



**RENTAL
PROPERTY
INSPECTION
: A
COMPLETE
GUIDE FOR
TENANTS**

ABSTRACT

Are you renting your home? Rental inspections are part and parcel of most tenancies, but they're often a cause of stress for renters who don't know what to expect (or what's expected of them). Use this rental inspection guide to stay on top of the basic expectations, and you'll ace your next visit from the property manager/landlord.

INTRODUCTION

A routine inspection is a visit that may be carried out by your property manager/landlord to ensure your rental is being cared for and that any maintenance and repairs are being reported.

In Australia, these inspections are standard and, in most cases, will occur several times a year. Property managers carry out these visits as part of their responsibility to the property owner for two main reasons:

- To ensure your rental property is being cared for; and
- To make sure any repair/maintenance issues are reported/addressed.

Importantly, your property manager/landlord can't just turn up and inspect your home or tell you they're coming around the next day. By law, they must provide you with adequate notice. Here's how it works in each state & territory

I. Tenants Rights and Responsibilities in Australia Explained

One of the biggest challenges facing investment property owners is trusting a tenant with their prized investment. The constant possibility of a tenant trashing the property, refusing to pay rent, or engaging in long battles over repairs can be a nightmare for property owners.



And in the event that damage is done - in the form of cracked windows, pest-infested kitchens, or broken appliances - who is responsible for the property maintenance and repair costs? While Australian Property Law states the specific liabilities of each party in situations like these, this crucial knowledge is too often overlooked.

This complex web of tenants' rights and responsibilities can be incredibly confusing and challenging to wrap your head around. Today, we'll uncover some of the most common problems and questions surrounding this issue so that you're crystal-clear about what you're entitled to, and what your obligations are. This way, if disputes do arise, you'll be able to rest assured knowing you've covered all your bases.

State-by-state breakdown of tenant and landlord responsibilities

For a property owner with their hard-earned investment on the line, it goes without saying that any foreseeable problems should be prevented from the outset. The most effective way to prevent those dreaded tenant-owner disputes is to make sure both you *and* your tenants are on the same page about your respective rights and responsibilities - from the very beginning.

The most basic responsibilities you can expect your tenant to fulfill include:

- Respecting the neighbours
- Keeping the property clean
- Notifying you of any maintenance issues
- Respecting the details of the tenancy agreement

At the same time, there are also a number of things that your tenants can expect from you. These include:

- Ensuring the property is clean, secure, and livable upon move-in. This includes conducting pre-lease pest control, gas & electricity installation, security and lock setups, and smoke alarm maintenance
- Keeping the property in the same condition as when the tenant moved in
- Responding to tenants' maintenance & repair requests in a timely manner
- Respecting tenants' right to quiet enjoyment of the property
- Ensuring a constant utility supply

However, tenants' rights and responsibilities vary from state to state in Australia, meaning that you need to take extra care especially if you have properties in more than one state.

Here's a breakdown of the most common responsibilities that trip up Aussie owners and tenants to help you get a sense of what's expected in each state:

Tenant and landlord responsibilities by state in Australia

Tenants' rights in NSW: Fair Trading

Tenants' rights in VIC: Consumer Affairs

Tenants' rights in QLD: Residential Tenancies Authority

Tenants' rights in ACT: ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Tenants' rights in TAS: Consumer, Building and Occupational Services .

Tenants' rights in SA: Consumer and Business Services.

Tenants' rights in NT: Consumer Affairs.

Tenants' rights in WA: Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety.

The guide to conducting rental inspections

A lot of tenancy disputes arise when move-out day rolls around, because that's often when people realise that there were issues that hadn't been rectified early enough.

To make sure that the property's being maintained as it should, owners and property managers are entitled to conduct routine inspections.

Why is it important to conduct property inspections?

- To ensure the tenant is taking care of the property.
- To identify and address underlying repair/maintenance issues.
- To carry out urgent repairs or appliance replacements.

What do property managers look for during an inspection?

It's important to know what to keep an eye out for during property inspections so that you know you're covering all your bases. Here's a rental inspection checklist containing the most noteworthy things that property managers look out for:



- Check for any damage or dampness in the walls.
- Check the condition of appliances and safety features like smoke alarms.
- Check wet areas for issues like leaks or mould.
- Ensure the property is reasonably clean and undamaged.
- Ensure that gardens are maintained, and the lawn is mowed, watered, and weeded.
- Make sure the number of tenants is restricted to the names on the lease.
- Confirm that the rental agreement is being respected, with no unapproved pets on the property.

While routine inspections aren't as detailed as ingoing and outgoing property inspections, you might find it useful to refer to your previous inspection report while you're doing your walkthrough of the property. For owners, keeping this report on hand is a helpful way to remind themselves of the areas they should pay particular attention to; for tenants, it can be used as a rental inspection checklist to prepare for a routine home inspection.

In the case that you don't have your report at the ready, here's a tenancy condition report from NSW Fair Trading which you can use for reference.

Rental inspections: tenants' rights by state in Australia

While owners and property managers are entitled to conduct routine inspections, each state has its own restrictions on how often these can happen. After all, the property is legally the tenants' home, and their space and privacy need to be respected.

Apart from keeping the number of routine inspections to a reasonable minimum, there are also certain rules and boundaries to follow. Before knocking on your tenants' door with your property inspection checklist in hand, you need to make sure you've given them the right amount of notice. This can range from 24 hours to 14

days, depending on the state - but when in doubt, refer to the table above where we've broken down the responsibilities of tenants and owners by state.

There are also certain boundaries to respect while you're walking through the property. Shannyn shares the pointers that property managers keep in mind when conducting an inspection:

How do property managers look after the rights and responsibilities of owners and tenants?

For everyday owners and tenants who aren't well-versed in tenancy law and legal jargon, property managers act as the middlemen who ensure that both parties uphold their respective ends of the agreement.

On the one hand, property managers will manage the owner's legal duties to the tenant, to ensure that they're well looked-after. After all, no owner would be thrilled at the prospect of going to the tribunal for a tenancy complaint.

On the other, they'll also make sure that the tenant is respectful of the property so that the owner isn't faced with excessive maintenance costs or complaints from the neighbours.

How can property managers help?

They make sure you and your tenants are on the same page

They ensure that, prior to the tenancy, both you and your tenants are crystal-clear about your respective rights and responsibilities. What's fair wear and tear, and what's considered damage? Who is responsible if mould develops in the bedrooms? By making sure that you're on the same page, you'll reduce the chance of disputes down the track.

They nip bad practices in the bud

They point out possible problems the tenant can fix to prevent future damages, such as dirty kitchens, insufficient ventilation in bathrooms, trampolines on grass, etc.

They can prevent any out of lease activities from happening

They look for unapproved pets or tenants living on your property and keep a check on any illegal activities taking place on the premises.

They help avert future conflicts between you and the tenant

They keep a check on the property's cleanliness and raise possible maintenance and damage issues that can be fixed during the tenancy to reduce the chance of end of lease disputes.

They make sure the legal rights of tenants are maintained without conflict

They help maintain boundaries during rental property inspections and maintenance checks, manage any payment issues, and listen to any problems that might arise, keeping tenants happy and paying rent over the long term!

They make sure you've covered all your bases

They make sure your tenants' rights are respected to the tee, so that you've upheld your end of the tenancy agreement and won't be liable if any conflicts do arise.



II. How To Conduct Regular Inspections To Protect The Value Of Your Rental Property

One question consistently at the top of any property owner's or investor's mind is, "How do I protect the value of my rental?"

The second way is to conduct inspections — and do so regularly. Inspections are done by the landlord or person assigned to that task by management. As a landlord, I always went to my rental properties monthly to collect rents, which allowed me to observe the property's condition. But now that rent collection can be automated, many investors have property management companies that manage their rentals, and in that case, regular inspections should be included in the contract.



Whether the owner or property manager conducts the inspection, the inspector should review the property inside and out with the tenant present so that deficiencies can be noted. The inside inspection should check the condition of appliances, plumbing and light fixtures; identify leaks; and check the general cleanliness of the place. The outside inspection should evaluate the paint and exterior surfaces, yard maintenance, the roof, fencing, pet droppings, yard care (if this is done by the tenant) and general appearance (think: no yard art).

I suggest that the landlord or property manager start with more frequent inspections with new tenants. If there is going to be a problem with the new tenant caring properly for the property, you will find it right away. Then you can actually “train” a new tenant as to what you expect when taking care of the property if you find problems at the first or second inspection.

An initial general inspection should be conducted at three months for every new tenant. This first inspection sets the expectation that you will find the place clean and in as good condition as it was when they moved in. Inspectors can also get an idea of how their tenant experience has been. If the inspection has good results, then you can wait longer before the next one — say, six months. If the inspection reveals a problem the tenant must address, issue a notice to have the problem remedied within a certain number of days and schedule a follow-up inspection for compliance with that notice. Failure to care for the property may be grounds to cancel your tenant's lease. Be sure that any tenant failing an inspection understands that.

After you have found that the tenant is doing a good job of keeping the place clean, caring for appliances, etc., you may want to move to either six-month or yearly inspections. An inspection should be done before the lease is offered for renewal or six to eight weeks before the lease expires, depending upon the amount of notice that your state requires for termination of a lease agreement.

The Importance Of Regular Inspections

It does not take long for the condition of a valuable rental property to go south. One potential result of not conducting inspections is that the tenant signed to the lease actually moves out and lets other people into the unit as unapproved subletters. The old tenant collects rent from the new tenants (who are not identified on any lease) and then pays the landlord who has no knowledge of the arrangement. In one situation I know of, when this was finally discovered, there was horrible damage done to that unit — the cost to repair was over \$25,000. The original tenant declared bankruptcy and could not be made responsible for the damage done. It fell totally on the landlord to repair the property.

Without inspections, there may also be unauthorized additional people or pets living in units. In these situations, there is often excessive wear and tear on the whole place. If pets are not taken outside (which may happen when the tenant does not want their pet to be discovered), carpets, floors, walls and doors can suffer huge damage. I have seen rental homes where three to five families live in one residence. Many problems can arise: tenants park on the lawn because there isn't enough designated parking for all parties, or toilets and sewer lines become damaged or need to be replaced. In these cases, police may simply instruct the owner to file a civil case against the tenant for eviction. This could result in a months-long process to get a judgment, and during that time, more damage may be done by retaliatory tenants who aren't able to repay the cost of repairs.

But these situations can be avoided with regular inspections. The process can be made simple by including inspection frequency and even dates in the lease agreement when the new tenant signs. Language can include giving the landlord/manager permission to enter the property if notice of the inspection is given but the tenant is not present at the appointed time. You can also use an addendum to be specific about what is expected of the tenant when caring for the property.

A Note On Commercial Properties

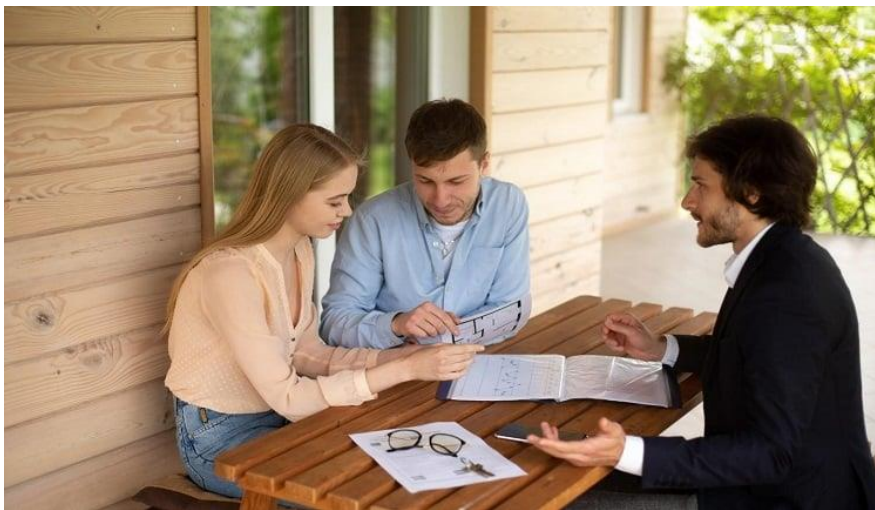
Commercial inspections are different from residential inspections. Usually, there are normal inspections scheduled for HVAC, elevators, the roof, heating systems and plumbing in the building that do not affect the tenants directly. But inspections of actual spaces usually relate to the terms outlined in the lease agreement and are to prove compliance.

For example, does the signage of the business conform to terms set forth in the lease? In triple net leases, the maintenance responsibilities are assigned to the tenant, not the landlord. So, inspections may center around the maintenance of plumbing, adequate exit corridors for fire codes and ensuring that codes are followed in the construction of tenant improvements. Most commercial inspections are conducted by professionals who can report any code violations to the local authorities.

Whether you own commercial or residential properties, regular inspections can ensure the care and safety of your valuable investment and help avoid unnecessary costs related to the failure of that care.

III. 10 ways to impress a rental property manager

Ever wondered why your rental applications keep getting rejected? There's nothing more disappointing than traipsing around the open houses and inspections, filling in all the paper work and still ending up empty handed.



You might have your heart set on renting a stylish apartment, classic city terrace or country cottage, and either way, being prepared and making a good first impression can help you seal the deal. Brad Jacobs from Boutique Property Agents has offered his insider knowledge and tips to get your application to the top of the pile.

1. Be prepared

Download or request an application form prior to the open – most agents will have this available on their website or will be happy to email it to you. A lot of Sydney agents are using the website [1form.com](https://www.1form.com) for applications, speak to the agent prior to see if they will accept it.

2. Fill it in

Ensure your application form is completed in full so if you're happy at the inspection, you can submit it straight away. Don't forget to check the required documents and 100 points ID as your application cannot be considered without these elements.

3. Have backup ready

Ask your current agent for a copy of your rental ledger to provide with your application and a reference letter if they are happy to provide one to submit with your application.

4. Don't hesitate

Make your start date is as close to the availability date as possible. Even if you can't move on that specific day – the cost of a few days or even a week of paying double rent is minimal in the big scheme of things.

5. Don't forget anyone

Make sure all tenants/occupants put in an application. The more income coming into the property the better and also makes everyone responsible. Many think more people will reflect badly but it's the opposite as long as the property will not be over occupied.

6. Give your reference a heads up

Advise your employer they will be getting a call to confirm your employment. Sometimes the HR team need written approval from the employee, and if they don't have it, it can delay the confirmation of your employment.



7. Give it a year

Applying to rent for 12 months or a longer lease is always better than 6 months.

8. Supporting docs

Provide good quality supporting documents to support your application. These include, a copy of your Passport (and potentially a visa if you're a non-resident),

Driver license or photo ID, recent bank statements or savings accounts with balance of funds, employment contract and a minimum of two recent payslips.

9. Don't dally

Get your application in as soon as possible.

10. First impressions

Present yourself well at the open house and make sure you meet the agent on site!

IV. How To Create A Schedule For Your End Of Lease Cleaning

Planning is one of the crucial steps that can help you achieve desired goals in an organized manner. When vacating the rented apartment or house, thoroughly inspect all rooms, check your entry condition report and create a cleaning checklist.

A tenant or renter is obligated to fulfil all their duties, such as paying rent on time, doing necessary repairs, returning keys, notifying the landlord before the exit, and performing a thorough end of lease cleaning Canberra. You need to ensure that the property matches the entry condition report. Thoroughly spruce up the entire premises if you want to get your full bond money.



Here is a complete guide on creating a schedule for your end of lease cleaning to save you time and energy. Pay attention to the right processes and impress your fussy landlord during rental inspection.

Let's Get Started!

1. Inspect The Property Using Entry Condition Report

A property condition report is a pivotal element of any residential tenancy in ACT. It outlines the current condition of the rented premises at the start and end of a lease. The landlord inspects the property to prepare a condition report and hands over two copies to the tenant within seven days of the tenant moving into the property.

Tenants have the right to disagree with the condition mentioned within the report. They have seven days to note their changes or additions within both copies and return one copy to the landlord.

You can use the same report to inspect the entire property before the end of your tenancy. This will give you a clear picture of what needs to be done for safe retrieval of the bond amount. Condition reports are used as evidence in security deposits or bond disputes and may be used:

- If a landlord has provided the property in a clean and well maintained state.
- If a tenant has returned it in the same condition as when they moved in, fair wear and tear is accepted.

Inspect all nooks and crannies with the entry condition report and jot down the areas or surfaces that need to be cleaned thoroughly.

2. Write Down A Deep Cleaning Plan

Once you have a clear picture of what needs to be cleaned, prepare a thorough plan to achieve sparkling results within a given timeframe.



Professional end of lease cleaners Canberra usually spruce up the entire property depending on its size and condition. If you are doing it yourself, you should set out a plan for each room, especially the kitchen and bathrooms because you don't know what property managers look for in a rental inspection.

Note: If you are planning to hire professional cleaners, book them at least 3-4 weeks in advance to get the service at the most reasonable price.

3. Arrange All The Necessary Cleaning Supplies

After that, stock up on all the necessary cleaning products and tools in a cleaning caddy. This will save you a lot of time. Make sure you have the following cleaning supplies:

- A HEPA-filtered vacuum machine
- Microfiber cloths
- Dusters and paper towels
- Sponges and brushes
- Squeegee
- An old toothbrush
- Dish soap
- Vinegar
- Baking soda
- Hydrogen peroxide
- EPA-approved disinfectants
- Buckets
- Spray bottles
- Rubber gloves

Note: Do not use store-bought cleaners because these products contain toxic chemicals that can lead to health hazards. Instead, use environmentally-friendly products, such as vinegar and baking soda that are safe for your home, the environment and your well-being.

4. Remove Large And Heavy Furniture

It becomes quite difficult to clean the rented property with all the large furniture extensively. Professionals always recommend that customers remove all the large pieces, such as tables, chairs and sofas, before arriving. This reduces distraction and makes removing dust and dirt from every nook and cranny easy.

5. Start With Your Kitchen

It is the dirtiest area on the entire property. Dirty and greasy surfaces can harbour harmful germs and bacteria. So, it is always good to start the end of lease cleaning process with your kitchen. You can follow a top-to-bottom approach and perform the following tasks:



- Remove accumulated dust and grime from an exhaust fan
- Clean inside, outside and top of your cupboards, shelves and cabinets. It is important to know which cleaning products you should avoid on marble
- Clean and disinfect cabinet handles
- Wash windows
- Remove oil splatters, burnt food particles and stubborn stains from your oven and microwave
- Clean inside and out your fridge and dishwasher
- Wipe down the stove top, knobs and the countertop
- Unclog garbage disposal
- Clean and sanitise the sink and faucets
- Polish backsplash
- Sweep and mop the floor.

Note: Follow the REIACT-approved checklist to cover all surfaces and pass the inspection with ease.

6. Deep Clean Your Bathrooms On Time

Head to your bathrooms and remove stubborn stains and soap scum using vinegar and warm water. Make sure you pay attention to the following tasks:

- Exhaust fan or vents
- Shower head, shower walls, glass door and curtains
- Remove stains from your bathtub
- Remove brown stains from toilet bowl and rim area
- Remove limescale from faucets and sinks
- Polish mirrors
- Mop the floor.

7. Pay Attention To Your Living Room

Start from the ceiling fan and vents to remove accumulated dust and grime. Use microfiber cloths to fetch dust and use a vacuum cleaner to clean blinds, carpets and rugs. You can follow this checklist for better outcomes:

- Remove cobwebs from ceiling fans, walls and light fixtures
- Clean air vents
- Wash windows inside and out
- Vacuum blinds and door tracks
- Spot clean switches and power plugs
- Remove stains from baseboards
- Vacuum carpets
- Mop the floor

8. Clean The Patio Area And Garage Walls

Do not forget to clean the patio area and garage floors and walls. Remove debris and dried leaves using a broom. You can wipe down your patio furniture if required.

You can contact professionals if you need pest control services or a detailed end of lease cleaning Canberra to get the full bond back.

Using the above schedule, you can thoroughly clean every corner of your rented property without stress. This will help you achieve great outcomes in a streamlined way before the end of your tenancy. If your landlord is still unhappy, book the best bond cleaners in Canberra and pass the rental inspection.

V. 10 tips to refresh your rental kitchen that your landlord will be down for



Many of us love spending time in the kitchen, especially if we're playing with different ingredients to create some mouthwatering recipes for dinner parties and most importantly, ourselves. Some of us, however, may live in smaller spaces where we may feel it to be quite tight to spend time in our kitchen cooking and more. Not to mention, boring looking, if the decor is plain and simple.

With that said, some of us may want to give our small kitchen a makeover for it to feel a little more spacious than it usually does or for it to simply look innovative and cool. All it takes is some knowledge on simple renovations and refreshing the space productively, as well as upkeep it to be your creative space since that's where all the cooking is done.

We had the pleasure of speaking with interior designer Ling Law, of Ling Interiors, who provided us with her tips and tricks to refresh a small kitchen without having to go all out on hardcore renovations.

Changing the paint color

You'll be surprised at how paint color can improve the mood in the room. If you are renting and want a quick refresh, selecting a new paint color will be an instant fix on your walls or cabinets. Try to pick a neutral and off-white paint color if you'd like the space to feel light and airy. White Dove by Benjamin Moore is always Law's go-to for white, as it is soft yet creamy with a very settled grey undertone and goes pretty much with everything.



Adding or changing lighting fixtures

Decorative lighting is also a great item to update the look and feel of a space. Adding pendant lights above the island and a chandelier above the dining table not

only makes the space visually appealing but also enhances the ambience of the space.

Out with the old hardware and in with the new

Swapping out the kitchen cabinet hardware can also give an updated look. If you'd like a more modern look, try to find some hardware that has simpler and cleaner lines. If you're leaning towards a more traditional or transitional look, try to pick something with a little more detail and don't be afraid to mix in with the pulls and knobs to make the hardware look more interesting.

Look into open shelving

Empty kitchen walls call for adding shelves. When incorporating shelves into a blank wall, you could display your cookbook assortment as well as glassware. To add a touch of glam, you could include minimal or decorative shelf brackets.

Give your countertops some cover

A fast and effective way to refresh kitchen countertops is by covering a portion of your counter with a large slab of marble or cutting board. This will work well if your objective is to hide any minimal damage your countertops have.

Include a kitchen runner

Breaking up your flooring by incorporating a runner in front of your cabinets is a neat way to add a pop of color to your small kitchen. This idea is beneficial for those who don't want to waste money on replacing their floors, as a runner can distract your guests from looking down at cracked kitchen tiles.



Put your favorite items on display

A fun and cool way to refresh your small kitchen is to turn your favorite pieces into décor. Rather than tossing items away in cabinets, place your favorite plates, bowls, cups, tile spoon, and other items of preference on display. You could always hang your chic-looking pans from a mounted rack on the wall. Also, hanging art on empty wall spaces or investing in some plants and flowers will give your small kitchen some vibrancy.

Replace appliances

Although replacing your kitchen appliances may not be as budget-friendly, ordering a new stove or chic-looking fridge could give your small kitchen some life. All you have to do is order your appliances and have them installed by the representatives who are in charge of the delivery and viola!

Get a new faucet

Give your small kitchen some sparkle by investing in a new faucet. With an old-looking faucet, your kitchen will just look plainer than ever. Even if your faucet isn't rusty or leaking at the moment, a bright and shiny fresh faucet is like adding a rare coveted jewel to your small kitchen.

CONCLUSION

While rarely convenient, rental inspections are a necessary part of the residential property system in order to protect property owners.

99% of tenants and landlords work well together to ensure a property is maintained and tenants can take a few easy steps to prepare a property, however it's still important to remember the rules that govern what landlords and tenants can and can't do.

And though there can be slight variations on the rules and regulations from state to state, in general they're very similar and offer you, as a tenant, key rights when it comes to the inspection of your home.

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