

13

BOND RETURN REQUEST

Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA) — Section 61

Your rights at the end of tenancy — how to claim your bond and dispute deductions

WHEN TO USE THIS BUNDLE

Use this bundle at the end of your tenancy to formally request the full release of your bond. Use it alongside your move-out inspection documentation and your original inspection sheet.

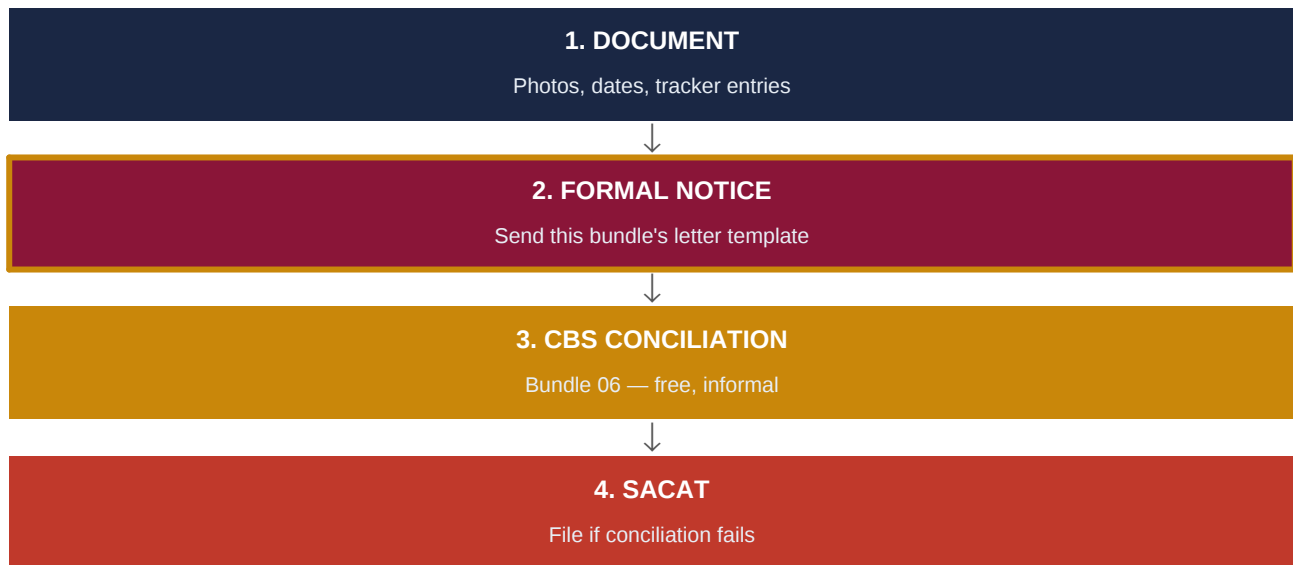
KNOW THE LAW — BOND RETURN VIA RESIDENTIAL BONDS ONLINE (S.61)

Your bond is held by Consumer and Business Services, not the landlord. Either party can lodge a bond release claim through Residential Bonds Online (RBO). The other party then has 15 days to agree or dispute. Disputed claims can be counter-offered up to seven times through RBO (10 days per round) before the matter must go to SACAT, which typically resolves bond disputes within 4–10 weeks.

FAIR WEAR AND TEAR VS. DAMAGE

FAIR WEAR AND TEAR (NOT CHARGEABLE)	DAMAGE (CHARGEABLE)
Minor scuff marks on walls	Large holes in walls
Faded paint (normal sunlight)	Stains, significant marks
Carpet flattening from normal use	Carpet stains from spills or burns
Small nail holes	Broken fixtures or fittings
Worn door handles / locks	Damaged appliances

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS — YOUR ESCALATION PATH



The highlighted box shows where this bundle fits in the journey.

- 01 Photograph the property thoroughly before vacating**
Mirror your move-in documentation exactly — photograph every room, every surface, every appliance.
- 02 Compare move-out photos to your inspection sheet**
Note where the property is in the same or better condition than at move-in.
- 03 Lodge your RBO release claim the day you vacate — don't wait for the landlord**
You do not need the landlord's permission or cooperation. This starts the 15-day clock running against them.
- 04 Send the template letter the same day**
Notify the landlord your claim is already lodged and any deduction must now be raised as a formal, evidenced dispute.
- 05 Challenge every unjustified deduction in writing**
Itemise your objection to each claim with supporting evidence, using the Deductions Log.
- 06 Escalate a disputed claim**
Disputed → RBO counter-offer rounds (up to seven, 10 days each) → SACAT if still unresolved.

IF YOU NEED TO ESCALATE — WHAT SACAT CAN ORDER

SACAT will assess each deduction individually against your evidence. A well-documented Evidence Tracker with entry and exit photos is significantly more persuasive than verbal claims.

★ GOOD TO KNOW — FAIR WEAR AND TEAR CANNOT BE CHARGED

Lease clauses attempting to require professional cleaning, carpet replacement, or repainting as standard end-of-tenancy obligations are generally unenforceable in SA. The 'reasonably clean' standard prevails, tested against your inspection sheet.

■ CRITICAL — LODGE YOUR OWN RBO CLAIM — DON'T WAIT

Either party can lodge the bond release claim. Lodging your own the day you vacate starts the 15-day clock against the landlord, rather than leaving them in control of the timeline.

■ CRITICAL — FAIR WEAR AND TEAR IS NOT DAMAGE

The landlord cannot deduct for normal wear and tear — scuff marks, minor carpet flattening, faded paint from sunlight, or worn fittings from ordinary use.

1. COPY

Copy the letter below into a new email

2. FILL

Replace every **[bracketed]** field with your details

3. SEND

Email it — request a read receipt, save a copy

Fill in every **[bracketed]** field, then send via email — request a read receipt.

SUBJECT:**FORMAL REQUEST FOR BOND RELEASE: [Insert Property Address]**

I am writing to confirm I have vacated the above-referenced property on **[Insert Vacate Date]** and have lodged a bond release claim via Residential Bonds Online for the full bond amount of \$**[Insert Bond Amount]**.

1. PROPERTY CONDITION

- The property has been left in the same or better condition than recorded in the inspection sheet at the commencement of the tenancy, as evidenced by the attached photographs.

2. RBO CLAIM

- My bond release claim was lodged on **[Insert Date]**. You have 15 days from that date to agree or lodge a dispute via RBO.

3. ANY PROPOSED DEDUCTIONS

- Any deduction you wish to claim must be itemised and supported by evidence. I will respond in writing to each item and, if unresolved, pursue this through SACAT.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Property Address]

[Date]

[Contact Number / Email]