

A-Z GUIDE FOR ATTRACTING AND KEEPING GREAT TENANTS



MYND
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

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A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

Introduction

Finding and retaining great tenants is an enormous part of any successful investment strategy. It drives how you manage your advertising and what you do to prepare your property for the rental market.

Wanting to attract and lease your home to high quality tenants means you have to have a great screening process in place.

There's a lot more involved than tenant screening and advertising.

To attract great tenants, you have to provide a great property. You have to communicate well with those tenants, and you have to develop a relationship that's respectful, professional, and transparent.

At Mynd Property Management, we work with all sorts of tenants. The individuals and families we rent properties to are all over the country, and we've developed a lot of tools, resources, and knowledge that we want to share with rental property owners and investors.

If you're excited about owning investment property and renting it out for the most possible rent every month, but you're not sure about the right way to bring in good tenants who pay rent on time and take care of the property, this book has some valuable information for you.

We talk about screening and security deposits. We talk about getting your property rented to those great tenants as quickly as possible. We also talk about what to do when unpleasant things happen – like rent stops showing up.

Find out what to do if your property isn't renting and how to handle the move-in process. Tell us what else you need to

know about the owner/tenant relationship, because we have a lot of ideas.

After you've looked at this helpful book, let us know what you liked and what you wanted to hear more about. Contact us at Mynd Property Management.

A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

Chapter 1

How to Get Your Property Rent Ready

Getting a property rent-ready means ensuring it's in the right condition to be listed on the market.

If it's an attractive, well-maintained home that's priced competitively and being widely advertised, you're probably going to generate a lot of interest as soon as it's listed.

But, you don't want to let prospective tenants go and see it if you're not sure that it's move-in ready.

So, before you start taking those marketing photos or running those advertisements, make sure you've taken these important steps to prepare your home or unit for the local rental market.



For the video, go [here](#).

Curb Appeal Counts



The best place to start your rent-ready process is with your curb appeal.

This is especially important because a lot of prospective tenants will form an opinion about your property just by the way it looks from the outside. First impressions matter, especially when people are deciding where they want to live.

So, make a good first impression.

Give prospective tenants a reason to schedule a showing and view your property. Give them a reason to get excited about the property. The right curb appeal can tap into their emotions and help them to feel great about your property.

Start with the landscaping.

If it's a single-family home you're renting out or a building with a lot of outdoor space, pay attention to the grass. You want to keep it mowed and healthy. If there are trees and bushes, make sure they're trimmed and pruned. You don't want a lot of branches covering the windows of the building or dropping onto the roof.

You want the building and the outside area to be clean.

Remove any debris or trash, and look for eyesores like dead cars and broken furniture. Clean everything up when you're listing a unit. If you have a single-family home, make sure the front door and the walkway are clear, clean, and easy to see. You need sufficient, bright exterior lighting and an easy, well-marked path to the home's entrance.

Stand on the street or the sidewalk in front of the property. Does this look like a property that good tenants will want to enter and inspect? If it does, then you've created some great curb appeal.

Walk the Wall



Once you know your exterior curb appeal is *on fleek*, it's time to walk the wall.

This is a process that professionals do when inspecting the property or preparing it for the rental market. The idea is to enter the property through the front door and take an initial look around from that perspective.

As you're standing at the entryway, you shouldn't see any spider webs or debris. There shouldn't be any insects hurrying to hide. The paint needs to look good and the carpets need to look fresh and everything should look and smell right before you begin to look around.

Then, you will walk the wall.

Start from the left or the right and follow the walls through the property until you've done a complete circle and you end up back at the front door.

This gives you the opportunity to check every inch of the apartment or home. You can look at every outlet you pass, you can test each set of blinds that you encounter. You'll be able to check windows to make sure they lock and look at screens to make sure they're in place and in excellent condition.

Look for cracks in windows or window frames. Check the paint and make sure there aren't any scratches or blemishes on the walls. Turn on all the faucets, look for leaks under each sink, and run the garbage disposal. You want to open and inspect each appliance to make sure it's clean and working.

Take a look at every bit of the property.

Address the Necessary Repairs



The next thing you need to do to prepare your property for the rental market is make a list of the things you may have noticed while walking the wall.

Perhaps there was a light bulb that had burned out or an outlet that wasn't working. Maybe a toilet seemed to be running or the air filter was caked with dust.

Keep a checklist with you as you walk the walls so you can keep a detailed record of the things you encounter that need attention. Taking pictures is a good idea so you can make before and after comparisons.

Make sure your list is extensive and includes everything.

Even if it's a minor repair or a simple fix; add it to your list. You don't want to overlook any of these things because the prospective tenants are going to walk into that house imagining that they can move right in. They won't want to hear that you plan to get the dishwasher fixed and they don't want assurances that you'll be painting the walls as soon as the lease is signed.

Everything needs to be right the first time they walk through the door.

Another reason to have a comprehensive list of repair and maintenance requirements is that you want your vendors and contractors to go over to that property one time only. You don't want them going back and forth over and over again to fix things that weren't noticed the first time.

Time is money and it's valuable.



Make sure you're minimizing the amount of time you're preparing your rental property. If you have great relationships in place with vendors in your local area, you'll

be able to make these repairs and updates quickly and get that property on the market as soon as possible.

If you're making the repairs yourself, go to the store with your list and gather everything you need. But, only make the repairs yourself if they are things that you know how to do.

This isn't something that you want to be casual about.

It's important to make all the necessary repairs and to make them properly. If there's something that's needed and it's outside of your expertise, hire a professional. It's going to save you time and money because professionals will get the job done quickly and they'll get it done right the first time. You don't want to keep making the same repair.

Replace what needs to be replaced. Sometimes, owners will over-repair a system or an appliance that should really just be replaced with a new one.

If your refrigerator keeps breaking down and it's 20 years old, don't spend the money to repair it. Buy a new one instead. This will cut down on the maintenance that's required for your fridge, and you'll have a brand new appliance that will really appeal to prospective tenants when they're looking at your listing and visiting your property.

Check every system and every detail.

Make sure the home is ready for tenants to see. By walking the wall, you'll catch even the small issues. It's worth your time. You don't want to be called over to the unit in the first 30 days to fix something that you could have fixed before the tenants moved in.

And, you don't want your unit to be vacant for longer than necessary because you forgot or neglected to do something critical in the property.

Be thorough. It keeps your tenants satisfied before they even move in, and you're establishing a great relationship for the tenancy.

Check the Cleaning and Clean Again



Cleaning is critical when you're getting your property rent-ready.

It should be clean and free of dust and debris when you're walking the walls. You don't want any stains on the carpet or the floor.

Hire a cleaning crew to really do a deep clean, which should include pulling appliances away from the wall to clean and dust under them and behind them. You'd be amazed at the crumbs and dust that can gather around appliances.

While the initial cleaning is important, you also want to clean after the work is done. When you have repair people coming and going through the property, additional cleaning will probably be necessary before you put the home on the market.

If you don't pay attention to the cleaning, you'll have a longer vacancy. Good tenants will never be willing to move into someone else's dirt.

These steps are important and they keep you from losing time and money. A rent-ready property will rent faster to better tenants and for more money.

If you don't have the time or the resources to inspect your property before you list it, work with professionals who have experience in this area.

A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

Chapter 2

What to Do if My Property Isn't Renting

Renting your property out quickly is an essential part of your ROI. Long vacancies cost money, and are best avoided.

So, your rental property is ready for the market and in excellent condition. You think you've taken some high quality photos and listed it in all the relevant places.

But, you feel stuck. You don't have any potential tenants coming through the funnel. Either they're not contacting you at all, or they're going to see the property but then they're not filling out applications.

What do you do?



**WHAT TO
DO IF MY
PROPERTY
ISN'T
RENTING**

For the video, go [here](#).

We want to introduce you to a concept we call RAP. This stands for:

- Rent
- Advertising
- Property

If your property isn't renting as quickly as you'd like it to, the problem likely can be traced back to one of those RAP elements.

The R in RAP: Rent Examination



When your property isn't renting right away, you need to start with price.

You might have felt good about your rental value and where you priced your home when you were first deciding to rent out the property. But, when you're thinking about rental rates and rental value, you have to keep in mind that you're dealing with a live market.

Properties are constantly changing prices, and your competition is probably updating their prices pretty consistently. Whatever the rent was a week or two ago might be irrelevant now. You have to be flexible and keep up with the changing rental values in your local market.

Look at multiple channels when you're establishing or adjusting your rental price.

When you use different sources of data, you have a better idea of where you should be pricing your own property.

There are multiple online places to check the range of rents for properties similar to your own. You can use sites like Craigslist, Zillow, Zumper, and Redfin. You'll find lots of sources.



If you work with a professional property management company, they can do this for you, and probably more effectively. It's

a manual process because you have to look in several different places to gather as much data as possible. But, it's necessary, so put in the effort to look at multiple data points.

Remember that some of the rental amounts you find on public sites are aspirational. Asking prices do not always translate into rental prices.

Owners may try to rent out their properties for 10 or 15 percent more than they'll actually get. When you come across a number like this, it's a data point, but not as reliable as the data you can access through a professional property manager.

When you work with an experienced management company like Mynd Property Management, you'll access actual data that's been collected on what properties rented for, not what they are listed for. It's far more valuable and a lot more reliable.

We recommend that you collect public and professional data and then do a gut check. Figure out where your own rental rate figures into the statistics you've captured.

A competitively priced home will almost always rent faster than an overpriced home.

Property data and actual data will help you discover which rental rates got locked into an actual lease. Once you have that information, you can do one of three things:

- You can leave your rent as is and wait for a tenant who is willing to pay that amount.
- You can lower your rent if you find the rental rate isn't competitive.
- You can do something else to attract prospective tenants.

The first two options are pretty self-explanatory, so let's dig into the third.

For example, you can play with utilities. It's acceptable to advertise your property without the cost of utilities factored in,

and it makes your rent appear to be lower. Lots of owners do this, and we don't make a professional recommendation one way or another.



Just be transparent with your prospects.

You can list a lower rent that doesn't include utilities, and then specify in the description that the rent does not include the cost of utilities.

It's important that you don't deceive your prospective tenants. It will only waste your time and theirs, and create an unhappy experience for everyone.

But, removing utilities when you're advertising your rental rate may get the attention of a wider tenant pool.

Another option is to create a scale plan where you have your rent rate set high, and then after a certain amount of days, you will lower it slowly to hit the optimal point. Your property manager can help you work out a plan where the rent amount comes down slowly over time to attract tenants.

You have many different options, and if your property isn't renting, you definitely want to assess your rent.

The A in RAP: Assess Your Advertising



Are you advertising in all the relevant channels?

At Mynd Property Management, we use a syndication service where our listings go to 40 different sites with the click of a button. If you're working with a management company, find out if they have a similar system.

Otherwise, you'll have to manually list your property on each site, and that can be time consuming. If you're a self-managing owner, there are services you can use like Tenant Turner. Getting on these sites is important.

The next step after you've listed your property on the necessary rental sites is to make sure your listings are actually showing up and being updated.

Every platform has a different algorithm for when you can update your post. Check frequently and make sure your listings are easy to find.

Sometimes, there's just a lot of competition, and your listing can drown. You might need to spend some advertising dollars to ensure you pop up on some of the most popular platforms.

With your advertising, make sure:

- Your listing is on all the right platforms.
- It's easy to find.
- You're willing to invest some money to get the right attention.

The P in RAP: Your Property



Do a deep dive into the condition of your property and how you're presenting it. Why are things stagnant? Why aren't you getting any showings?

Understand where things are stopping.

If no one is interested in scheduling showings, you may want to look at how you're presenting your property. Check your pictures. The majority of prospective renters look at the pictures first.

An easy fix is lighting. The right lighting will dramatically improve your photos, so take those pictures during the day when you have plenty of natural light. If you have the time and money, get your property professionally photographed. Good pictures will make your property more competitive when people are deciding which homes to view.

Increase the number of showings with self-bookings.

Having someone there to coordinate the showings can get in the way. You're relying on two schedules, and the person who shows the property has to be available to take the call and get to the property on time.

If you have the opportunity for self-showings, you can invite prospective tenants to go over to the home at a time that's suitable. There's no back and forth to schedule the day and the hour, and there's less lag time.

During the time between the scheduling and the showing, a lot can happen. The prospective tenant can be further in with another property and they won't bother coming to look at your home. So, if you can condense that time between scheduling and arriving, you'll get more showings.

It's also a benefit because there's no sales pressure. Tenants won't feel like they're being followed around by an agent who is desperate to rent the home.

Most property managers will use a smart lock or a code box. Our data has shown that self-showings significantly increase the number of tenants who are coming through the funnel.

If people are scheduling showings and coming to see the property but they're not asking for an application or moving forward, take a hard look at your property condition.

Compare your home to the competition. If you have old appliances or you need a fresh coat of paint, people may move on to other properties. So perhaps you can invest and prioritize what needs a little extra attention. Take a look at each room in your property and your curb appeal.

Having a great rental property is often not good enough.

Check your RAP framework so you're analyzing rent in a comprehensive way. Check your advertising strategies and track your competition. Then, fully assess your property and make sure it shows well and is competitive.

A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

Chapter 3

Screening to Get the Best Tenants for Your Rental Property

The tenant you put into your property will have a direct impact on the type of rental experience you have as an owner.

That's why tenant screening is so important. If you don't screen thoroughly, you could end up with a tenant who doesn't pay rent or who damages your property. You could find yourself with a bad tenant who refuses to follow the terms of the lease or engages in illegal or disruptive activity in your property.

The best tenants are responsible, consistent, and reliable.



For the video, go [here](#).

They pay rent when it's due, they communicate when maintenance or repairs are needed, and they meet all of the expectations that are set forth in your lease agreement. They

stay in place for a long time and they treat your property as if it is their own.

How do you find these tenants?

You establish a great tenant screening process. We're talking about screening today.

Familiarize Yourself with the Fair Housing Act



As an owner, you should be familiar with the federal fair housing laws.

The Fair Housing Act mandates that we don't discriminate against any tenants or applicants. As you may know, the law establishes seven protected classes.

You cannot deny housing to anyone based on:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Sex
- Familial status
- Disability
- Religion

State and local laws are sometimes even stronger than the federal fair housing laws, so make sure you get to know any additional requirements in your specific market.

Violating fair housing laws is extremely costly. If a tenant or prospective tenant files a fair housing claim against you, there will be a lengthy investigation process and if you're found to have violated the law, you could be fined several thousands of dollars.

It's hard to recover from that type of a mistake.

So, make sure your tenant screening process is compliant. We recommend that you document it in writing and follow it consistently every time.

Digitizing and Automating the Screening Process



At Mynd Property Management, we take fair housing seriously, and we've implemented some processes that make it impossible to discriminate unintentionally. Our screening process is entirely digital. This is helpful and safe because it removes the human element and any biases that humans may have.

When tenants want to rent one of our properties, we ask for a current government-issued form of identification and two verifiable documents that prove income. We also ask for social security numbers so we can run our background and credit checks.

In many parts of the country, we get tenants who are foreign nationals. They often don't have the necessary documentation but they do have employment letters or verifiable income that's quite high. American companies often hire these individuals to work for them, and they're paid very well. Thus, they meet the screening standards we have in place.

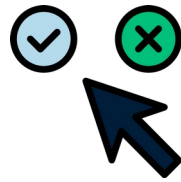
When we have the completed application and all the supporting documentation, we screen the applications and notify tenants of the results.

This process completely avoids any bias and keeps our owners safe from fair housing claims. When an application is submitted and screened, there is not a human interaction, so it's difficult to discriminate.

Your own bias, whatever that may be, cannot slip in and impact your decision-making process when it comes to choosing a tenant.

You're really looking for someone who qualifies, and this process accomplishes that.

Accepting and Declining Tenants



Our system runs a credit and a criminal check through Transunion. It also does a nationwide eviction check. The results will prove whether the applicant meets our criteria, and we can let the applicant know that they are approved for the property they want or whether we have to decline them.

Sometimes, it's very simple.

But sometimes, there are varying degrees of results. An applicant's results may fall somewhere between a tenant we'd accept and a tenant we'd decline. So, we have the option of making an offer that's conditional.

If there's something on the applicant's credit history that makes us nervous, we will ask for higher security deposit. They get a chance to live in the property they want, and our property owners are covered in case the tenant does not perform the way we expect.

There are often cases where a person simply does not fit into the cookie cutter situation where they can just hand over the required documents and sign the application with a photo ID. Not every application is clear and easy to screen.

That's where the human element has to come into play. At Mynd Property Management, we have a lot of people working in the leasing department, and we do a really great job of combining the digital element with the human element.

With our well-staffed and talented screening department, we can connect with prospects and work with them on anything that might be different in their situation.

No matter what type of situation the prospective tenant is facing, we can help make things a little bit easier for us and for them. With our team, there are a lot of eyes who can look at

information and analyze data to decide if someone will be a good tenant.



Sometimes, we have to be creative about collecting the required information and documentation. It might require more paperwork and it may mean we have to make a few extra phone calls. But, it puts us in a position of being customer service oriented. We can provide a lot of value to both our tenants and our rental property owners. We don't shy away from putting extra effort into the screening process. We know it's critical and we won't cut corners.

A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

Chapter 4

Tenant Move-In Checklist: What to do as an Owner

Congratulations!

You have found a great tenant to rent your property, and you thoroughly screened that tenant, and now you're expecting to have a positive and profitable rental experience.

Filling a vacancy can feel like a major accomplishment and it is. The marketing, showings, and screening process can be challenging and exhausting. Now that you have finished with that and you have a tenant, you're ready to get started on being a great owner.

But, what's next?



For the video, go [here](#).

Are you ready to have your tenant move into your property?

There are a few steps that you have to take before you hand over the keys and begin collecting rent checks every month.

The first thing you need to do is create a move-in checklist. All of these things have to be done before your tenant moves in. Once you've checked off all the items on this list, you're prepared and ready to be an owner.

Item No. 1: Health and Safety Issues



The first item on your list is to check for health and safety issues at the property.

If you find anything that may be hazardous to your tenants or their guests, address those issues right away. This could be something as simple as a loose handrail on steps or an electrical outlet that smokes when you plug something into it.

If flooring is buckling or carpet is pulling up and creating a trip hazard, you'll want to take care of that before anyone moves in.

Look for any signs of mold in the property. Check under your sinks and identify any soft spots or discoloration in walls and ceilings that may indicate there's a plumbing leak that isn't immediately evident.

Water can be especially damaging to property and if it's left untreated, it can lead to rot and mold. This may cause health issues to your tenants, so you want to get out ahead of it.

It's also important to check and test the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. It's imperative they work and that they're in places where they're needed. If your property was constructed before 1978, it's a good idea to check for lead paint as well. Don't forget to provide tenants with a copy of all

the legally required disclosures, especially concerning lead paint.

Item No. 2: Cleaning



The second task on your checklist is cleaning.

You need to clean your property well. This is critical if you're turning a unit or renting your property out for the first time.

Unless you're a really detailed cleaner, it's a good idea to hire a professional cleaning team to be sure it's thoroughly cleaned. You'll need to be detail-oriented before the tenants move in. So, clean behind the stove and under the stove. Pull out the fridge and clean behind that. Clean inside the appliances as well.

Everything has to look new. Whether it's a small unit or a large house - clean it well.

After you've cleaned the kitchen extremely well, turn your attention to the bathrooms. You want to really scrub the toilet, tub, and tiles.

Handing over a property that isn't perfectly clean will damage the relationship with your tenant before it even starts. You want a happy tenant from day one, so make sure the place is as clean as it can be.

Part of your cleaning process should include checking for pests. Have the property exterminated or treated so there aren't any pests or insects.

This is critical because you don't want your tenants complaining about bugs or rodents right after moving in. It doesn't set a great tone for the tenancy.

Item No. 3: Systems and Functions



Next on your checklist is to evaluate the systems and functions in your property.

The most important things are heat and plumbing and electricity. These are habitability issues, and so there's a legal element to checking them as well as a move-in checklist element. You want to be sure that there's heat and electricity.

Check all of the faucets and sinks and make sure the water is running and accessible too. A tenant cannot move into your home if any of these things are not working properly.

All of the utilities have to be set up and turned on as well. This might be your responsibility if you include utilities in the rent.

It might also be your tenant who is responsible for establishing and maintaining utility accounts. However you have it set up in your lease, make sure the heat comes on in all the rooms.

Look for any leaks or drips in the plumbing. Check each outlet in every room and make sure the electricity works every time something is plugged in.

Item No. 4: Lease Signing

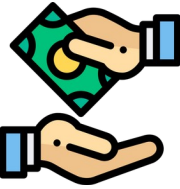


The next step is to review the lease agreement in detail and have the tenant sign it.

A lot of things can be automated during the leasing and management process, but we believe that it's always nice to review the agreement in person with your tenants. It allows you to meet one-on-one and discuss expectations and responsibilities. It will really cut down on misunderstandings and give each party a better idea of who they are working with.

We recommend that you go over each line item issue by issue. Take your time and answer any questions. Once you have gone over the entire lease agreement and answered all the questions your tenants may have, both parties need to sign and date it in person.

Item No. 5: Collecting Move-In Funds



Collect the first month's rent and the security deposit.

Each state has its own security deposit laws. For example in California, you can only charge up to two times the monthly rent for your deposit. In Arizona, you can only charge one-and-a-half times the monthly rent when you're collecting a deposit.

It's important that you comply with state laws regarding security deposits. This is an area that can create and cause a lot of disputes between owners and tenants.

If you're not sure what the law is when it comes to how much you collect and where you hold it, contact your local property management company or another expert in the field. You really want to avoid the expensive mistakes that can be made in the process of collecting, holding, and returning a tenant's security deposit.

Item No. 6: Inspections and Locks



The next item on your checklist is to have your rental property inspected if that's required by your local laws.

You may need to schedule a third-party inspector to come out and make sure the property is up to code. If any violations are noted, you'll need to make those corrections and schedule a follow-up inspection as soon as possible. Make sure you're prepared. If you're not sure whether an inspection is required, you'll want to find that out as soon as possible.

Always change the locks to your unit between tenants. In places like Texas, this is a legal requirement according to the property code. But, you should do it whether it's required by law or not.

Changing the locks is important because it ensures the safety of your tenants. You don't know how many keys the previous tenant gave out, so you don't know who may have them.

With a new lock, only you and your new tenants will have the keys. This will also protect you from liability that you could face if someone were to gain access to the house.

Item No. 7: Contact and Communication



Finally, you need to provide your tenant with all your contact information.

This is critical if you don't have a property manager. When you work with a management company, they will be the point of contact for your tenants. But, if you're self-managing, you'll need to be available to your

tenant at all times.

Share your phone numbers and your email address and any other way you want your tenant to reach you. It's acceptable for you to set boundaries for when they can contact you.

For example, if you don't want to be bothered before 9:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m., just tell your tenants that. However, if there's an emergency at the property, you'll have to be willing to respond at all hours.

Your tenants and your property need you to be available 24 hours a day if something goes wrong.

We know that you want to have a great rental experience and you want to provide a great rental experience for your tenants. This move-in checklist can put you on the right path. It will help you stay organized and be prepared for the full tenancy.

A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

Chapter 5

First Steps to Take When Your Tenant Doesn't Pay Rent

As an owner, you place tenants who you believe will pay rent on time, take care of your property and follow the terms of your lease. When rent suddenly doesn't come in, you might feel nervous and that's normal, but try not to panic. There could be a simple explanation.

We have a list of best practices that we use when rent is late. The process of collecting late rent will depend on where your rental property is and how you feel it's best to proceed.

**First Steps
to Take
When Your
Tenant
Doesn't Pay
Rent**



For the video, go [here](#).

Setting Yourself Up for Success



One of the best ways to deal with late rent payments is not to have any late rent payments at all.

When you're screening tenants, do everything you can to get an idea about whether they've paid rent on time in the past. A review of credit, rental, and eviction histories will usually tell you what you need to know.

Make sure you have a written lease agreement in place.

That lease agreement should include a clear and consistent rent collection policy. Your rent collection policy should state how much rent is due, when it is due, whether there's any kind of grace period in place, and where to send rent to make a payment.

The rent collection policy and the lease agreement should also include information about late fees and other penalties that will be enforced if rent is not paid.

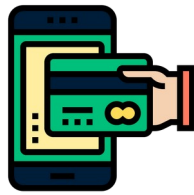
When you have late fees and penalties in place, make sure you enforce them consistently. You don't want to train your tenants to pay late. Show them how important it is to you that the rent comes in on time.

Don't let your tenants get away with late payments. If you accept a late payment one time without charging a late fee, your tenants will have no incentive to pay on time.

Offer Online Rent Payments

We strongly recommend that you provide a platform for tenants to make electronic payments.

You won't have to hear excuses like "the check is in the mail." You will also increase the likelihood of on-time rental payments, and you'll be able to track when those payments are made.

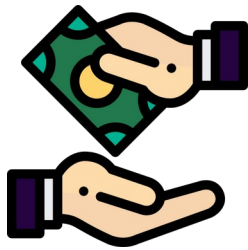


Tenants also appreciate the ease and efficiency of paying rent online or electronically. They can set up recurring payments or reminders so that they aren't late or running behind.

If you don't have the technology that allows for online rent payments, see if you can still accept electronic transfers. There are plenty of digital platforms such as Paypal, Apple Pay, and Zelle, among others.

When you give your tenants multiple ways to pay rent, you will increase the likelihood that you'll be paid on time.

Always Follow the Law



It's really important to know your local ordinances and state laws in terms of how you can collect late rent and what the timelines and steps are for the eviction process. There are normally a lot of things that happen between the rental due date and the eviction hearing in court.

Eviction Steps: Communicate with Tenants

If the rental due date comes and goes and any grace period has expired and you still haven't received the rent payment, there are a few things you can do.



First, be swift with communication. Reach out to your tenants via phone, text, or email. Try to get ahold of the tenant and ask where the payment is. Maybe they just paid the rent or they put it in the mail that morning. Find out what the situation is, especially if this is a tenant who usually pays on time without any issue.

You can wait a few days before you make a legal demand if you want to, especially if you're trying to preserve the relationship

you have with your tenants. As soon as a notice is served the situation can heighten.

If you have a tenant who is normally pretty great and this late payment is uncharacteristic, it might be better to give them a chance to pay before you escalate the situation.

However, if this is a tenant who routinely pays late or you have a specific rent collection process that you're committed to following, file the legal demand immediately. That's a good and valid option, too. It really depends on your relationship with the tenant and whether you have any confidence that rent will ultimately be paid.

Legal Notices and Payment Demands



When we talk about legal demand notices for rent, you need to remember that these are called different things, depending on the state that your rental property is located.

When we mention a legal demand notice, we're talking about the documentation you serve on the tenant to actually start the formal eviction process. In many states, this is a three or five day notice to pay rent or quit.

You're giving the tenant a written notice that rent is late and they have three or five days to either catch up with the late rent payment or move out of the property.

Usually, a delinquent tenant will respond and pay the rent as soon as they receive this notice because they don't want the eviction process to go any further.

Again, this process varies by state. Make sure you know what kind of notice you need to serve, how you need to deliver it to your tenant, and what sort of documentation you need to get the process going.

The creation and delivery of this demand for payment is critical and you may have to show proof that it was done later on if

the issue goes to court. So, make sure you know the requirements. If you're unsure about how to proceed, seek legal advice or talk to a property manager.



Once you've served the notice, if the tenants don't respond or pay within the stated time period, you have a couple of options on how to proceed.

The market you're in definitely matters.

It's important to know your jurisdiction and whether the eviction process will be quick or slow. In some states, it will take two to four months before you even get a court date. This will be expensive for you because the tenant won't be paying rent for those months.

In other jurisdictions, there could be a mediation requirement before you can get a court date. In cases like these, it might be worth your time and resources to try something new.

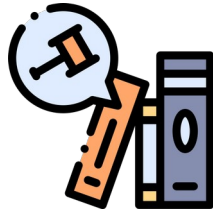
You could try to set up some kind of payment plan with your tenants. Maybe you can come to an agreement so that the tenant gets back on track and you can avoid the time and expense of a legal process.

If you do reach a payment plan agreement, make sure you put it in writing. Have both parties sign it and then enforce it. If the tenant does not meet the requirements of the payment plan, you'll want to move forward with the eviction.

Knowing the legal complexities or simplicities will help you make the best decisions when you're attempting to collect late rent. If you have to wait for two to four months and there are high filing court fees, so be creative. You might want to settle with your tenant in another way.

For example, you could find yourself in an extreme circumstance where you just want to get the property back. You could offer to waive the overdue rent and just let the tenant move out without an eviction on their record. Stipulate that you want the property returned in good condition, and

then just let them go and cancel the lease. This may be more cost-effective if you have a lengthy court process looming.



No matter where your rental property is, it's important that you know the laws there. Even a small mistake during the eviction process can get your case thrown out. And then you'll have to start over and you'll just lose more time and money doing it again.

The process of collecting rent and filing for eviction can be complex. You're absolutely required to follow the law. You cannot change the locks on the tenant or turn off the utilities. You cannot make threats.

Stay professional and remove the emotions you may be feeling from the matter. Trust the legal process or work directly with the tenant to get what you want – whether that's caught up payments or possession of the property.

Unfortunately, when it comes to eviction, you have to be an expert. If you're not an expert, we strongly recommend that you consult with an attorney. Also, you should make sure you participate in your local apartment association.

A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

Chapter 6 Avoiding and Handling Security Deposit Disputes

Security deposits can be one of the most contentious areas of an owner and tenant relationship.

Usually, disputes come down to misunderstandings and poorly communicated expectations. There are also different sets of laws and regulations from state to state and city to city.

Wherever you happen to be renting out property – avoiding security deposit disputes should be a priority.

Mistakes are expensive when it comes to security deposits, and you want to know how to handle tenants who are pushing back against charges you have made.



For the video, go [here](#).

Best Practices for Avoiding Disputes



The first thing you can do to avoid security deposit disputes is to set clear and consistent expectations.

This begins when your tenant moves into the property. It continues through the lease period and then it's reinforced when the tenant decides to move out or you decide not to renew the lease.

Talk to your tenant about what you'll expect the property to look like when they move out. Include this information in your lease agreement, and when notice is given from either party that the tenancy will end, be sure to reiterate those expectations.

Provide a list of things that the tenant needs to do to get the full security deposit back. This will give them plenty of time to return the property to the same condition it was in when they took possession.

Document Condition with Inspection Reports



Documentation is pretty important when you're moving a tenant in and moving a tenant out. Before a tenant moves into the property, do a thorough walk-through and a move-in inspection report.

You and the tenant need to walk through the property and document the condition of the unit. When both of you sign off on that inspection report, you're agreeing to how the property looks.

You can use that same inspection form during the move-out, and then compare the condition at each time.

You want the property returned in the same condition it was in when your tenants moved in, except for the normal and expected wear and tear. Your tenants should understand this.

Pictures can supplement the inspection report and are excellent to include. When you can document the condition of your property with pictures, you'll be able to prove that there was damage or changes to the property during the lease period.

Provide an Opportunity to Remediate



Along with setting clear expectations at the start and end of the tenancy, you also want to give tenants an opportunity to remediate and address any conditions before they move out.

Give them notice so they know what types of things you will deduct for when you're reviewing the security deposit return.

In some states, like California, you're required to do a pre move-out walk-through with your tenants so you can point out any deductions that they may be subjected to. In California, owners are required to do this, but we think it's a good idea for all owners to do it, even if your state doesn't require it.

When you offer this to tenants, there can be no surprises from the tenant when part or all of their security deposit is withheld.

Mutually coordinate a time to walk through the property together, and then itemize any issues you see so the tenants have the information they need. They have an opportunity to cure the problem before leaving.

It's a great practice to adopt, whether it's required in your state or not. This helps you to avoid disputes and it adds transparency. Your tenants can decide if they want to do any additional cleaning or address the problems you've pointed out, or if they'll move out knowing they'll have some of their deposit withheld.

Document the Money Spent



Another thing that's critical to avoiding disputes is the documentation of any money you spend on the cleaning or repair of your property after a tenant moves out.

If you do have to do some work after a tenant leaves and you're going to charge the security deposit, make sure you have invoices and appropriate bills and receipts to back up those charges.

This will go along with the security deposit accounting statement to the tenant who has moved out. Be clear about the deductions you've made and the balance that the tenant is getting back, and have supporting documents to match.

It's important to remember that these best practices must layer in with knowing the statutory requirements in your jurisdiction. Each state will have a requisite timeframe for owners to return the security deposit and the accounting to the tenant.

You need to know what your timeline is so you don't make the mistake of missing it.

Usually, you'll need to return the money and/or the itemized deduction list to your tenants within 15 to 30 days of their move-out date. It depends on where your rental property happens to be.

In California, for example, owners have 21 days to either return the deposit or provide an accounting of where the deposit was spent.

While you're researching your state's requirements, remember that you also need to know if there are any requirements or limitations on the amount of money you can charge in a security deposit.

Some states have a multiple of monthly rent that's followed when deposits are collected.

In California, you cannot collect more than two times the monthly rent for a security deposit. Some states also have limits on the amount you can collect in pet deposits and cumulative deposits. Usually, they are aggregated with a total deposit amount.

Why You Might Charge the Deposit



You need to understand what's appropriate for reductions, and these things are pretty similar everywhere.

Owners can withhold security deposit for unpaid rent, any repairs to the property for damages caused by abuse, misuse, or neglect, and any cleaning that's required to bring the property back to the level of cleanliness it was in when the home was rented out.

All of this is subject to wear and tear.

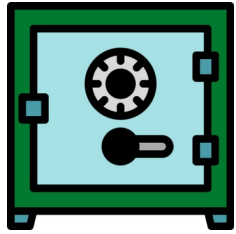
Owners cannot charge the security deposit for general wear and tear that happens to every property, regardless of who is living in it. The courts also expect you to amortize big ticket items like paint and flooring over the lifespan of that thing.

If a floor has to be repaired after five years and your tenant only lived there for two and a half years, you'll have to amortize the amount of what they owe. They shouldn't have to pay the full flooring replacement cost.

You have to understand the penalties involved in security deposit disputes.

Be aware of them because a lot of times, there's a multiplier that's implemented by the courts. These statutory penalties can be steep. If you don't comply with the law and you don't have the required documentation, or you miss the deadline to return a security deposit, you can find yourself paying the tenant one, two, or even three times the amount of the security deposit as a penalty.

Managing Security Deposit Disputes



If you are in a security deposit dispute, there are a few things you can do to resolve it.

Do your best to talk to your former tenants and reach an informal settlement. If you can't resolve things, your case may end up in a small claims lawsuit or a hearing; local rules decide how the dispute or the claim is handled.

The first thing you should do is double-check the charges you made. Determine whether you made appropriate deductions or if they were over-reaching in terms of property condition when you initially leased it.

Review whether you complied with all statutory regulations. If you didn't, it will be very hard to defend yourself in court. For example, if you didn't provide an itemization within the requisite time period, you'll probably have a losing case even if you were justified in what you deducted.

Set clear expectations when your tenant moves in, and then reiterate those expectations when your tenant is preparing to move out. The best way to manage a security deposit dispute is to avoid it.

A-Z Guide for Attracting and Keeping Great Tenants

Conclusion

If we've done our job correctly with this eBook, you now feel a bit more comfortable about how you will find, keep, and communicate with exceptional tenants.

There's a lot of information here; fair housing rules, marketing best practices, ideas for getting your home rented faster, and some important information about approaching eviction and avoiding security deposit disputes.

In every rental market across the country, the landscape is changing quickly. As a rental property owner, you have to be knowledgeable and flexible. You also need a great team of experts to help you when you get stuck.

We'd love to be on your team. Contact us at Mynd Property Management to talk more about tenants, rental properties, and anything else you'd like.