

What is an Inventory?

An inventory is a report showing the condition of each and every element within a property. It is not a list of contents.

Elements include doors, windows, walls, stairs, toilets, sinks etc. as well as furniture and contents.

It will contain meter readings as at the time of inspection as this is the point where the tenant becomes responsible for paying the bills.

Smoke alarms are also tested and it will be noted on the report that they are working and comply with regulation. They are to be photographed to prove that they have been tested.

Why have an inventory?

When a landlord lets a property they will take a deposit to cover any damage to the property over and above normal 'wear and tear'. To minimise any dispute at the end of the tenancy an inventory is compiled to show the exact condition of the property and its contents. If then at the end of the tenancy the carpet is ruined for example, there is a record to show what condition the carpet was in at the start of the tenancy, with photographs to back that up. The landlord can then use this as evidence to attempt to claim from the tenant's damage deposit for the carpet to be repaired, replaced, or cleaned.

An inventory is a document that is beneficial to both landlord and tenant. A tenant will be given the opportunity to make any comments once the inventory is complete so that they are happy with its contents. Defects picked up at the inventory cannot therefore be blamed on the tenant at the end of the tenancy.

Generally, the properties are let to the tenant in a clean condition. Unfortunately, some tenants do not clean the property before they vacate. The inventory will also report on how clean the property is. This is then used as proof if the property is handed back and requires cleaning before it can be re let. Likewise for the tenant, if there are any cleaning issues at the start of the tenancy then they cannot be charged for those issues at the end of the tenancy.

An inventory is a totally independent document and is not bias towards either the landlord or tenant. It protects both tenants and landlords.

What happens after an inventory?

Once an inventory is compiled it is sent to the incoming tenants for them to read through, they then have the chance to add any defects that they may notice is not included, and then they sign to say that they agree with the document. It is then kept until the tenant moves out and is used to check over to make a comparison between check in and check out.

How many photographs does an inventory contain?

A good inventory will contain between 400-900 photographs based on the size of the property and its condition.

Look to take between 30-80 photos per room, less for a small WC and more for a large kitchen.

What photos do we take?

Photos are taken of EVERYTHING including at least one photo for each wall, each section of carpet, the ceiling, each window – with and without curtains or blinds shut. Toilet – with lid up and lid down. All kitchen cupboards -inside and out, each section of worktop etc etc. Every square inch of the property will need to be photographed please. Please include a full room shot of each room. Please ensure there are some good close ups too, especially of any damage, marks or cleaning issues.

Please view the inventory examples to see the photo examples.

How long will an inventory take?

Each inventory will take an average of 1-3 hours depending on the size of the property. The more you do the faster you will get.

What will I be looking for?

You will be looking for any damage, defects and broken items. Things such as cracked sinks, broken floor tiles, burns on carpets, broken windows, torn curtains, damp/mould, damaged kitchen units etc. You will also be noting furniture and contents such as beds, pictures on walls, kettles etc.

If you are in a property which is quite old, try not to worry about things that are age related, maybe old doors, old wooden floor boards, cracks, uneven walls etc. Concentrate on things that the tenant could have caused and ultimately be blamed for. Particularly high value items like sinks, worktops, windows, carpets, door frames etc.

(Obviously photograph everything still, but don't worry about something being old and worn)

How is the inventory made?

You will use an app on an Iphone called InventoryBase. You will work your way through each room of the property and answer the questions as best you can. From the questions you will be able to gauge what sort of information we are after and your photographs should reflect this.

There are 3 columns to the report -

Item	Condition	Comments
Walls	Good	No further comment
Ceiling	Fair	Light mould staining

Condition

On each element you will be prompted to give a judgement as to whether you feel something is in Good, Fair or Poor condition. Please don't overthink on this bit as there are a lot of questions and by losing time on this will prolong the report considerably.

Good – when something is new, freshly painted or has some minor light marks.

Fair – when something has some marks, discolouration and some wear, but still fully functional.

Poor – when something is heavily marked, scuffed, stained, cracked or broken.

Comments

The comments column is already pre filled with 'No Additional Comment'. If there is something that you feel needs to be noted, please delete 'No Additional Comment' and replace it with what you feel needs noting – such as

Mould or mildew marks

Blue tac marks

Heavy scuffs

Stained

Damaged

Cracked

Burn mark 5cm

Furniture

In a bedroom it is expected that there will be a bed, a chest of drawers, a wardrobe, a desk and a chair, so therefore you will be asked to just the condition and make any relevant comments on each of those items specifically.

In a lounge or dining room, the amount of furniture will vary so we ask you to list the furniture that is present with a very brief description/condition – such as

Round dining table – scratched

4 dining chairs – worn

Red sofa – Good condition

Blue arm chair - spot marked

All furniture needs to be fully inspected and photographed please. With a chest of drawers, please photograph the item as a whole, then the top, then open the drawers and photograph from above to show the condition. With a wardrobe, please take a photograph as a whole, open the doors and photograph the interior. With a sofa or armchair, please take photographs from a couple of angles and also lift the cushions if applicable and photograph under there too.

Beds - it is really important to show the condition of the bed frame and mattress at the start of the tenancy. Please take a photograph of the bed as a whole. A photograph of the mattress from the top, and then where possible lift the mattress and take a photograph both of the underside of the mattress and the bed frame.

One of the big deposit issues we face with students is broken beds and stained mattresses. It is really important to get evidence of the condition of these during the inventory please.

Mattress protectors –

Each bed should have a mattress protector. Please take a photograph of the protector in place, then please remove or peel back the protector to photograph the mattress and frame. Please then replace the protector fully and leave the room presentable.

There will be questions about items which are not present, such as fireplaces. There is a question re fireplaces as many of the older properties do have them. If there is no fireplace there is an option for 'Not Applicable'.

Similarly, there may be an item in a room which is not covered by the questions in the report (a sink in a bedroom for example, there are a few, but not enough to add to the template) . You will find a Notes section at the bottom of every room. Please use this text box to add any information you see relevant.

Comments of level of Cleanliness - There is a section at the bottom of each room with a drop down option for cleaning comments. Each property you go in should have been professionally cleaned so there should be 'No cleaning issues Identified'. However, please feel free to use the other options where needed.

Please do not be too harsh on this section. It may not be how you would want it to be for you personally. However, these are often old properties which have wear and staining to many surfaces.

The properties will be sanitised and all surfaces wiped, vacuumed etc. We can only report on cleaning issues if there is visible dirt that can be evidenced.

The biggest issue with student deposits is cleaning. However, if a student has made an effort at the end of their tenancy to sanitise, vacuum and leave the property tidy and rubbish free it is very unlikely that they will be charged cleaning costs from their deposit.

How do I take meter readings?

Most meter readings will involve just taking a full screen size photograph of the front of the meter. Some meters will require you to press some buttons to scroll through different screens and take photographs of all readings. It is suggested that you read the meters and test the smoke alarms as soon as you get to the property, this way, we will be able to come to you and help you if you have any problems with them.

My suggestion is also to face time me if you have to press any buttons on a meter so that we can tell you what to do.

Power Packs

You will be supplied with a power pack, please plug your iphone in to charge if it falls below about 50%. Please remember to switch the power pack on when you plug in your iphone or it will not charge.

Keys

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR KEYS ON YOU. In your bag. It is very easy to get locked out when checking meters and inspecting gardens.

Iphone— has it crashed?

From time to time your iphone will crash, don't panic. All you need to do is to go back into Inventory base and go back to where you were. Just remember that the photo you took crashed the app so you will need to re take it.

Gardens

Please make sure that items in the gardens are listed and that all nooks and crannies of the garden are photographed. Try to take a photograph of the back of the house too.

Finished?

When you have finished, please make sure that the property is secured correctly.