**Rental Property Inspection Laws: When Can a Landlord Inspect a Rental?**

Scheduling regular property inspections is a great way to ensure the property is safe for tenants and in great condition. But it’s important to abide by rental property inspection laws during inspections to avoid violating a tenant’s right to privacy.

*Best practices towards rental property inspections and what a landlord can (and can’t) do during visits.*

**Can Landlords Regularly Inspect the Property?**

Landlords can perform regular inspections, either quarterly or more frequently, to ensure the property is safe and free from property damage. At least one property inspection will usually be conducted during the lease term, depending on how often maintenance requests pop up.

**How Often Can a Landlord Inspect a Rental Property?**

Most states do not limit how many rental property inspections can be done per lease term, but landlords cannot enter the premises without notifying the tenant beforehand with a notice of entry form.

It’s also important to note that inspecting a property too often without probable cause can potentially violate a tenant’s right to privacy and lead to an unpleasant renting experience. For that reason, landlords are advised to be mindful of how many inspections are conducted to avoid making tenants uncomfortable.

*Check your local landlord-tenant laws to properly prepare for the next property inspection.*

**What Can a Landlord Do During an Inspection?**

Landlords can refer to a move-in and move-out checklist to help them perform a basic inspection on their rental. An inspection is typically when landlords look for obvious signs of damage, check that all the appliances are functioning properly, and see if there are any signs of pest infestation.

Landlords are not allowed to go through a tenant’s personal belongings — such as their dresser, living room furniture, or locked spaces they do not have the key to — since it’s not part of the rental property. Choosing to go through a tenant’s belongings can result in legal action, which is why landlords are advised not to during inspections.

**4 Reasons Why a Landlord May Want to Perform an Inspection**

*There can be various reasons as to why a landlord wants to perform an inspection, but here are the main four.*

**1. Emergency Purposes** - The most common reason for property inspections is due to sudden emergencies, like damage caused by a fire or a broken window. If the tenant has notified the landlord of an issue that needs to be addressed, then they can enter the property to inspect the rental.

**2.** **Maintenance or Routine Property Inspection** - Landlords can enter the property if a tenant has submitted a maintenance request. However, maintenance needs to be approached differently than property inspections. Routine maintenance should generally be done during normal business hours (which can vary by state) during the week to abide by local ordinances. Landlords may also have to provide a written notice in-person to ensure the tenant is aware of their upcoming visit.

**3. A Tenant Has Been Gone for an Extended Time** - If the tenant has been absent from the property for more than seven days, then some states do allow landlords to enter the property. This may not always be the case since states vary in what’s viewed as an extended absence, so check local ordinances to be sure.

**4. Landlord Suspects the Tenant Moved Out Without Notice** - There are rare cases where a tenant may move out without proper notice, but landlords may still need to take precautionary measures before entering the property. Before visiting the property, gather evidence that the tenant has indeed moved out, whether it be a change of address filed or confirmation from other residents. Landlords may then want to consult with a lawyer to determine what the next steps are. A Notice of Belief of Abandonment may need to be filed to give your tenant enough time to respond and determine the next steps.

**Rental property inspections should be done carefully to ensure your tenant’s right to privacy is protected, while still allowing you the chance to view your property. As a landlord, it’s important to familiarize yourself with rental property inspection laws before scheduling a visit and to always give proper notice beforehand.**