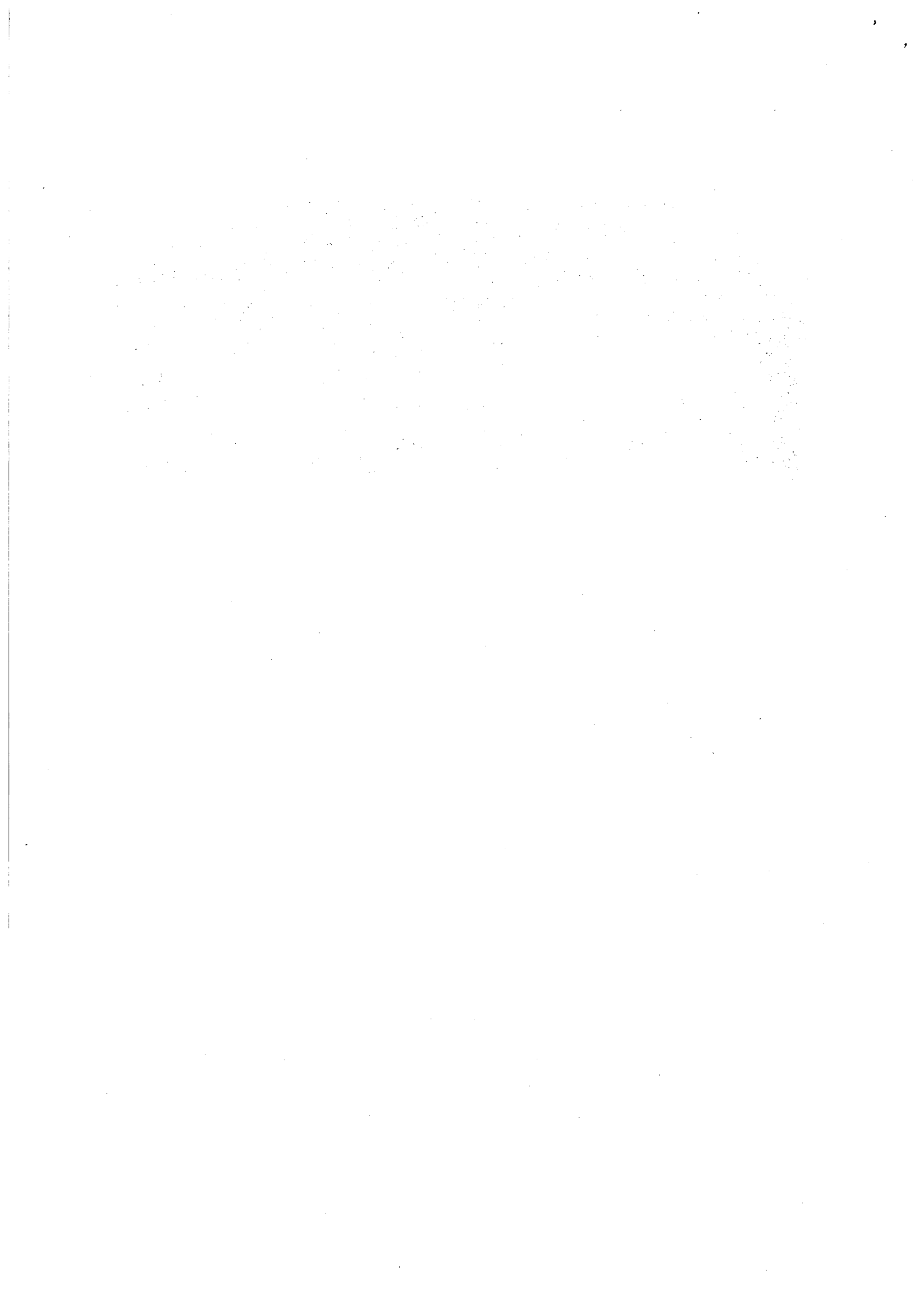




# TRACE A PLACE

R E N T I N G

c/- Service to Youth Council Inc.,  
128 Glen Osmond Road,  
Parkside. S.A. 5063.  
Phone 272 2544.



## RENTING

### WHAT IS RENTING?

This means that you pay the person who owns a house or flat, a certain amount of money each week or a fortnight. In return, you get to live in the house or flat. The person who owns the house or flat is called the Landlord. The person who rents the place is called the tenant.

### HOW DO I FIND A PLACE TO RENT?

Houses and flats are fairly difficult to find in Adelaide these days. So, you may be looking for quite a while before you find something suitable.

- \* You can look for accommodation in the newspapers or on noticeboards. If you look in the "Houses to let" and "Flats and Rooms" columns of the newspapers, especially on Wednesdays and Saturdays, you may find something.
- \* There are usually noticeboards at Colleges, Universities and Information Centres like The Women's Information Switchboard where there may be accommodation listed.
- \* If you are a student or going to be a student, there will usually be an accommodation service at the college or university. Try this service for rental places as well as hostels and private board.
- \* Real Estate Agents quite often have places to rent so it might be an idea to ring around or visit a few of these to see if they have any accommodation. Make sure that you ask if this is going to cost you.
- \* Another way of finding a place to rent is to ask around among people that you know. Sometimes they may know of a place that someone is moving out of.
- \* There are rental agencies in Adelaide that find some people places to rent. But, these agencies charge fees which can be up to \$50 or more. In many cases they will not be able to find you a place to live in.

There is another service which does not ask you to pay a fee and this is called "Whereabouts". The contact number for this service is listed at the back of this pamphlet.

### WHAT SORT OF THINGS MUST I REMEMBER WHEN I'M GOING TO LOOK AT A PLACE?

Some landlords or real estate agents ask you for references to show that you are O.K. to let a house to. If you are working, you can get an employer to give you a reference. If you have just left another rented place, you could ask the landlord of the old place to give you a reference. If you can't do any of these things, then ask someone who knows you well to write you a reference.

House-hunting is like looking for a job in many ways. Quite often you need references as we've just talked about. As in an interview for a job, how you dress and talk matters a lot too. So, put on the "glad-rags" when you go out looking at a place. Mind you, it's not a good idea to overdo it. Whatever you do, be friendly, and try to answer all the questions that you may be asked as well as you can.

Only quick ones get houses or flats! So, if you are looking for somewhere to live you must get up very early, as horrible as this may sound. If you look in the papers very early and ring or visit the place as soon as possible you may get to live in it.

I'VE FOUND A PLACE THAT I LIKE AND THE LANDLORD SAYS THAT WE SHOULD HAVE A LEASE. WHAT DOES HE OR SHE MEAN?

A Lease or a Residential Tenancy Agreement is a written agreement or contract that both you and the landlord sign.

It will say how much rent you will have to pay to the owner of the place every week or two weeks. In return for this rent money you will be allowed to live in the house or flat for a certain period of time. These agreements can be for 6 months for example, or they may not state any period of time.

The agreement can also say that you must follow certain conditions if you live in the place. One condition may be that you don't have pets while you are living there. If the landlord seems to be asking you to follow conditions that seem unfair, ring the Residential Tenancies Tribunal and ask about it. Their number is at the back of this leaflet. If you are unsure, do not sign anything, before you talk to someone about it.

HOW DO WE FIX UP A LEASE?

There is a form available at the Residential Tenancies Tribunal which is free if you want to use it. When it is filled in, both you and the landlord get to keep a copy of it. It will only cost money to have a lease put together if the landlord gets an agent to do it. But, if the landlord wants the lease done this way, he or she must pay for it.

WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE I MOVE INTO THE HOUSE OR FLAT?

You should check to see if things are broken or damaged in the place before you move in. Write a list of these things, including stains on the carpet and cracks in the walls. You then sign this list and get the landlord to sign it. This list must have a date on it. Make sure that you keep this list in a safe place. If you lose it, you may be asked to fix things which were already broken before you got there.

There is a special form that you can get at the Residential Tenancies Tribunal to use for this.

HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO PAY WHEN I MOVE IN?

Most landlords will ask you to pay a security deposit or "bond" before you move in. This is an amount of money which can be as much as four weeks rent. You cannot be asked to pay more than this amount as a bond.

The other money that you will have to give to the landlord will be for rent. You can only be asked to pay two weeks rent in advance. After two weeks have gone by, you will have to pay another two weeks rent.

### WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MONEY THAT I GIVE THE LANDLORD?

The landlord must not keep the bond or security deposit money. They must send it to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal who will keep it until you move out of the place. You will get a letter from the Tribunal telling you that they have got the money in about 2 or 3 weeks time. If you don't hear anything about the bond money, ring the Tribunal and ask about it. The landlord is allowed to keep the rent money.

### IS THERE ANYTHING THAT I MUST DO WHEN I PAY MY RENT?

It is very important for you to get receipts for the money that you pay in rent. You must also make sure that you get a receipt for the security deposit. Keep these receipts put away somewhere, because you may need them at some stage. This means that if you and your landlord have an argument over paying rent, you will have it all written down to prove that you have paid. Quite often you will be given a "rent book" by the landlord. This is a good way of keeping track of what you have paid and it can be used as a receipt. You can buy a rent book if you are not provided with one.

### WHEN SOMETHING GETS BROKEN IN THE HOUSE OR FLAT WHO HAS TO PAY FOR IT?

If something breaks which belongs to the landlord it must be fixed. If you broke it you must pay to have it fixed. But, if it is a problem of things wearing out like rusty water pipes for example, the landlord must pay to have it fixed.

### HOW DO I GET THINGS FIXED?

When something stops working it is a good idea to tell the landlord as soon as possible. If it is because something has worn out, you will not have to pay for it to be fixed in most cases. You will need to call in a plumber, electrician or other tradesperson to fix it.

It's a good idea to get "quotations" or ask how much the job is going to cost before you let the person go ahead and fix it. These quotations should be in writing. Usually, the landlord will want to know how much it is going to cost before the job is done.

When you have had something fixed you can either send the account or bill to the landlord or pay it and get them to pay you back. This can be arranged with the landlord before you get the repairs done. If you have paid the bill the landlord must pay you back within 7 days if you ask for it. If he or she does not do this you can ring the Tribunal and tell them about it.

### WHEN CAN THE LANDLORD KICK ME OUT OF THE PLACE?

If you break the rental agreement the landlord can ask you to move out. Breaking the agreement can mean:

- \* not paying your rent;
- \* damaging the house or flat on purpose;
- \* not following "the conditions" of the lease. For example, this may mean having pets when you are not meant to;
- \* disturbing the neighbours or other people living near you by your noise or behaviour.

If you do any of these things, you can be asked to leave after 14 days. But, the landlord cannot "throw" you out. If you don't move when you are asked to the landlord can ring the Tribunal and ask for someone called a "Bailiff" to come and get you out. When the bailiff comes round, you will most probably have to leave.

WHAT ABOUT IF I HAVE A LEASE FOR 6 MONTHS - CAN I BE KICKED OUT BEFORE THEN?

If you do have a lease for a certain amount of time, the landlord can only ask you to leave before this time if:

- (1) you break the agreement as we have talked about;
- (2) the landlord wants to do a lot of renovations or pull down the building. In this case, you must be given 60 days notice in writing that this is going to happen;
- (3) the landlord or his or her family want to live in this place. The landlord must give you 60 days notice in writing that this is going to happen also;
- (4) the landlord can give no reason for wanting you to move out of the place. But, if he or she does this you must be given 120 days notice in writing that you have to leave the place.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A LEASE - DOES THIS MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO WHEN I CAN BE ASKED TO LEAVE?

No, if you don't have a lease or a written agreement you can only be asked to leave the house or flat for the same reasons as those talked about before. You must be given the same amount of notice as you get if you have a lease in this case.

The notice must be written on a special form which is available at the Residential Tenancies Tribunal.

WHEN CAN I MOVE OUT? WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A LEASE?

You must give 21 days notice that you are going to move out if you do not have a lease for a particular period of time. This should be in writing.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO HAVE A LEASE?

In most cases, you must stay in the place until the lease is finished. If you move out before this time, you will probably have to pay rent until someone else moves into the house or flat.

Sometimes the landlord will agree to you moving out before your lease has ended. If you are replaced by other people straight away then you will not have to keep paying rent to the landlord.

If you think that the landlord has been unfair to you and this is why you want to leave, ring the Tribunal or go in to see someone about it. It may be that the agreement or lease can be ended because of this.

The agreement with the landlord that you will stay in the place for a certain amount of time can be written down or just agreed upon. If you have said that you would live there for twelve months for example, then it is the same as signing a lease to say this.

It is a bit harder to prove that you did both agree to this though.

#### WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO WHEN I'M MOVING OUT?

When you leave the place, make sure that you have fixed anything that you have broken. Leave the house or flat clean and tidy. The landlord will check to see that the place is alright. It's a good idea to bring out the list of things that were wrong when you moved in, at this point. If everything is O.K. the security deposit or bond that you paid when you moved in will be given back to you.

If you do have any problems about bonds, ring the Tribunal to ask for help.

#### WHEN YOU ARE RENTING REMEMBER THAT -

- \* it is your place to live in so you need privacy. Landlords are not allowed to come round more than once a week to collect rent.
- \* Landlords cannot go into your place to inspect it without giving you 7-14 days notice that this is going to happen.  
Only in the case of an emergency can the landlord enter your house or flat without asking you beforehand.
- \* You must keep the place reasonably clean and tidy.
- \* You must tell the landlord if you damage the house or flat in any way.
- \* You must pay your rent on time. If you know that you are going to have trouble paying the rent the next time that it is due, contact your landlord and explain the situation. You may be able to pay it in smaller amounts if you ask about doing it this way.

#### PLACES TO LOOK IF YOU ARE WANTING ACCOMMODATION

- \* TRACE-A-PLACE, 128 Glen Osmond Road, Parkside. Phone 272 2544.  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
- \* Noticeboards.
- \* Newspapers.
- \* Real Estate Agents.
- \* "Whereabouts". Phone 51 3867. 10 a.m. - 2-30 p.m. Mon. - Fri.
- \* Student accommodation services at colleges and universities.
- \* The Women's Information Switchboard, 122 Kintore Avenue, Adelaide.  
Phone 223 1244.
- \* The Emergency Housing Office, 38 Waymouth Street, Adelaide. Phone 51 6801.
- \* The Unemployed Workers' Union, 245B Sturt Street, Adelaide. Phone 212 6956.

PLACES TO CONTACT IF YOU WANT HELP WITH RENTING PROBLEMS

- \* The Residential Tenancies Tribunal,  
11th Floor,  
Grenfell Centre,  
25 Grenfell Street,  
ADELAIDE.

Phone 228 3260.

- \* The Emergency Housing Office,  
38 Waymouth Street,  
ADELAIDE.

Phone 51 6801.

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