



Securing long-term tenants by making your rental property a home

By: *ExpertBeacon* | 2014

As most landlords know, the key to a successful property management business is to keep costs low and to retain good tenants long-term. The best way to achieve this is by being more flexible, and letting tenants treat the property more like their home rather than just a temporary residence. In order to help you establish long-term tenants for your rental property, here is some advice to help.

Do

- let tenants feel at home
- permit painting
- approve custom curtains/drapery
- encourage gardening

Don't

- let fear guide the landlord/tenant relationship
- let tenants make radical changes
- keep them from hanging holiday decorations
- forget that tenants want to feel at home

Do

Do let tenants feel at home

The more personal touches tenants are allowed to make, the harder it is for them to leave because it has essentially become their home. When it comes time to renew their lease, many residents look around their home, see all of the work and personality that they have put into it, and really can't imagine leaving.

Do permit painting

An easy way to let a tenant modify their interior space is to give them free reign on their color scheme. Many tenants want the ability to select their own wall colors, and allowing them to do this can have long-term benefits for a landlord. Plus, a new interior paint job is fairly standard when tenants move out anyway.

Do approve custom curtains/drapery

Window treatments are another easy way to let tenants put a personal touch on their home. Letting a tenant select their own drapery and curtains allows them to further express themselves without making drastic changes to the home.

Do encourage gardening

Encouraging tenants to make landscaping and gardening improvements not only makes them happier, but it also increases the curb appeal of the property. Tenants should be allowed to indulge in their green thumbs, and the neighbors will also be happy with the overall improved appearance for the neighborhood.

Don't

Do not let fear guide the landlord/tenant relationship

Landlords shouldn't put so many rules and restrictions on their tenants for fear of having to deal with a decorated or modified home once the tenant leaves. There is nothing costlier than having to find new tenants, especially if it is on a frequent basis. Landlords will likely have to re-invest in the home to lure new tenants, and it may be months before the right tenant is found.

Do not let tenants make radical changes

By simply allowing a tenant to make minor aesthetic changes, they may develop a personal connection with the rental property. A little paint and decorations can go a long way toward making tenants feel comfortable, without having to make costly structural changes.

Do not keep them from hanging holiday decorations

Allow tenants to show their holiday spirit by hanging lights or setting up lawn ornaments. Letting tenants create their ideal experience will help them feel more connected to their home and, in turn, they will likely find it harder to leave.

Do not forget that tenants want to feel at home

When tenants walk through the doors of a rental property for the first time, you want them to feel like they are walking into their new permanent home. But if tenants don't have a strong connection with their home, or they don't feel like it is a place that they can treat as their own, they won't be staying long.

Summary

For landlords, there is nothing costlier than having to find new tenants, especially if it is on a frequent basis. Being more flexible and allowing tenants to make minor aesthetic changes is a simple, no-cost way to retain long-term tenants, improve the landlord/tenant relationship and enhance the tenant's connection to the home.

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