoid problems while you are renting:

- If you have paid a security bond, you should receive a Record of Payment of Security Bond (record of payment) when the bond is lodged with the Bond Administrator at the Department of Commerce. If you do not receive the record of payment within 4 weeks of paying the bond, contact the Consumer Protection Advice Line on 1300 30 40 54 to make sure it has been lodged correctly. The record of payment will also advise you of your Rental Bond Reference Number.
- If you do not agree with the property condition report, mark your concerns on the report and return it to the lessor. The property condition report is an important piece of evidence. If you do not take the time to complete it accurately, money could be taken out of your bond to pay for damage that was already there when you moved in.
- If you paid an option fee, it should be applied to your rent or returned to you.
- The lessor cannot require you to pay more than 2 weeks rent in advance at any time during the tenancy agreement. However, at any time during the tenancy agreement, you can choose to pay more.
- Never stop paying your rent, even if the lessor is not complying with their side of the agreement (e.g. by failing to do repairs) – you could end up being evicted if you stop paying rent.
- You must not stop paying rent with the intention that the lessor will take the rent from the security bond.
- You or the lessor will need to give notice in writing before ending the tenancy agreement (see "ENDING THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AGREEMENT" in your residential tenancy agreement).
- On the day your tenancy agreement ends, you must give vacant possession of the premises to the lessor (this includes handing over the keys to the lessor or the property manager). You may be liable to pay damages to the lessor if you do not vacate on time.
- If the property has a pool or garden, be clear about what the lessor expects you to do to maintain them.
- Under the *Building Regulations 2012*, owners and occupiers are responsible for ensuring that a suitable enclosure is provided around a swimming pool or spa-pool on the property. If a fence, wall, gate, window, door or other barrier around a swimming pool or spa-pool is not in working order or does not comply with *Building Regulations 2012*, contact your lessor or property manager immediately to arrange urgent repairs. If delays occur, or you need more information, contact your local government
- Loose blinds or curtain cords or chains which are not fixed out of reach pose a strangulation risk for children. Contact your lessor or property manager to discuss arrangements about making window coverings safe. Product safety laws apply.
- Be careful with what you sign relating to your tenancy, and do not let anybody rush you. Never sign a blank form, such as a claim for refund of bond.
- Keep a copy of your property condition report, rent receipts, bond receipt, record of payment of bond and copies of letters/emails you send or receive in a designated tenancy file or folder. Keep it somewhere you can easily find it.
- You must provide a forwarding address to the lessor or the property manager of the premises when you leave the premises. It is an offence not to do so.

COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

If a dispute between a lessor and a tenant is to be decided by the court, it must be dealt with by a court that has jurisdiction to hear and determine the application. The Magistrates Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear and determine applications relating to bond and other tenancy matters that do not involve a claim over \$10 000. When making an application to the Magistrates Court, you must always use the name of the lessor on the application form and not the property manager or agent.

If you need to give the lessor a notice under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987*, it should be in writing and can be given to the lessor or the property manager of the premises, someone living with the lessor who appears to be over the age of 16, or to the person who usually receives the rent.

If the lessor needs to give you a notice under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987*, they can do so by posting it to you or by giving it to someone living in the rented premises who appears to be over 16 or to the person who usually pays the rent.

Where there are 2 or more lessors or tenants, notice only needs to be given to one of them.

For information about the Magistrates Court, including what forms you should use, visit their website at www.magistratescourt.wa.gov.au or go to the Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.wa.gov.au/ConsumerProtection to view general information publications about disputes and about the Magistrates Court process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Perth office: Forrest Centre, 219 St Georges Terrace, Perth, Western Australia 6000

Hours 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. **General Advice Line:** 1300 30 40 54

Email: consumer@commerce.wa.gov.au

Internet: www.commerce.wa.gov.au/ConsumerProtection

REGIONAL OFFICES:

Goldfields/Esperance: (08) 9026 3250 | **Great Southern:** (08) 9842 8366 | **Kimberley:** (08) 9191 8400

South-West: (08) 9722 2888 | **North-West:** (08) 9185 0900 | **Mid-West:** (08) 9920 9800

The WA Government provides funding assistance to the WA Tenancy Network which provides advice, information and advocacy to tenants throughout Western Australia.

Contact the Consumer Protection Advice Line on **1300 30 40 54** for referral to a centre near you.