



## Conducting a reference check

A reference check provides further information to help you make an informed decision when selecting tenants. Do not rely only on gut instinct or casual chats with prospective tenants.

The pre-tenancy application form (available at [www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz)) asks prospective tenants to agree to you contacting their referees. Ask the tenant to advise the referees that you will contact them. It is useful if one referee is the tenant's current or previous landlord.

**Tip:** Never skip a reference check because a referee is unreachable. Try another referee.

**Tip:** Never forego a reference check in return for a tenant offering additional rent upfront.

**Tip:** Never hand over the keys until all your checks are done and legal requirements fulfilled.

### What to ask a referee

When you ring a referee, ask if it's a convenient time to talk (if not, ask for another time to call). Always thank the referee at the end of the call.

You could ask questions to get an idea of the tenant's behaviour. For instance did they:

- advise you of repairs or maintenance issues?
- return calls promptly?
- keep the premises reasonably clean and tidy?

If the referee has not mentioned things you want to know, ask specific questions, such as:

- Did the tenant ever get into rent arrears? If so, what did they do about it?

**Tip:** When listening to the referee, be alert to:

- unusual hesitations
- ambiguous or evasive responses
- negative or vindictive responses
- overly enthusiastic responses.

If you get the impression that a referee is not being completely frank with you, take note. You may wish to speak to another referee.

### Need more information?

For tenancy advice and information call 0800 TENANCY (0800 83 62 62), visit our website [www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz) or email us at [info@dbh.govt.nz](mailto:info@dbh.govt.nz)

