

Nightmare Averted: How to Find Good Renters (and Avoid the Bad Ones)

It's the big day: the end of your tenant's lease. They've never quite been the perfect renter - the rent is usually late, and the police have been over more than once - so you're relieved to get your keys back. But when you step inside the vacated property, you're faced with a nightmare. Trash litters every room, some appliances are gone, and fist-sized holes decorate most of the walls. It's going to cost you thousands of dollars and several weeks of work to get this place back into rent-worthy shape. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to prevent this from happening again. Here's our guide for vetting good renters.

Be Upfront About Your Property and Policies

Many bad tenant relationships can stem from mismatched expectations. When you advertise your property, make sure to include all relevant information, such as the monthly rent, pet and smoking policies, as well as any other criteria they must meet. Some landlords, for example, want their tenants to have a minimum credit score, a minimum monthly income, and/or carry a verified renter's insurance policy. Consider adding an application fee of \$30 to \$45, too - this will help screen out people who aren't serious about leasing from you.

If you're unsure of what policies to institute, look at ads for similar properties in your area to get a feel for what other rental property owners are doing. Just remember that landlords must abide by the regulations in the [Fair Housing Act](#), which prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability.

Show the Property in Person

After you hear from prospective tenants, invite them to drive by the rental first to make sure that the neighborhood and exterior match what they're looking for. If the tenant finds it suitable, tell them a few days and times that you will be at the property for showings. While they're looking over the property, ask them some questions: Have they ever been evicted before? Are they smokers? How many people and pets will be living with them? Their answers will help you determine if they're a good match. Also, observe their behavior - if they're criticizing tiny imperfections in the property or have a bad attitude, those could be signs of a difficult renter.

Check and Double-Check

Once you have a possible tenant lined up, have them fill out an application and consent to a background check. Then, thoroughly screen them for any potential problems - no matter how nice or trustworthy they seem. This usually involves a criminal background check, as well as a credit check. Ask the prospective renter to also provide at least three references, including one from their employer and one from their current landlord. Call the people listed, ask for feedback

on the tenant, and verify that the information on the application is correct. If a tenant has lied about their dates of employment or when they rented their last place, proceed with caution.

At [CLIENT] we fully screen all of our applicants to make sure we are putting the right tenants in your home. Our multi-step process includes checks for income, employment, credit, and rental history. We are a full-service property management company proudly serving [REDACTED] as well as surrounding areas. Call us today at [PHONE] or email [EMAIL ADDRESS]