

APRIL 2025

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

News, Trends & Developments
in the World of Real Estate

A Note From Karlie

New Minimum Housing Standards: External Door Locks

South Australia has updated their minimum housing standards and now require that all external doors in rental properties be fitted with locks operable by a key from the outside and unlockable from the inside without a key.

This change aims to enhance Tenant safety by ensuring quick and unimpeded exit during emergencies. As a result, certain deadlocks that require a key to unlock from the inside are no longer permitted.

The Housing Safety Authority have provided a fact sheet to help Landlords understand what the requirements are. For reference, you can find this at the end of the Newsletter.

If you would like any clarification, please feel free to call me on 08 8358 0999.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED ARTICLES

A Note From Karlie

The Value of Regular Inspections

Comprehensive Condition Reports with
Confidence



The Value of Regular Inspections

Regular property inspections are essential for Australian and New Zealand landlords seeking to safeguard their investment and maintain a positive relationship with Tenants. By routinely assessing the condition of your property, you can identify and address potential issues before they become costly problems. From leaky taps to deteriorating fixtures, early detection ensures timely repairs, preventing major structural damage and keeping expenses under control.

In addition, inspections help verify that Tenants are adhering to the terms of their tenancy agreement. This fosters a safer, more harmonious environment, minimising risks such as illegal activities or unauthorised modifications. Meanwhile, regular contact with Tenants during inspections reinforces open communication, making them feel heard and encouraging prompt reporting of maintenance needs.

A comprehensive property inspection also allows landlords to track overall wear and tear, aiding in long-term budgeting for future improvements or renovations. Well-maintained properties not only retain their value but can also attract and retain quality Tenants. By setting a consistent inspection schedule, you will keep your property in top condition, protect your investment, and provide a secure, comfortable home for your Tenants. Thorough inspections truly remain a vital cornerstone of effective property management.

Comprehensive Condition Reports with Confidence

First National property managers recognise that property condition reports are a critical element of successful tenancy management in Australia and New Zealand. A thorough, detailed assessment of your investment's state not only satisfies legislative requirements but also serves as a protective measure for both landlords and Tenants. By documenting every aspect of your property's condition, from walls and fixtures to gardens and common areas, First National property managers strive to maintain transparency and fairness throughout the entire rental process.

In many Australian states and New Zealand jurisdictions, thorough condition reporting is mandated by law, ensuring a fair process for all parties. The comprehensive nature of First National's approach meets and often exceeds these requirements, giving landlords peace of mind that their property is protected within the confines of local legislation.

The process typically begins with a pre-tenancy inspection. On-site, our property managers meticulously document your property's current condition, taking note of visible wear and tear, as well as capturing high-resolution photographs to support written observations. By employing standardised checklists, our teams cover each aspect of the property methodically, reducing the risk of overlooking any details.

In addition to written reports, First National property managers use digital tools to strengthen the documentation process. Photographic evidence and, where appropriate, video footage is carefully labelled and stored securely for easy retrieval. These visual records offer added clarity, minimising misunderstandings and reducing the likelihood of disputes arising later.

At the start of a new lease, the condition report is shared with the Tenant, who is encouraged to review it thoroughly and raise any concerns. This collaborative approach helps foster an atmosphere of trust, ensuring both parties have a clear understanding of the property's initial condition. If the Tenant notes discrepancies, the property manager will update the report, confirming mutual agreement. Once signed, the report serves as an official reference point for future discussions.

Periodic inspections are then conducted during the tenancy to monitor upkeep and address maintenance issues promptly. First National property managers apply the same diligence to these mid-tenancy inspections, comparing new findings with the initial condition report. Any changes—whether due to normal wear and tear or Tenant-related damage—are identified and addressed early, preventing minor concerns from escalating into costly problems.

Finally, when the tenancy concludes, a comprehensive exit inspection is carried out using the original condition report as a benchmark. This process determines whether the Tenant has met their obligations and helps identify any areas requiring repairs or cleaning. By relying on meticulous records from the outset, First National property managers ensure that end-of-tenancy disputes are minimised and the bond refund process runs smoothly for all involved.

In essence, First National's approach to property condition reporting combines thorough preparation, modern technology, and clear communication. By delivering consistent, detailed assessments at every stage of the tenancy, our property managers protect landlords' interests while fostering a transparent, respectful relationship with Tenants. This commitment to accuracy and fairness underpins every aspect of our service, enabling landlords to feel confident in the ongoing care and protection of their valuable investment.

We put you first.



Government
of South Australia
Housing Safety Authority

Fact Sheet



External Door Locks

Regulation 15(e) of the *Housing Improvement Regulations 2017*

Each external door in the residential premises must be fitted with a lock that is able to be operated from the outside with a key and unlocked from the inside without a key.

What are external doors?

External doors open directly to outdoor spaces, including car ports and a verandah. They also include doors that provide access directly into garages.

External doors are generally thicker, stronger and more durable than internal doors. The material may include wood, fibreglass for outstanding weather-resistance, aluminium and composite doors. Door types may include bifold and patio.

External doors in apartment buildings include doors that open directly to balconies and doors that open to the areas outside the apartment, e.g., a communal area for lifts or stairs.

Screen doors

If a screen door is fitted with a lock, the lock must comply with regulation 15(e). This means that both the external door and screen door must each be fitted with a compliant lock.

Door locks

At least one lock on each external door must have both of the following operational functions:

1. Lock and unlock with a key from the outside; **and**
2. Unlock without a key from the inside.

If a door lock is unable to operate either of these two functions, it is not compliant with regulation 15(e) and the prescribed minimum housing standards.

Additional door locks

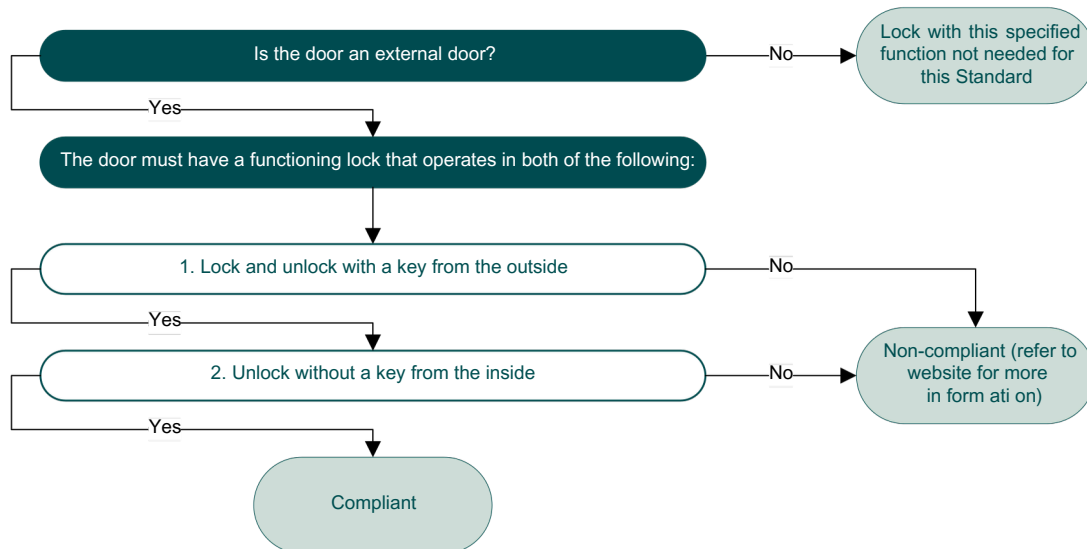
Provided each external door must have at least one lock that complies with regulation 15(e), the external door may also have additional locks or chains for security or to assist with safely screening visitors. Additional locks may include smart digital door locks and deadbolt door locks.

Sheds and other outbuildings





If a shed or other outbuilding is being used, or reasonably capable of being used, as a bedroom, kitchen, or dining or living area, each external door must comply with regulation 15(e).



Follow the flowchart



Examples of compliant and non-compliant locks

Compliant locks		Non-compliant locks	
			
Door can be unlocked from the inside without a key and locked / unlocked from the outside with a key.		Only fitted door lock that needs a key to unlock the door from the inside and from the outside.	
Sliding door can be unlocked from the inside without a key and locked / unlocked from the outside with a key.		Sliding door requires a key to unlock from the inside and from the outside.	

Scenario examples

- A. A sliding patio door is locked from the outside with a key. A key is needed to unlock the patio door from the inside to open it. This is considered as non-compliant as this is the only lock on the door and it requires a key to unlock from the inside.
- B. The lock in a wooden door that opens to a rear yard requires a key to unlock both inside and outside. However, the screen door lock only requires a key to unlock from the outside and does not require a key to unlock from the inside. The wooden door is considered as non-compliant, and the screen door is considered as compliant.
- C. A front door has a lock that requires a key to unlock from the outside but is capable of being unlocked from the inside without a key. This is considered as compliant.
- D. A shed converted into a self-contained granny flat. The external door cannot be unlocked without a key. This is considered as non-compliant as the requirement includes sheds and other buildings used as habitable rooms.
- E. The door from an apartment that leads directly to the residents' communal area where lifts and stairs can be accessed. A door lock requires a key to unlock from the outside but does not require a key to exit the apartment. This is considered as compliant.
- F. A front door has two locks fitted, both of which require a key to unlock from the outside. One of the locks can be unlocked from the inside without a key and the other needs a key to unlock from the inside. This is considered as compliant as at least one of the locks can be unlocked from the inside without a key.

Disclaimer - **Information contained in this factsheet has been prepared for general information only and does not constitute legal advice.**

