

# Property Inspection Checklist for Renters

## 1. Before you visit the property

The property manager/landlord will usually provide a written description of the property before it is ready for inspection. Have a good read and look for the following:

- Energy Efficiency: does the property have an energy efficiency rating (most newer properties will have this, older ones may not.). It is a good indication of the insulation and construction of the property, and how cheap/expensive it may be to heat/cool.
- Property manager: if the property has a designated property manager, investigate their organization. It is good to know if they have prior experience managing rental properties as it indicates if they are aware of your rights as a tenant and condition requirements of the property.

## 2. Front Door/Entry

Even before you enter the property, your inspector's cap goes on! Look at the front door closely.

- Security: look for signs of previous break-in attempts (Check around the lock area, is there any scuffing, scratches or chips of wood missing?)
- Lighting: Is there a sensor/security light located near the door? (Lights like these are great to deter would-be thieves, and also handy for when you arrive home late)

## 3. Living Room

You will be spending most time in this room, so pay close attention to it.

- Security: open and close windows. You are inspecting the property, so be thorough, you are allowed to check the functioning of inbuilt fixtures and fittings. (Is there a lock on the windows? Does it actually work? Do the windows have mesh screens or additional protection added to them?)
- Power: where are the power points located? I have never seen a living room without a television, so it is important for you to envision where it would go in this room.
- Antenna: where is the antenna input point located? I didn't check my antenna connection when I inspected my flat and I'm paying for it now. I found out that my flat doesn't have an outdoor antenna! So, I had to buy a \$80 digital indoor antenna and I have only managed to get half the available channels in my area.

- Heating/cooling: is there any inbuilt heating/cooling? Does it work? Is it cost effective? If there is already heating/cooling built into the apartment, note down the type of unit (for example: heating – an oil heater, gas heater, ducted heating) and the manufacturer. Then go home and research the cost effectiveness of the heating/cooling. It could save you heaps if it is efficient to run!
- Damp: look up! Are there any signs of mold/peeling paint on the ceiling? If there is, it will give you a good sign that maintenance is not completed as thoroughly as it should be.
- Lighting: what type of lighting is in this room? Lights with multiple globes can be very expensive to use, just as a single eco-globe can be very efficient. Have a look and think of any adjustments you could make to improve the cost efficiency of the lighting.
- Noise: can you hear the neighbors? Is there a dog barking non-stop next door? Are there kids playing on the floor above? It is important to note what time you visit the property. It is advisable to inspect it at several different times of the day to gauge the surrounding environment and its impact on you.
- Floor: look at the condition of the floor. Is the carpet clean and well maintained? Some states/territories require the carpet to be cleaned to a professional standard before a tenant moves in. Check to see if this applies to your area and if it has been cleaned to a high standard.

#### 4. Kitchen

- Appliances: can the landlord provide the user manual for the appliances oven, cook top, range hood and dishwasher)?
- Appliances: note the make and model of the appliances and do a similar research task as you did for the heating/cooling.
- Cupboards: Do all the cupboard open? Do they show any sign of warping (warping can be a sign of excess water)?
- Pantry: check for signs of damaged shelves. Small dints and scratches lower down could be a sign of rodents.
- Safety: is there a smoke alarm fitted to the ceiling? Does it work?

- Fridge: is there adequate space for your refrigerator? Check height and width and depth. Your fridge might fit, but could stick out so far that it is impractical. Remember, your fridge needs space behind it for air circulation. If your fridge has a built in ice maker, make sure that there is a water supply available (if it requires one).

## 5. Bathroom/Laundry

- Mold: use your nose! Make sure the air is crisp and fresh. The landlord might have left a window open to disguise a damp smell, so be mindful if you spy the window strategically open.
- Fan: Does the fan work? Turn it on and find out! You are allowed to test all these items when inspecting a property.
- Power: where are the power points located? Is there a power point for your dryer/electric razor/ toothbrush/hair dryer? Is it in a safe location? (for example: away from any sources of water)
- Drains: is there an additional drain in the floor (I have learnt the benefit of a laundry drain located in the floor after my washing machine malfunctioned and leaked water everywhere)
- Toilet: does the toilet have both the half flush and full flush options? I can save you hundreds if there is a half flush option! Saving water is great!
- Toilet: is the toilet separate to the main bathroom? This can be advantageous if you are planning on living with other people. An additional WC (water closet) can be very handy when you are all trying to get ready for work in the morning)
- Security: is there a lock on the bathroom window? Is it high enough to deter would-be thieves?
- Privacy: is the bathroom window frosted? Or are their blinds on the window? I have been to several bathrooms where the window looked into next doors' living room. I don't think they want to see me relieving myself while watching TV.
- Privacy: is there a lock on the bathroom door? Does it work? Don't underestimate the power of the lock if you are planning to share with other people!

## 6. Bedroom

- Size: is the bedroom large enough to hold your queen-sized bed (and have space to walk around it)?
- Wardrobe: is there enough space for your clothes? Are there shelves as well and hanging space?
- Power: where are the power points located? I sleep with my phone charging next to me. I need power for the charger as well as my lamp and alarm clock. Check the power points meet your power requirements.
- Window: are you able to open the bedroom window? Does it lock? I love to 'air out' my bedroom from time to time, and having a fresh breeze is important to me!
- Antenna: some people have a television in their bedrooms. If you do, make sure there is an antenna input point available.

## 7. Backdoor

- Security: is there a lockable screen door as well as a solid back door? Look at lock area around the back door? Does it show signs of a break-in attempt?
- Lighting: is there a sensor/porch light?

## 8. Backyard

- Maintenance: find out what is required to maintain the backyard? Do you have to cut the grass?
- Security: are the fences secured? Does the property back on to a train line, public park or carpark (or a place where there could be a gathering of questionable people)?

## 9. Houses/flats next door

- Look at the condition of the houses/flats next door to this one. Are they maintained? You will find that certain housing areas have different maintenance standards. If the houses next door are kept clean and visually appealing, then your place will probably be kept in a similar condition. If there is rubbish in front yards, long grass, cars parked on nature strips, even poorly maintained letterboxes; it may be a sign that the neighborhood has a high crime rate.