

# Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria (RDRV)

## What is RDRV?

RDRV is a free service that helps resolve rental disputes early, without needing to go to a formal Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) hearing.

A resolution coordinator helps you and your landlord understand the issues and try to reach a lawful agreement.

Resolution coordinators are neutral, accredited mediators who cannot give legal advice or decide what is fair or what is the best option for you. They can't pressure or rush you to agree or make an offer. Their job is to help you and your landlord communicate and negotiate.

Going through the RDRV process is voluntary, but make sure you respond when the resolution coordinator contacts you. And you can tell them at any time that you want to go to a VCAT hearing.

You can participate in RDRV negotiations via phone or video call, or in person. If you have a lawyer or advocate, they can represent you at RDRV or VCAT.

## Disputes RDRV handles

RDRV handles common rental disputes, including disputes about:

- Bonds
- Compensation
- Rent increases
- Urgent and non-urgent repairs

For other disputes, apply straight to VCAT.

## How to apply to RDRV

### 1. Apply

You can apply to RDRV online through the RDRV portal at [my.rdrv.vic.gov.au](https://my.rdrv.vic.gov.au)

If you need help or are unable to use the portal, call 1300 017 378 or visit an RDRV office.

You don't need to provide all your documents and evidence with your application, but it can help. RDRV will ask for any other information when needed. You can submit documents through the portal, by email or in person at any RDRV office.

### 2. Give your landlord or their agent your application

When you apply to RDRV, you should send a copy of your application and any supporting documents to your landlord or agent.

If they are registered with RDRV, you can do this through the portal. If not, you can send them by email, post or in person.

If you are unsure, you can also ask the resolution coordinator for the best way to provide these documents.

### If your landlord applies to RDRV

Your landlord must give you a copy of their application and evidence, and a resolution coordinator will contact you.

If you don't want to take part in negotiation at RDRV, tell the resolution coordinator you want the dispute to go straight to VCAT.

This information is a guide and should not be used as a substitute for professional legal advice.

### 3. Resolution coordinator contacts you

Once RDRV has received your application, a resolution coordinator should contact you within one business day for urgent repairs, or as soon as possible for all other disputes handled by RDRV.

Respond to the resolution coordinator as soon as you can to help keep things moving.

### 4. Participating in the dispute resolution process

The facilitated discussions usually take place within 2 business days for urgent repairs, or within 2 weeks for all other disputes handled by RDRV.

The resolution coordinator may:

- Arrange a joint discussion where you and the landlord speak together, or
- Conduct a shuttle negotiation where they talk to you both separately and pass any messages between you, so you don't have to speak directly to the landlord or agent, or
- Arrange a formal mediation session to discuss several issues together, if you and your landlord agree

## Tips for participating in RDRV

- ☑ Get advice early and know your rights, this is your strongest tool
- ☑ You don't have to agree, going to VCAT is always an option
- ☑ Don't be pressured, ask for more time if you need it
- ☑ Consider trades, not just concessions: 'If you agree to X, I will agree to Y'
- ☑ Stay calm and focused on the outcome you want
- ☑ Confirm next steps and get things in writing

For helpful information, see the Tenants Victoria website: [tenantsvic.org.au/rdrv](https://www.tenantsvic.org.au/rdrv)

## If you reach an agreement

Put it in writing to make sure everyone follows through on their commitments.

In most cases, you can have your agreement made into a VCAT consent order for free. This is a legally binding order made by VCAT. This provides much stronger protection than a private agreement.

Alternatively, you can write a private settlement agreement – a private contract between you and the landlord. This is harder to enforce than a VCAT consent order. If you do this, ask for the agreement to be placed on file with RDRV, with a contract term that allows it to be shared with VCAT or a court if the landlord does not comply with it.

## If you do not reach an agreement

It is fine if the issue is not resolved through negotiation at RDRV. The dispute can be referred to a formal VCAT hearing. The resolution coordinator can help with next steps, including whether you need to pay an application fee, or not.

VCAT hearings are usually held:

- Urgent repairs: within 2 business days
- Non-urgent repairs: within 7 days
- All other disputes: within 4 weeks

**Note:** What was said at RDRV cannot be used as evidence at VCAT unless both you and the landlord agree in writing.

## Family or personal violence

If you are experiencing family or personal violence, tell the RDRV resolution coordinator as soon as possible. If appropriate, they may refer your application to VCAT, where you can get help from the VCAT family violence support team.

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