



PRE-TENANCY GUIDE

Preparing your property for new tenants

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A pre-tenancy turn-over guide

The two weeks between one tenancy ending and another beginning is the only time most landlords have unrestricted access to their own property. Use it well and you set up the next tenancy to be quieter, longer, and more profitable. Use it poorly and small problems compound into Tribunal cases.

Phase 1: the final inspection (outgoing tenants)

Done well, this is also the start of preparing for the new tenants. We document everything against the entry inspection report from the previous tenancy, photo by photo. Bond deductions, if any, are itemised.

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| ■ Walk through with outgoing tenant where possible | Reduces dispute risk |
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| ■ Compare every room against entry photos | |
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| ■ Note all damage beyond fair wear and tear | Distinguish between the two carefully |
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| ■ Photograph any condition that's changed | Time-stamped photos to file |
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| ■ Read meters — power, gas, water if separately billed | |
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| ■ Collect all sets of keys, including spares | |
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| ■ Confirm forwarding address for bond refund correspondence | |

Phase 2: cleaning standards

Outgoing tenants must return the property 'reasonably clean'. The standard in case law is roughly: clean enough that an incoming tenant would have nothing to clean before moving in. In practice most professional cleans in Auckland for a 3-bedroom house run \$350–\$550 and take 3-5 hours.

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| ■ All kitchen appliances cleaned inside and out — oven, hob, range hood, microwave, fridge if included | Range hood filter and oven racks the common misses |
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| ■ Bathrooms — grout, taps, glass, ventilation grilles | Mould treatment if visible |
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| ■ Windows inside, and outside where accessible | |
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| ■ Carpets professionally cleaned where lease requires | Pet tenancies often require carpet shampoo on exit |
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| ■ Curtains and blinds dusted, washed if specified | |
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| ■ All cupboards and drawers wiped out | |

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- Outside — lawns mowed, weeds, rubbish removed
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- Letterbox cleared and contents removed
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Phase 3: pre-tenancy repairs and compliance

Anything you noticed at the final inspection that needs to be fixed before the next tenant moves in. The compliance items are non-negotiable.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Healthy Homes compliance statement refreshed for the new tenancy | <p>Includes heating, insulation, ventilation, moisture, draughts</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Smoke alarms — test and replace any with expired battery or unit (>10 years) | <p>Photoelectric, ceiling mounted near sleeping areas</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locks — re-key or change if any key is unaccounted for | <p>Insurance often requires this</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Power and water — confirm utilities can be transferred easily | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Any deferred maintenance — book trades while access is unrestricted | <p>Painting, deep cleans, garden tidy easier when empty</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Test every appliance you've supplied | <p>Don't discover the oven element is gone via the new tenant</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Walk through with your eyes on the next tenant's experience | <p>Common misses: hose tap, garage door, garden bins</p> |

Phase 4: photographs for the listing

The single biggest factor in time-to-let after price is the quality of the listing photos. Spend the money on a property photographer if you're between tenants for more than 2 weeks — \$250-400 buys photos that shorten your vacancy by 1-2 weeks. The maths is one-sided.

- Shoot when the property is empty or near-empty — uncluttered, bright, with natural light.
- Mid-morning or late afternoon for soft light, never midday harsh sun.
- Wide-angle lens but no fisheye — honest representation of room size.
- Capture every room plus exterior, garden, and the street view.
- Update the photos with each tenancy change. Stale photos cost you weekly.

Phase 5: the move-in pack

A short welcome document handed over with the keys. Sets tone, prevents avoidable calls in week one, and encourages tenants to treat the property well.

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| ■ Property manager contact details and emergency line | |
| ■ Bond receipt (for the tenant's records) | |
| ■ How to operate the heat pump, oven, hot water and any controls | |
| ■ Rubbish, recycling and green bin collection days | |
| ■ Power, water, internet provider transfer notes | |
| ■ Maintenance request process — link and phone number | |
| ■ Smoke alarm test instructions | |
| ■ Local information — nearest doctor, supermarket, schools | Especially useful for tenants new to the area |
| ■ Healthy Homes compliance statement (also in tenancy agreement) | |

Phase 6: entry inspection on move-in day

Sign the entry inspection with the tenant on move-in day. This document, with its photos, is the reference for the bond refund. If a dispute ever reaches the Tenancy Tribunal, it's usually decided on these photos.

- Every room photographed from each corner
- Any pre-existing damage explicitly noted and photographed

- Meter readings recorded — power, gas, water
- Smoke alarms tested with the tenant present Each one
- Heat pump tested in heating and cooling modes with the tenant present
- Keys handed over with signed receipt
- Tenancy agreement signed (digital or physical)
- Bond paid and receipted, lodged with Tenancy Services within 23 working days

Common Tribunal causes — and how to avoid them

Common claim	How to avoid it
Disputed cleaning deduction	Photos at entry and exit, identical angles
Disputed damage deduction (carpets, walls)	Itemised quote from a trade, photos with measurements
Lock change / re-keying cost passed to tenant	Only valid where tenant lost keys; document carefully
Late bond refund	Lodge bond within 23 working days; refund initiated within 14 days of vacate where uncontested
Healthy Homes non-compliance during tenancy	Refresh compliance statement at every tenancy change

Want this handled for you? Every Max Rentals managed property gets this entire turnover process run by us, including the photographs, the cleans, the compliance refresh, and the entry inspection report. Book a free appraisal at maxrentals.co.nz/rental-appraisal to discuss switching.