



Sydney is a great city, but it's not always easy to find a place to live. If you're thinking of sharing with others, follow our quick guide to make sure your new home is safe and comfortable.

Whether you're looking for your own flat, or a room in a boarding house, hostel or share house, **you are entitled to basic requirements.**

Getting help

Tenants' services

Tenants NSW 1800 251 101

tenants.org.au

(this service will give advice to tenants only – they will not help landlords)

NSW Fair Trading 13 32 20

fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

Dispute resolution

Community Justice Centres 1800 990 777

cjc.nsw.gov.au

Consumer, Trader and

Tenancy Tribunal 1300 135 399

cttt.nsw.gov.au

Legal advice

Community Legal Centres NSW 02 9212 7333

nswclc.org.au

Law Access 1300 888 529

lawaccess.nsw.gov.au

Redfern Legal Centre 02 9698 7645

rlc.org.au/our-services/international-students

(this is a free service for international students)

Discrimination

Anti-Discrimination Board 02 9268 5555

lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb

Australian Human Rights Commission 1300 369 711

hreoc.gov.au

Translating service

Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450

tisnational.gov.au

Report your concerns

If you come across advertisements or know of accommodation that you think looks unsafe or illegal, please let the City of Sydney know by calling **02 9265 9333** or head to cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/illegal-housing for more info.

Your call can be anonymous, but you will need to provide the address so we can investigate the property.



What to look for in share accommodation

Information for **international students** and **visitors** looking for an affordable place to stay.



Rooms are usually advertised:

- ✓ On popular property listing sites;
- ✓ Noticeboards in cafes;
- ✓ Community centres;
- ✓ Universities; and
- ✓ Newspaper property listings.

Rooms can be advertised by:

- ✓ Landlords;
- ✓ Real estate agents;
- ✓ Universities; and
- ✓ Existing households looking for a flatmate.



Types of accommodation

Shared accommodation

When looking to share a room or house, it's helpful to ask:

- ✓ Is there a lease in place?
- ✓ Does the building/room have smoke detectors?
- ✓ Does the bedroom have a window?
- ✓ Does it have basic facilities such as kitchen, a bathroom and do the stove, oven and toilet/shower work?
- ✓ Is the property clean and tidy?
- ✓ Are there more than two adults living in one room?

Boarding houses

When choosing a room in a boarding house, it's a good idea to check if the property is listed on the NSW Department of Fair Trading accommodation register at fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

A listed property is more likely to meet basic fire safety and health standards.

Keep in mind: a boarding house resident does not have the same control over the premises as a tenant with a 'residential tenancy agreement' or lease.

Hostels and backpackers

If you're looking to stay in a hostel or backpackers, check if they are listed with Backpacker Operators of Australia at boansw.org.au. This will help you choose a reliable company.



Watch out for common traps

Scams

Be aware that some people may not be truthful when advertising properties. If the owner makes excuses as to why you can't inspect the property but insists on an upfront payment, it could be a scam. You should always inspect the room or house before agreeing to move in.

Privacy

Don't be afraid to ask how many people live in the house. Overcrowded households can be a sign that the accommodation is unsafe or even illegal.

Try to meet your housemates before you move in. Consider your housemates' day-to-day activities – cooking, watching TV and going to the bathroom can get pretty noisy! Consider this when looking at lofts, attics or any 'rooms' without walls and a door.

Contracts and payment

Before moving in:

- ✓ Confirm the weekly rent and what it does and doesn't cover;
- ✓ Establish whether there is a bond (safety deposit, usually worth a month's rent) and how this is managed. Bonds should be lodged by the landlord or agent with the NSW Department of Fair Trading.

Keep in mind:

- ✓ An electronic transfer or cheque is good evidence of your payment in case any disagreements arise. Regardless of how you pay, always ask for a rent receipt.
- ✓ It is a good idea to sign a written contract with the owner, agent or head-tenant, if you are subletting. If something goes wrong, this will help you enforce your rights.