Rooming house residents
Know your rights

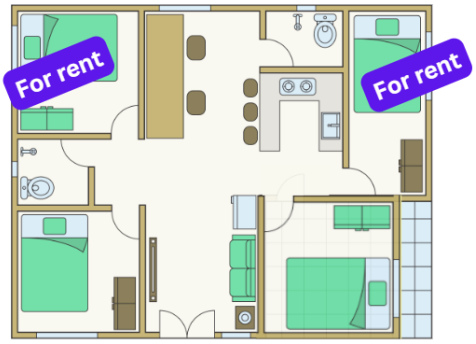
If you are renting a room in a rooming house this information is important for you.

It is important that you know your rights.

This is an Easy Read document, but you may still need help reading it.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What is a rooming house?



A **rooming house** is a house or building where 2 or more rooms are available for people to rent.

You are called a **resident** and you might rent a room by yourself or with a friend.

The **owner** is also called the **proprietor**.

The owner may also live in the property or just visit to provide meals, clean the common areas, or check residents are following house rules.

What a rooming house owner must do

As a rooming house resident you have legal rights:

- the owner must give you a copy of your signed agreement

- the owner can only ask you to pay one week's **rent** in advance when you start living there

- the owner can't charge you for things like water, electricity, gas, telephone, meals or the internet unless these charges are explained in writing before you move in

- if you are asked to pay a **bond**, it can't be more than the cost of 2 weeks' rent.

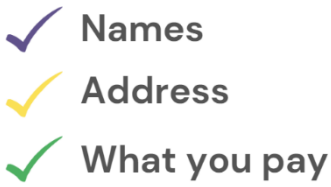
Agreements

It is a good idea to have a signed agreement when you rent a room.

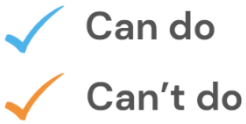
There are 2 kinds of agreements.

- You may have a fixed term agreement. This will be for an exact amount of time, for example, 6 months or 1 year.

- You may have a periodic agreement. A periodic agreement doesn't have an end date and could be as short as 2 weeks.



The agreement must include the names of the people renting, the address of the home and what you will pay.



The agreement must explain what you can or can't do – and what the owner can or can't do.

Make sure you are happy with all the rules and other details before you sign the agreement.

Rent

You can pay your rent directly to the owner.

If you do this they must give you a receipt within 48 hours.

You don’t need a receipt if rent is paid directly into the owner’s bank account - but you can ask for one.

Rent can only be increased every 6 months unless you have agreed in writing for it to be increased more often.

House rules

House rules list the expectations that every resident must meet.

The rules must be displayed where you can easily see them.

Or you can ask for your own copy of the house rules.

If any of the house rules are changing, the owner must tell you in writing 7 days before.

If you're not happy with a rule you can ask the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) if it can be changed.

Security

The owner must make sure your room is secure.

If there is a problem with a lock, tell the owner straight away so the lock can be fixed.

There must be a cupboard, or something to keep personal property secure within your room.

Cleaning and maintenance

The owner must make sure all shared facilities are kept clean.

You will need to keep your own room clean.

The owner must make sure that appliances, fittings and fixtures being installed or replaced meet minimum energy and water efficiency standards.

What you can and can't do

As a rooming house resident you must:

- pay rent on time

- obey house rules

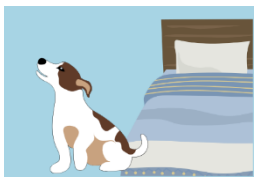
- care for your room so that it is safe

- tell the owner if anything in the rooming house gets damaged

- give the owner reasonable access to your room if any work needs to be done.

You must not:

- use your room for anything illegal



- keep animals without permission in writing.

Further advice and information

Consumer and Business Services (CBS)

Visit CBS' Customer Service Centre at:
4 to 6 Chesser Street, Adelaide

www.sa.gov.au/renting/rooming-houses

Phone 131 882

RentRight SA

If you need further advice on how to make sure a rooming house operator respects your rights contact RentRight SA:

www.syc.net.au/rentrightsa

Ph: 1800 060 462 (free call)

Community Legal Centres SA

Free online legal directory: www.clcsa.org.au

Ph: 1300 860 529