

## Top 10 tips for landlords this winter



For landlords looking to protect their rental properties this winter, here are some top tips, as well as hints on how to stand out from the competition and avoid mistakes when renting your property.

- + Paint your property in neutral colours, keeping it as timeless as possible. Avoid very fashionable or gimmicky décor. This will maximise interest from the start.
- + Replace carpets for hard floors. Hard floors last up to three times longer than their softer counterparts but it is still a good idea to place a large rug down to create a homely feel.
- + It sounds simple but make sure your property is professionally cleaned once it is vacant. This can prevent other issues from occurring further down the road such as mould or rodent damage. It will also make potential tenants feel like your place has been taken care of.

+ Dress the property properly. This doesn't have to cost the world but allows those viewing to use their imagination. When you're furnishing it, think to yourself how can I show off the best aspects of the space without spending too much?

+ Wooden floors are in vogue, but if you can only have carpets in your lease, then at least put a hard-wearing one down and go for a trendy grey over light cream. Light colours mark easily and only likely to last one tenancy before need replacing.

+ Let there be light! Follow a rule from our interior designer partners - they always explain we should have five points of light in the living room. You can count a window as one of these.

+ Review your furniture before you have your property viewed. Don't make one of the biggest mistakes of waiting for tenants to request it be changed. On average, you are missing at least three offers if the property isn't suitably furnished; people often don't believe they will receive the outcome they want when they can't see it from the start!

+ Sort out any maintenance issues. Don't leave the applicant wondering why the landlord didn't have all probable headaches sorted before their contract initiates. Fix all trivial issues, both structurally and aesthetically, before marketing the property.

+ Increase your property's curb appeal. The focus is usually emphasized on the interior of a property, and you may not notice that the garden looks a bit overgrown or the terrace has muddy pathways or weeds growing. The moment a potential tenant arrives at the front door, they have started forming an opinion.

+ If you are overseas or have a busy work schedule, it pays to have it managed by a reputable agent. Around 80% of applicants will dismiss a property, even if it ticks all the boxes, if it is not maintained for an overseas landlord. When tenants need a management contact in an emergency and they know it isn't going to be feasible, it could be enough to put them off.

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