

Move-In & Handover — Deposit Protection Checklist

For tenants & landlords in Singapore (2026). Protect the deposit from day one to move-out.

Before you sign

- Read the reinstatement clause — know what you'll owe at move-out.
Fair wear and tear should be excepted. Note any cleaning / repaint duties.
- Confirm the deposit amount & refund terms in writing.
- Tenancy agreement stamped with IRAS.

Day one — build your move-in record

- Dated photos of every room — walls, floors, ceilings, fittings, appliances.
- Close-up photos of every existing scuff, stain, chip, crack or dent.
- Written inventory of contents & condition, listing all pre-existing defects.
- Landlord acknowledges the defect list & photos in writing.
A signed or emailed copy that can't be disputed later.
- Test & record: aircon, water heater, taps, locks, lights, appliances.
- Note meter readings (utilities) at handover.

During the tenancy

- Report faults in writing as they arise (wear caused by the unit, not you).
- Get written consent before any alteration; keep the approval.
- Don't change wall colours or fixtures without permission.

Move-out — defend the deposit

- Repeat the photo walkthrough; compare against the move-in record.
- Professional clean if the agreement requires it; keep the receipt.
- Reinstate tenant additions (partitions, carpentry) and make good.
- Challenge 'betterment' — you pay to repair, not to upgrade an aged unit.
New-for-old charges on old flooring/paint are not your cost.
- Get itemised quotes for any deduction; apportion for age & fair wear.
- Return all keys, access cards & fobs; transfer or close utilities.

No statutory deposit scheme in Singapore: your dated move-in record is the protection. If a deduction can't be agreed, the dispute goes to the Small Claims Tribunals or the Community Mediation Centre — not CEA.

Want a clean hand-back and a full deposit return?

MCSG reinstates & makes good at the end of the lease, with itemised quotes you can stand behind. WhatsApp +65 8334 1313 or visit reinststate.sg.