SMITH
REAL ESTATE NT

TENANT HANDBOOK

A practical guide to renting with Smith Real Estate NT

For residential tenants in Darwin, Palmerston and the Greater Darwin region

Version 1.1 | July 2026

Important

This handbook is practical guidance only. It does not replace your signed tenancy agreement, property-specific instructions or Northern Territory law. If there is an inconsistency, the tenancy agreement and applicable law prevail.

Keep this guide for the full tenancy and refer to it before contacting the agency about common issues.

Welcome to Smith Real Estate NT

Our aim is to make expectations clear, help prevent avoidable problems and support a professional tenancy from move-in to final inspection.



About us
Smith Real Estate NT is an independent boutique agency providing residential property management and sales services across Greater Darwin. The agency was established by Wayne Smith with a focus on clear communication, practical service and long-term relationships.

Meet Our Team

Our team works together to manage your tenancy and provide support throughout your time with Smith Real Estate NT. Your enquiry may be handled by different team members depending on availability and the nature of the matter.

Team member	Role and how they may assist	Phone
Kelly Fuller	**Senior Property Manager** Manages day-to-day tenancy matters, maintenance, inspections, renewals and communication.	0447 269 201
Alana Wilkie	**Assistant Property Manager** Supports inspections, maintenance, tenancy administration and access arrangements.	0417 902 541
Sally Nicholas	**Business Manager** Coordinates business operations, administration, compliance and support across the agency.	0460 349 533
Stella Murray	**Sales Professional** Supports sales campaigns, buyer enquiries, inspections and property-sale appointments.	0427 351 639
Wayne Smith	**Selling Principal and Director** Oversees the agency and assists with complex tenancy, property and client matters.	0417 272 077

Who should I contact? For general tenancy, maintenance and inspection matters, please contact Kelly or Alana using the agency's approved email address or telephone number.

Office and contact details

Office hours are 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays. Please make an appointment before attending because staff are often away conducting inspections and appointments.

Non-urgent matters should be emailed. Genuine urgent repairs or emergencies should be reported by telephone immediately and followed by email.

Agency	Smith Real Estate NT
Office Location	27/119 Reichardt Road, Winnellie NT
Email	admin@smithrealestatent.com.au
Website	www.smithrealestatent.com.au
Postal	PO Box 782, Nightcliff NT 0814

Emergency services

Call 000 for fire, police or ambulance emergencies. Contact the agency only after immediate danger has been addressed.

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1. How to Use This Handbook

This handbook brings the main tenancy processes, agency procedures, checklists and Top End property-care guidance into one place.

- **Read your lease first.** Property-specific terms may differ from general guidance in this handbook.
- **Use the contents page.** Each section is designed to be read separately when an issue arises.
- **Keep important matters in writing.** Email maintenance reports, requests, approvals and notices so there is a clear record.
- **Act early.** Small leaks, mould patches, pest activity and damage can become expensive problems when ignored.
- **Ask before changing anything.** Do not alter, install, remove, paint, drill or arrange substantial work without written approval.

Documents you should keep

- Your signed tenancy agreement and any special conditions.
- The ingoing condition report and your photographs or video.
- Rent receipts or statements.
- Written approvals, maintenance correspondence and contractor details.
- Any body corporate rules, pool instructions or property-specific guides.
- Your vacating notice, final inspection documents and bond correspondence.

2. Understanding Your Tenancy Agreement

A tenancy agreement is a legally binding agreement between the landlord and every tenant named on the document.

Who is responsible?

Every adult named as a tenant is responsible for complying with the agreement. Where there is more than one tenant, tenants are generally jointly responsible. An agreement between housemates about who pays which share does not change the responsibility owed to the landlord.

- The full rent being paid on time.
- Damage, cleanliness and property care.
- The conduct of occupants and visitors.
- Returning the property, keys and access devices at the end.

Fixed-term and periodic tenancies

A fixed-term agreement has a start and end date. Signing it means committing to the agreed period. Personal circumstances changing does not automatically end the agreement.

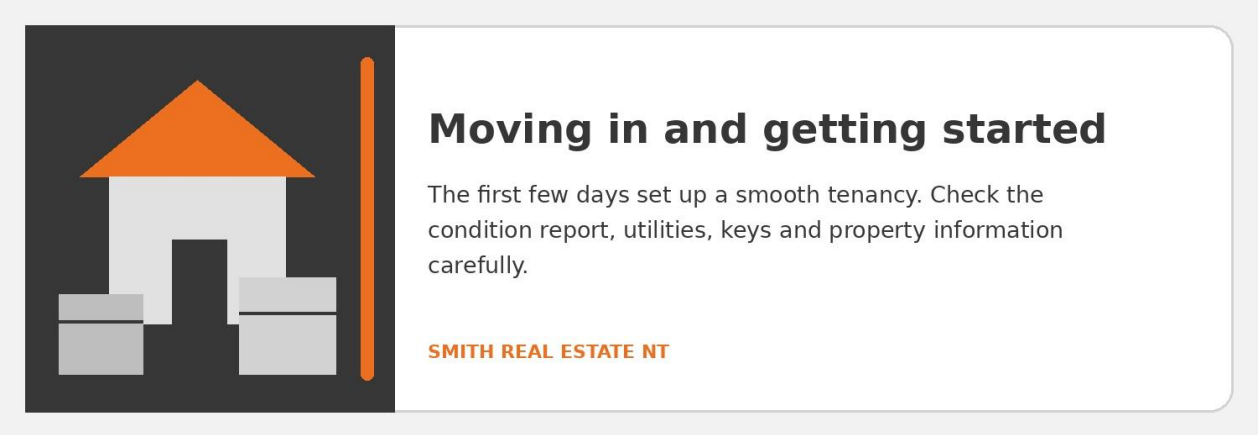
A periodic agreement has no fixed end date and continues until lawfully ended by the landlord or tenant with the required notice.

Property-specific conditions

- Gardens, lawns, pools, spas, bores, septic systems and reticulation.
- Furniture and supplied equipment.
- Water usage, gas and separately metered services.
- Parking and body corporate rules.
- Pets, smoking and particular appliances.

Do not assume
Moving out, returning keys or sending an informal email does not necessarily end the tenancy. Correct notice must be given and rent remains payable until the tenancy lawfully ends.

3. Before You Move In



Complete the administrative and practical steps below before collecting keys.

☐ Read and sign the tenancy agreement and all attachments.

☐ Pay the bond and required rent as soon as the lease is signed with the correct reference.

☐ Arrange electricity in your name from the required commencement date.

☐ Arrange gas where applicable and confirm whether bottles are full or need ordering.

☐ Arrange internet, telephone and any other tenant-paid services.

☐ Arrange contents insurance for your belongings and personal liability risks.

☐ Confirm the key collection time and who is authorised to collect keys.

☐ Review property-specific instructions, bin day, parking, pool, garden and body corporate rules.

☐ Plan your move to avoid damage to walls, doors, lifts and common areas.

Utilities and local services

Tenants are generally responsible for arranging electricity, gas, internet and other services stated in the agreement. Do not interfere with meters, safety equipment, irrigation systems or supplied services.

Bin collection and waste-facility arrangements depend on the local council. Darwin residents may need an access tag for Shoal Bay Waste Management Facility. Palmerston residents should check the City of Palmerston requirements.

Contents insurance

The landlord’s building insurance does not insure your furniture, electronics, clothing or other belongings. Consider contents insurance and cover for accidental damage or liability. The agency cannot arrange this for you.

4. Moving In and the Condition Report

The ingoing condition report is one of the most important documents in the tenancy.

Complete it carefully

Inspect every room, fitting, appliance and outdoor area. Do not assume marks, stains, damage, missing items or faults are already recorded. Record changes clearly and return the report within the timeframe stated in the report or applicable law.

☐ Compare the property with every entry in the condition report.

☐ Photograph or video each room and all existing damage.

☐ Test lights, fans, air conditioners, taps, toilets, appliances, remotes and locks.

☐ Check cupboards, wardrobes, screens, window tracks, gardens, pools and sheds.

☐ Record missing keys, remotes, manuals or supplied items.

☐ Return the signed report on time and keep a complete copy.

☐ Report repair items separately; the condition report is not a maintenance request.

Previous occupant's mail

Do not open mail addressed to another person. Write "Return to Sender – Not at This Address" on the envelope and place it in an Australia Post mailbox. Do not discard official-looking mail unless it has been properly returned.

5. Rent, Bond and Payments

Rent must remain paid in advance throughout the tenancy.

How rent in advance works

The rent paid before moving in covers the first rental period, not the final weeks of the tenancy. For example, if rent is $700 per week and you pay $1,400 before a tenancy beginning 1 January, that payment covers 1–14 January. The next payment must reach the nominated account before 15 January.

Common misunderstanding
The first two weeks paid before moving in cannot be used again at the end. Continue paying rent until the tenancy lawfully ends.

Payment requirements

- Pay on or before the due date and allow time for bank processing.
- Use the unique tenant payment reference every time.
- Do not withhold rent because of maintenance or a disagreement.
- Contact us early if financial difficulty may affect a payment.
- Check your tenant portal or statement and report allocation errors promptly.

Bond

The security deposit is held as security against tenancy obligations. It is not the final four weeks' rent. At the end, legitimate claims may include unpaid rent, tenant-caused damage, cleaning, missing keys or other amounts properly owed. Fair wear and tear is different from damage caused by misuse, carelessness, neglect or a failure to report a problem.

Tenant portal

PropertyTree access may be provided by email. It can give access to tenancy details, statements, receipts, invoices and communication. Contact us if an invitation has not arrived or a replacement link is needed.

6. Communication and Professional Conduct

Clear, respectful communication helps issues progress faster and protects everyone involved.

Best contact method

Email is normally best for non-urgent maintenance, tenancy questions, approvals and requests. Staff are often away from their desks. Email allows the relevant file and history to be reviewed and provides an accurate written record.

We aim to respond to non-urgent enquiries within two business days. If there is no response, a polite follow-up is welcomed.

After-hours contact

After-hours telephone contact is reserved for genuine emergencies that cannot safely wait until the next business day. General maintenance, rent questions, inspection changes, documents, routine pest concerns and update requests are not after-hours emergencies.

Respectful and appropriate behaviour

Agency staff and contractors are entitled to feel safe and comfortable at work. Abusive, aggressive, threatening, discriminatory, sexually suggestive or otherwise inappropriate behaviour is not accepted, even if it occurs once.

- Swearing at, threatening or intimidating staff or contractors.
- Flirting with, propositioning or “hitting on” staff.
- Personal, sexual or suggestive comments or intrusive questions.
- Unsolicited private messages or friend/follow requests to personal social media accounts.
- Publishing personal information, images or private communications online.
- Contacting staff through private accounts instead of agency channels.

Possible safety measures
Inappropriate conduct may result in communication being restricted to writing, two staff members attending, contractors declining to attend alone, or other reasonable measures to protect staff.

Complaints

Raise concerns directly and in writing. Identify what occurred, when, who was involved, what action has already been taken and the outcome sought. Keep the complaint factual and respectful.

7. Everyday Tenant Responsibilities

Tenants must take reasonable care of the property and comply with the agreement throughout the tenancy.

- Pay rent in full and on time.
- Keep the property reasonably clean and prevent dirt, grease, rubbish, mould and pet waste building up.
- Report repairs, damage, leaks, faults and safety concerns promptly.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent avoidable damage.
- Allow lawful access after the required notice.
- Keep keys, remotes and security devices safe.
- Comply with parking, body corporate, pool and property-specific rules.
- Ensure occupants and visitors do not cause damage, nuisance or illegal activity.

Visitors and occupants

Visitors are permitted, but another person must not effectively move in without approval. Signs of an additional occupant include regularly sleeping at the property, keeping most belongings there, receiving mail there or treating the property as their main home.

Noise and neighbours

Normal household noise is expected, but repeated or unreasonable noise, barking, parties, yelling, smoke, odours, blocked access or misuse of common property may lead to complaints and formal action.

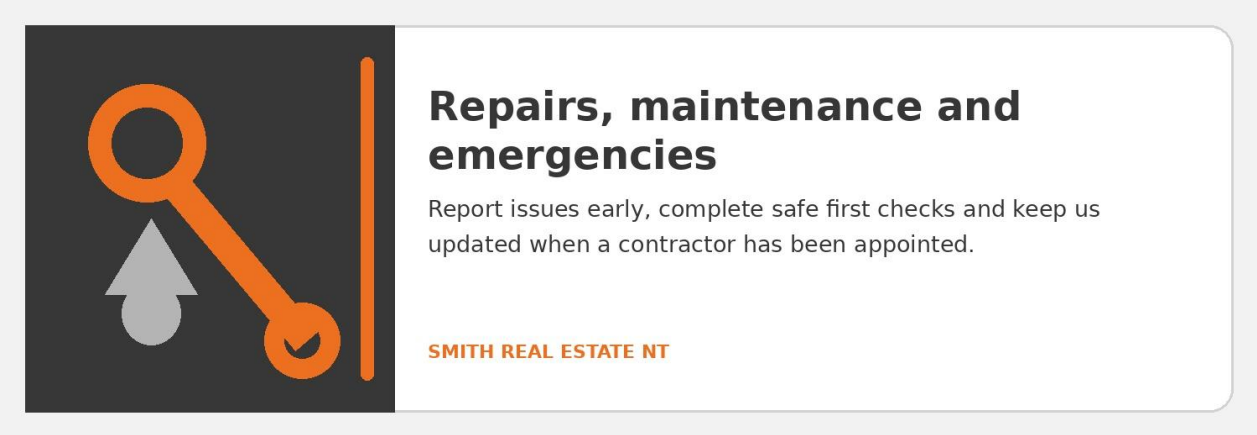
Parking and vehicles

- Use only allocated or approved areas.
- Do not park on lawns, landscaped areas, footpaths or accessways.
- Do not use visitor bays as permanent parking.
- Do not store unregistered or abandoned vehicles without approval.
- Avoid major repairs, oil leaks and activities that create noise, mess or damage.

Residential use

Do not conduct illegal activity. Contact us before operating a business if it may involve customers, traffic, signage, noise, alterations, insurance or planning issues.

8. Reporting Maintenance and Repairs



Do not wait for a routine inspection. Report problems as soon as you notice them.

What to include

- Property address and exact location of the problem.
- Clear description and when it began.
- Photographs or video where safe.
- Whether it is worsening or causing further damage.
- Troubleshooting already completed.
- Any safety risk and your availability/access details.

Urgent and emergency repairs

Call immediately and follow up by email. Examples may include a serious roof or water leak, gas leak, dangerous electrical fault, serious storm/fire/impact damage, a property that cannot be secured, or a blocked toilet where no other toilet is available.

General repairs

Email non-urgent repairs. Once a contractor is instructed, they should normally contact you within two business days to arrange attendance. Follow up with the contractor or tell us if no contact occurs.

Access and contractor appointments

Respond promptly to calls, texts or emails from contractors. Make reasonable arrangements during normal operating hours. If you cannot attend, agency-held keys may be used with appropriate authority and notice.

Do not ask a contractor to complete additional work or change the approved scope without written agency approval.

Avoidable call-out costs

Tenants may be responsible for a reasonably avoidable call-out or reattendance cost where access is not provided, a pet is not secured, the fault is caused by misuse, incorrect information is supplied, attendance is cancelled after travel, or reasonable troubleshooting was not completed.

9. Common Problems: What to Check First

Complete only simple and safe checks. Never attempt electrical, gas, internal plumbing, roof or height-related repairs.

Issue	Safe first checks
No power	Check neighbours, switchboard and whether one appliance caused a trip. Unplug appliances before one reset. Do not repeatedly reset a circuit. Call urgently for sparks, smoke, burning smells or exposed wiring.
Light or power point not working	Test another appliance, check the circuit and replace an accessible globe. Report heat, damage, arcing or burning smells immediately.
Air conditioner not cooling	Set to Cool at about 22–24°C, close doors/windows, clean accessible filters, check remote batteries and restart after five minutes. Report leaking, unusual noise or a unit that still fails.
Ceiling fan	Check wall/remote controls and batteries. Stop using a fan that wobbles excessively, smells burnt, becomes hot or makes severe noise.
No hot water	Check whether all taps are affected, the switchboard and gas bottle/valve where applicable. Allow reheating time. Do not dismantle the system.
Blocked sink or shower	Remove visible debris, clean strainers and try a plunger. Do not use strong drain chemicals without approval.
Blocked toilet	Stop flushing if water rises. Use a toilet plunger carefully. Only toilet paper and human waste should be flushed.
Water leak or burst pipe	Turn off the nearest valve or main supply if safe, move belongings, contain water and call immediately. Keep away from electrical fittings.
Dishwasher	Clean filters, drain area and spray arms; check the hose and loading. Run a suitable cleaning cycle.
Oven or cooktop	Check the wall switch, circuit, clock, child lock and timer. For gas, check the bottle. Treat any gas smell as urgent.
Smoke alarm beeping	Identify a low-battery chirp versus an alarm, replace a removable battery if required and gently clean dust. Never cover or disable an alarm.
Garage door	Check power, remote battery, wall button, sensor obstruction and manual lock. Do not adjust springs, cables or force the door.
Door or window sticking	Clean tracks, try the spare key and gently align the door. Do not force keys or lift doors from tracks.

Issue	Safe first checks
Internet	Restart equipment, check cables and provider outages, then contact the provider. Tenant-owned modems and service faults are generally the tenant's responsibility.
Reticulation	Check power, Auto mode and watering schedule. Photograph leaks or broken heads. Do not dig up components.
Pool equipment	Check power and water level. Do not change valves or timers unless instructed. Turn off only if running dry, overheating, leaking heavily or making severe mechanical noise, then report it.

10. Routine Inspections and Access

Routine inspections are visual checks of the property and visible maintenance concerns. They are not a substitute for tenant maintenance reports.

What we generally inspect

- General cleanliness and care.
- Damage, neglect, leaks, mould and moisture.
- Gardens, outdoor areas, pools and safety barriers.
- Smoke alarms and visible safety concerns.
- Approved occupants, pets and compliance with previous requests.

Scheduling and change requests

Inspections are arranged during normal business hours around staff availability, routes and other appointments. We consider reasonable change requests where possible, especially illness, a contagious condition, medical emergency, family emergency or another unavoidable circumstance.

Night-shift workers may reasonably prefer daytime sleep. We will consider another business-hours time where the schedule allows, but night shift does not automatically require an evening, weekend or public-holiday inspection. Tenants generally do not need to be present if lawful access is available.

Before an inspection

- Ensure safe access, working locks and clear pathways.
- Secure pets.
- Email maintenance issues in advance.
- Attend to basic cleaning, lawns, rubbish, mould and pet waste.
- Disclose illness, safety concerns or special access issues promptly.

Other lawful access

Entry may be required for repairs, compliance work, valuations, sale or reletting inspections, photography or emergencies. The reason for entry determines the notice requirement. Once lawful notice has been provided, tenants must provide reasonable access.

Security cameras and recording

Advise us if internal cameras operate in areas staff or contractors need to access. Cameras must not be used to harass or intimidate, and recording must comply with privacy and surveillance laws. Never place cameras in bathrooms or other areas where a person reasonably expects privacy.

11. Keys, Locks, Security and Lockouts

Keep every key, remote, fob and access card secure for the full tenancy.

- Lock doors and windows when the property is unattended.
- Do not give keys to unauthorised people.
- Report lost or stolen items immediately.
- Do not duplicate secure keys or remotes without permission.
- Do not change, add or remove locks without written approval except where law permits.
- Return every supplied item when the tenancy ends.

Borrowing agency keys

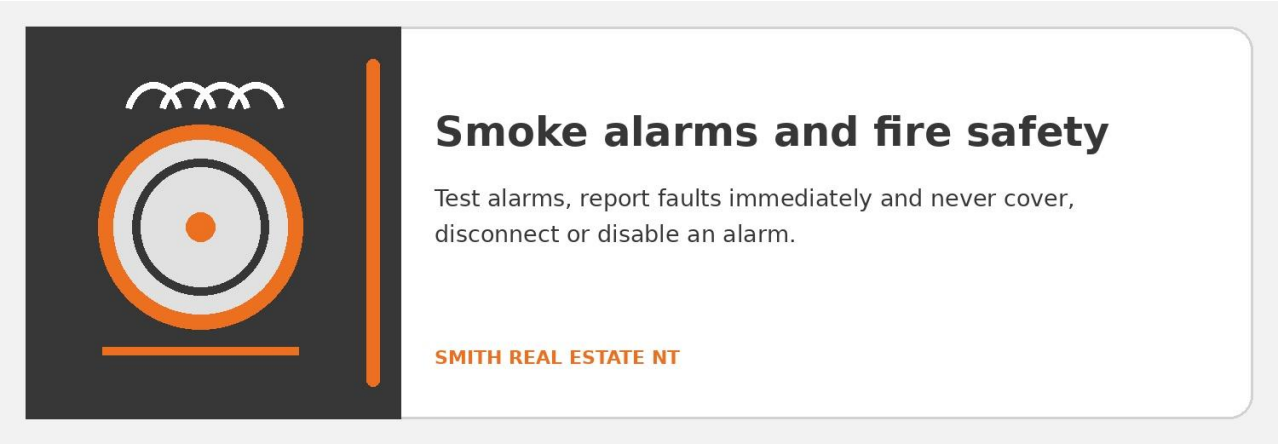
Where an agency key is available, identification and signing the key register may be required. Borrowed keys must be returned promptly. Availability is not guaranteed.

After-hours lockouts

The agency may not be available after hours. You may need to arrange and pay for a locksmith. Any changed lock must be approved and the agency provided with required replacement keys.

12. Smoke Alarms and Fire Safety

Working smoke alarms are essential. Never remove, cover, disconnect, paint over or interfere with an alarm, even where it has activated unnecessarily.



Tenant responsibilities

- Test each smoke alarm at least once every 12 months. As an additional agency safety reminder, we recommend testing alarms on 1 May and 1 December each year.
- Advise the agency immediately if an alarm does not sound when tested, is damaged or loose, repeatedly chirps, appears expired, or has been affected by water, dust or building work.
- Keep accessible alarms reasonably clean in accordance with the manufacturer instructions and any smoke alarm information supplied at the start of the tenancy.
- Replace a removable standby battery only where the alarm is designed for that battery to be replaced by the occupant and in accordance with the manufacturer instructions or agency guidance. Do not open a sealed 10-year battery unit.
- Cooperate with reasonable access for smoke alarm testing, maintenance, replacement and compliance work.

> **Never disable a smoke alarm because it is chirping or has caused a false alarm. Report the problem so it can be investigated.**

Testing and false alarms

- Use the alarm test button. Do not test an alarm with a flame, burning material, smoke or an aerosol.
- If cooking smoke or steam activates an alarm, remove the cause, use the rangehood or exhaust fan and ventilate the area where safe. Do not remove the alarm or its battery.
- Dust, insects, steam and aerosols may contribute to false alarms. Report repeated or unexplained activation so the alarm and its location can be checked.

If an alarm sounds

Treat the alarm as genuine unless the cause is immediately obvious and safe. Alert everyone, leave the property and call 000 if there is smoke, fire or any doubt. Do not re-enter until emergency services advise it is safe.

NT tenants must test smoke alarms at least annually and report faults. See the NT Government smoke alarm guidance listed in Useful Contacts.

13. Alterations, Fixtures, Pets, Smoking and Vaping

Obtain written approval before changing the property or introducing anything requiring consent.

Alterations and installations

- Painting, drilling, shelves, hooks, brackets and television mounts.
- Changing curtains, blinds, locks or doors.
- Security cameras, satellite dishes or fixed equipment.
- Air conditioners, electrical, plumbing or building work.
- Garden changes, pools, spas, trampolines or large structures.
- Removing supplied fixtures, appliances or furniture.

Adhesive products

Temporary hooks and mounting strips can still remove paint or plaster. Obtain approval and accept responsibility for damage caused.

Pets

Contact us and complete the required NT pet process before bringing a pet to the property, including a temporary pet. Approval or non-objection for one pet does not automatically apply to another or replacement pet.

Tenants remain responsible for waste, nuisance, fleas, odours, damage and any required cleaning or pest treatment.

Pets during appointments

Secure pets before every inspection, maintenance attendance, valuation or photography appointment. A friendly pet may still be protective, frightened or difficult for a stranger to manage.

Smoking and vaping

Comply with the agreement and body corporate rules. Smoke and vapour can cause odour, residue and staining to walls, ceilings, curtains and air conditioners. Dispose of butts and vaping waste safely and never leave them in gardens, balconies or common areas.

14. Cleaning and Caring for the Property

Regular cleaning prevents avoidable deterioration and makes routine and outgoing inspections easier.

Area	Ongoing care
Walls, doors and switches	Remove marks and fingerprints before they build up. Avoid abrasive products that damage paint.
Dust and cobwebs	Clean ceilings, corners, vents, light fittings and fan blades regularly.
Windows and screens	Clean glass, sills, tracks, frames and flyscreens. Report torn screens.
Bathrooms and laundry	Clean soap scum, grout, silicone, toilets, exhaust covers and drains. Dry wet towels and bathmats.
Kitchen	Clean benches, cupboards, oven, cooktop, rangehood and filters. Remove grease and food residue.
Floors and carpets	Sweep, mop and vacuum regularly. Treat spills promptly and avoid soaking surfaces.
Air conditioners	Clean accessible filters and intake vents regularly. Report leaks, poor cooling and unusual noise.
Curtains and blinds	Dust regularly and check care labels before washing. Some require dry cleaning.

Pot plants and aquariums

Use waterproof trays under plants and protect balconies, floors and carpets from moisture and rust. Aquariums are extremely heavy and stands can stain or permanently indent flooring. Obtain approval where required and use suitable protection.

Cracking and movement

Report new cracks or worsening existing cracks in walls, ceilings, tiles or external areas. Provide photographs and approximate length/width where possible.

15. Mould Prevention and Management in Darwin



Darwin's warm, humid climate means mould prevention requires active management throughout the year, not only during the wet season.

The four controls

- **Moisture:** Dry spills, leaks, condensation and wet belongings promptly.
- **Humidity:** Use suitable air conditioning or dehumidification when outdoor air is humid.
- **Temperature:** Avoid creating very cold surfaces that attract condensation.
- **Air movement:** Use ceiling fans and leave space around furniture and inside wardrobes.

Air conditioning and windows

We recommend air-conditioning settings of about 23–25°C and not below 22°C. Keep windows and external doors closed while air conditioning operates. Very cold walls, floors, ceilings, furniture and wardrobes can attract condensation when warm, humid air enters the property.

Opening windows may help only when the outdoor air is genuinely drier than the air inside and the air conditioner is switched off. A sea breeze may feel cooler and fresher while still carrying substantial moisture.

Why an open window is not enough in Darwin

- Opening a window exchanges indoor air with outdoor air; it does not automatically dry the property. During the build-up, wet season, after rain and on humid coastal days, the incoming air may contain more moisture than the air already inside.
- A breeze is moving air, not necessarily dry air. The room may feel more comfortable while the humidity remains high enough for condensation and mould to develop.
- If humid outdoor air contacts surfaces cooled by your air conditioner, an adjoining apartment or an air-conditioned common hallway, moisture can condense on the surface. This may occur without obvious water droplets.
- Do not leave windows or balcony doors open while air conditioning is operating. This continually introduces humid air while the air conditioner creates colder surfaces.
- Use opening windows as one tool only when conditions are genuinely dry. Mould prevention also requires exhaust fans, ceiling fans, suitable air conditioning or dehumidification, prompt drying and regular checks of hidden areas.

Common mould issues in units and apartment buildings

Units require particular care because walls, floors and ceilings may adjoin other apartments, common corridors, lift foyers or rooms that are air-conditioned for long periods. Your own air conditioner does not need to be operating for a shared surface to become cold.

- Mould or condensation behind beds, lounges, televisions, cabinets and bedheads placed against shared or external walls.

- Mould inside wardrobes, linen cupboards and storage areas where doors remain closed or belongings are packed tightly.
- Condensation around balcony doors, windows, tracks, skirting boards and corners.
- Mould on walls, floors or ceilings adjoining strongly air-conditioned neighbouring units or common areas.
- Moisture from bathrooms, laundries, indoor clothes drying and portable cooking appliances spreading into the rest of the unit.
- Units being left closed and unattended without air movement or humidity control.
- Water entering from balconies, windows, roofs, plumbing or common-property areas.

In units and apartments, leave a gap between furniture and walls, check shared walls and corners regularly, open wardrobes, wipe condensation promptly and report recurring dampness or mould. Where several units or common areas are affected, tell the agency because a building or common-property issue may require investigation.

Daily prevention

- Use ceiling fans where safe and practical.
- Run bathroom exhaust fans during and for at least 20 minutes after showering.
- Use the rangehood while cooking, including with portable appliances.
- Dry washing outside where possible and do not put damp items in cupboards.
- Leave a gap between furniture and walls.
- Open and inspect wardrobes regularly.
- Wipe condensation immediately.
- Check behind beds, lounges and cabinets, especially in apartments.

Portable cooking appliances

Air fryers, rice cookers, multi-cookers, electric frypans, benchtop ovens and similar appliances must be used in a properly ventilated kitchen, preferably under or close to an operating rangehood. Follow manufacturer clearances and do not use cooking appliances in bedrooms, wardrobes or enclosed areas.

When mould appears

Photograph it, identify moisture or condensation, clean only a very small amount of ordinary surface mould where safe, dry the area fully, improve airflow and monitor. Do not dry-brush, sand, paint over, aggressively spray, mix chemicals or use an ordinary vacuum on mould.

Report promptly when

- Mould returns, spreads or affects more than one area.
- There is a musty smell, damp carpet, bubbling paint or water staining.
- A leak, faulty exhaust fan or air conditioner may be involved.
- Porous materials or concealed areas are affected.
- The area cannot be safely or effectively cleaned.

16. Pests, Vermin and Wildlife

Ants, cockroaches, spiders, rodents, frogs, geckos, possums and snakes are commonly encountered in the Top End.

Prevention

- Keep food and pet food sealed.
- Clean crumbs, grease and spills promptly.
- Empty bins and rinse recycling.
- Avoid cardboard, rubbish and clutter build-up.
- Keep sinks and wet areas reasonably dry.
- Close doors and screens and report damaged entry points.
- Treat ordinary insect activity early with suitable household products.

Rats and mice

Act promptly on droppings, scratching, gnawing or odours. Use safe traps or enclosed bait stations, keep poison away from children, pets and wildlife, and report repeated indoor activity or suspected building access.

Native wildlife

Do not poison, injure, trap or relocate native animals. An occasional frog, gecko or possum entering through an open door is generally part of Top End living. Notify us if an animal repeatedly enters through a damaged building component or appears to live in a roof, wall or ceiling.

Snakes

- Do not approach, touch, chase, corner or attempt to kill a snake.
- Keep children and pets away and allow an escape route.
- Contact a professional snake catcher.
- If it disappears, do not search through cupboards, boxes or gardens.
- For a bite, call 000, keep the person still and follow emergency instructions.

17. Gardens, Lawns, Pools and Outdoor Areas

Your signed agreement determines which outdoor tasks are your responsibility.

Gardens and lawns

- Mow, edge, weed, water and remove fallen leaves or palm fronds where required.
- Do not remove established plants, prune major trees or alter landscaping without approval.
- Report reticulation faults, large branches, erosion, drainage problems and dangerous trees.
- Keep yards free of rubbish, pet waste and stored items that attract pests.

Pools and spas

Where the lease makes routine pool care or chemicals the tenant's responsibility, follow the supplied instructions and professional handover. Keep water at the correct level, remove debris, maintain chemicals and store equipment out of direct sun.

- Do not alter timers, valves or equipment without instruction.
- Report leaks, cloudy/green water, failed pumps and unusual noise promptly.
- Never prop open pool gates or place climbable objects near barriers.
- Report any fence, gate or latch fault immediately.
- Keep children and visitors supervised and comply with all pool-safety requirements.

Rural and special systems

Properties with septic systems, bores, tanks, pumps or large reticulation systems may have special instructions. Do not flush wipes, sanitary products, oils or chemicals into septic systems. Report alarms, overflows, unusual odours, pump faults or loss of water promptly.

18. Wet Season, Cyclones and Emergency Preparation



Top End weather can cause rapid flooding, wind damage, power outages and access problems.

☐ Know your local cyclone plan and monitor official SecureNT and Bureau of Meteorology warnings.

☐ Keep balconies, yards and patios free of loose items before severe weather.

☐ Do not place rubbish or garden waste where it can block drains.

☐ Know the location of the water main and switchboard.

☐ Keep torches, batteries, water, medicines and essential supplies.

☐ Charge devices and make plans for pets.

☐ Report roof leaks, drainage problems and dangerous branches before severe weather.

☐ After a storm, stay away from fallen powerlines, damaged structures and floodwater.

☐ Photograph damage when safe and report urgent issues by phone, followed by email.

Immediate danger
Call 000 or the relevant emergency authority first. Do not risk personal safety to protect belongings or inspect damage.

19. Going Away or Leaving the Property Vacant

A Darwin property should not be left closed, humid and unchecked for an extended period.

☐ Notify us in writing if required by the agreement or if the absence is extended.

☐ Clean and dry kitchens, bathrooms and laundries.

☐ Remove wet washing, towels, food waste and rubbish.

☐ Leave suitable internal and wardrobe doors open.

☐ Move furniture slightly away from external or shared walls.

☐ Leave ceiling fans on a safe low setting where practical.

☐ Use air-conditioning timers where available at 22°C or above.

☐ Keep windows and external doors closed while air conditioning operates.

☐ Arrange a trusted person to check the property regularly.

☐ Ensure gardens, pools and pets continue to be cared for.

☐ Ask the checker to report leaks, condensation, mould, pest activity, storm damage and air-conditioning faults promptly.

Agency role

The property manager is not a house-sitter or caretaker and is not responsible for operating fans, monitoring humidity, checking personal belongings or regularly inspecting the property while you are away.

20. Occupant Changes, Renewals and Breaking a Lease

Contact us before making arrangements that affect who lives at the property or when the tenancy will end.

Changing tenants or occupants

All changes require the appropriate application, approval and documentation. A departing tenant is not automatically released because they move out. Do not sublet, transfer, rent a room or advertise short-stay accommodation without required written consent. Please note there is an administrative fee for the work involved in vetting and adding or removing tenants.

Lease renewals

Renewals are usually considered before the fixed term expires. Respond promptly to offers and tell us early if you do not intend to renew. Do not assume a renewal is guaranteed until documents are signed.

Breaking a fixed-term lease

A fixed term is a commitment for the full period. Leaving early may result in rent and reasonable reletting losses until a replacement tenancy begins, subject to the agreement and law. The landlord and agent must take reasonable steps to reduce loss, but a new tenant may not be found immediately.

Hardship and disputes

Serious personal circumstances do not automatically cancel a tenancy. Seek advice early about negotiated termination or an application to NTCAT where appropriate. Keep paying rent unless a lawful agreement or order says otherwise.

21. When the Owner Sells the Property

A sale does not automatically cancel the tenancy.

Fixed-term tenancy

A purchaser generally buys subject to the existing fixed-term tenancy. The owner cannot simply require you to leave early because a buyer prefers vacant possession. The tenancy ends early only by written agreement, another lawful basis or an order.

Inspections and privacy

The selling agent may arrange lawful access with the required notice, (please note minimum 24 hours notice required). You are expected to cooperate with reasonable inspections, but you are not required to present the home as a display property or leave during every inspection.

Photography

Store personal documents, family photographs, medication, valuables, mail and computer screens before photography. Raise concerns if advertising images reveal private information or security-sensitive belongings.

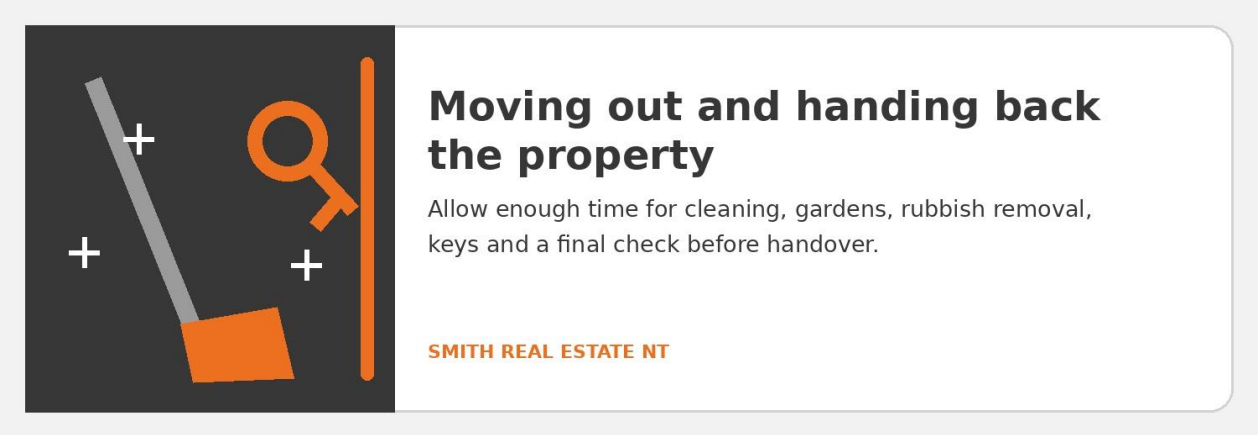
After settlement

Continue paying rent as usual until clear written instructions are provided. The new owner becomes landlord and the agreement generally continues on the same terms. Your bond does not disappear and you should not pay a second bond merely because ownership changed.

Negotiating an early move

You may agree to leave early but do not rely on verbal promises. A written agreement should address the vacate date, rent end date, waiver of break costs, moving contribution or compensation, final inspection and bond handling.

22. Giving Notice and Preparing to Vacate



Contact us well before your intended moving date so the correct notice and process can be confirmed.

Before the tenancy ends

- Give the required written notice using the correct form or process.
- Continue paying rent until the lawful end date.
- Arrange service disconnections or final readings.
- Remove all belongings, food and rubbish.
- Repair or report tenant-caused damage.
- Complete garden, pool and outdoor work required by the agreement.
- Provide a forwarding address.
- Return every key, remote, fob and access card by the agreed deadline.

Cleaning standard

The outgoing inspection compares the property with the ingoing condition report, allowing for fair wear and tear. It is not intended to give tenants a hard time. Owners and incoming tenants reasonably expect a clean, properly presented property without another tenant's rubbish, food, dirt, palm fronds or unfinished work.

In many cases the property was professionally cleaned before move-in and is expected to be returned to a similar standard. A professional cleaner is optional unless the agreement or a specific requirement applies, but the tenant remains responsible for the result.

Choosing a cleaner

The agency may be able to provide details of the cleaner used before your tenancy. Be cautious with very cheap bond cleans: poor work may require a second clean and cost more. Inspect the cleaner's work before returning keys.

23. Comprehensive Vacating Checklist

Allow enough time to clean, move, garden and inspect the property before returning keys.

Inside the property

☐ Remove all belongings, rubbish and food.
☐ Clean walls, doors, handles, switches, power points and skirting boards.
☐ Remove cobwebs and clean light fittings, fans and vents.
☐ Clean windows, sills, tracks, screens and glass doors.
☐ Clean wardrobes, cupboards and drawers inside and out.
☐ Clean oven, cooktop, trays, racks, knobs, rangehood and filters.
☐ Clean sinks, taps, benches, splashbacks and appliances.
☐ Clean showers, screens, baths, toilets, grout, mirrors and exhaust fans.
☐ Clean laundry trough, cabinets, floors and dryer area.
☐ Clean air-conditioner filters and accessible vents.
☐ Vacuum carpets and clean stains; arrange appropriate carpet treatment where needed.
☐ Sweep and mop all hard floors.
☐ Remove mould and condensation-related residue and report any recurring issue.
☐ Check supplied furniture, manuals, remotes and appliances.
☐ Replace tenant-responsible globes or batteries where appropriate.

Outside the property

☐ Mow, edge, weed and water gardens where responsible.
☐ Collect leaves, branches and fallen palm fronds.
☐ Remove pet waste and treat pet-related fleas where required.
☐ Clean balconies, patios, garages, carports, sheds and paths.
☐ Remove oil stains, rubbish and stored items.
☐ Clean pool and spa areas and return equipment.
☐ Check gates, locks and fences and report damage.
☐ Remove all tenant-installed items and make good approved alterations as required.

Before returning keys

☐ Compare the property with the ingoing condition report and photographs.
☐ Photograph every room and outdoor area after cleaning.
☐ Check cupboards, oven, fridge cavity, dishwasher, sheds and bins for forgotten items.
☐ Return all keys and access devices together.
☐ Provide forwarding address and final account details.
☐ Do not assume the tenancy ends until keys are returned and the agreed process is complete.

24. Outgoing Inspection, Bond and Finalisation

The outgoing inspection is completed after possession is returned and is compared with the ingoing condition evidence. Please keep electricity on at the property for 3 business days after your move out date to allow sufficient time for the outgoing inspection to be completed.

Fair wear and tear versus damage

Fair wear and tear is normal deterioration from ordinary use and ageing. Damage includes deterioration caused by misuse, carelessness, neglect, unauthorised changes or failing to report an issue that then became worse.

Common bond issues

- Unpaid rent or other properly payable charges.
- Cleaning not completed to the required standard.
- Rubbish or belongings left behind.
- Garden, pool or pet obligations not completed.
- Missing keys, remotes or supplied items.
- Tenant-caused damage or unauthorised alterations.
- Avoidable contractor or removal costs.

What happens next

We will communicate identified issues and reasonable next steps. Where work remains, access for a tenant or cleaner may depend on timing, incoming tenancy commitments and the circumstances. Do not assume you can return after keys are handed back without approval.

25. Quick Reference Checklists

Use these pages when you need a fast reminder.

Move-in checklist

☐ Lease and attachments signed.
☐ Bond and rent paid with correct reference.
☐ Electricity, gas and internet arranged.
☐ Contents insurance considered.
☐ Condition report checked, photographed and returned.
☐ All faults separately reported.
☐ Keys, remotes and manuals checked.
☐ Smoke alarms tested using the test button and any fault reported.
☐ Bin day, parking and property-specific instructions confirmed.

Routine inspection checklist

☐ Access and pathways safe.
☐ Pets secured.
☐ Property reasonably clean and tidy.
☐ Kitchen, bathrooms and floors maintained.
☐ Mould, condensation and pest activity addressed.
☐ Lawns, gardens, pool and outdoor areas attended to.
☐ Damage and maintenance emailed before the inspection.
☐ Any smoke alarm fault or repeated chirping reported.
☐ Any illness or access problem disclosed early.

Going-away checklist

☐ Agency notified where required.
☐ Property cleaned and dried.
☐ Food waste and rubbish removed.
☐ Fans/air-conditioning timers safely arranged.
☐ Windows secured.
☐ Gardens, pool and pets covered.
☐ Trusted person arranged to check regularly.
☐ Emergency and agency contact details provided to checker.

Emergency report checklist

☐ Call 000 first for immediate danger and take safe steps to limit damage.
☐ Telephone the agency immediately with the address, exact issue and safety risk.
☐ Follow up by email and attach photographs or video where safe.
☐ Remain available for instructions and access.

26. Frequently Asked Questions

Can I stop paying rent because a repair is outstanding?

No. Continue paying rent. Report and pursue the repair separately.

Do I need to be home for an inspection?

Usually no, provided lawful access is available and pets are secured.

Can an inspection be after hours because I work?

Routine inspections are generally during business hours. Reasonable business-hours alternatives may be considered, but evenings and weekends are not normally required.

Can my partner or friend move in?

Contact us first. An application and written approval may be required.

Can I paint or install shelves?

Not without written approval.

Is the bond my last month's rent?

No. Rent must be paid until the tenancy ends.

Who deals with a possum, frog or gecko?

Ordinary wildlife encounters are part of Top End living. Report repeated entry caused by a building defect or wildlife living in a roof or wall.

What if a contractor does not contact me?

Follow up with the contractor or notify us after two business days.

What should I do if a smoke alarm chirps or will not test?

Do not remove or disable it. Report the fault immediately and follow any safe battery-replacement instructions that apply to that alarm.

Can I leave windows open while the air conditioner runs?

No. Humid outside air meeting cold surfaces increases condensation and mould risk.

Does the lease end if the owner sells?

No. A sale does not automatically cancel the tenancy.

Can I use social media to contact staff?

Use approved agency contact methods, not personal accounts.

Can I return to clean after handing back keys?

Only if the agency expressly agrees. Returning keys usually means possession has been handed back.

27. Useful Contacts and Further Information

Keep emergency and tenancy-support details accessible.

Organisation	Contact	Purpose
Emergency services	000	Fire, police or ambulance emergencies.
Jacana Energy	1800 522 262	Electricity accounts and connections.
SecureNT	secure.nt.gov.au	Cyclone and emergency information.
Bureau of Meteorology	bom.gov.au	Weather warnings and forecasts.
NT Consumer Affairs	consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au	General tenancy information and forms.
NTCAT	ntcat.nt.gov.au	Tenancy dispute applications and information.
City of Darwin	darwin.nt.gov.au	Bins and waste facilities.
City of Palmerston	palmerston.nt.gov.au	Bins and waste facilities.
NT Government – Smoke alarms	nt.gov.au	Current smoke alarm requirements and safety guidance.

Legal disclaimer

This handbook is general practical guidance prepared for Smith Real Estate NT tenants. It is not legal advice and does not reproduce every provision of the Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT), regulations or other law. Legal requirements and government forms may change. Refer to your signed agreement and current official information, and seek independent advice where needed.

Document control

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Review	Review at least annually and whenever legislation, agency procedures or contact details change

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Thank you for renting with Smith Real Estate NT

We hope you enjoy your home. Clear communication, prompt reporting and reasonable care help create a successful tenancy for everyone.