

## A GUIDE FOR ROOMING HOUSE RESIDENTS

**A rooming house** is a residential property where rooms are available, on a commercial basis, for three or more people to live.

**A rooming house proprietor** lets out rooms in a rooming house. The proprietor may also live in the property.

**A rooming house resident** lives in a room in a rooming house.

### Renting in a rooming house

- You must be given a copy of your lease (agreement) when you sign it, or within 14 days of it being signed by the proprietor.
- You can only be asked to pay **one week's rent in advance** at the start of the lease.
- A proprietor cannot charge you for things that you were not told that you would be charged for unless they put it in writing first. This includes facilities and services such as water, electricity, gas, telephone, meals or the internet.

### Bond

- If you are asked to pay a **bond**, it **must not be higher** than the cost of **two weeks' rent**.
- You must get a receipt for the bond payment within 48 hours.
- The proprietor must lodge the bond with Consumer and Business Services (CBS) within 2 weeks.
- The proprietor can lodge your bond online ([www.sa.gov.au/residentialbonds](http://www.sa.gov.au/residentialbonds)). Give the proprietor your email address if you would like to check the status of lodgements, refunds and other bond activities online.
- If you're leaving Australia, make sure you keep your Australian bank account open if you want your bond refunded electronically. You may have to pay a fee if you want it paid into an international account.

### House rules

- There will usually be house rules about conduct or behaviour of the residents.
- House rules must be displayed where they can be easily seen.
- You must be given your own copy of the house rules if you ask (unless you have been given a copy in the last two months).
- You must be given at least 7 days written notice of any changes to house rules.

### Security of rooms and property

- A proprietor must provide and maintain the locks and other devices to make your room reasonably secure.
- If there is a problem with a lock, tell the proprietor straight away so that the lock can be fixed.
- A proprietor must provide a cupboard, or something to keep personal property secure within your room.

## Rent receipts and rent increases

- If rent is paid directly to the proprietor, you must receive a receipt within 48 hours.
- You do not need a receipt if rent is paid directly into a proprietor's account, but a receipt must be provided to you within 7 days if you ask.
- Rent can only be increased every six months, unless you have agreed at the beginning of your tenancy for it to be increased more often.

## Ending your agreement

- If you abandon your room, the rental agreement is terminated.
- If you no longer want to live at the premises and have a periodic agreement (no end date), you need to let the proprietor know that you are going to leave at least one day before you leave.
- If you have a fixed term agreement (has an end date) for at least 6 months and you want to leave early, try to come to an arrangement with the proprietor. If no agreement can be reached you may have to pay the proprietor's cost of finding a new resident and any lost rent.
- If you don't pay rent for two weeks in a row, the proprietor can give you a notice giving you two days to catch up with your rent. If you do not pay the amount owed by the end of the two days, you will have to move out.
- The proprietor can give you a notice to leave straight away (or on a specified date) if you, or someone you have invited into your room, cause serious damage, creates danger to a person (or property) in the rooming house or seriously interrupts the privacy or quiet enjoyment of another resident.

If you receive a notice from the proprietor that you don't understand, **visit Consumer and Business Services, Customer Service Centre, 91 Grenfell Street, Adelaide or phone 131 882. This is a free service.**

## As a resident you must:

- Pay the rent on time;
- Obey the house rules;
- Not use your room, or allow your room to be used, for any illegal purposes;
- Not keep any animals in your room or on the premises unless the proprietor says that you can;
- Keep your room tidy enough so that there is no fire risk or health hazard;
- Tell the proprietor if anything in the rooming house gets damaged;
- Allow the proprietor to have reasonable access to your room.

## The proprietor must:

- Not interfere with your quiet enjoyment of your room;
- Allow you to have access to your room, toilet and bathroom facilities at all times;
- Maintain your room and any facilities that you share in a reasonable condition (*unless the rooming house is subject to a housing improvement notice*);
- Carry out repairs, if aware;
- Give you written notice if they intend to sell the rooming house;
- Only make house rules that are reasonable and help maintain the health and safety of persons in the premises and protect property.

### If there is a problem

If you and the proprietor have a problem that cannot be sorted out after talking with staff at Consumer and Business Services, the problem may need to be worked out by going to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) for a hearing.

**There is a cost to apply to SACAT. If you are a full time student or have an approved government concession card, you may not be required to pay this fee. If SACAT is satisfied that the resident is unable to present their case without help.** Residents may have representation when their case goes before SACAT.

Assistance can be obtained from:

#### **Tenant's Information & Advocacy Service (TIAS)**

Ph: 1800 060 462 (free call)

<http://www.syc.net.au/tias>

#### **Community Legal Centres**

Adelaide Inner                      Christies Beach  
Ph: 8342 1800                      Ph: 8384 5222

Norwood                              Para Districts  
Ph: 8362 1199                      Ph: 8281 6911

The Parks  
Ph: 8243 5521

#### **Shelter SA**

Unit 44, 81 Carrington Street, Adelaide.  
Phone: 8223 4077

**Information on rights and responsibilities as a resident can be obtained from:**

#### **Consumer and Business Services**

Customer Service Centre  
91 Grenfell St, Adelaide.  
Phone: 131 882.

[www.sa.gov.au/tenancy/renters](http://www.sa.gov.au/tenancy/renters)