

How Often Should a Property Manager Inspect a Rental?



Just like investing in the stock market, rental properties require owners to keep a watchful eye on their assets. [Inspecting a rental regularly](#) is one way property managers detect wayward tenant behavior that can damage a property. It also allows managers to catch repair issues early and deal with them before they become more serious.

Furthermore, tenants are incentivized to be more careful with a property if they know managers will be checking on them. Finally, managers can also use inspections to demonstrate to tenants how they expect a property to be treated.

Undoubtedly, inspecting a rental property is important and it's safe to say most managers know this. What is unclear is how often a manager should inspect a property. Some managers will only inspect a property at the time of tenant move-in or move-out.

Others inspect too frequently and end up infringing on the tenant's right to quiet enjoyment of the residence. Deciding how often to inspect a rental property is a delicate dance between protecting the owner's interests and respecting the tenant's privacy. This article explains how to achieve that balance.

First of all, tenants cannot be entirely trusted to look after a property. Partly because there are repair issues tenants may not even be aware of because they do not know how to detect those problems. Also, if a tenant is the cause of a problem, they cannot be expected to report on themselves.



Even though owners and managers have the lease agreement and security deposit to fall back on in case of tenant-damage, the cheapest way to deal with issues is to keep them from happening. This means a policy of zero-inspections is not the best way to go.

Having said that, there are three types of inspections managers can conduct on a property. And each one has specific guidelines on how it should be used. The three types of inspection are:

- Routine inspections for maintenance and repairs
- Non-routine inspections which are connected to managing the tenants
- Drive-by inspections that do not require scheduling

Routine Maintenance and Repair Inspections

Checking a rental property regularly for small maintenance and repair issues is always a good idea. It helps keep tenants happy and is useful for avoiding expensive repairs. There are several issues managers should look out for during these inspections:

- Overall cleanliness
- [Signs of pest infestation](#)
- Tenant safety and security
- Presence of mold in areas prone to water damage
- Appliances in good working condition
- State of the HVAC system
- Well-looked after hardwood floors
- Presence of holes in walls
- A properly maintained lawn

Given that these inspections are not casual walk-throughs of the property, it is best to have a fixed schedule for them. The best times are during the season changes; before the cold winter and hot summer months. The onset of spring and autumn are also great times to inspect a property with minimal disruption to tenants.

These periods are convenient because they coincide with times when tenants expect a property to be worked over. By scheduling maintenance during these periods, it feels less invasive to tenants; they view it as a manager's attempt to secure their comfort.

Non-Routine Inspections

Under this category are the following:

Move-In Inspections

These are conducted at the beginning of a new lease before the property is turned over to the tenant. The manager carries out a detailed inspection of the premises, in the presence of the tenant. The records from the inspection serve as a baseline of the condition of the property at tenant move-in.



Move-Out Inspections

This is similar to a move-in inspection, but is done to record a tenant's impact on a property. The condition of the property at tenant move-out is compared to its state at move-in. If it has deteriorated during a tenant's stay, they may be required to pay for repairs.

Checks For Unauthorized Tenants

It is not uncommon for tenants to harbor [unauthorized persons](#) in an apartment. These may be people who move-in with a tenant or a pet that was sneaked into the property. Suspicion that a tenant is hosting an unauthorized tenant is reason enough for a manager to inspect, but the tenant must be informed and given adequate notice.

Drive-by Inspections

A drive-by inspection does not require the manager to notify a tenant because it does not involve the manager entering the property. Managers can conduct a quick assessment of a property as they drive past it. There is no limit to how often these inspections can be done.

In order to avoid problems with tenants, property managers should make sure the lease agreement covers every conceivable reason for conducting an inspection. If from the outset a tenant knows the manager will inspect a property periodically, they are less likely to view it as an intrusion.

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