

# **NEW** PET RULE CHANGES: **TENANT Q&A**



From 1 December 2025, new pet rules come into effect under the Residential Tenancies Act, giving tenants clearer rights to request pets and landlords fairer ways to manage them. These changes aim to make renting more pet-friendly while still protecting properties and ensuring everyone understands their responsibilities. At Watson Integrity we know pets are part of the family, so we've put together this guide to help you understand how the new rules work and what to expect if you'd like to have a pet in your rental home.

## **What is a pet bond?**

From 1 December 2025, landlords may charge a pet bond of up to two weeks' rent (in addition to the standard bond of up to four weeks).

One pet bond is held per tenancy, you don't pay a separate bond for each pet, and it must be lodged with Tenancy Services. If rent increases, the pet bond can be topped up; it is refunded when the pet leaves and no damage is found.

## **When do the new rules start?**

The new rules start **1 December 2025**. Until that date, nothing changes. Your landlord still decides whether pets are allowed under your current tenancy agreement.

## **Will I automatically be allowed a pet?**

Not automatically. You'll still need written consent from your landlord before bringing a new pet into the property. However, landlords can no longer say "no pets" by default, they can only refuse on reasonable grounds.

## **How do I request a pet?**

You must go through this process before bringing any new pet into the home. Bringing in a pet without written approval will still be considered a breach of your tenancy agreement, even after the law change.

## **To request approval:**

- 1. Email your Property Manager** with details about the pet. Include the type, breed, age, size, temperament, and any relevant background information. If you have pet references from previous rentals, obedience certificates, or vet records, please include these too as they can help support your request.
- 2. We'll contact the property owner** to discuss the suitability of the pet and any conditions that may apply.
- 3. You'll receive a written response within 21 days.** If the owner doesn't respond within that timeframe, the request is automatically considered approved under the new legislation.
- 4. If approved,** we'll update your tenancy agreement with a short addendum that outlines any agreed conditions (for example, number or type of pets, carpet cleaning, or outdoor areas) and confirm whether a pet bond applies.
- 5. Once this is completed,** and the bond (if any) is lodged, you'll have written consent to keep the pet at the property.



### **What are “reasonable grounds” to say no?**

MBIE (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment) are still providing information around this, and we will know more closer to the 1 December however at this stage examples may include:

- The property isn’t suitable (e.g. no fencing for a dog)
- Body corporate or council rules prohibit pets
- The pet could cause health / safety risks (e.g. classified dangerous dog)
- There’s strong evidence the pet could cause significant damage
- The tenant refuses reasonable conditions (e.g. carpet cleaning at end of tenancy)

### **Can conditions be added if my pet is approved?**

Yes, conditions must be reasonable and in writing. Examples include “one small dog only”, “indoor cat only”, or “professional carpet clean at end of tenancy.”

### **Do I need to pay a pet bond for my existing pet?**

No. If you already have a lawfully approved pet before 1 December 2025, you don’t need to reapply or pay a new pet bond. The new rules only apply if you get a new pet after that date.

### **What if I get a pet without asking?**

That remains a breach of your tenancy agreement. Landlords can issue a breach notice and apply to the Tenancy Tribunal if needed. Always ask first to avoid penalties or tenancy termination.

### **Who pays for pet damage?**

You will be responsible for any damage caused by your pet. Both the general bond and the pet bond can be used to cover repairs.

### **What happens if my pet leaves or passes away during the tenancy?**

If your approved pet is no longer living at the property, you can request the refund of your pet bond. Before this can happen, your property manager will arrange a quick inspection to confirm there’s no pet-related damage.

Once everything checks out, the pet bond will be refunded through Tenancy Services, just like your main tenancy bond at the end of a tenancy. If you later decide to get a new pet, you’ll need to go through the full approval process again including owner consent and potentially a new pet bond.

### **Are disability assist dogs included?**

No, they are excluded from the consent and pet bond rules. Landlords cannot refuse them or charge a pet bond.

**We’re here to make these new rules easy to understand and simple to follow. If you have any questions about the process, the requirements, or what the changes mean for your tenancy, please reach out to your Property Manager. We’re always happy to help and want to make sure you feel confident before taking the next step. The goal is to create happy homes where both tenants and pets can thrive.**

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