**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PET DEPOSITS**

F[inding a pet-friendly apartment](https://www.apartments.com/blog/how-to-find-a-pet-friendly-apartment)that’s a good fit for both you and your furry best friend is essential when apartment hunting. Although that on-site dog park might catch your eye [during a tour](https://www.apartments.com/blog/tips-for-touring-a-new-apartment), it’s important to know what to expect when renting with a pet.

**WHAT ARE PET DEPOSITS? WHAT DO PET DEPOSITS COVER?**

A pet deposit is a one-time payment typically paid on the move-in day after the lease is signed. Similar to a regular deposit, landlords will deduct money from the pet deposit to cover the cost of any damage made to the apartment caused by your pet. A few examples of [pet damage](https://www.apartments.com/blog/dealing-with-pet-damage-in-your-apartment) a landlord might use a pet deposit for include:

* Urine and feces stains
* Ripped up carpet
* Scratches on the floors or walls
* Holes in the wall
* Broken appliances
* Flea infestations
* Pet odor
* Excessive pet hair

**HOW MUCH IS A PET DEPOSIT?**

A pet deposit typically ranges between $100 and $500, but the amount could be lower or higher. Some states have a limit for how much a landlord can charge tenants for a pet deposit, so it’s a good idea to research the laws in your area to gauge how much you’ll have to pay.

**ARE PET DEPOSITS REFUNDABLE?**

Yes, pet deposits are refundable. If your furry friend doesn’t cause any damage, your landlord should give you a full refund for your pet deposit. If your landlord uses the pet deposit to cover damage, they will give you an itemized list of repair costs along with an explanation for their deductions. If your landlord doesn’t provide an itemized list, ask for one. Remember to use [a walk-through checklist](https://www.apartments.com/blog/the-ultimate-walk-through-checklist-what-to-look-for-before-moving-in) and take photos and videos so you can help dispute any discrepancies when you [move out](https://www.apartments.com/blog/the-essential-to-do-list-before-moving-out-of-an-apartment).

**CAN A LANDLORD CHARGE A PET DEPOSIT AND A PET FEE?**

Some states allow landlords to charge a pet fee, monthly pet rent, and a pet deposit. Many states have a cap for the amount landlords can charge for each as well. Other states don’t allow a pet deposit but will allow a non-refundable pet fee and pet rent instead. Since the rules for pet payment vary by state, investigate what your state requires.

**PET PAYMENT AND FEES FOR MULTIPLE PETS**

If you have more than one pet, it’s common for landlords to charge per pet or charge a larger amount. For example, sometimes the rate for monthly pet rent is determined by how many pets live in the apartment. The type of pet can also be a factor. A renter with one cat might get charged less than a renter with two dogs. Remember, the laws for pet-friendly rentals vary by state. Do your research so you can know what to expect.

**CAN I ASK MY LANDLORD TO ADD A PET ADDENDUM TO MY LEASE?**

Since landlords own the rental property, allowing pets is at their discretion. However, it’s doesn’t hurt to ask your landlord if they can add an addendum to your lease if they don’t have a pet policy. If your landlord already has a pet policy included in the lease and charges pet rent, you can try to negotiate the cost. For example, if you want to avoid paying monthly pet rent, you can offer to sign a longer lease (landlords want to avoid rental vacancies). You can also offer to pay a larger pet deposit, which might sway your landlord since they’ll have money set aside in case any damage occurs.

Along with the cost of the pet deposit, a pet policy or pet addendum will detail several rules and expectations such as breed and weight restrictions. If applicable, the amount for pet rent and the pet fee will also be included. Note that [service and assistance animals](https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/fair-housing-act-and-assistance-animals) are exempt from pet rent, pet fees, and pet deposits. Service animals aren’t considered regular pets and landlords are legally required to make reasonable accommodations. If your landlord refuses to accommodate, you can file a complaint with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and request an investigation for discrimination.

For many people, pets are more than just cuddly companions; they’re family. Before signing a lease, make sure you understand the rules and restrictions, along with any pet payments you’ll have to pay. While pet deposits are an extra expense when moving with pets, our four-legged friends aren’t perfect, and damage is always a possibility. Besides, paying that extra money is well worth the comfort of having your furry best friend by your side every day.