

MANAGE MY  
SECTION 8

Atlanta Area  
PROPERTY AND MANAGEMENT, INC.



## GETTING YOUR PROPERTY READY TO RENT

A fresh start to a new lease means getting your property sparkling and ready to rent for your next tenant. To attract the best renters your home must stand out from the competition. Your home should give the potential renter a reason to choose your home over another – especially if the rent is higher.

The condition of your soon-to-be rental property will significantly impact how much rent you can receive and how long it will take to rent. As objectively as possible, assess how well your home compares to others on the market. You may not see your home's quirks and faults but a potential tenant probably will - and may be turned off.

Before listing your home, you must get it "Rent-Ready". The sooner your property is ready for a tenant, the sooner you can start collecting rent. Properties that are not show-ready will sit on the market - and a vacant property is a huge expense. As tempting as it is, avoid the urge to market your property before it is ready to show.

We've provided a checklist to make sure important items are not overlooked. If you need our help, just let us know. We can do it all or just the things you don't want to tackle.

# Vacancy Standards

*Before listing a rental, we bring vacant units to "hotel room" clean.*

## FIXING AND CLEANING

### UTILITIES

- If this is your first time renting, leave all utilities on. We will let you know when to disconnect them. Homes in sweltering heat or extreme cold do not attract tenants. In addition, visitors will use the bathroom and you want to make sure toilets flush.
- After the first time, we handle all utilities while the home is vacant.. You won't need to worry about turning them on and off.
- Keep a list of utility companies and their contact numbers.

### PAINT WALLS AND TRIM - VERY IMPORTANT!

- We always recommend painting the entire interior of your home the very first time you put your home on the rental market. Once your furniture has been removed, you won't believe how marked up they are. A tenants biggest complaint is that they feel like they pay a lot of money for rent and expect the walls NOT to be spotty with mis-matched paint.
- Remove tape, stickers, nails, picture hangers, plant hangers and screws.
- Some marks on walls can be wiped off with Magic Erasers but walls that cannot be cleaned without spotting should be painted.
- Do not touch-up walls with paint because it always spots and will show when light reflects on them. Plan to paint a marked up wall from corner to corner.
- Use neutral paint colors (not white) and limit accent walls.

### DOORKNOBS AND LOCKS

- All exterior door locks need to be re-keyed.
- Try to have matching door knobs through the home.
- Update doorknobs. They are inexpensive but make a huge impact!
- Make sure the deadbolts are keyed on one side with a turn knob on the other side to meet code requirements. If locked, a tenant needs to be able to get our quickly in case of fire or other emergency.
- We recommend a closet doorknob paired with a deadbolt on exterior doors. This way the tenant can't accidentally lock himself out.



# FIXING AND CLEANING

## OUTLETS AND LIGHT SWITCHES

- Replace all broken and burned outlets.
- Replace all broken, novelty, or non-matching outlet and switch plate covers.
- Ensure all outlets are grounded and are solidly in place.

## HVAC

- Vacuum vents and registers.
- Replace rusted or dented registers.
- Replace filters and service the unit. This is one system we recommend you take great care. Our Tenant Benefit Program delivers dated filters to the front door quarterly. Tenants are fined if we discover they are not changing them.



## PERSONAL PROPERTY AND TRASH

- Remove all personal property. Do not store anything on site, including lawn mowers, tools, furniture. If a tenant gets injured, you can bet you'll be named in a lawsuit. Store your personal property in a rented storage facility not on site.
- Properly dispose of all trash. Do not leave it on the curb unless you **KNOW FOR SURE** the trash company will pick it all up.

## SMOKE ALARMS AND FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- Make sure all smoke alarms are operable and have been tested. Install smoke alarms in every room except the kitchen.
- Install wall-mounted carbon monoxide monitors within 15 feet of bedrooms.
- Put a fire extinguisher in the kitchen and make sure it is within the expiration date. If there is a fire, you don't want to get caught up in a law suit because you didn't install these very inexpensive but life-saving devices.

## SINKS AND BATHROOMS

- Clean sinks, tubs, showers, toilets, medicine cabinets, mirrors, faucets, shower heads, and shower doors.
- Wipe drain pipes under the sinks and clean up the cabinet shelf under the sink.
- Wipe off counters and remove stains the best you can.
- Replace toilet seats and remove any products that color the toilet water.
- Remove mold using bleach or mold/mildew cleaner.
- Scrub shower and tub grout and re-seal.
- Remove bathtub mats and stickers.
- Re-caulk if caulk is not fresh and free from mildew.
- Mop the floors and do not leave any rugs or mats.
- Clean mirrors or replace them if they are tarnished. Picture-frame mirrors are very stylish and make the home look updated.

# FIXING AND CLEANING

## FLOORING AND STAIRS

- Vacuum carpets and have them professionally cleaned. Have spots addressed and use pet conditioners if there was a pet in the home.
- Mop hardwoods, laminate and tile floors with hot water; no soap
- Rejuvenate hardwood and tile floors for that gorgeous shine.
- Replace broken and damaged tile (Clean grout and re-seal.) and repair hardwood flooring.
- Secure stair railings and paint if they look worn. Replace any broken or missing balusters.
- Paint stair risers if needed.

## CABINETS AND VANITIES

- Clean inside drawers and under cabinets. Remove all shelf papers.
- Wipe off cabinet faces and knobs.
- Replace any damaged or missing knobs and hinges.
- Paint or repair doors that are chipped and worn.
- Make sure all drawers and cabinet doors open and shut easily and stay shut.



## FIREPLACE

- Clean out ashes and vacuum thoroughly.
- Wipe the mantle and clean any smoke on the hearth.
- Make sure there is a fireplace screen or doors and that it is not damaged.
- Dispose of any unused firewood; Do not leave firewood anywhere on the property.
- If the fireplace is not to be used or is non-operational, seal the opening permanently with an aesthetically pleasing material.

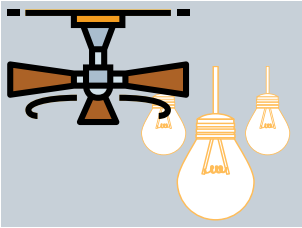
## WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Make sure all windows can be opened and locks are operable.
- Replace fogged windows.
- Repair window screens or remove the screens entirely - don't leave some and remove others.
- Install blinds on all uncovered windows and replace any broken blinds.
- Install curtain rods across double glass doors so tenants can purchase their own drapery. Don't install vertical blinds as they break too easily and will have to be replaced when broken.
- Remove drapery but you can leave the rods only if they are in good condition. If you remove the rods then remove the brackets and patch and paint the holes.
- Wipe marks off the doors or paint them. Wipe dust off the door, window ledges and sills.
- Make sure all doors open easily and latch when closed.
- Clean window panes on both sides. Hire someone if you can't reach them.
- Weatherstripping must be in place so there are no gaps

# FIXING AND CLEANING

## LIGHTS AND FANS

- Change all burned out and missing light bulbs with the correct bulbs and wattage.
- Replace low wattage bulbs with the brightest bulbs possible.



- Replace broken lights and light fixtures. Inexpensive light upgrades vastly improves visual appeal and feels updated.
- Remove light covers and clean; remove dead insects.
- Wipe off ceiling fan blades and dust fan unit. Clean the ceiling if dust has accumulated around the fans. Make sure they are operable and replace if they are not working.

## APPLIANCES

- Make sure all appliances are in working order. Do not turn off the refrigerator.
- Thoroughly clean all appliances removing food debris, spillage, and stains. Make sure appliance bulbs are working.
- Clean oven, racks, doors, knobs, burners, panels, glass tops, bottom of oven,
- Replace burner rings and drip pans if they cannot be cleaned. Remove all grease and clean up all oven cleaner residue.
- Remove all stickers and magnets.
- Pull the refrigerator out and clean the floor and wall. Be careful not to damage the floor. Wipe off the top and clean the grill. Replace any filters.
- If there is an ice maker, it must be operable. If not, repair or remove it.
- Wipe out the washer/dryer if you provide one. Clean lint filters. Vacuum behind the dryer and clean the vent.

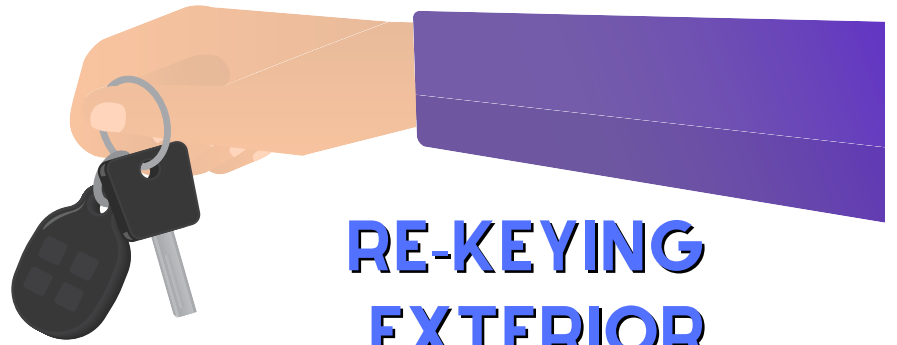
## EXTERIOR

- Blow off decks, patios, porches, and steps. Shed must be structurally sound.
- Dust off exterior doors, light fixtures; window surrounds to remove cobwebs.
- Mow lawn, cut bushes to below windows, edge lawn, lay mulch. Maintain trees.
- Repair fascia, shingles, gutters, downspouts, decks and railings.
- Landscaping lights must be in working order otherwise remove them.
- All porch lights should be operational and in good condition; no rust or missing parts.
- Ensure there are no "tripping" hazards around the property; fill holes, bury exposed wires and cables
- Fencing and gates must be sturdy and secure with no missing or damaged planks.
- Decks must be free of rotted wood and properly maintained. Railings secure and meet code. Paint rusted railings.

## MECHANICAL COMPONENTS

- All systems should be working as designed. Service and repair them.
- Includes HVAC, plumbing, electrical, kitchen and laundry appliances, sump pumps, dehumidifiers, swamp coolers, gas fireplaces, sprinkler systems, water filtration systems, water heaters, septic tanks, roofs, etc.
- Roof must be without leaks or missing shingles.
- Make sure there is easy access to the main water valve.
- Septic tank must be cleaned between tenants; and checked every 3 to 5 years.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF



# RE-KEYING EXTERIOR DOORS

**Our policy is to re-key every exterior door before a new tenant takes possession. Here's why ...**

## **POTENTIAL LAWSUITS**

Most homeowners have several keys (or codes) to their house in circulation: relatives, neighbors, cleaning crews, contractors. If you think about it, there are probably more keys in circulation than you can remember.

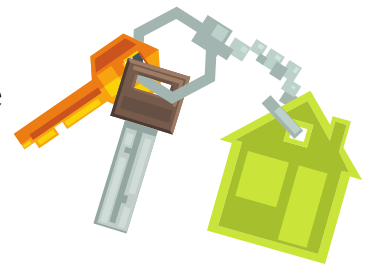
Imagine your home rented and a relative who didn't know you moved lets himself in - walking in on a tenant munching on a bowl of popcorn watching TV. In our "lawsuit happy society", a tenant would not hesitate to sue you for NOT protecting their right to privacy and for NOT providing a safe place to live.

## **OPERABLE LOCKS**

Many homes have locks that have not worked for years and owners tolerated not having a key to those doors. However, what you tolerated as an owner is different than what you must provide as a landlord. Rental property must be secured with working exterior locks and window locks.

## **ONE KEY**

It is common for owners give us three to six keys to a home when we take over management. For easier management and containment, we reduce the number of keys to just one.



## **LIMITING OWNER ACCESS**

Many owners do not understand that when they rent their home they have transferred the "right of possession" to another. We have had owners actually enter properties when tenants were in possession causing major problems. Re-keying the locks helps protect owners from themselves and offers the tenant the same peace of mind that you want in your private residence.

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404-692-3543 ~ [info@ManageMy8.com](mailto:info@ManageMy8.com)