

## Tenancy resources

If you are having problems with your current rental arrangement and are unsure of where to go for help:

**Tenants Information and Advocacy Service**

Tel: 8305 9459

Country callers Tel: 1800 060 462

Or

**Tenancies Branch at OCBA**

Tel: 8204 9544

For a full list of forms, tenancy legislation and free courses and information sessions:

**Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA)**

Website: [www.ocba.sa.gov.au/tenancies](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au/tenancies)

Having problems with your neighbours/flatmates?

**Community Mediation Services**

Tel: 8384 5222

If you have problems with your landlord and need help to resolve a dispute:

**Residential Tenancies Tribunal Registry**

Tel: 8226 8989

If you have a general housing query and don't know where to go for help:

**Shelter SA**

Tel: 8223 4077

Website: [www.sheltersa.asn.au](http://www.sheltersa.asn.au)

## What is Shelter SA?

At Shelter SA, we believe everyone has the right to affordable accommodation that is appropriate to their needs. As the state's peak housing body, we work to actively promote and inform the general public, non-government and government organisations about housing and related issues.

We do this via public forums and presentations at conferences, schools and community groups on a range of topics – from mental health issues to affordability and the decrease in public housing stock, from youth homelessness to caravan park residents. And the list goes on...

We respond to government policies, produce our own monthly newsletter, facilitate the annual Homelessness, Health and Housing Expo and carry out small South Australian-specific research projects. Our latest research project focused on developing a youth housing strategy for the Southern Fleurieu region.

And finally, we actively seek to engage with and provide opportunities for vulnerable groups to raise their housing concerns. We do this via one-on-one interviews for the *Telling Stories* feature in Sheltershortz Newsletter, consultations and via our branches. If you have a housing query, then contact us. We can help!

**Shelter SA**

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3

**Shelter SA**

*GET INFORMED ABOUT*

HOW TO BE A

GOOD TENANT



## HOW TO ENSURE YOU HAVE A GREAT TENANCY RECORD

Now that you have moved in to your new home, it is important to be aware of how to maintain the property. Here are our top tips to a successful tenancy:

1. Always, always, ALWAYS pay your rent on time. Sometimes (maybe once a year) you may find that the telephone, electricity, gas and rent are due on the same day. If or when you find yourself in this situation, contact your landlord or agent immediately and let them know. Also let them know when you can catch up the back rent. Landlords and agents will try to be flexible; however if it happens too often you may need to consider moving somewhere cheaper.
2. Always report maintenance problems. Whether it is a dripping tap, a cracked tile or a branch has fallen on the verandah, tell your agent or landlord as soon as possible. They will arrange for a repair person to fix the problem and this usually involves the tenant being on the property to let the tradesperson in.
3. Always report breakages or damages to the landlord or agent. Whether it is a broken light fitting or a broken window from playing football in the backyard, let your agent know what the damage is. They may prefer a trusted repair person or be able to recommend one. Be prepared to pay for any damages you or your visitors have caused.
4. Look after the property. One of the main concerns for real estate agents is whether tenants can and will maintain the property. This can include a bit of gardening/weeding, mowing the lawns, washing marks off walls (especially when children live in the house), cleaning oil off the driveway (if your car leaks oil) and so on. It is a good idea to take photos of the property just before you move in and date the photos. Then when you eventually vacate the property you want it to look at least as good as that (if not better). Schedule regular cleanups (i.e. Have a working bee preceding every quarterly inspection).
5. Expect an inspection every three months or so. However, some landlords will conduct inspections every 28 days to ensure you are looking after the property. Your agent will give you a minimum of seven days written notice that this will occur. Many tenants get upset about having a stranger walk through their home uninvited, but it is a fact of life with renting, so get used to it. Use the inspection as an opportunity for a spring clean.
6. Being a good tenant is also about being a considerate neighbour. Noise is one of the most common complaints. A good way to check if you would be considered a noisy neighbour is to turn on your stereo to the level you like to listen to it, and then go outside. If you can hear your music in your driveway it is too loud and you are likely to receive complaints. If you like it loud, consider investing in good quality headphones.
7. Always respond to mail sent to you from your agent or landlord. At Shelter SA, we regularly hear about tenants ignoring or not understanding the letters sent to them. Often, the letter is simply asking if you want to extend your lease. If you don't reply, the agent will assume you no longer want the property and will expect vacant possession at the end of the lease. So, if you don't understand a letter relating to housing sent to you, please contact the Tenants Information and Advocacy Service on 8305 9459 or Bowden Brompton Housing Service on 8340 3013 or Shelter SA on 8223 4077 immediately.
8. When you decide to vacate the premises, and give the appropriate notice, always ask for a reference. Providing you have followed the guidelines above, agents are generally happy to give you either a written or verbal reference. When you have three references, you should have little difficulty finding and securing your next home.