



# RENTING TO PET OWNERS

## A Guide for Landlords

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This brochure contains suggestions for landlords who want to allow tenants with pets into their rental units.

It also contains forms landlords may want to use when deciding to accept tenants with pets.

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## What are some of the benefits of renting to pet owners?

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Renting to people with pets can increase your number of potential tenants. It can also improve your occupancy rates because many responsible pet owners make good long-term tenants.

Instead of ruling out all pet owners as tenants, set fair, clear-cut rules for pet owners. Only accept those you feel are suitable for your rental property.

By accepting tenants with pets, you can:

- **increase demand for your property**  
Since not all rental properties on the market accept tenants with pets, yours will be in high demand.
- **attract more long-term tenants**  
It is hard to find rental properties that allow pets, so tenants with pets are likely to stay longer than tenants with no pets. This could reduce turnover in your building(s).
- **attract responsible tenants**  
Responsible pet owners often make the most responsible tenants. Because few rental properties allow pets, these tenants are less likely to do anything to put their tenancy at risk.

If you decide to allow pets in your buildings:

- Know the different types of pets that people own. Every animal has different physical and emotional needs.
- Decide what types of pets you will allow and make this clear to all tenants.
- Have clear rules about where pets will be allowed in the complex. This may help other tenants who may be concerned about pets in tenancies.
- Remember that the tenants/pet owners are responsible for caring for their pets and making sure their needs are met.



## Tips for Accepting Pets

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Once you've decided to accept tenants with pets, follow these tips to help things run smoothly.

- Consider all the possible pets people can have and decide which ones you will allow in your building (ex: cats only, dogs under a certain height). Visit a pet store to see what pets are available.
- Speak to potential tenants about their pets before you decide whether to accept them. Every pet is different so you should make your decision on a case-by-case basis. Use the pet checklist (page 4) to get information about your tenants' pet. If the pet is a dog or cat, you may want to see them first.
- Ask potential tenants to give you written letters from previous landlords or their veterinarians, about their pet, if possible. This will help you find out if the person is a responsible pet owner and if the pet is well behaved. See page 5 for advice on pet references.
- Include a pet policy clause in your standard tenancy agreement that deals with the keeping of pets. See page 5 for a sample pet policy clause.
- Ask potential tenants to provide proof that their pets are licensed or have permits, if applicable.
- Ask for a pet damage deposit if you are concerned about pets damaging the rental unit or building.
- Consider limiting the number of pets allowed in each unit. Contact your city or municipality to see what the local by-laws say.



## Pet Checklist

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Deciding to accept pets doesn't mean that you must accept every pet. You will want to consider each tenant and their pet before entering into a tenancy agreement with them. Before you accept a pet owner as a tenant, find out more about the person and the pet. Below is a checklist of the kinds of questions you could ask a potential tenant:

### For all pet owners:

- What types of pets do you own and how many?
- How long have you had your pets?
- Can you provide a reference for your pet from a previous landlord or your veterinarian?
- Are your pets regularly vaccinated and treated for fleas and worms (if applicable)?
- Do you have someone to care for your pet in case of an emergency?
- Do you have someone to care for your pet while you are away or on holiday?
- Is your pet spayed or neutered?

### For cat owners:

- Is your cat trained to use a litter box?



### For dog owners:

- How often do you walk/exercise your dog?
- How often will your dog be left at home alone and for how long?
- Do you have a dog sitter or dog walker for when you are not at home?
- Is your dog housebroken?
- How does your dog get along with strangers?
- Is your dog licensed?
- Has your dog attended obedience-training classes?

## Ask for a Pet Reference

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It's a good idea to ask potential tenants for written letters about their pet's behaviour from previous landlords or their veterinarian. Remember, however, that tenants who are new pet owners may not be able to provide references.

References from a previous landlord should answer the following questions:

- How long did the tenant live with pets in the previous rental unit?
- Which pets did the tenant own at that time?
- Does the previous landlord consider the tenant to be a responsible pet owner?
- Were the tenant's pets well behaved?
- Did the tenant's pets cause any damage to the property?
- Did the tenant's pets disturb other tenants or neighbours?

References from a veterinarian should answer the following questions:

- Are the tenant's pets generally well behaved?
- Does the veterinarian believe the tenant is a responsible pet owner?
- Does the tenant provide routine health care for the pets (ex: vaccinations, flea treatments)?

## Add a pet clause to tenancy agreement

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The Residential Tenancies Act lets you decide whether to allow pets in your building. Your tenancy agreement should clearly show whether tenants can or cannot have pets in their units.

If you decide to let a tenant have a pet, think about adding a schedule to your tenancy agreement that says what conditions the tenant must agree to. Tenancy agreements could include the wording shown below:

- The tenant agrees that they will abide by the conditions shown in Schedule 1, which is part of this tenancy agreement.
- On signing this agreement, the tenant will pay a pet damage deposit to cover any damage caused by their pet to the rental unit or the residential complex during the tenancy.

## Collecting a Pet Damage Deposit

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When you allow a tenant to keep a pet in your building, you can:

- collect a pet damage deposit from the tenant
  - For a pet damage deposit collected between June 30, 2010, and July 31, 2014, the maximum amount you can collect is one-half of one month's rent.
  - For any pet damage deposits collected on or after August 1, 2014, the maximum amount you can collect is one month's rent.
  - Existing tenants who have already paid a pet damage deposit can't be asked to pay the increased amount.
  - Regardless of the number of pets the tenant has, you can only collect one pet damage deposit.
  - When you collect a pet damage deposit, you must give the tenant a separate receipt for the money.
- require a new rental unit condition report be completed when an existing tenant gets permission from you to keep a pet in the unit

You cannot ask tenants who require a service animal, such as a guide dog, to pay a pet damage deposit. Tenants who had pets with your permission before this type of deposit was allowed are not required to pay a deposit for those pets.

## Refunding a Pet Damage Deposit

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Once you've collected a pet damage deposit, you:

- can keep a pet damage deposit for the entire length of the tenancy, even if the pet dies or is given away
- have 14 days to refund the pet damage deposit, with interest, once the tenancy ends
- can make a claim against a pet damage deposit for the cost of repairing damage caused by a pet, or for any extra cleaning required because of the pet
- have 28 days to notify the tenant of your claim



## SAMPLE Schedule to Tenancy Agreement

The landlord,

has given permission for the tenant(s)

Name of landlord

Name of tenant(s)

to keep the pet(s) identified below at:

Address of rental unit

Pet details – insert name and breed of pet(s)

Landlords can make up their own reasonable conditions to attach to tenancy agreements when allowing pets. Below are some things that landlords may want to consider as conditions:

- Tenants must provide references for their pets from previous landlords or their veterinarians.
- Tenants must fill in separate information forms for their pets, including contact details for their veterinarians and names of people who will care for their pets in an emergency.
- Tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets.
- Landlords will report the tenant to an animal welfare organization if they believe a pet kept in their rental properties has been neglected or abandoned.
- Tenants must not leave their pets in the rental unit when they are away, unless clear arrangements have been made for their care.
- Dogs should not be left alone in rental units for long periods of time. Tenants must make certain their dogs will not cause damage to the unit if left unsupervised.
- Pets must be vaccinated and regularly treated for fleas and worms (if appropriate). Tenants may have to provide evidence of this from their veterinarians.
- Tenants with pets must pay a pet damage deposit of one month's rent (effective August 1, 2014). This covers the cost of repairing any damage caused by a pet, or any extra cleaning necessary because of a pet.
- Tenants must make sure their pets don't cause trouble or disturb other tenants. This includes excessive noise or damage to other people's property. Dogs must be kept under control, and on a leash in all public places, including common areas and walkways.
- Tenants must not leave animal waste inside their properties, unless the animal is a caged pet or trained to use a litter box. Litter boxes must be cleaned regularly and the waste put in **[landlord to insert specific instructions for disposal]**. Any pet waste must be removed immediately from the common areas of the complex and disposed of safely and hygienically in **[landlord to insert specific instructions for disposal]**.
- Tenants are responsible for keeping the rental unit and the residential complex clean and free from parasites (ex: fleas).
- Tenants must not keep pets they intend to breed or sell.
- Tenants who want another pet after moving in must ask for their landlord's written permission.
- Tenants with pets agree to have the carpets professionally cleaned before they move out, or pay the cost of carpet cleaning at whatever rates apply at that time.

## SAMPLE

### Pet Information Form

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You should consider keeping a record of all pets living in your building(s), along with as much information about them as possible. Ask your tenant to complete this form.

My pet	
Name:	
Species:	
Breed:	
Sex:	
Age:	
Colour:	
Microchip No.	
Is your pet neutered?	
Is your pet currently licensed?	
Date of last vaccinations:	
Date of last flea treatment:	
Date of last worming:	

About my pet

Contact information for pet owner	
Name:	
Daytime phone number:	
Evening phone number:	
Contact information for veterinarian	
Name:	
Address:	
Phone number:	
Out-of-office contact number:	

## Contact information for person who can care for my pet in case of an emergency

Name:	
Daytime phone number:	
Evening phone number:	

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **What should I do about pets that are neglected or abandoned in my building(s)?**

If you are concerned about the welfare of an animal living in your building, contact an animal welfare organization (ex: Winnipeg Humane Society) immediately.

### **What do I do about dangerous pets?**

If you believe your tenant is keeping a dangerous pet in the building, report it to the City of Winnipeg Animal Services Agency at 311 or your local authority.

The City of Winnipeg by-laws identify certain pets that cannot be kept in the city. For more information, visit the Animal Services Agency website at <http://www.winnipeg.ca/cms/animal/default.stm>. If you are outside Winnipeg, check with your city or municipality to see if they have similar rules.

### **What are the rules for service animals, like guide dogs?**

Service animals, like guide dogs, hearing dogs and dogs for disabled people, are permitted by law to live in rental properties. The Manitoba Human Rights Code prevents anyone renting out property from discriminating against a person with a service animal.

You cannot ask a tenant who relies on a service animal for a pet damage deposit.

### **What do I do about loud pet noises?**

If a pet kept in your building is disturbing other tenants, ask the tenant to find the cause of the problem. Dogs bark for many different reasons: because they are excited, scared, bored, frustrated, lonely, or guarding the home.



If you have already spoken to the tenant and they are not doing anything to resolve the noise problem, provide a written warning saying if the problem continues, they may have to get rid of the pet or move out. If things do not improve, you may give the tenant notice to move out (notice of one rental payment period).

### **What should I know about cleaning up after pets?**

Tenants must always clean up after their pets in the rental unit and common areas of the rental complex.

Dog owners are responsible by law for cleaning up after their dogs in public places.

### **What do I do about pet odours?**

Tenants must keep their units odour-free by regularly cleaning their pet's cages.

All cats and dogs must be housebroken. Cats must use litter trays that are regularly emptied. Dogs must be taken outside to relieve themselves, and their owners must pick up after them.

You may want to set up garbage containers that tenants can use to get rid of pet waste, or give tenants clear instructions on how and where to dump litter box contents and pet waste.

### **What about tenants with pet allergies?**

You should let current and potential tenants know if there are pets in the building, or if there have been pets in the unit they're planning to rent.

You may want to keep tenants with pets separated from other tenants. For example, if you have a multi-building complex you can make specific buildings pet-friendly so tenants with allergies can avoid those buildings.

You can also choose specific outdoor areas for tenants to walk their dogs and have them use certain doors to exit and enter the building.

### **Tips for making common areas and units allergy-friendly**

- Install linoleum, ceramic, or other flooring that is solid, sealed and easily cleaned.



- Use washable oil or acrylic paints on the walls. Avoid wallpaper, cork or other absorbent materials.
- Provide well-sealed garbage containers for animal waste to limit the smell and reduce the risk that animal feces (especially from cats) pose to pregnant women.
- Seal all holes in walls (ex: electrical and phone outlets) immediately behind the faceplate. This will also reduce heat loss through air leaks.
- Think about installing high-efficiency filters on forced air ventilation in the common areas for better ventilation.
- Check and clean ventilation systems in high-humidity environments (ex: those with fish tanks) because mould often grows in the ventilation system.
- Think about having your air systems cleaned when a tenant leaves. A wet clean will allow allergic tenants to be comfortable in an apartment that had pets.

Contact the Residential Tenancies Branch office nearest you if you have questions or concerns regarding pets in tenancies. You can also go online to [www.manitoba.ca/rtb](http://www.manitoba.ca/rtb) for more information.

**Brandon Office:**

Telephone: 204-726-6230  
 Toll free: 1-800-656-8481  
 Fax: 204-726-6589  
 Email: [rtbbrandon@gov.mb.ca](mailto:rtbbrandon@gov.mb.ca)

**Winnipeg Office:**

Information unit: 204-945-2476  
 Toll free: 1-800-782-8403  
 Fax: 204-945-6273  
 Email: [rtb@gov.mb.ca](mailto:rtb@gov.mb.ca)

**Thompson Office:**

Telephone: 204-677-6496  
 Toll free: 1-800-229-0639  
 Fax: 204-677-6415  
 Email: [rtbthompson@gov.mb.ca](mailto:rtbthompson@gov.mb.ca)

