

# What to do next: a checklist for renters facing disaster

If you're a renter in Victoria and your property has been affected by a storm, flood, or bushfire, this checklist can help you understand your rights and guide you through the steps you can take next.

**Call 000 if you are in danger right now.**



## If you need to leave in a rush, don't forget to take important documents with you

When you leave your rental property, you may not be able to return. Remember to take important documents with you, including your ID, insurance policies, financial records, and prescriptions.



## Before you hand your keys back, understand your legal rights

If your rental property is significantly damaged, your landlord (officially called the rental provider) or estate agent may ask you to leave your home and hand back your keys.

Returning the keys will end your tenancy, which means you may lose the right to move back into the property. Finding another rental property nearby could then be difficult. Even if you decide not to stay, keep your keys and seek legal advice as soon as you can.



## Report any damage to the landlord or agent

Call your landlord or agent as soon as possible to report any necessary repairs, especially if they are classed as urgent.

Even if the problem seems likely to be resolved with just a phone call, if you can, follow up by confirming what repairs are needed in writing. This is required by law, and it will also give you proof of when you reported the problem if you need to take further action later.

For more information about reporting repairs, including if a repair is classified as urgent or non-urgent, see the [Repairs Toolkit](#) on our website.



## Document the damage

Take photos or videos of any damage to your home and belongings. This is important because you may need proof if you make an insurance claim or if there is a dispute about the bond with your landlord.

Save backup copies of the photos or videos in case the originals are lost or damaged.



## If you need to, find emergency or temporary housing

Check local instructions for information about where to seek emergency accommodation. You may also consider asking other residents or emergency services for guidance. If an emergency relief centre has been established information may be available there.

For crisis and emergency housing advice, contact the Housing Victoria Statewide After Hours Service:

- Phone: 1800 825 955 (free call) or (03) 9536 7777
- Hours: between 5 pm and 9 am, Monday to Friday and 24 hours on weekends and public holidays

Women and children escaping family violence should contact Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre ([safesteps.org.au](https://safesteps.org.au)):

- Phone: 1800 015 188 (free call)
- Hours: 24 hours



## Seek legal advice

- Call Tenants Victoria's renter support line on (03) 9416 2577 or visit our website at [tenantsvic.org.au](https://tenantsvic.org.au)
- Call Victoria Legal Help Victoria on 1800 113 432 or use their Legal Help Chat at [www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)
- Find your nearest centre on the Federation of Community Legal Centres website at [fclc.org.au/find\\_a\\_community\\_legal\\_centre](https://fclc.org.au/find_a_community_legal_centre)



## If you leave, remember to cancel your utilities

See the Real Estate Institute of Victoria's [moving house checklist](#) for other things to consider: [realestate.com.au/advice/your-moving-house-checklist](https://realestate.com.au/advice/your-moving-house-checklist)