

CONSUMER AFFAIRS – TENANCY

SHARING A RENTED HOUSE OR FLAT

Many people, especially young people, consider a move into a share house or flat if they cannot afford to rent the premises themselves.

If you are thinking about sharing there are a number of things you should look into before making a decision:

1. Do you know the people you want to move in with? It is important that you are able to live with these people with as few problems as possible as conflicts can make the situation unbearable. If you don't know the people you should at least meet them before you enter into any agreement so that you can check each other out.
2. Do you know what sort of place you are looking for? Check out the newspapers and real estate agents for houses or flats to rent and arrange to visit several you think will meet your needs, including the rental cost. Will each of you be able to afford to pay your share of the rent each fortnight? *Remember that if one of you doesn't pay the others will have to make up the difference.*
3. Do you know what other costs you will have to pay? Up front you will have to pay your share of the security deposit (usually equal to 4 weeks' rent) and then your share of electricity and water bills plus perhaps furniture etc. It is a good idea to make a budget so that you can see what you have left after paying the rent and other expenses each fortnight.

When you and your intended house-mates have decided on a place the landlord or agent still has to agree to rent it to you. You will need to complete an application form, provide references and provide evidence that you can pay the rent when due. If the landlord/agent agrees to rent you the place, usually for 6 or 12 months initially, you will be asked to sign a rental agreement and pay the security deposit before you are given the keys.

Before you sign the rental agreement, make sure you read it and understand all the terms and conditions as you will be held to them; if you don't keep to them you can be evicted at short notice.

It is important that all those who are contributing to the security deposit and the amounts paid by each of you are included on the receipt issued by the landlord/agent.

Your lease status

Before you sign the lease you must agree on your lease status:

- If there is only one person's name on the lease he or she is the 'head tenant' and is responsible to the landlord for the place that you're living in.
- If you are going to sign the lease with the other tenants then you will become a co-tenant and share all the rights and responsibilities of the tenancy.
-

- If you are going to live in the house or flat and have your own room but your name will not be put on the lease then you are a sub-tenant. The head tenant must get permission from the landlord for you to live in the house/flat. As a sub-tenant you will generally share all the same rights as the others whose names appear on the lease but individual circumstances may affect these rights and responsibilities and advice is recommended.

For further information contact Consumer Affairs

Old Admiralty Towers, 68 The Esplanade, GPO Box 1722, Darwin NT 0801

Ph: 08 8999 1999 - Fax: 08 8935 7727

or

Level 1, Belvedere House, Parsons Street, PO Box 1745 Alice Springs NT 0871

Telephone: 08 8951 8606 Fax: 08 8951 5442

or phone 1800 019 319

Email: consumer@nt.gov.au

Web site: consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au

General Disclaimer: The material contained in this publication is intended for use as a guide and for general information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for independent professional advice. The Northern Territory Department of Justice accepts no responsibility or liability for the correctness, accuracy and completeness of any of the material contained in this publication and recommends that users of this publication exercise