



Rental Deposit Handover: Build Evidence Before Returning Keys

Description

Start from the signed tenancy agreement, conduct a joint room-by-room inspection, timestamp the condition, record meters and keys, and put every deposit deduction or release date in writing before the handover file is closed.

Use the contract as the baseline

Deposit timing, reinstatement, minor repair and notice terms come from the signed agreement. Do not substitute an agent’s message for the executed clause. ([CEA private rental guide](#))

Walk entrance, living area, rooms, kitchen, bathrooms, balcony and utility areas in the same order as the inventory. Take wide and close images so a defect can be located.

Situation	What changes
Condition matches the signed inventory	Record acceptance and the deposit-return date
A defect is disputed	Photograph scale, location and surrounding condition before keys are returned
Cleaning or repair is agreed	Record scope, evidence and the amount or invoice basis
Keys or access devices are missing	List each missing item and the contractual consequence

Related: [review the tenancy due-diligence baseline](#)

Record utilities and access

Photograph meter readings and list physical keys, mailbox keys, cards, remotes and digital-lock credentials. Both parties should acknowledge the count at handover. ([CEA landlord rental checklist](#))

A useful record shows age, prior condition, use and the precise change. Do not label every mark as damage or every repair as normal wear without evidence.

Example: A S\$4,000 deposit with an agreed S\$180 cleaning invoice and S\$120 replacement remote leaves S\$3,700. If the S\$120 item is disputed, identify the undisputed S\$3,880 separately instead of freezing the whole deposit.

Make deductions auditable

For each proposed deduction, record the clause, item, evidence, amount and whether a quotation or paid invoice supports it. Return the undisputed balance according to the agreed timeline.

Remove saved Wi-Fi, camera, smart-home and access credentials and return only the records the contract requires. Do not leave identity documents in a shared handover folder.

- Read the signed handover clauses
- Match the inventory
- Photograph every room
- Record meters
- Count keys and devices
- Itemise agreed deductions
- Sign and retain the handover record

Related: [check the separate tenancy stamp-duty task](#)

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Author

nuraisyah