

What to do when a tenant asks for pets

 By [Adrian Goslett](#)

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When leasing a property, tenants are required to receive the permission of their landlords before they may bring a pet into the home. Landlords ought to consider what their stance is on this issue and should remain flexible on the topic - provided that there are no external restrictions on pet ownership on the property - if they hope to hold onto reliable tenants.



Source: www.pixabay.com

Given the lack of pet-friendly rental options, pet-friendly homes are highly sought after by tenants. In some cases, tenants may even be willing to pay a little extra to secure the right property. They are also less likely to move in future owing to how difficult it is to find another rental home that will allow pets. This provides landlords with security and the possibility of higher rental yields.

However, there are several practical reasons that may influence a landlord's decision to deny a tenant from owning pets. Space is often a primary concern, especially in homes without the ground space for larger breeds. Landlords may also fear that the animals could cause damage to the property or that neighbours could lay noise complaints against their tenants' pets. There may also be body corporate rules and regulations around pet ownership in the complex that tenants might not follow, which would lead to landlords being issued with fines or penalties.



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Preventing unwanted surprises

While these are valid concerns, there are safeguards landlords can put in place to prevent any unwanted surprises. In the first instance, landlords can specify in the lease agreement exactly what sorts of pets are allowed, even giving specific measurements to prevent tenants from housing larger dogs on the property.

If fearful that pets will cause damage to the home, landlords can add a damage deposit into the lease agreement. This is a sum of money that the tenant will have to pay upfront that will be reimbursed to them once the lease expires, provided that there is no damage to the home caused by their pets.

Beyond this, landlords should ensure that their tenants are informed of all the rules of the complex and are made aware that they will be held liable for all fines or penalties incurred for any infringements of the rules.



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Staying on top of the latest rules set out by the HOA may be tricky for landlords, which is why hiring the services of a managing agent who can forward all relevant communications to the tenant is ideal. Managing agents can also conduct regular inspections of the property to ensure that there is no damage to the home caused by the pets.

While managing a rental property with pets may be slightly more complicated than renting one without, the reality is that the supply of pet-friendly rentals is far below the demand for them. Landlords who do allow pets can reap the rewards of this decision, provided that the situation is properly managed. Those who are unsure of what to do next should seek out the advice of a local property manager who can provide them with more insight around their concerns.

ABOUT ADRIAN GOSLETT

Adrian Goslett is CEO and regional director of RE/MAX Southern Africa. He joined RE/MAX Southern Africa in 2005 as a franchise development consultant, supporting various regions and offices. Throughout his career at RE/MAX he has held various positions. In 2010, after successfully leading 160 offices and over 1500 agents in six countries through the worst years real estate has ever seen in South Africa in 30 years, Goslett was appointed as CEO of RE/MAX Southern Africa.

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