



# MASTERING YOUR RENTAL INSPECTION: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

#### **ABSTRACT**

A rental property inspection (sometimes called a rental inspection or property inspection) is a process where a landlord or property manager visits a rental property to assess its condition and ensure that it is being properly maintained by the tenant. Rental inspections are typically conducted periodically, such as every few months or at the end of a lease.

#### INTRODUCTION

A rental property inspection is conducted by a landlord or property manager for the purpose of assessing the condition of a property or individual unit.

Inspections are performed by scheduling a visit to the unit or property with the tenant, typically with the tenant present during the inspection.

#### I. Rental Property Inspection

#### What is a Rental Property Inspection?

The purpose of a rental inspection is to identify any issues that need to be addressed, such as repairs or cleaning, and to ensure that the tenant is complying with the terms of the lease agreement.



During the inspection, the landlord or property manager will typically take note of the condition of the property, including the cleanliness, condition of the appliances and

fixtures, and any damage. The tenant is usually given notice and expected to be present during the inspection, and they may also be provided with a report detailing the findings of the inspection.

#### II. 10 Reasons You Shouldn't Skip a Home Inspection

After your offer to buy a home enters into contract, the process of near-endless check writing begins. There are many necessary costs, such as realtor and lawyer fees, and the total of these expenses may have you looking for ways to save money elsewhere. You may be tempted to skip the home inspection and its \$200 to \$500 invoice, but there are 10 good reasons why you should get one.

#### 1. It Provides an "Out"

A quality home inspection can reveal critical information about the condition of a home and its systems. This makes the buyer aware of what costs, repairs and maintenance the home may require immediately, and over time. If a buyer isn't comfortable with the findings of the home inspection, it usually presents one last opportunity to back out of the offer to buy.

#### 2. Safety

A home inspection can detect safety issues like radon, carbon monoxide, and mold, which all homes should be tested for 1 Make sure that your home-buying contract states that should such hazards be detected, you have the option to cancel the offer to buy.



#### 3. Reveal Illegal Additions or Installations

A home inspection can reveal whether rooms, altered garages or basements were completed without a proper permit, or did not follow code, according to Chantay Bridges of Clear Choice Realty & Associates. "If a house has illegal room additions that are un-permitted, it affects the insurance, taxes, usability and most of all the overall value. In essence, a buyer is purchasing something that legally does not exist," she explains. Even new homes with systems that were not installed to code will become the new homeowners' financial "problem" to fix (and finance).

#### 4. Protection

Home inspections are even more critical if you are buying an "as-is" foreclosed property or short sale. Dwellings that have been boarded often develop hazardous mold problems, which are costly to remedy and pose health concerns. Greg Haskett, Director of Operations at TrueBlue Total House Care says it's common for home inspectors to find that copper plumbing lines and outdoor compressors have been removed from foreclosed properties by people trying to sell copper to recyclers for money.

#### 5. Negotiating Tool

Realtor Jennifer De Vivo, owner of Orlando-based Lotus Door Realty says the home inspection report presents an opportunity to ask for repairs and/or request a price reduction or credit from the seller. Work with your realtor to understand what requests can and should be made to negotiate a better deal.

#### 6. Forecast Future Costs

A home inspector can approximate the installation age of major systems in the home like plumbing, heating and cooling, and critical equipment like water heaters. They can diagnose the current condition of the structure itself, and tell you how long finishes have been in the home. All components in the home have a "shelf-life." Understanding when they require replacement can help you make important budgeting decisions, and it will determine what type of home insurance coverage or warranties you should consider.

#### 7. Determine "Deal-Breakers"

De Vivo suggests that home inspections can help buyers identify how much additional money or effort they are willing and able to spend to take the home to a condition that is personally acceptable. If you are unwilling to repair issues like faulty gutters, cracked walls, or ceilings, perhaps you are not ready to end your home buying search.



#### 8. Learn to Protect Your Investment

The home inspector is a valuable educational resource. They can suggest specific tips on how to maintain the home, and ultimately save you thousands of dollars in the long term, according to De Vivo.

#### 9. Reveal the Big Picture

Haskett advises that people use home inspection to understand the nuances of what may be the biggest purchase they ever make. "People fall in love with a piece of

property based on the color of the walls, the location of the home, or something else; they are completely blind to the issues that can make that dream home a nightmare," he says.

#### 10. Insurance

Some insurance companies will not insure a home if certain conditions are found, or without the presence of certifications like Wind Mitigation and four-point inspections, according to Haskett. "Qualified home inspectors can do these things at the same time as their other services and save the home buyer time and money in the long run."

It is your responsibility to understand as many details as you can about the property you may soon call home. Home inspections reveal the inner workings of the property, allowing you to be informed of all the perks and pitfalls the home has to offer.

## III. 10 Tips To Prepare For Your Property Inspection



In such a hot real estate market as we're experiencing today, many buyers are passing on property inspections, attempting to win the bidding wars incited by the current inventory crisis. But the inspection is still one of the most critical stages in the process of buying and selling property. Let's be realistic: Properties deteriorate over

time. Professional property inspections dig deep into the features of a building and can often lead to unexpected results.

Sellers can and should protect themselves so that during the inspection there are fewer surprises on the back end. With some basic knowledge of dealing with inspections and property maintenance, you can easily maneuver your way through the inspection and ultimately maximize your property's returns.

#### 1. Check for major issues in the property before inspection.

The first thing you should focus on is finding if the property has any major issues. These might include structural issues, problems with electrical or sewer systems, or mold or termite infestations. Each factor can drastically reduce the price of your property, or worse, kill a deal. Ensure that you know the ins and outs of your property before you put it on the market to ensure a profitable sale.

#### 2. Get professional help from your real estate agent.

If you are not experienced in property sales and inspections, get help from your trusted real estate broker to assess the true condition of your property. Remember that real estate agents have experience selling properties and can ensure a level of experience that will be of value to you.

### 3. Make a checklist of different property features and their condition.

It is always helpful to make a checklist of the various features of your property that might be of interest to the inspector. Some of these features include grounds, structure, roof, exterior, windows, doors, the kitchen, bathrooms, plumbing and electrical. Write them down and mention their condition. Also, write down the repairs required. It will help you get things done in an organized manner and save you money in the long run.



#### 4. Don't ignore the minor issues.

While most of the time minor issues can easily be addressed, do not ignore them before your inspection. Minor issues can include HVAC units, garage doors, doors, lights, walls with cracked or flaked paint, minor exterior maintenance, outdated appliances and worn subtleties. These are not deal-breakers, but it helps significantly to update your minor issues before selling your property. While they don't usually result in a major devaluation of the property, it is always better to be prepared for the worst. Some buyers get so stuck on small things that they cannot see the bigger picture. Avoid that problem before it presents itself.

#### 5. Clean the property before inspection.

Cleaning your property before an inspection is a must. The inspectors will be looking beyond the superficial sparkle of a clean property, but a clean building is easier to sell at a more favorable price than a dirty one.

#### 6. De-clutter the property before inspection.

It's important to de-clutter your property before an inspection. Make sure that that the inspectors have easy access to attics, basements and electrical panels. Make sure all systems are turned on to ensure a seamless inspection.

#### 7. Make sure the property is in 100% operational condition.

Make sure that all the utilities including gas, water and electricity are turned on. You should also provide the inspector with remote controls for different equipment including lights, fans and HVAC systems.

## 8. Allow the property inspector and buyer the necessary time for inspection.

It can take anywhere between one to four hours for the complete inspection of your property, depending upon its size. Allow the property inspector and potential buyer the necessary time for inspection. Don't try to rush them.

#### 9. Leave the property.

It's a good idea to leave the property during the inspection. This gives the inspector and the buyer the privacy they need to look at things from their perspective. While you might think that your presence will ease things, it can prove to be a hindrance to the inspector. Think of it as if you were buying the property: Wouldn't you like the luxury of interrupted access during your inspection? Your buyer would too. It goes a long way.

#### 10. Don't try to hide any issues.

This is simple: Do not ever try to hide issues. They will be found — if not by the inspector, then by the buyer. When you fill out your seller property disclosure form, you must disclose all known issues. When you sign the document, this becomes your liability. It is always in your favor to do the right thing. When you do the right thing, you always win.

The reality of the situation is that property inspectors are experienced professionals who have been through the motions before. Chances are if you behave suspiciously, they will know. You will also lose valuable trust with your inspector and buyer.

Property inspections can be quite nerve-wracking, especially for inexperienced sellers. If you follow the tips mentioned above, you can get through the entire process with ease.

#### IV. A Checklist for Landlords With Tenants Moving Out

A checklist can help ease the stress of tenant move-out. It makes both sides aware of the expectations. Landlords can customize this checklist to meet the specific needs of their property. The items on this list should include the condition the rental property should be left in, as well as any additional move-out procedures and obligations.

Your tenant should provide notice that they intend to move out of your rental unit. Most often this is in the form of a letter but you may specify it to be delivered in another format in your lease. Check with your local landlord-tenant laws to see how much notice the tenant should give before they vacate a rental unit.

#### **Move-Out Checklist**

A tenant move-out checklist is a form that landlords should attach as a rider (also called an addendum) to the original lease agreement. This checklist provides instructions for the tenant on the procedures and the tasks they need to complete when they vacate your property.

Every landlord's move-out checklist can be different. Some like to break down detailed procedures by room, while others only provide general terms of what is expected.

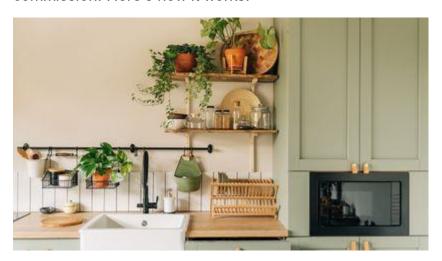
#### Why It's Important

Move-out checklists are especially important when it comes to the security deposit. Security deposit disputes are a big issue between landlords and tenants. If the tenant understands the proper procedures for move-out, including the condition in which they are supposed to leave the rental property, it will help minimize these issues. Following these instructions, and adhering to the terms of their lease, will help ensure the tenant receives their security deposit back in full.

Tailor your checklist to meet your own specific needs and the specific needs of your property.

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

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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.



## VI. Common End of Lease Cleaning Mistakes to Avoid



End of lease cleaning is one of the most challenging tasks for tenants to complete. Since it is not a regular chore, it requires a lot more effort, time, and attention. However, both time and energy are sparse during the end-of-tenancy period. Most

renters rush through the process because they have limited time on hand. They have to juggle packing their possessions, transporting the stuff, and cleaning the property.

With so much on their plate and so little time left to complete the tasks, they make mistakes. Some of these errors are common across rented properties and cause the tenants to lose their bonds. However, if the tenants are aware of these slip-ups, they can steer clear of them. So, here is a list of the common end of lease cleaning mistakes to avoid. These can prepare them for a comprehensive clean-up that helps satisfy the landlord and the property manager.

#### Not Preparing for the Cleaning

Planning before execution helps identify problems and overcome them. However, most tenants forget to plan for end of lease cleaning and lose their bonds. Preparing in advance allows them to gather all the cleaning tools and supplies and cover all the rooms in a systematic manner. It streamlines the process and reduces stress related to the task.

Most end of lease cleaning Sydney prepare a cleaning checklist for this purpose. They customise the list to ensure the dirty spots are cleaned effectively for the inspection. It helps to manage time and reduce effort.

#### Neglecting the Entry Condition Report

End of lease cleaning restores the rented property to its original condition. Tenants and landlords prepare an entry condition report with pictures at the beginning of the tenancy to keep a record of the property's condition. This helps the landlord compare the current condition with the report during the final inspection.

Thus, tenants must use the report as a benchmark and clean the property to meet the same standard. Forgetting about this report and cleaning without direction can lead to problems with the landlord. It is also vital to check the lease agreement. If it mentions certain cleaning requirements, the tenant must meet them.

#### Missing the Hard-to-Reach Corners

Most people are not used to deep cleaning their properties. The job is perfectly performed by end of lease cleaning Sydney professionals who are aware of the industry best practices to clean hard to reach areas. They know the correct techniques and have the right tools to remove dust, grease, fluff and dander from all the nooks and crannies.



Missing hidden spots can cost the tenants their bonds. Thus, they must make every effort to clean the ceiling fans and exhaust fans in the bathrooms, window frames, doorknobs, baseboards, light fittings, and inside of cabinets and drawers.

#### Cleaning with Incorrect Products

Did you know that using the wrong cleaning products can damage delicate surfaces? For instance, acidic cleaners on laminate or marble floors can dull or damage the surface. Thus, it is important to use the right products for different surfaces.

To avoid this mistake, always do a patch test on surfaces like wooden furniture, painted walls, marble countertops and stainless steel surfaces. End of lease cleaning Sydney professionals always recommend using eco-friendly cleaning products that are gentle and effective. If you want to pass your rental inspection, consider the following hacks and choose the right products for effective cleaning results:

- Always read the label and avoid ammonia or bleach-based products
- Never use white vinegar, lemon or any acidic cleaner on natural stone surfaces
- Use mild, soapy water to clean wooden floors
- Baking soda can help you clean stainless steel surfaces without causing any damage.
- Check the care label of your couch.

#### Overlooking Delicate Floor Coverings

Leaving carpets and rugs dirty can lead to a rental dispute. You may even lose a part of your bond money. So, refer to your property condition report and retrieve the shine of your floor coverings if they look dull and discoloured.

Vacuum your carpets to remove embedded dust, dirt, pet dander, debris and allergens. For stubborn stains, spray a white vinegar solution and blot with a damp cloth. This will help you remove stains. However, do not rub the carpet stains as it will embed the stain further and damage the fabric. Gently blot and clean the surface.

You can also hire experts for a professional carpet cleaning in Sydney and revive its original shine before the final rental inspection.

#### **Leaving Nasty Streaks on Windows**

There is no denying that windows are the most crucial parts of a rental property. Landlords thoroughly inspect all windows inside and outside before releasing your bond amount. Neglecting or using the wrong cleaning method can leave a bad impression on them.

So, never use a newspaper to wipe down your windows or mirrors. This can leave nasty streaks behind. Instead, spray the cleaning solution (vinegar and soapy, warm water) on the surface and gently scrub with a sponge or cloth. To remove excess water, run a rubber squeegee from top-to-bottom. This will leave your windows spotless and shiny, helping you secure full bond money.



These are some of the common mistakes every tenant should avoid during a thorough end of lease cleaning session. Make sure you plan the process, read the tenancy agreement, refer to the property condition and use proven cleaning techniques report for a worry-free rental inspection.

# VII. 15 spots in your home you may be forgetting to clean

These easy-to-miss spots provide the perfect breeding ground for bacteria.

Do you follow the same auto-pilot routine when cleaning your home: vacuum, mop, wash the dishes, do the laundry, a bit of dusting, and a quick wipe down of all surfaces? There are many places in the home that we wouldn't even think of when cleaning the house but are just as important as your standard household jobs.

From couch crevices to curtains and even the appliances that we use to clean, we uncover some of the dirtiest places in your home and how to tackle them.

#### 1. Behind the toilet

Cleaning the toilet is a no-brainer but what about around and behind it? Often hard to get to, the back and sides of toilets not only accumulate dust and dirt but harmful bacteria. Put on those rubber gloves and give it a good scrub with disinfectant and hot water.

#### 2. Inside the couch

Crumbs, rubbish, pet hair and maybe a few coins (if you're lucky!) are just some of the interesting things you'll find if you dare to take off your couch cushions. Give your couch a good vacuum at least once a month and wash the cover, if you have one, to instantly freshen up your living room. Removable couch covers are ideal as you can easily throw them in the wash to remove stains and germs.

#### 3. TV remote

Although they are handled every day, TV remotes are often overlooked when it comes to household cleaning. Multipurpose antibacterial wipes are great to have on hand for quick and easy jobs like this.

#### 4. Door knobs and light switches

Like the TV remote, these are something we handle every day in our homes. Give them a wipe down at least once a week to prevent bacteria build up, especially in the kitchen and bathroom.



#### 5. Curtains and blinds

Curtains and blinds collect dust and mildew just like the rest of your home.

Depending on the material, fabric curtains can be machine washed or dry-cleaned.

Roller, vertical and venetian blinds can be wiped down with a damp cloth. For tough stains, scrub them gently with an old toothbrush and detergent. Curtains and blinds are a haven for dust.

#### 6. Your toothbrush holder

If your toothbrush holder is hard to see inside, chances are it hasn't been cleaned in a while. Rinse, scrub and repeat until the grime is gone. You can even run it through the dishwasher to kill any bacteria.

#### 7. The dishwasher

How is your dishwasher supposed to clean your dishes if it isn't clean itself? If you've noticed your dishwasher isn't quite doing its job (or it smells a bit off) it may be time for a clean. To clean your dishwasher, scrub with a solution of baking soda and white vinegar and then run a cycle with nothing in the dishwasher to get that sparkle back!

#### 8. The washing machine

Like dishwashers, washing machines need to be cleaned to wash your clothes effectively.

Again, using bicarb soda and cleaning vinegar, add ¼ cup of bicarb soda to the detergent container of your machine and pour 2 cups of vinegar into the drum. Run normal hot cycle and let the machine do all the work. Give the whole machine a wipe down with vinegar or multipurpose spray. Cleaning washing machines and dishwashers is essential.

#### 9. Under the bed

When was the last time you vacuumed under your bed? You'll be surprised at how quickly dust accumulates under there, especially if you use that area for storage. Pull everything out and give it a good vacuum and a mop if you have floorboards or tiles.

#### 10. Rubbish bins

You change your bin liners regularly to prevent rubbish sitting inside for too long, but what about the bin that holds said rubbish. To prevent nasty odours and bacteria building up, it's a good idea to wash your bin weekly with disinfectant and hot water.

#### 11. Air conditioner

Investing in an air purifier is one way to ensure the air in your home is as clean as possible, but a purifier can only do so much if your air conditioner is pumping out musty air on a daily basis.

It's a good idea to clean the filters in a wall-mounted reverse cycle unit every fortnight. If you've never taken a look inside the machine, you may be in for a nasty shock!



Refer to your unit's instruction manual for a guide to cleaning the machine safely. Regular cleaning will prevent dust and mould build up and ensure the unit runs as efficiently as possible. If you've never looked inside your air conditioner, you may be in for a rude shock.

#### 12. Mattress

You may clean your bed linen once a week, but have you ever given a thought to cleaning your mattress? Once you've stripped the bed, give the surface and sides a thorough vacuum with an upholstery attachment.

For visible stains, use a damp cloth to gently dab a small amount of detergent (or a spot stain remover) into the mattress. Once the stain has lifted, use another clean damp cloth to dab away the excess product. (Note, this stain removal method may not be suitable for latex or memory foam mattresses, so consult the manufacturer for cleaning tips specific to your mattress). Allow the mattress to dry completely (either by opening the windows or carrying the mattress outdoors to dry in the sun).

To deoderise a mattress, sprinkle bi-carb soda on the surface and leave for an hour or two before vacuuming thoroughly.

#### 13. Rangehood

A grimy rangehood will not only bring down the look of an otherwise spotless kitchen, it will attract dust and bacteria – and nobody wants *that* hovering inches above their food.

The easiest way to clean your rangehood filters is to detach them and pop them in the dishwasher on a high heat setting. If you don't own a dishwasher, submerge the filters in a bucket of soapy water and use a stiff brush or scour sponge to buff away the dirt and oil before rinsing clean. For extra greasy filters, leave to soak overnight in a bucket filled with a solution of water and Selley's Sugar Soap before scrubbing and rinsing clean.

Use a damp cloth and detergent to remove grime from the surface and exterior of the rangehood before reinstalling the now clean and dry filters. Don't let a grimy rangehood let down an otherwise spotless kitchen.

#### 14. Small kitchen appliances

The microwave, the kettle, the toaster. You use these small kitchen appliances daily – but have you cleaned them lately?

**Microwave**: Half-fill a microwave-safe dish with water and place half a lemon in the water. Microwave the water and lemon for about five minutes on high (or until the glass inside the microwave begins to steam up). Carefully remove the dish from the microwave and wipe the interior of the appliance clean with a soft cloth. The steam, along with the acid from the lemon, will dissolve grease while banishing nasty bacteria. The lemon will also leave the microwave smelling fresh. If you don't have a lemon handy, use a mixture of equal parts water and white vinegar.

**Toaster**: Breadcrumbs can build up inside, on top of and underneath your toaster and can present a fire hazard. Keep things safe and clean by disconnecting the appliance from the power source and emptying the crumb tray. Then use a soft, damp cloth to wipe down the exterior of the appliance and the benchtop underneath.

**Kettle**: Boil equal parts water and vinegar in the kettle. Allow the solution to remain in the kettle for about 30 minutes. Discard the solution and rinse the kettle thoroughly. Regularly cleaning your kettle can prevent limescale buildup and the

growth of bacteria and mildew. It's easy to overlook small appliances such as kettles and toasters.

#### 15. The top of the fridge

If the inside of your fridge is stacked hygienically and odour free, you could be forgiven for thinking that that's where the story ends. But swipe your finger across the top of the fridge and you may discover there's still more work to do.

The top of the fridge is easily overlooked but can quickly attract a layer of kitchen grease and dust. Use a soft, damp cloth and detergent to wipe the surface clean.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Regular property inspections are essential for ensuring the long-term well-being of your investment. By identifying potential issues early on, you can prevent small problems from turning into costly repairs. Inspections allow you to stay ahead of maintenance needs, ensuring that your property remains in good condition for years to come.

Additionally, routine checks help you comply with safety regulations and improve tenant satisfaction by providing a well-maintained environment. Overall, consistent inspections protect the value of your property, reduce the likelihood of expensive fixes, and contribute to its long-term durability and profitability.

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