

# SECURITY & PET DAMAGE DEPOSITS

A security deposit (damage deposit) is money that the landlord collects at the start of the tenancy, holds on to and must be prepared to return at the end of the tenancy. If your landlord requires a security deposit, you must pay it within 30 days of moving in.



## THE SECURITY DEPOSITS

This deposit is meant to cover any damage that you or your guests may cause. Similarly, the pet damage deposit is meant to cover any damage caused by your pets. As long as you have not caused damage and do not owe any money, your landlord is required to return your deposits within 15 days after you move out. Deposits cannot be used to cover normal wear and tear during the tenancy.

### NOTE

Once a tenant has paid a security deposit neither landlord, nor tenant, can change their mind, and the landlord must allow the tenant to move in. Even if the tenant chooses not to move into the unit, they are still responsible for all obligation under a tenancy (for example, paying rent or damage deposits). For more information please visit: [Deposits & Fees - Province of British Columbia](#)

## HOW MUCH ARE THE SECURITY & PET DEPOSITS?

A security deposit can be **up to but not exceed half the monthly rent**. A pet damage deposit can also be up to half a month's rent. The landlord can only ask for one of each regardless of how many co-tenants or pets are moving in. If the landlord increases the rent during the tenancy, they cannot ask for more damage deposit.

## CONDITION INSPECTION REPORTS

Both the landlord and tenant are required to complete a condition inspection of the rental unit at the start of the tenancy, at any point that the tenant gets a pet during the tenancy, and at the end of the tenancy. A condition inspection consists of walking around your new rental unit with your landlord and documenting any damages using the Condition Inspection Report (RTB-27).

The landlord must supply you with a copy of the report at the beginning and end of the tenancy. These reports are critical in determining damage deposit return.

### NOTE

In order to keep some or all of the deposit, a landlord must have completed Condition Inspection Reports at the start and end of the tenancy as well as getting one of the following:

- + The tenant's written consent
- + An order from the RTB to keep all or part of the deposit
- + An order from a previous dispute resolution process which the tenant hasn't yet paid

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## GETTING YOUR DEPOSIT RETURNED

Provide your landlord with a forwarding address in writing for where your deposit can be sent. Make sure you can provide proof you gave your forwarding address.

Once you have provided your forwarding address in writing and your tenancy has officially ended, your landlord has 15 days to do one of three things:

- + Return all of your deposit
- + Get your written consent to keep some or all of your deposit, or
- + Apply for dispute resolution to keep some or all of your deposit

If a landlord does not do this, a tenant can apply for the return of double their damage deposit.

### A LANDLORD CAN KEEP YOUR DEPOSIT(S) IF:

- + A tenant does not provide a forwarding address in writing within 1 year of moving out
- + They have an order from the Residential Tenancy Branch to keep the deposit
- + The tenant does not participate in the move in/move out inspections of the unit.

## RESOLVING ISSUES WITH RETURN OF DAMAGE DEPOSIT

If the landlord doesn't take action within the 15-day timeline, or if there is a disagreement about deposit deductions, first try to reach a solution by calmly discussing it with your landlord.

If this does not resolve the issue, you may need to apply for Dispute Resolution. Learn more about Dispute Resolution and how to apply at:

[Dispute Resolution - Province of British Columbia](#)

The right to claim compensation doesn't end with the tenancy. Claims may be filed within two years after the tenancy ends – sooner is always better because things will be easier to remember. If one of the parties files a claim within that period, the other party can make a separate claim even if it falls outside the two year period, as long as they do so before the first claim is heard.

Tenancy Forms can be found online at: [Tenancy Forms - Province of British Columbia](#)



### YOUR LANDLORD CAN RETURN YOUR DEPOSIT BY:

- + Delivering it in person
- + Mailing it
- + Sending it electronically

### DISPUTE RESOLUTION

This is the formal process through the Residential Tenancy Branch to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants. It's similar to a court proceeding

### IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONTACT THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY BRANCH AT:

- + **604-660-1020** (Lower Mainland)
- + **1-800-665-8779** (Elsewhere in B.C.)