Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

# Record keeping for rental properties


**Find out what records you need to keep for properties you rent out, including holiday homes**

When you own a rental property, you'll need to keep records:

- right from the beginning (before you even sign the contract to buy)
- every year that you own it (including records of your income and expenses)
- when you sell it (keep them for at least 5 years after you sell).

Keep this checklist on hand as a reminder of the records you need to keep.

Before getting started, remember, if you:

- have more than one rental property, keep separate records for each
- co-own your rental property, the rental income and most expenses must be attributed to each co-owner according to the legal interest in the property
- have a tax agent, ask how they want you to keep and share your records with them.

## Record-keeping checklist

The following examples are a guide only. There may be different records you need to keep.

## Property information

You need to keep records from the time you buy the property, whether you lived in it before renting it out or purchased it solely as a rental. These records will help you calculate your capital gain or loss when you sell the property.

### When you buy the property

- [ ] certificate of title (showing ownership by name and percentage)
- [ ] mortgage papers (loan contract)
- [ ] other loan documents, including
  - – lender's insurance certificate
  - – lender's title search fees
  - – stamp duty on the mortgage
- [ ] land tax assessments
- [ ] receipts for pest and building inspections
- [ ] settlement statement that outlines:
  - – conveyancing and legal fees
  - – costs for searches
  - – state and territory stamp duty

### When you first start using the property to produce income (for example, renting out the property, or a room in your home)

- [ ] receipts and invoices for any repairs you've made to the property before renting it out
- [ ] market valuation* (by a professional valuer, showing the value of your property at the time you start renting it)
- [ ] records showing any periods you lived at the property* (for example, utility bills or electoral roll address confirmation).

*only required if you start renting your main residence.

## Records of your rental income

You must declare all income you receive for your rental property (including overseas properties) in your tax return. This includes:

- short-term and long-term rentals
- renting your property through a sharing platform (for example, Couchsurfing, Airbnb)
- renting part or all of your home.

For more information, see Rental income you must declare.

### Rental income

- [ ] records showing the dates you rented the property out
- [ ] statement from your property manager, or receipts you give to tenants (if you don't have a property manager)
- [ ] tenancy agreements
- [ ] statements from sharing economy platforms
- [ ] evidence of other payments from tenants – for example, utility costs

### Bond money retained

- [ ] documents from government bond authorities

### Insurance payouts

- [ ] documents from your insurance company, including any payments received

## Records of your rental expenses

To be entitled to claim a deduction, you must incur the cost. You need to work out the amount of the expense relating to your income-producing activities.

If you rent out part of your property, you need to work out your expenses on a floor-area basis, and in some circumstances, on a time-basis as well.

For more information, see Rental expenses you can claim and Common property expenses.

### Interest expenses

- [ ] bank statements
- [ ] loan documents
- [ ] details of any redraws (and what it was for)
- [ ] documents of refinancing and any additional amounts added to the loan (and whether this was for your rental or private use)
- [ ] calculations of apportioning for private use

### Expenses to rent the property

- [ ] receipts and invoices for all expenses (with details of each expense)
- [ ] insurance premium notices
- [ ] contract or agreement with rental property agent or manager
- [ ] annual statement from your property manager (alongside invoices) showing
  - their fees and commissions
  - advertising costs
  - minor repair costs
- [ ] evidence of your efforts to rent out the property; for example, communication between you and your agent or manager
- [ ] tenant leases
- [ ] land tax assessments

- [ ] water rates and charge notices
- [ ] council rate notices
- [ ] bank statements with ongoing bank or finance fees
- [ ] body corporate fee notices (showing breakdown of admin fees, sinking fees, etc)
- [ ] solicitor invoices for legal expenses
- [ ] invoices for accounting fees

### Repairs, maintenance and capital expenses

The more details of these expenses you have, the easier it will be to categorise when lodging your return. Keep in mind, you can only claim repairs and maintenance that **you** paid for. You can't claim for your own labour.

- [ ] receipts and invoices
- [ ] contracts for work done
- [ ] depreciating assets schedule (capital allowances)
- [ ] property manager reports
- [ ] before and after photos
- [ ] evidence of construction costs (capital works).

## Short-term rentals and personal use

If you are renting out part of a property through the sharing economy like Airbnb or Booking.com, you need to apportion expenses based on:

- the floor-area solely occupied by the renter (user) and add to that a reasonable amount based on your guests' access to common areas
- the number of days during the year you rent out part of the property.

For more information, see Renting out all or part of your home.

### Sharing economy or short-term letting of entire property through an agent or manager

- [ ] periods the property has paying guests
- [ ] booking confirmations
- [ ] statements from the platform, agent or manager showing
  - periods the property was rented
  - fees and commissions, including cancellations
  - advertising expenses
  - cleaning fees charged by the platform
- [ ] receipts and invoices for utilities, rates, body corporate fees, insurance, repairs and maintenance, and depreciating assets
- [ ] calculations for decline in value and capital works

### Expenses relating to the entire property that need to be apportioned according to the 'floor area' used by guests

- [ ] plan of your property with floor area used by guests clearly marked
- [ ] calculations of expenses you apportioned, including
  - house, contents and landlord insurance
  - cleaning and maintenance
  - utility bills such as electricity, gas, water and internet
  - body corporate fees
  - council rates

### Personal use

- [ ] periods of personal use by you or your family/friends (even if they paid a reduced rate)
- [ ] periods the property is used as your main residence (home)

## Selling the property

When you sell your rental, you will need to hold onto your records for at least another 5 years.

### Selling your rental or investment property

- ☐ contract of sale
- ☐ settlement statement showing
  - – conveyancing or solicitor fees for the sale
  - – settlement adjustments
- ☐ receipts, invoices or other documents showing paid advertising expenses and real estate commission
- ☐ details of any unclaimed capital expenses, including initial repairs
- ☐ calculation of capital gain or loss

## How to keep rental records

Keep separate records for each rental property or holiday home.

Your records must be in:

- English, or translatable to English
- writing (they can be electronic or paper) – we recommend you keep a backup of any digital records.

## How long to keep your records

You need to keep records of deductions for 5 years from the date you lodge your tax return.

The records for buying, owning and selling the property need to be kept for at least 5 years after you dispose of the property.

If you have amended a tax return, you need to keep your records long enough to cover the amendment period (usually 2 or 4 years) for assessments using information from the record.

In some circumstances, you may need to provide these records as proof that you were the one to incur the expense.

**This is a general summary only.**
For more information:

- Worksheet – work out your net rental income or loss
- Rental property video series
- Rental properties guide.

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