

Capital Gains Tax Checklist: Home Buyers

Your home is usually free of capital gains tax. These are the records that keep it that way, and that protect you if your plans change.

PROPERTY

CONTRACT DATE

ACCOUNTANT

The **main residence exemption** means most people pay no capital gains tax when they sell their home. It can be lost or reduced if you rent the home out, use part of it for business, live overseas or own a large block. Keeping these records from day one costs nothing and can save a lot later.

WHEN YOU BUY

- ☐ **Contract, settlement statement and stamp duty receipt kept**
Your home is usually exempt from capital gains tax, but if part of it ever becomes taxable you'll need these to work out the cost base.
- ☐ **Invoices for buying costs kept**
Conveyancing and legal fees, buyer's agent fee, building and pest inspection, valuation and survey fees.
- ☐ **Move-in date written down**
The exemption works best when you move in as soon as practical after settlement. Note the date and keep proof, such as a removalist invoice, utility connections and your updated address.
- ☐ **Land size checked** ACREAGE
The main residence exemption covers your home and up to 2 hectares of land. On larger blocks, part of the gain may be taxable.
- ☐ **Selling your old home too? Watch the 6 months**
If you buy before you sell, both homes can usually be exempt for up to 6 months, as long as the old home was your main residence for at least 3 months in a row in the year before sale and wasn't rented out in that time.

WHILE YOU LIVE THERE

- ☐ **Receipts for improvements kept**
Renovations, extensions, a new kitchen or bathroom. Only needed if part of the home ever becomes taxable, but impossible to recreate later.
- ☐ **Renting a room or using it for business? Keep records**
Renting out a room, listing it on Airbnb or running a business from a dedicated part of the home can make part of the gain taxable. Note the dates and the floor area used.
- ☐ **Moving out and renting it? Get a valuation**
You can usually keep treating it as your main residence for up to 6 years while it's rented, as long as you don't claim another home as your main residence. Record the date you moved out and ask your accountant whether you need a valuation at the date it was first rented.
- ☐ **Moving overseas? Check before you sell**
If you're a foreign resident for tax when you sell, you generally can't claim the main residence exemption, with limited exceptions. Get advice before you go.

WHEN YOU SELL

- ☐ **ATO clearance certificate applied for**
Australian residents need one before settlement, whatever the sale price. Without it, the buyer must hold back 15% of the price and send it to the ATO. Apply online early. Certificates last 12 months.
- ☐ **Tell your accountant if it wasn't always your home**
If any part was rented out, used for business or you lived elsewhere for a while, give your accountant the dates and records above.

If it was rented at any point, the 2026 Budget capital gains tax changes may apply to that part. Ask your accountant.
- ☐ **Records kept for 5 years after the sale**
Keep the contracts, statements, invoices and dates together, in case the ATO asks.

We can't give tax advice, but we can point you to an accountant who works with property buyers. Keep this checklist with your property records.

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General information only, not tax, legal or financial advice. Capital gains tax rules depend on your circumstances and can change. Speak to a registered tax agent or accountant before making decisions. Current as at October 2026.