Boarding houses

Boarding house tenancies and standard tenancies share many of the same requirements. Find out about the differences here.

**Important COVID-19 information for boarding houses:** Temporary legislation regarding rent increases is in effect from 26 March to 25 September 2020, unless extended.

[COVID-19 information on rent increases (also applies to boarding houses)](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/rent-bond-and-bills/rent/increasing-rent/)

About boarding houses

In a boarding house, tenants have their own boarding house tenancy agreement with their landlord to rent single rooms or a sleeping area within a room they share with other tenants. They also share any facilities, eg the kitchen or bathroom. A boarding house is occupied, or intended to be occupied, by at least six tenants.

This is different to a standard tenancy, where one or more tenants sign the tenancy agreement to rent the whole property.

Landlords must comply with their local council requirements before establishing a boarding house. You may need to make changes to the property to meet these requirements. Contact your local council for more information.


Boarding house landlords also need to stay up to date with changes to tenancy law. Recent changes include the healthy homes standards and Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2019.

[Recent changes to tenancy law](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/law-changes/)

Healthy homes standards

All boarding houses must comply with the healthy homes standards by 1 July 2021.

Insulation is compulsory from 1 July 2019 where it is reasonably practicable to install, but some boarding house landlords may need to improve existing insulation by 1 July 2021 to meet the healthy homes standards.

[About the healthy homes standards](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes/)

[Current insulation requirements](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/maintenance-and-inspections/insulation/compulsory-insulation/)

From 1 July 2019 boarding house landlords must make a signed statement in any new or varied boarding house tenancy agreement that they will comply, or already comply, with the healthy homes standards under section 66I(1)(bb) of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

[Tenancy agreements](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/starting-a-tenancy/tenancy-agreements/)
How boarding house tenancies are different

In a boarding house, each tenant rents a room or a sleeping area within a room they share with other tenants, rather than the whole house. They share facilities such as the kitchen and bathroom with the other tenants. A boarding house has (or is intended to have) at least six tenants at a time.

Other differences to standard tenancies are:

- there are no fixed-term tenancies in a boarding house - agreements are intended to last 28 days or more
- if the bond is equal to one week’s rent or less, it doesn’t have to be lodged with Tenancy Services
- the landlord must give 28 days’ written notice before increasing the rent
- tenants must have access to their room, and toilet and bathroom facilities, at all times
- landlords must keep the shared facilities in a reasonable state of cleanliness
- tenants’ rooms must be reasonably clean and tidy, and must not create a health or safety hazard
- the landlord can enter the boarding house at any time, but they should have a valid reason.

Boarding house tenancy agreement

Use our boarding house tenancy agreement template to make sure you have all the required information. It is similar to a standard tenancy agreement, but must also include:

- if the tenancy is intended to last for 28 days or more
- the landlord’s phone number
- the room number that the agreement is for
- whether the room is shared by other tenants – and the maximum number of tenants who may occupy the room
- whether the tenancy is a joint tenancy – and the names of the other people in the room
- services the landlord provides
- the name, contact address and phone number of the boarding house manager (if different than the landlord)
- a description of the fire evacuation procedures.

Boarding house tenancy agreement template [PDF, 955 KB](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/assets/Forms-templates/boarding-house-tenancy-agreement.pdf)

House rules

A boarding house landlord can make house rules. These set out any provided services, along with how to use and enjoy the facilities. The landlord must provide at least seven days’ written notice of any rule changes.

The landlord must give the tenant a copy of the rules at the start of the tenancy. They should also display copies around the boarding house.

The house rules can’t breach the Residential Tenancies Act or any other law (eg, the Human Rights Act or the Privacy Act). If you believe a house rule breaches the law, you can apply to the Tenancy Tribunal.

Locks and security

The house and all rooms must be reasonably secure. The landlord must provide enough locks to ensure this. Tenants must have access to their room, and toilet and bathroom facilities, at all times.

Before changing any lock, the landlord must tell every tenant who will be affected.

Tenants must not alter, add to or remove any lock or similar security devices.

Entering a tenant's room

A boarding house landlord may enter a boarding house room without notice:

- if a tenant of the room agrees at, or immediately before, the time of entry
- if the landlord believes there's an emergency, or serious risk to life or property
- to provide any agreed services, as long as entry meets the conditions of the agreement or house rules
- in accordance with an order from the Tenancy Tribunal.

Other than these situations, the landlord may enter a boarding house room after giving 24 hours’ notice to the tenants:

- to inspect the room, if no inspection has been made in the last four weeks
- to inspect the room, if the landlord believes the tenant has abandoned the room or breached the Residential Tenancies Act in another way
- to show the room to a possible tenant or buyer
- to fulfil their obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act
- to inspect work the landlord required the tenant to carry out, or the tenant agreed to carry out
- to show the room to a registered valuer, real estate agent, or building inspector.

The landlord can enter the boarding house at any time. However the landlord, or other tenants, can’t interfere with your quiet enjoyment of the premises.

What is quiet enjoyment? (http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/maintenance-and-inspections/quiet-enjoyment/)

Ending a boarding house tenancy

Different rules apply for ending a boarding house tenancy.

Ending a boarding house tenancy (http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/ending-a-tenancy/giving-notice-to-end-tenancy/ending-a-boarding-house-tenancy/)