

ULTIMATE GUIDE



A season-by-season look at caring for your rental properties.

Rental Property Maintenance

Welcome to the Ultimate Guide





Seasonal Rental Property Maintenance

Owning rental property means keeping up on routine maintenance so your investment continues to pay off each year.

Landlords who reinvest a portion of their rental income into performing routine maintenance will keep their properties in great condition and their tenants happy.

This Ultimate Guide gives you a season-by-season look at the maintenance tasks that will keep your property in great shape.

Starting with spring, you will see what tasks are important to manage at the beginning of the year to minimize moisture damage.

In summer, you learn about getting the outdoor areas ready for warm weather activities and summer pest control.

Fall is a good time to animal proof your house to make sure critters don't move indoors as it gets colder.

And winter, you'll learn tips to winterize your property before the freezing weather creeps in.

Set reminders in your calendar

for a maintenance day each season to keep your property in great shape.

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You will also find helpful tasks to pass along to your renters so they too can maintain the beautiful home they will want to keep living in.

Attending to routine maintenance and preparing a property for seasonal weather will prolong the performance of your investment.



Spring Maintenance

Spring Tasks

As the sun starts peeking through the clouds, it is likely your tenants will start to head outside to enjoy the fresh air once again. Here is the spring maintenance that should be on your radar.

Clear the Gutters:

It's important to clean gutters before and after the wet seasons. Winter winds can bring with it debris that become trapped in gutters causing leaks. This can result in expensive damage to roofs and home interiors if a leak occurs.

If your downspout gooseneck is clogged, simply use a house to force out any organic

materials. Should the debris be too difficult to remove, consider calling an expert.

Landscape Management:

Spring is known for its beautiful blooms; increase your curb appeal and your tenants' contentment by sprucing up your landscape. It's time for annual landscaping to ensure that your property looks its best.

It's also imperative to clear any limbs or other debris from the landscape to avoid trips or accidents.

Maintain shrubs and branch so they will not conduct moisture onto your roofing and siding. This will also discourage critters from finding

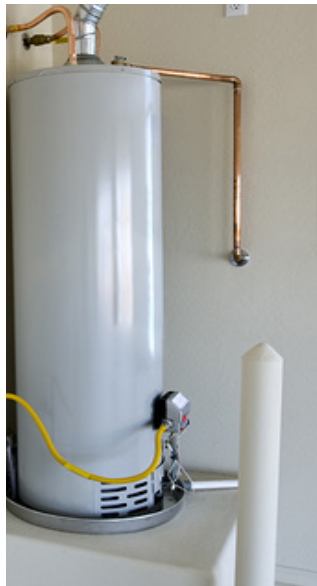
an easy path to nest in the attic.

Spring landscaping can include lawn aeration, overseeding, fertilization, and pruning of shrubs or trees.

This is the ideal time to start thinking about landscape management; mowing or weeding grass now will provide a head-start on sudden growth caused by warm weather.

Planting annuals in the spring is a low maintenance way to give a dash of color to a yard and increase your property's curb appeal.

Early spring is a perfect time for pruning flowering trees and fruit trees since they will start budding soon.



Spring-Clean the Exteriors:

Check for areas that could use a good power washing and blast away any residual winter grime.

Complete these tasks before hot summer months when that excessive water use could be irresponsible.

In the process, be sure to check for any chipped or cracking paint. Exposed siding can be subject to rot, so protect it with a fresh coat of paint if needed.

Minimize Moisture:

Remind tenants to look for any mold. Winter dampness can lead to mold buildup on the surface of walls within the unit.

Small puddles should be managed as quickly as possible and it is wise to install or hire a dehumidifier so that no mildew is allowed to develop.

If you notice that a leak has caused mold to penetrate the structure of the unit, hire a

professional to address the situation. Make certain that you are fully aware of your legal responsibilities with regard to mold in a rental home. Check state or local jurisdictions to learn more.

Have the HVAC Inspected:

Check that your property's heating system is inspected, serviced and cleaned at least once a year.

Your heating systems worked hard, in winter. Spring maintenance can postpone an unfortunate and rather expensive replacement.

A simple spring checklist can be the key to protecting your investment and ensuring happy tenants.

Spring Cleaning

Tips to Pass Along to Tenants

Daily Tasks: Tidy any personal items; vacuum carpets and area rugs, and finally, sweep and mop flooring.

Dust: Take a trick of the trade from the pros and start at the top working your way to the bottom to address any hard to reach spots that you may miss in the day-to-day cleaning.

Clean Walls: Use a sponge and soap or vinegar with water to remove scuffs. Avoid dyed soaps and sponges that can cause discoloration.

Wash Window Screens & Sills: Maintain the cleanliness of window screens and sills.

Vacuum Low-Traffic Areas:

Address areas that may be neglected on regular days.

Clean Carpets:

A run over from a carpet cleaner can ensure that your carpet looks as good as the day you moved in.

“ Spring landscaping includes lawn aeration, overseeding, fertilization, & pruning of shrubs or trees. ”



Summer Maintenance

Summer Tasks

With the first official day of summer only a couple weeks away, actively preparing your rentals for the hot weather months with summer maintenance will keep your property functioning optimally and your tenants happy.

Now is the time to spruce up your common areas and perform routine maintenance and inspections that took a back burner to harsh weather and urgent requests through the colder months.

Ready Outdoor Amenities:

If your property offers outdoor amenities like pools, fire pits or grills, make sure everything

is clean and working well.

Summertime calls for entertaining in outdoor spaces, and providing your tenants with functioning features is part of the reason they chose to rent from you in the first place – don't let them down!

Get the pool in prime condition for summertime splashes. If you don't have a lifeguard on duty, check to make sure your posted safety signs are visible & aren't faded by winter weather or the sun. Check that locks & gates are in good condition.

If you want your residents to use the community space you provide, make sure the pro-

pane tank is full & keep an extra on hand, in case your residents need to make a quick switch.

While you're in the general vicinity of the chimney, be certain to inspect it (and your fireplace) before your tenants use it for warmth against winter's cold.

Check Sprinkler Systems:

When the temperatures start to rise, service the irrigation system to save on water usage, prevent landscape damage & reduce standing water.

Every system needs a good annual tune-up and the first heat wave of summer is a great time to do it, ensuring no plants will be without water when they



need it most. Make sure your irrigation system is programmed to follow any water rationing regulations. Program sprinklers to optimal summer use settings to keep the landscape looking fresh.

Seasonal Pest Control:

Bugs love warm weather, including ants, mosquitoes, wasps and spiders.

If you choose to use pesticides on your property to prevent insects and pests from invading the grounds, treating your property seasonally will help stop pest before they become a big problem.

Don't forget to check the nooks and crannies of the exterior of your property for wasp or hornet nests that might pop up this time of year. And advise

your tenants on the best way to handle any ants that seek refuge inside your tenants' homes.

Summer Fire Wise:

Prep your property for high heat and remove fire dangers.

Trim bushes and trees, take care to remove dead plants. Ensure any grills are properly ventilated and positioned away from buildings. Double check your local laws about fire extinguisher requirements for landlords.

To further protect against summer fires, tests smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms.

Although your tenants should monitor their own detectors, maintaining

these property features can easily get overlooked by passive tenants. Every detector should have a test button, and batteries should get changed biannually.

Check in With Tenants:

Whether you send out a seasonal tenant newsletter, or send a friendly email, check in with your tenants to stay connected and remind them to communicate questions or concerns they have about the rental property.

Take advantage of asking for renewals while spirits are high. Host a community event, like a BBQ or pool party & offer renewal incentives.

Remind your tenants about how much fun it is to live in your property; they will be more likely to stay.





Autumn Maintenance

Autumn Tasks

As the temperatures cool, take some time to give your property some attention and visit those maintenance issues that took a back burner during the busy summer months.

With a seasonal inspections and a little preventative maintenance, you can help keep your rental property in top condition.

You can also make expensive items like your roof or furnace last much longer, which means more money in your pocket.

Exterior Checks:

Check for inexpensive maintenance issues like areas

that need caulking, gutters that need debris removed, or vegetation that needs trimming to prevent future damage.

Check the roof for loose or missing shingles.

Fixing small issues before they cause expensive problems is key.

Inspect for Fall Safety:

Autumn brings with it cold weather and, often rain. Inspect your supports and railings for decks, patios and entry ways. Be sure that the handrails can support someone who may slip on a wet surface.

Animal Proofing:

Cold weather brings critters

seeking refuge in the warmth of an accessible basement or attic. To prevent an infestation, caulk small holes and cover large holes with hardware cloth.

The Humane Society recommends the following tips for animal proofing your property: caulk for small holes, staple or screw hardware cloth over larger holes, or make permanent repairs.

Bug screen (1/4 inch hardware cloth) will not hold up to stronger animals, such as raccoons, so 16 gauge 1 x 1 inch steel mesh is recommended for raccoons.

For squirrels, solid aluminum flashing is the exclusion material of choice.



Prep Your Attic:

Check your attic's insulation to prevent ice damming on your roof, which can lead to damage and expensive repairs.

Unwelcome critters can destroy insulation which will need to get repaired before winter weather makes the problem an even bigger repair.

Roof Inspection:

Ice, rain, snow and wind combined with rapidly changing temperatures and humidity wreak havoc on roofs.

Check for missing or loose shingles. A slightly damaged roof can lead to water exposure which cause deterioration to insulation, wood and drywall, making electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems vulnerable.

It's better to proactively deal with repairs in the fall, than discover a leaky roof during a winter storm. Due to the importance of your roof, have a

licensed, certified roofing professional check the condition of your roof once a year.

Caulking:

Caulking and sealing openings is one of the least expensive maintenance jobs. Openings in the structure can cause water to get in and freeze, resulting in cracks and mold build up.

Gutters:

Once leaves start to fall, clean out the gutters and downspouts around the property.

Clogged gutters can create ice dams in freezing temperatures that can cause gutters to break entirely and a cleared



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gutter will direct water away from the property and prevent water damage to the foundation or structure.

Preventative maintenance before autumn is crucial and protects your investment from storms.



Winter Maintenance

Winter Tasks

Winter chill is in the air, indicating that it's time to take care of the all-important winter maintenance tasks before storms hit full-force.

Preventative winter maintenance includes protecting pipes from bursting, fixtures from crumbling, plants from dying, and your tenants from slips and falls.

Here's a look at the most important winter maintenance tasks to prevent cold weather damage this season.

Winterize Pipes:

Any un-insulated pipes must be wrapped to ensure they will

not freeze or burst when the temperature drops. Remind your tenants to disconnect garden hoses and insulate outdoor spigots.

Tell your tenants to take special precautions if the temperature drops below 20 degrees. Instruct them to keep one or two faucets running slowly at all times to prevent the line from freezing.

Tell tenants to keep the cabinet under the kitchen sink open so warm air can flow around the pipes.

Flush the Water Heater:

Experts advise that you flush the water heater at least every two years to control mineral

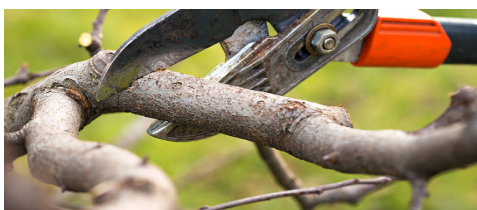
buildups that can cause damage or prevent efficiency. An old water heater will need some extra TLC; plan to schedule either a repair or a replacement, if necessary.

Prune Trees & Clear Debris:

Now is the time to prune your vegetation to protect it from harsh weather, and to ensure safety for your tenants.

Heavy snow and ice can weigh on unstable branches leading to dangerous breakages that could harm residents or obstruct pathways.

Check your property for any trees or shrubs in need of a trim before the cold hits full-force, and ensure that walkways



are clear of slippery mulching leaves.

Prevent damage from water pooling against your roof or siding by cleaning the gutters once more.

Autumn winds brought leaves and debris with it that need to be addressed.

Weather-Proof Structures:

Don't forget to seal windows and doors to insulate against the winter chill.

This keeps heating costs down for your tenants (ensuring their satisfaction, and that your heating system is not over-worked) as well as keeps out damaging moisture.

Attend to the Roof:

If you have yet to have a certified roofing professional inspect your roof this year, now is the time. It is crucial to check for even slight damage, as this can lead to water exposure and deterioration leaving your plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems vulnerable.

While you're in the general vicinity of the chimney, be certain to inspect it (and your fireplace) before your tenants use it.

Seasonal maintenance is always the perfect time to perform your yearly or seasonal safety inspection and check in with tenants.

This provides an easy venue for tenants to inform you of any maintenance concerns, and serves as an excellent time to remind tenants of their responsibilities as winter comes closer.

In addition to a verbal reminder, a simple newsletter containing winter maintenance instructions for your tenants will go a long way to ensure the protection of your properties this season.

Inform tenants to inspect their fireplaces before use, remove window air conditioners, and reverse ceiling fans.

All of these simple maintenance tasks can ensure that you don't have a preventable crisis on your hands when the freezing weather hits.

Rental Property Safety Checklist



You are legally required to provide safe conditions for residents within your rentals.

How Safe Are Your Rentals?

HOUSING SAFETY LAWS:

- Structural elements must be secure & intact
- Known toxins must be managed appropriately
- Water heaters & heating systems must work appropriately
- Electrical, plumbing, heating ventilating & air conditioning systems must be operating safely
- Threat of foreseeable criminal intrusions reduced
- Infestations of rodents and other vermin exterminated
- Common areas (hallways, stairways, entryways) must be clean and in safe condition



Regular inspections of your property will help keep your tenants safe and allow you to identify problems before they become expensive repairs.

INTERIOR SAFETY CHECK:



Doors:

Doors inside & outside need to close/open properly. Otherwise you risk an intrusion or a fire hazard.



Outlets:

Wall outlets should work appropriately & cover panels will be secure. Black, scorched, or dangling wires are also hints to bad wiring.



Lights:

Lights should switch on & off smoothly. A delayed response could be a clue to faulty wiring which can spark a fire.



Ceilings:

Cracks or sags in the ceiling can indicate a water leak or roof damage to address before it causes issues or collapses.



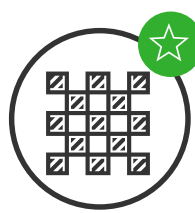
Walls:

Check base of walls & look for cracks or holes that could let vermin in the walls. Examine for cracks & water stains.



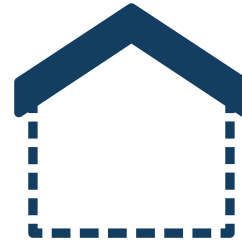
Fireplace:

Sweep the chimney to remove any debris that has built up during the warm weather hiatus. Clogged chimneys run the risk of igniting a chimney fire or poses ventilation risks.



Floors:

Sloping floors can indicate structural damage/foundation problems & should be repaired or replaced ASAP. Stains & soft spots in the flooring can also reveal rot or water damage.



Schedule regular safety inspections at least once a year, and again in between lease terms to provide safe conditions for your tenants.

EXTERIOR SAFETY CHECK:



Walkways & Stairwells:

Make sure all railings are secure and antislip or caution guards are in place. Walkways and common areas should also be well lit and free of obstacle or debris.



Lights:

Lights should switch on & off smoothly. A delayed response could be a clue to faulty wiring which can spark a fire.



Landscape:

Check base of walls & look for cracks or holes that could let vermin in the walls. Examine for cracks & water stains.



Windows:

Wall outlets should work appropriately & cover panels will be secure. Black, scorched, or dangling wires are also hints to bad wiring.



Roof Inspection:

Cracks or sags in the ceiling could indicate a water leak or roof damage that must be addressed before it causes more issues or collapses on a tenant.





Proper maintenance can extend the life of your appliances, postponing expensive replacements.

APPLIANCE SAFETY CHECK:



Smoke & CO Alarms:

During any routine maintenance, ensure smoke & CO alarms are working properly. Tenants can forget to change batteries, or remove them altogether.



HVAC System:

Heating systems should be inspected, serviced & cleaned at least once a year. Remind tenants to change air filters regularly & provide extra filters to make sure it gets done.



Washer/Dryer:

Lint & debris can build up in dryer vents causing damage or fires. While the dryer is running, check that the exhaust is coming out. Clear blockages by vacuuming the hose or calling a professional.



Stove/Oven:

Make sure each electric heating element works properly or check that gas lines are clear & burners ignite appropriately for gas stoves.



Refrigerator:

Make sure the refrigerator maintains an appropriate temperature to keep food safely stored.



Water Heater:

Ensure the temperature is set below 120° F to prevent scalding. Test safety relief valve once a year to ensure proper operation & flush the system to remove sediment that cause system failure.



Water Pressure:

Check water supply & pressure on all sinks and shower. Does water flow properly? Flush the toilet to make sure it drains and refills properly without leaking.



Extras:

Check any other supplied kitchen appliance to make sure they are functioning (dishwasher, garbage disposal, etc.)

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Wrapping Up Seasonal Maintenance

While regular maintenance work may not be the most exciting task on your to-do list, prudent landlords jump at the opportunity to protect their pocketbooks in the long run.

Landlords and property managers are responsible for ensuring that conditions are habitable and small repairs now can easily save hundreds if not thousands of dollars worth of damages later.

Seasonal maintenance in conjunction with yearly safety inspections will keep your margins high and your tenants happy.

Property management software and calendar tools are helpful to set reminders that will send notifications about scheduling a

maintenance day each season.

You can also remind yourself to send an email to your renters each season to change their air filter and perform other tenant maintenance tasks.

Protect against damage during

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your seasonal maintenance by using that time to check in with your tenants; a quick check-in with your renters might remind them to report an issue that they might otherwise not worry about mentioning.

Need More Info About Seasonal Maintenance, & Maintenance Responsibility?

Check out **Rentec Direct's blog** for tips and tricks, articles on habitability requirements and articles outlining maintenance tasks to remind your renters to complete.

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