FAQ for tenants

RBO essentials

What is Rental Bonds Online (RBO)?

This is an online service to lodge and refund bond money for NSW managing agents, landlords and tenants.

Bonds lodged online using RBO do not need a signed paper bond lodgement form. Instead, both the managing agent and the tenant log on to RBO with separate accounts to conduct rental bond transactions.

To replace signatures on a lodgement bond, RBO uses other security measures, such as mobile phone SMS codes, to verify rental bond transactions.

Your agent or self-managing landlord must offer Rental Bonds Online as the first option for lodgement of your rental bond.

What is an online bond'?

A residential tenancy bond where both the managing agent and the tenant are registered with RBO. The service allows the bond to be managed securely over the internet, without signing and sending paper forms.

What do I need to start using RBO?

Your property agent (or landlord where the property is not managed by an agent) must already be registered as a user with RBO. The agent or landlord will need to invite you to use the service, before you pay any bond money or sign your tenancy agreement.

As a tenant, to start using RBO you must have:

- details of the bond amount to be paid (as agreed with your landlord/agent)
- your email address
- your mobile number or a phone number capable of receiving SMS messages
- access to the internet (using a standard browser such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome or Safari)

- the ability to pay your bond by Visa, Mastercard or BPAY
- your bank account details (BSB and account number) with an Australian financial institution, usually a bank or credit union. This account is used to refund any bond money due to you at the end of your tenancy.

How does RBO verify who I am?

Each user will have a unique RBO user ID and password to log on to RBO. Also, to authenticate the person, RBO will send a security code via SMS to the mobile phone number entered for this person. Each user is also required to maintain security questions and responses that we may ask in the future to help identify them over the phone.

Can I use RBO on any mobile device or internet browser?

You can access RBO from any internet-enabled device, including a desktop PC, laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

How do I keep my details up-to-date in RBO?

To update your details simply log on to your RBO account and go to 'Your Details'.

It is important to update in RBO any changes to your mobile phone number, email address and bank account. If you are a co-tenant, the nominated 'principal tenant' can do this on your behalf.

What if I am sharing with other tenants?

If there are other tenants (co-tenants), you need to decide which tenant is going to be the 'principal tenant' and advise your agent or self-managing landlord.

The principal tenant acts on behalf of all the tenants for the rental bond and is responsible for:

- registering with Rental Bonds Online and paying the bond money to NSW Fair Trading
- providing the contact details for all co-tenants so that all tenants are informed of any changes to the bond
- submitting or responding to a claim for refund of bond money on behalf of all the tenants at the end of the tenancy
- distributing the bond refund to the other tenants.

Other tenants may view details and receive copies of notifications sent to the principal tenant, but they cannot log on to RBO or do any bond transactions.

Lodging a bond

How can I pay my bond money?

You can pay your bond online by Visa, Mastercard or BPAY. For payments by Visa or Mastercard, you will be guided to our secure third party payment gateway. A small 0.4 percent surcharge applies. This is the fastest way to pay your bond and is the best option if you need to sign your tenancy agreement quickly.

If you choose to use BPAY, a BPAY Advice Slip will be produced with a Biller Code, Reference Number and the amount to pay. Use your internet banking to make your payment by BPAY.

Can my agent or landlord insist I use RBO?

No. You cannot be forced to pay using the online service. Your agent or self-managing landlord must offer the service as the first option for lodgement of the rental bond but you can still choose to use the existing paper-based method if the online service is not suitable to your circumstances.

My agent/landlord has invited me to use RBO, how do I register and pay my rental bond online?

Follow these steps to register for RBO and to pay a bond:

1. Give your email address to your agent (or self-managing landlord) so that they can start the lodgement process in RBO.
2. You will receive an email from RBO with instructions and a link to the secure RBO website.
3. Follow the instructions to create an account with RBO and pay your bond. This should take less than 10 minutes.
4. Once the bond money is received, NSW Fair Trading will issue you a receipt and immediately notify your agent or landlord.
5. Your agent or landlord will then arrange for you to sign the tenancy agreement.

What if I do not go ahead with the tenancy?

If you decide not to go ahead with the tenancy after paying your bond money, you can ask for your payment to be returned. As your bond money is securely held by NSW Fair Trading, simply log on to RBO and choose 'Request Return of Funds'. Your landlord or agent will be notified.

Refunding a bond

How do I submit a claim for refund?

You can only submit a claim after e tenancy has ended. To submit a claim for a bond refund in RBO, log on to RBO and access your bond details. Click on 'Submit a

claim' and follow the instructions. You will need your mobile phone to receive an SMS code to verify the claim.

All refunds for online bonds will be paid by direct deposit into the bank account nominated in RBO. This means it is important your bank account details are up-to-date before you submit a claim for refund.

For shared tenancies (two or more tenants on the bond), only the principal tenant with an RBO account can submit the claim on behalf of the other tenants.

You should discuss the claim with your landlord or property agent before you submit your claim in RBO.

Existing laws relating to bond refunds also apply to bonds lodged using RBO. A claim must not be made before the termination of the residential tenancy agreement, unless you have written agreement from your landlord or agent to submit an earlier claim, or you are directing the full bond to be paid to your landlord or property agent.

What happens after I submit a claim for refund of an online bond?

A 'Notice of Claim' is issued to the landlord or property agent. This notice will be sent by email. The Notice of Claim advises the landlord or property agent that a claim has been submitted.

If the landlord or property agent agrees with your claim, they can log on to RBO and accept it. Once an agreement has been entered into RBO, the bond will be refunded within two working days.

If the landlord or property agent disagrees with the claim, they may discuss the claim with you. If an agreement cannot be reached, the property agent or landlord has 14 days to contest your claim by applying to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. If they do not apply within the 14 days, the bond will then be paid out as per your claim.

Visit getting your bond back page for more information on the bond refund process.

What if my landlord or property agent submits the claim for a bond refund first?

If your landlord or property agent submits a claim releasing the whole bond to you, you do not need to take any action. You will receive an electronic notification advising of the claim and that payment is being processed. You should allow two working days for the funds to appear in your nominated bank account.

If an amount of the bond is being claimed by the landlord or agent, a Notice of Claim will be emailed to you with a 14-day notice period to respond.

In RBO, you may choose to:

- agree to the refund, or
- tell NSW Fair Trading that you have applied for a hearing with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, if you are disputing the landlord or agent's claim, or
- take no action and the bond will be refunded as per the landlord or agent's claim after the Notice period expires.

If you and the landlord or agent agree on a different deduction amount during the Notice period, NSW Fair Trading will process the new claim after receiving evidence. You are able to provide evidence using RBO.

Other

Can I transfer an online bond to another property?

No, you will need to refund the bond and create a new online lodgement for the new property.

How can I find out more?

Once you have activated your RBO account, you will be able to view 'Help' information within RBO. If you need further assistance, contact Rental Bonds Online Security and Support by email: rbosupport@finance.nsw.gov.au or phone 1800 990 724 (free call).

Need some help?
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https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-property/renting/rental-bonds-online/faq-for-tenants 26-03-20

26-03-20