

FAQ for property agents

Answers to our frequently asked question for property agents.

RBO essentials

What is Rental Bonds Online (RBO)?

This is an online service to lodge and refund bond money for NSW managing agents, landlords and tenants.

Bonds lodged online using RBO do not need a signed paper bond lodgement form. Instead, both the managing agent and the tenant log on to RBO with separate accounts to conduct rental bond transactions.

To replace signatures on a lodgement bond, RBO uses other security measures, such as mobile phone SMS codes, to verify rental bond transactions.

Property agents must be registered with Rental Bonds Online. Agents must also offer the service to new tenants as the first option for lodgement of their bond for residential bonds.

What is an 'online bond'?

A residential or retail tenancy bond where both the managing agent and the tenant are registered with RBO. The service allows the bond to be managed securely over the internet, without signing and sending paper forms.

How does RBO verify who I am?

Each user will have a unique RBO user ID and password to log on to RBO. Also, to authenticate the person, RBO will send a security code via SMS to the mobile phone number entered for this person. Each user is also required to maintain security questions and responses that we may ask in the future to help identify them over the phone.

To complete key updates associated with user profiles, you will first need to authenticate yourself through a security code sent by SMS to your mobile phone. For this reason, it is important to keep mobile phone numbers and email addresses in RBO up-to-date.

Can I use RBO on any mobile device or internet browser?

You can access RBO from any internet-enabled device, including a desktop PC, laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

What is the principal tenant's role?

If more than one tenant is on the bond (two or more co-tenants), the tenants must decide who will be the 'principal tenant' or 'authorised officer' for retail bonds.

The principal tenant or authorised officer acts on behalf of all tenants. They must:

- register with Rental Bonds Online (RBO) and pay the bond money to NSW Fair Trading
- as part of the RBO registration, provide all co-tenants' or communication recipients for retail bonds contact details to keep them informed of any changes to the bond
- at the end of the tenancy, respond to or submit a claim for refund of bond money on behalf of all the tenants
- distribute any bond refund to the other tenants.

The other tenants or communication recipients may view details and receive copies of notifications sent to the principal tenant, but they cannot log on to RBO or do any bond transactions.

The principal tenant or authorised officer may log on to RBO at any time. They can do this to view the status of their bond, view any notifications and create or respond to transactions that you initiate.

It is important to advise NSW Fair Trading of any changes to co-tenants for a shared tenancy with a residential online bond by completing and submitting the Change of Shared Tenancy Arrangement form to Rental Bonds. Change of Shared Tenancy Arrangements cannot be completed for retail bonds. If the principal tenant vacates, the Change of Principal Tenant process must be completed before the Change of Shared Tenancy Arrangement form can be submitted to Rental Bonds. These forms can be downloaded from the [Forms page](#).

A principal tenant or authorised user can reuse their RBO logon to pay their bond for any future property they may rent, if the managing agent or landlord is registered to use the service.

For Retail Bonds - The Principal Tenant includes an Authorised Officer authorised to perform transactions on the bond and is not required to be noted on the Retail Lease.

Co-tenant includes communication recipients required to receive email and SMS notifications for retail bond transactions and is not required to be noted on the Retail Lease Agreement.

Lodging a bond

How do you lodge a bond online?

You or your agency must already be registered to use RBO before you can lodge a bond online.

As the managing agent, you start the process of lodging a bond online. The tenant is sent an email to create a login or link a new bond to an existing login and pay for their bond using Visa, Mastercard or BPAY for a residential bond. To pay a retail bond the tenant must pay via BPAY. The tenant pays their bond money directly to NSW Fair Trading.

RBO notifies you that Fair Trading has received the tenant's payment. You can then arrange for the tenant to sign their Residential Tenancies Agreement and complete the lodgement process in RBO. Immediately after you sign the lease, you should mark the bond lodgement as finalised for residential bonds. Once you finalise the bond, RBO will then allocate the Rental Bond Number and notify you and the tenant.

Can I insist that a tenant pay their bond online?

No. A tenant can't be forced to pay using the online service, however, they need to be offered the service as the first option for lodgement of residential bonds.

What does a tenant need in order to lodge their bond online?

A tenant needs:

- internet access
- email
- a mobile phone (used as part of the service's security settings)
- an Australian bank or credit union account
- to be able to pay their bond through Visa, Mastercard or BPAY for a residential bond or BPAY for a retail bond
- to agree to lodge their bond online.

If the tenant cannot meet all these requirements, you will both need to use the paper-based method to lodge their bond instead.

Can I still lodge bonds by the paper-based method?

Yes. Where tenants do not meet the requirements for an online bond, you may download a Rental Bond Lodgement form from your RBO account and send with a cheque or money order to Rental Bonds or lodge the bond over the counter at any Service NSW centre. After Rental Bonds has finished processing the lodgement, you will be able to see the bond in the Rental Bonds Online (RBO) 'Your bonds' list and you can also view the bond details.

These bonds are referred to as 'paper based' (displayed as 'Paper' in RBO). You will not receive online notifications regarding these bonds. Tenants cannot view or transact paper-based bonds online in RBO.

Can an online bond be paid by instalments?

Yes, for residential bonds. You will need to indicate that the bond will be paid by instalments during the initial online lodgement process and enter the initial instalment amount. Once the bond is finalised, as the agent, you will be able to create a request for the tenant to pay an instalment. The tenant will be notified by email and can pay the instalment in RBO by Visa, Mastercard or BPAY.

Can a retail tenancy bond be lodged online?

Yes, retail bonds can now be lodged online just like residential bonds.

You or your agency must already be registered to use RBO before you can lodge a bond online.

As the managing agent, you start the process of lodging a bond online. When you create the pending lodgement online you will need to select "Retail" for the tenancy type. The tenant or authorised officer is sent an email to create a login or link a new bond to an existing login and pay for their bond using BPAY with the maximum amount of \$100,000.00. The tenant pays their bond money directly to NSW Fair Trading.

RBO notifies you that Fair Trading has received the tenant's payment. You can then arrange to complete the lodgement process in RBO to finalise the lodgement. RBO will then allocate the Rental Bond Number and notify you and the tenant.

Can an online retail bond be topped up?

Yes, you can add a Top-Up to the bond after the bond has been finalised. Once finalised, as the agent you will be able to create a request for the tenant to pay the Top-Up. The tenant will be notified by email and can pay the Top-Up via BPAY.

Refunding a bond

How is an online bond refunded?

Either a managing agent (or self-managing landlord) or tenant can submit the claim for refund using RBO. You can only submit a claim after the tenancy has ended for a residential bond.

If you, as the managing agent, are starting the claim, you first need to enter the amount to be deducted from the bond. This will be zero if the full bond is to be refunded to the tenant. Before you submit the refund claim, discuss any deductions first with your tenant.

If you submit the claim for bond refund online in RBO, the principal tenant or authorised officer will be sent a 14-day Notice of Claim by email as well as a phone notification by SMS (copies will be sent to any other tenants).

The principal tenant or authorised officer can then log on to RBO and view the claim details. If the tenant agrees to the claim, they can log on to RBO and agree for the bond to be refunded.

The bond will then be deposited into the nominated bank account(s). When tenants first register for RBO, they enter a bank account that will be used to deposit any bond refund owed to them. All refund payments for agents and principal tenants or authorised officers registered in RBO will be by direct deposit to their bank accounts. It is therefore important that the bank account and contact details entered in RBO are kept up-to-date.

If they do not agree with the claim, the tenant is encouraged to discuss this with you. If you cannot agree, the tenant can opt to dispute the claim by applying to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) for a residential bond, or by commencing prescribed proceedings and applying to the Small Business Commission for mediation for retail bonds and notifying NSW Fair Trading of the dispute using RBO during the 14-day notice period.

Can a tenant submit a refund claim online?

Yes. Principal tenants or authorised officers registered in RBO with an online bond can submit a claim online using the service. However, RBO encourages the tenant to discuss their claim with the agent before submitting it online. For residential bonds, you can only submit a claim after a tenancy has ended.

A Notice of Claim will be issued to you by email with a 14-day Notice period to respond. In RBO, you may choose to:

- agree to the refund,
- tell us that you have lodged an application for a hearing with the Tribunal for a residential bond, or commenced prescribed proceedings and have applied to the Small Business Commission for mediation for retail bonds, if you are disputing the tenant's claim, or
- take no action and the bond will be refunded as per the tenant's claim after the notice period expires.

If the landlord and the tenant agree to a different deduction amount during the Notice period, NSW Fair Trading will process the new claim on receiving evidence that both you and the tenant have agreed to the new amount. You are able to do this using RBO.

Other

Can I transfer an online bond to another property?

No, you will need to refund the bond and create a new online lodgement for the new property.

How can I see bonds for properties where the bond wasn't lodged online?

You will see all your existing bonds linked to your Rental Bonds Agent ID Number (Agency Code) when you login to RBO. If they are not visible in RBO, they may not have been updated with your Agency Code - contact Rental Bonds if this applies. These bonds will appear as 'paper type' bonds. Claims for paper can be submitted online. Alternatively you will be able to download and print pre-populated forms for these bonds to complete and post or email to Rental Bonds.

How can I find out more?

You will be sent an information pack when you register with Rental Bonds Online (RBO). This includes details on how to set up your agency as well as how to perform key processes such as lodging a bond and submitting a claim for refund.

If you need further assistance, you can access online help when logged in to RBO or you can contact Rental Bonds Online Security and Support by email to rbosupport@customerservice.nsw.gov.au or phone 1800 990 724 (free call).

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<https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-property/renting/rental-bonds-online/faq-for-property-agents> 29-08-22

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29-08-22