

All about tenancy bonds

A bond is money that a landlord can ask tenants to pay when they move into a property. A bond can be any amount up to a maximum value of four weeks' rent. Some landlords may ask for less. The landlord sends the bond to the Department of Building and Housing where it is held to cover any unpaid rent, damage to the property (if that damage can be shown to be the tenant's fault) or any other claim. If the property has been properly looked after and the rent is paid in full, the tenants should get their bond money refunded after they move out.

All bond forms are available on www.dbh.govt.nz, or by calling 0800 737 666.

Lodging the bond

Landlords who take a bond must lodge it with the Department of Building and Housing within 23 working days (unless it relates to a boarding house tenancy and the bond is not more than the equivalent of one week's rent). When sending bond money to us, please ensure you:

- 1. Make the cheque payable to the Department of Building and Housing**
We will not be able to lodge the bond if the cheque has not been made out correctly.
- 2. Enclose the Bond Lodgement Form with your cheque**
Please complete every section of the form clearly to prevent delays when you apply for a refund.
- 3. Provide an Address for Service for both the landlord and tenants**
We may not be able to process the bond without these. An Address for Service is a physical address in New Zealand where notices and other documents relating to the tenancy will be accepted by you or on your behalf, even after the tenancy has ended. A PO Box, fax number, or email address can also be provided as an additional address for service.
- 4. Check the Bond Lodgement Form is signed by the landlord and tenants**
When an application is made for a bond refund, the signatures on the Bond Refund Form are checked against those on the Bond Lodgement Form. The Department of Building and Housing needs to hold a copy of the signature of anyone likely to sign the Bond Refund Form.

Paying bond by instalments

If you are paying the bond by instalments, a bond number will be printed on the acknowledgement of your first payment. Please make sure that you quote this bond number on each Bond Lodgement Form that you use for later instalments or partial payments.

Change of tenant or landlord

When there is a change of tenant, the new tenant's details must be sent to the Department of Building and Housing. If at least one of the original tenants remains in the property, you can complete a Change of Tenant Form. If all the original tenants move out, send a completed Bond Refund Form. Make sure you put your bond number on the form.

When there is a change of landlord, the new landlord needs to complete a Change of Landlord Form and send it to the Department of Building and Housing. Make sure to include both the new and previous landlord's names and signatures, and the bond number.

Landlord leaving the country for more than 21 days

If the landlord is leaving the country for more than 21 consecutive days, they must appoint a New Zealand-based agent to manage their property during this period. The landlord must inform their tenants of the agent's contact details, and for tenancies where a bond is held, they must also inform the Department.

If you lose or forget your bond number

If you have forgotten the bond number, please telephone 0800 737 666 (with as many details of the tenancy as possible, including the address and the names of the landlord and tenants) so we can give you the number.

Bond refunds

To ensure the bond is refunded promptly, please ensure you:

- 1. Provide a bank account number on the Bond Refund Form**
Refunds are by direct credit.
- 2. Put the bond number on the Bond Refund Form**
We need to check your bond number against our computer file.
- 3. Have the landlord and tenants sign the Bond Refund Form**
Refunds may be delayed if we do not have the necessary signatures.
- 4. State the amounts of refund on the Bond Refund Form**
Refunds may be delayed while we contact you to find out how much to refund to whom.
- 5. Provide phone numbers and addresses for both the landlord and tenants**
We may need to contact you for more information.
- 6. Check that the tenant names on the Bond Refund Form are the same as those on the Bond Lodgement Form**
We can only refund a bond if the Bond Refund Form is signed by the same people who signed the Bond Lodgement Form.

Transferring the bond to a new property

When you move out of a property, your bond money can be transferred to a new tenancy if the old landlord agrees to release the bond. If you want to transfer your bond money, complete a Bond Transfer Form (ensure the previous bond number is listed on the form).

The new landlord should ask the tenants for the Bond Transfer Form (signed by the tenants and the old landlord) and then send this into the Department of Building and Housing.

For tenancy advice and information, phone 0800 TENANCY (0800 83 62 62), visit www.dbh.govt.nz or email info@dbh.govt.nz