



Tenant's Guide

Dubai

Everything You Need to Know About
Renting Property in Dubai

Presented by Think Properties Real Estate

Dubai's rental market offers a wide range of options, from luxury waterfront apartments to affordable family villas and everything in between. Whether you're relocating for work, moving with your family, or seeking a short-term arrangement, understanding your rights and obligations as a tenant is essential.

This guide walks you through the entire renting process in Dubai — from searching for the right property to understanding your lease, knowing your legal rights under RERA, and managing your tenancy effectively.

Think Properties helps tenants find the perfect home in Dubai. Our RERA-registered agents provide free property search assistance and negotiation support.

Types of Rental Arrangements

Long-Term Rentals (12 Months+)

The most common rental arrangement in Dubai. Standard leases are for one year, with rent typically paid via post-dated cheques. Long-term leases are registered through Ejari and governed by RERA regulations.

Short-Term / Holiday Home Rentals

Fully furnished rentals ranging from a few nights to several months, typically booked through platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com. These properties must be licensed by the Department of Economy and Tourism (DET).

Mid-Term Furnished Rentals (1–6 Months)

Increasingly popular among business travellers and professionals on assignment. These combine the flexibility of short-term with the stability of long-term leasing. Often available in serviced apartments and hotel apartments.

Finding the Right Property

Define Your Requirements

- ✓ Budget (including DEWA deposit, agent fee, and security deposit)
- ✓ Location (proximity to work, schools, metro, amenities)
- ✓ Property type (studio, apartment, villa, townhouse)
- ✓ Furnished vs. unfurnished
- ✓ Number of bedrooms and bathrooms
- ✓ Community amenities (gym, pool, parking, security)

Where to Search

- ▶ **RERA-Registered Agents:** The most reliable method. Agents provide access to verified listings and handle negotiations.
- ▶ **Online Portals:** Bayut, Property Finder, and Dubizzle list thousands of verified properties.
- ▶ **Developer Leasing:** Some developers (Emaar, Nakheel, Meraas) offer direct leasing through their own portals.

Always verify that your agent has a valid RERA Broker ID (BRN). You can check this on the Dubai Land Department website or the Dubai REST app.

Viewing Tips

- ▶ Visit properties at different times of day to assess noise, traffic, and natural light
- ▶ Check water pressure, AC functionality, and appliance condition
- ▶ Ask about service charges and what they include
- ▶ Inspect parking allocation and visitor parking availability
- ▶ Check the internet and mobile signal strength
- ▶ Walk the surrounding area — proximity to supermarkets, pharmacies, schools

Rental Costs Breakdown

I Upfront Costs

Cost Item	Typical Amount	Notes
Annual Rent	Varies by area	Paid via 1–12 post dated cheques
Security Deposit	5% of annual rent	Refundable at end of tenancy
Agent Commission	5% of annual rent	One-time, paid at signing
Ejari Registration	AED 220	Mandatory tenancy registration
DEWA Deposit	AED 2,000 (apt) / AED 4,000 (villa)	Refundable when disconnecting
DEWA Activation	AED 130 (connection fee)	Non-refundable
Chiller Deposit	AED 2,000–5,000	District cooling areas only
Moving Costs	AED 500–3,000	Depends on distance and volume

Budget Rule: Your total upfront cost (deposit + agent fee + first cheque + DEWA) typically equals 15–20% of your annual rent on top of the first payment.

Rent Payment Methods

Dubai landlords typically accept rent in 1 to 12 post-dated cheques per year. Fewer cheques often means lower rent:

Payment Frequency	Typical Premium/Discount
1 Cheque (full year upfront)	Best rate — 5–10% discount possible
2 Cheques (bi-annual)	Standard rate
4 Cheques (quarterly)	Slight premium possible
6–12 cheques (monthly)	Premium of 5–10% above 1-cheque rate

Ongoing Monthly Costs

- ▶ **DEWA (Electricity & Water):** AED 500–1,500/month for apartments; AED 1,500–4,000 for villas
- ▶ **District Cooling (Chiller):** AED 300–2,000/month in applicable areas (Downtown, Business Bay, etc.)
- ▶ **Internet & TV:** AED 300–600/month (du or Etisalat packages)
- ▶ **Gas (if applicable):** AED 50–150/month

Understanding Your Lease Agreement

Key Terms to Review

- ✓ Lease duration (typically 12 months) and start/end dates
- ✓ Total annual rent and payment schedule (cheque dates and amounts)
- ✓ Security deposit amount and refund conditions
- ✓ Maintenance responsibilities (tenant vs. landlord)
- ✓ Early termination clause and penalty (typically 2 months' rent)
- ✓ Renewal terms and rent increase conditions
- ✓ Sub-letting restrictions
- ✓ Pet policy
- ✓ Notice period for non-renewal (90 days from either party)

Ejari Registration

All tenancy contracts in Dubai must be registered through Ejari, the official rental contract registration system operated by the Dubai Land Department. Ejari registration is required for:

- ▶ Activating DEWA (electricity and water) services
- ▶ Sponsoring family members' residence visas
- ▶ Enrolling children in schools
- ▶ Legal enforcement of your tenancy rights

Required Documents for Ejari:

-  Signed tenancy contract
-  Title deed copy (landlord provides)
-  Passport copies of tenant and landlord
-  Emirates ID (if UAE resident)
-  DEWA premises number

Cost: AED 155–220 (AED 155 online via Dubai REST app; AED 220 at typing centres) (can be done online via the Dubai REST app or at Ejari typing centres).

Your Rights as a Tenant

Dubai's rental market is regulated by RERA (Real Estate Regulatory Agency) under Law No. 26 of 2007 and its amendments. Key protections include:

I Rent Increase Protection

Landlords can only increase rent at renewal if the current rent is significantly below the average market rate, as determined by the RERA Rental Index Calculator. Increases are capped as follows:

Below Market Rate By	Maximum Increase Allowed
Less than 10%	No increase permitted
11–20%	Up to 5%
21–30%	Up to 10%
31–40%	Up to 15%
More than 40%	Up to 20%

Check your rent against the market rate using the RERA Rental Index Calculator on the Dubai REST app or the DLD website. This is the official tool used to determine whether a rent increase is legal.

Eviction Protection

A landlord can only evict a tenant under specific conditions outlined in Law No. 33 of 2008:

For Personal Use

Landlord must provide 12 months' written notice via notary public or registered mail, and must prove no alternative property is available.

For Sale

Landlord must provide 12 months' written notice. Tenant has right to remain until lease expiry.

Major Renovation

Landlord must provide 12 months' notice and obtain necessary permits from relevant authorities.

Non-Payment

Landlord must give 30 days' written notice to pay overdue rent before filing for eviction.

A landlord cannot evict a tenant during a valid lease period unless there is a breach of contract. All eviction notices must be delivered via a notary public or registered mail.

Maintenance Responsibilities

Unless otherwise stated in the contract:

Landlord Responsibility

Structural repairs, major AC repairs/replacement, plumbing infrastructure, building exterior, pest control for structural issues

Tenant Responsibility

Day-to-day maintenance, minor repairs (under AED 500 typically), AC filter cleaning, keeping the property in good condition, and garden maintenance (if applicable)

Dispute Resolution

If you have a dispute with your landlord, you can file a case with the Rental Dispute Settlement Centre (RDSC), part of the Dubai Land Department. The process involves:






- ▶ File a complaint online or at the RDSC office
- ▶ Pay a filing fee of 3.5% of annual rent (minimum AED 500, maximum AED 20,000)
- ▶ Attend a mediation session (many disputes are resolved here)
- ▶ If unresolved, the case proceeds to a tribunal hearing

Moving In Checklist

At Move-In:

- ✓ Sign tenancy contract and register via Ejari
- ✓ Activate DEWA (apply online at dewa.gov.ae or via the DEWA app)
- ✓ Set up district cooling account (if applicable)
- ✓ Activate internet and TV service (du or Etisalat)
- ✓ Collect keys, access cards, parking permits, and community passes
- ✓ Take detailed photos/videos of the property's condition
- ✓ Obtain building rules and community guidelines

Before Signing:

-  Verify landlord ownership (title deed) via DLD or your agent
-  Inspect the property thoroughly and document any existing damage
-  Confirm service charge payments are up to date
-  Agree on maintenance responsibilities in writing
-  Negotiate payment terms (number of cheques)

Ongoing

- ✓ Pay rent cheques on time (bounced cheques carry legal consequences)
- ✓ Report maintenance issues to landlord/property management promptly
- ✓ Maintain the property in good condition
- ✓ Keep copies of all communications with landlord
- ✓ Renew Ejari annually when renewing your lease

Lease Renewal and Moving Out

Renewal

Either party must give 90 days' written notice before the lease expiry if they wish to change terms or not renew. If no notice is given, the lease automatically renews on the same terms for the same period.

If your landlord proposes a rent increase, check it against the RERA Rental Index. If the increase exceeds the permitted cap, you can file a complaint with the RDSC.

Moving Out:

- ✓ Give 90 days' notice (or as per lease terms) if not renewing
- ✓ Schedule a property inspection with the landlord or property manager
- ✓ Repair any damage beyond normal wear and tear
- ✓ Professionally clean the property (typically required)
- ✓ Clear all utility bills (DEWA, chiller, internet)
- ✓ Cancel DEWA account and collect deposit refund
- ✓ Return all keys, access cards, and parking permits
- ✓ Collect security deposit refund (after inspection clearance)
- ✓ Cancel Ejari registration

Tip: Security deposit deductions should be itemised in writing. If you disagree with deductions, you can file a complaint with the RDSC. Always keep photos from move-in and move-out for comparison.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my landlord increase rent during the lease?

No. Rent can only be increased at renewal, not during the lease term, and only if the RERA Rental Index supports the increase.

What happens if my cheque bounces?

A bounced rent cheque is a serious matter in the UAE. Since 2022, bounced cheques due to insufficient funds are handled as civil matters through the Execution Court (fines of AED 2,000–10,000). The landlord can also seek eviction through the RDSC. Bounced cheques may result in travel bans. Always ensure sufficient funds are available on cheque dates.

Can I sublet my apartment?

Only with written consent from the landlord. Subletting without permission is a breach of contract and grounds for eviction.

My landlord isn't doing repairs. What can I do?

Notify the landlord in writing (email or registered letter). If they fail to act within a reasonable timeframe, file a complaint with the RDSC. Do not withhold rent — this could be used against you.

Can I break my lease early?

Most leases include an early termination clause with a penalty (typically 2 months' rent). If no clause exists, the tenant is legally obligated to pay rent until the lease expires. Negotiate this clause before signing.

Do I need a residence visa to rent?

No. Tourists and visitors can rent property in Dubai. However, you will need an Emirates ID for Ejari registration if you are a resident. Non-residents can register using their passport.

How do I check if a rent increase is legal?

Use the RERA Rental Index Calculator available on the Dubai REST app or the Dubai Land Department website. Enter your property details and current rent to see if an increase is permitted.

I Popular Rental Areas in Dubai

Area	1-Bed Apt (AED/yr)	Best For
Downtown Dubai	80,000–140,000	Luxury living, professionals
Dubai Marina	70,000–120,000	Waterfront, nightlife, young professionals
JVC	40,000–70,000	Affordable, families, first-time renters
Business Bay	55,000–100,000	Central location, professionals
JLT	50,000–85,000	Affordable, metro access
Arabian Ranches	120,000–200,000 (villa)	Families, schools, community
Dubai Hills	65,000–110,000	Modern, family-friendly, parks
Al Furjan	45,000–75,000	Affordable villas & apartments
Dubai South	30,000–55,000	Budget-friendly, near airport
Palm Jumeirah	100,000–250,000	Luxury, beach, exclusivity

Prices are approximate and based on market data as of early 2026. Actual rents vary by building, floor, condition, and furnishing.

Ready to Find Your Perfect Home?

Think Properties offers a free property search service for tenants. Our team will understand your requirements, shortlist the best options, arrange viewings, and negotiate the best terms on your behalf.

BOOK YOUR FREE CONSULTATION

Our team of RERA-registered professionals is here to guide you every step of the way.
Toll-Free: 800-MYTHINK (6984465) | Hotline: +971 52 888 9369 www.think-properties.ae
Suite 404, The Binary Tower, Business Bay, Dubai