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## Renovating and Prepping for Rental

Once you have a property, you're one step closer to raking in rental income - so now it's time to take stock of your property and make repairs as needed before welcoming your first tenant.



# Inspect Every Room

If you just purchased your rental, you likely had an inspection as part of the property sale. If you're adapting your existing residence, it's critical to evaluate the space through the eyes of a potential tenant. What parts of the house may be confusing or difficult for someone who's walking into it for the first time?

## Common property issues that could impact your unit's rentability include:

- Roof leaks
- Sagging/clogged gutters
- Leaky faucets, toilets, etc.
- Faulty electrical outlets
- Missing outlet covers
- Broken blinds
- Unpainted walls
- Holes in drywall
- Drafty windows/doors
- Slow-draining bathtubs, showers, washers, etc.
- Build-up in vents, HVAC, etc.

Fixing these known problems while the property's vacant will be much easier than trying to work around a tenant. If you're not comfortable taking on the work, find a reliable handyperson to help out!

**Pro Tip:** Test all of your appliances to ensure they're working properly before anyone moves in.

# Keep Safety at the Forefront

Adding safety measures protects both your tenants and your investment - so don't skimp out!

**Make sure your rental has:**



- ✓ Smoke detectors
- ✓ Carbon monoxide detectors
- ✓ A fire extinguisher
- ✓ A first aid kit
- ✓ Handrails accompanying all stairs
- ✓ Working door and window locks

Go above and beyond by creating a one-page laminate that lists the location of the detectors, extinguisher, water shut-off, fuse box, and any other critical information your tenant might need in an emergency. Add magnets to your laminated page so it can live on the refrigerator, making it easily accessible for all who need it.

# Updates to Protect Your Property

Seasoned landlords know there are certain features you don't want your rental to have. Let's take a look at upgrades that make your life easier in the long term.

- **Say goodbye to carpeting.** Carpet thins over years of use and can look dingy long before then. Instead, have wood or vinyl flooring installed. A good laminate material can give the look and feel of wood for significantly less money!
- **Welcome Energy-Star-certified appliances.** Even if you're not paying the heating bill, Energy Star-certified appliances meet strict energy efficiency standards set by the EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy. Climate-minded tenants will thank you. Plus, these kinds of machines need less maintenance over time.
- **Don't be blinded - get curtains instead.** Landlords aren't typically required to provide window coverings, but your renters will love having the extra privacy. But many landlords advise against vinyl blinds. They easily break and look janky quickly - so opt for curtains (in low-moisture rooms) and shades (in high-moisture spaces).



- **Install ceiling fans.** At minimum, a ceiling fan in each bedroom and one in the main living room will keep your rental temperate through every season.
- **Don't skimp on moisture sensors.** Is excessive moisture a concern? Buy some moisture sensors from Amazon or your local hardware store, then install them in places your tenant won't be every day - like the attic, crawl space, sites of past mold infestations, etc. Knowing when something has sprung a leak will make fixing it that much easier!
- **Paint your walls.** Beyond the fact that a freshly painted room feels more appealing, paint acts as a barrier between mold and your drywall. Leave no wall naked. If your walls are covered but haven't been touched up in a while, now is the perfect time to grab a brush.



Want to amp up the ROI on your rental? Check out these [easy-to-implement upgrades](#).



If you invest wisely in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life."

- *Frank Loyd Wright, American architect*

# Don't Forget the Exterior

Curb appeal makes a critical first impression on potential renters - so don't ignore the outside of your property.

## Make sure to:

- ✓ Powerwash the exterior
- ✓ Touch up the landscaping, with an eye toward low-maintenance plants
- ✓ Consider adding a tree or two
- ✓ Cut the grass
- ✓ Make sure the sidewalk is accessible and usable
- ✓ Add handrails to steps and stairs as needed
- ✓ Clean the gutters
- ✓ Ensure the house and unit numbers are clearly visible from the street



# Clean Up

No one wants to live in someone else's mess. Whether you're moving someone into your home or you're setting up a brand-new rental, take the time to make a clean slate for your tenant.



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**DIY:** [Better Homes and Garden](#) suggests decluttering before grabbing your mop and bucket. Then, start from the highest point of each room and clean downward - meaning you would wipe down the ceiling fan, then clean the cabinets, the counters, the appliances, and the floor, in that order. Move any heavy furniture out of the way to complete your clean.

**Hire a Professional:** This move may pay off in the long run, since you'll want someone to deep clean after your tenant eventually moves out. Test out a local pro by hiring them to clean the empty unit from top to bottom. We recommend using someone who is licensed and bonded (if required in your state). Don't be shy about asking your friends, family, and fellow investors for a recommendation!

**Pro Tip:** Whether you're buying your own cleaning supplies or hiring a team of cleaners, you can deduct these expenses from your taxes. [Learn more about tax strategies you should employ as a landlord.](#)





The best way to get things done is to simply begin."

*- Joanna Gaines, interior designer and author*



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