



WAA News

Volume 35 Issue 9 • November 2014 • Connecting the Rental Community Right Next Door and Across the State

*Happy
Thanksgiving!*

**What To Do When You
Discover an Abandoned Pet**
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Former Good Residents**
on page 13

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Today to Prepare for Winter**
on page 19



2014 WAA Conference and Tradeshow
THREE BEARS RESORT - WARRENS, WI
OCTOBER 10-12

**Check out what you
Missed at the 2014 WAA
Conference & Tradeshow**

on pages 10-11



2014-2015 Roster of Events

(for a full calendar of events, visit our website at www.waaonline.org)

BOARD MEETINGS

Saturday, November 15 • 10:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

Ho-Chunk Convention Center, S3214 Hwy 12, Baraboo • Lower Dells Salon A/B

Lunch (optional) will be at Standing Rock Buffet at noon. Cost is \$12.

Please RSVP to Kristy at kristy@waaonline.org or 920-230-9221
no later than **Monday, November 10.**

Saturday, January 24, 2015 • 10:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

Ho-Chunk Convention Center, S3214 Hwy 12, Baraboo • Lower Dells Salon A/B

Lunch (optional) will be at Standing Rock Buffet at noon. Cost is \$12.



2015 WAA/WRHLC Legislative Day

Wednesday, March 18

Be sure to mark your calendars now to join

WAA/WRHLC at the State Capitol!

Check out the New WAA website...

The WAA is continuing the update of a completely **new and up-to-date** website.

Please go to www.waaonline.org to check it out!

While you are there, please be sure to register on the website so that you have access to all the areas and information that the site has to offer, as a benefit of YOUR membership. That information includes access to recent WAA News issues, Legislative updates, minutes from WAA Board meetings, a forum area, and **coming soon...**the option of being able to list YOUR vacancies for tenants to search and find your listing.

Once you have had a chance to look over the website, we would love YOUR feedback!

*Please send any comments, thoughts, and ideas for content to Kristy at the WAA Office
(Kristy@waaonline.org).*



WAA is also now on Facebook... be sure to "Like" us!



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TEAMWORK

We need YOU! Our association is only as strong as our members and member participation is critical for our growth and success. We have established a number of standing committees (teams) to ensure that our association continues to meet goals that are set, retains and adds members, and provides education, leadership, and representation to ensure that YOU are able to operate your rental business successfully, ethically, and responsibly in our state. These members have agreed to volunteer their opinions, skills, and time to make this association the best it can be. Please consider getting involved as well and help make a difference in YOUR association, the Wisconsin Apartment Association!

Education Committee – Julie Fay-Krivitz-Chair (Associate), Sherrie Dorn (SWLA, Racine), Dale Hicks (JARPA, Janesville), and Pamela Strittmater (AALA, La Crosse)

Legislative Committee – Chris Mokler-Co-Chair (Winnebago, Oshkosh), Dale Hicks-Co-Chair (JARPA, Janesville), and Jessica Olson (AALA, La Crosse)

Membership Committee – Paul Winans-Chair (AALA, La Crosse), Julie Fay-Krivitz (Associate), Pamela Strittmater (AALA, La Crosse), Jeff Pralle (AALA, La Crosse), Hank Drechsler (FVAA, Appleton), Kris Mueller (MAAA, Marshfield), and Gus Orozco (SWLA, Racine)

Conference Committee - Pamela Strittmater-Chair (AALA, La Crosse), Kathy Haines (Associate), Julie Fay-Krivitz (Associate), Susan Verbeten (SWLA, Racine), Kelly Jensen (SWLA, Racine), Bill White (Associate), Lori Thurloff (AANW, Green Bay), Dawn Powell (KLA, Kenosha), and Dale Hicks (JARPA, Janesville)



President's Letter



Hello Landlords! We just finished the 2014 WAA Conference & Tradeshow at the Three Bears in Warrens and I want to thank everyone who attended and contributed to making it a great event!

For those of you who missed the event, you missed past President Dale Hicks doing cannonballs into the pool and getting dunked by the giant bucket of water! I think those who could make it, enjoyed the water park! Most importantly, I want to "Thank" all the guest speakers who put on great seminars and updated our knowledge bank. Toni Blake gave two awesome back to back presentations on "How to Gain & Maintain the Market Advantage" and "Total Team Customer

Service" during breakfast Saturday morning. I met with the local Presidents Saturday afternoon and we discussed our future goals for the WAA. We then finished up the night with the President's Reception and silent auction with music provided by Prairie Smoke. I think the silent auction raised one of the most in recent years and proceeds will go to the WAA legal defense fund. Dinner was delicious and we finished with our annual meeting. I also want to "Thank" all the vendors for their participation and we hope you support them as you continue to work your business. Many, many "Thanks" go to Kristy and Pam Strittmater, Conference Chair, for their hard work and, of course, many others...including Adele and Norm Vogel, Waukesha Area Apartment Association, for organizing the silent auction. I could go on and on, but I don't want to forget anyone!

Refreshments were provided by the Chippewa Valley Apartment Association in the Hospitality Room Saturday night and Gary Goyke, Chris Mokler & Dale Hicks did a Legislative & Political update after the continental breakfast Sunday morning.

When you consider all the educational seminars, networking opportunities, vendor relationships, entertainment, and all the meals provided, I would have to say attending the WAA Conference & Tradeshow is a great value! Please plan ahead and prepare for next year by pre-registering with Kristy for the 2015 WAA Conference & Tradeshow, October 9-11, 2015, at Chula Vista, Wisconsin Dells.

As we move forward, our WAA focus is going to be on marketing WAA throughout Wisconsin in 2015! We have some goals set and I look forward to working with the Board of Directors, Regional Directors, and all the committee chairs. Please join us at the next board meeting Saturday, November 15 at Ho-Chunk Conference Center. Please RSVP to Kristy no later than Monday, November 10.

I also want to "Thank" Kathy Haines for all her hard work over the past years dedicating her talents to the WAA as chair for the membership committee! As we move forward, please welcome Paul Winans, Apartment Association of the La Crosse Area, as our new chair for membership and marketing!

The 2015 WAA officers were sworn in at our annual meeting and I look forward to working with everyone this next year as we build new leadership, build new locals, and build our membership base throughout Wisconsin! We need each other, landlords need us, and we need them! The landscape in Madison is always changing and we need to continue to change with the times. Don't be left behind...get involved and please bring your leadership skills to the forefront!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the next board meeting! Your participation and ideas are welcome!

Sincerely,

Dean Ramsden

WAA President



What to Do When You Discover an Abandoned Pet

By Tom Binga, Co-Founder of RentPrep,
March 7, 2013

When a tenant abandons your rental property and leaves possessions behind, you have the legal responsibility to properly dispose of it according to the laws of your state.

When that abandoned property includes dogs or cats, it adds a whole new level to your process.

The Growing Problem of Abandoned Pets

There are too many sad stories of landlords discovering abandoned dogs or cats in vacated properties who are starving, sick, injured or dead. The process for declaring an animal as abandoned may differ from state to state, but there are some general guidelines you can follow to ensure that the animals won't suffer and that the former owners are held accountable, all while getting your property back.

Many states require you to store a tenant's possessions for a time, attempt to contact them and then outline how to dispose of the property. Pets require a completely different process so when you find one, follow these three steps to ensure the animal doesn't suffer and neither does your rental property.

Step 1. Verify Legal Abandonment

When you suspect the tenant has abandoned the rental property, look for clues that he has vacated, such as changing the mailing address, taken most of his belongings, or changing the utilities out of his name.

Neighbors may have noticed a moving truck, or otherwise learned that the tenant is indeed gone. If you have received notice from the tenant that he's vacated the unit or if you have legally evicted him, then the pet and all the other possessions may be considered abandoned.

Each state has different rules and laws on dealing with abandoned animals as well as animal neglect. Because they are living creatures, the laws for them are different than what you would do with an abandoned stereo or television. It's important to become familiar with the laws in your state concerning abandoned pets so you know what to do to help the suffering animal and protect your rental property at the same time.

Step 2. Safety and Security for the Pet and Yourself

If the animal has been abandoned for a long time, it may be hungry, cold, sick, stressed or desperate. While you may feel like you need to rush in and care for the pet, make sure that you always use caution with animals that can hurt you, like big dogs.

For the immediate short term, make sure the animals are secure (not wandering around and endangering others), and perhaps provide them with food and water. Animals can be unpredictable and you are a stranger to the abandoned animal. Even if the pet has behaved well around you before, the circumstances surrounding the abandonment may cause the animal to act differently, even aggressively. Never approach a dangerous animal—like a stressed out, starving big dog—no matter how sorry you feel for it.

When in doubt about the animal's behavior, err on the side of keeping yourself and others safe.

Step 3. Contact Animal Control

When you discover an abandoned pet, and have ensured that it is not a danger to anyone and that it has minimal yet basic care, immediately contact your local animal control officer through the police department.

Animal control will ask you to file a report, and come remove the dog or cat for you. Depending on the animal's condition, the former tenant may actually be charged with a crime based on evidence of how the pet was treated.

Between you and the animal control, hopefully you can locate the tenant so he can take responsibility for the abandoned pet and face charges of neglect and abandonment. If the tenant doesn't claim the pet or otherwise surrenders it, there are several options. Shelters accept abandoned dogs and cats, but there's a good chance the pet will be euthanized if it is not adopted soon. No-kill shelters are not as common, but will take in abandoned pets as well.

You'll need to make sure you follow all the laws about holding the pet, contacting the previous tenant and making the shelter aware of the real owner and that you're trying to get in touch with them.

In the end, you should always contact your local authorities when you discover an abandoned pet to determine the best way to get it removed quickly and placed somewhere that the owner can claim it or it can be adopted into a better home.



5 Thanksgiving Safety Tips for Your Renters

By Tom Binga, Co-Founder of RentPrep,
November 27, 2013



Landlords can keep their property and their tenants safer during the Thanksgiving holiday by sharing important safety tips with them. Even tenants that generally follow the rules for the

rest of the year may accidentally or intentionally let things get out of control during the holidays.

Here are 5 Thanksgiving safety tips that every landlord should share with their renters:

Safety Tip #1. Tenants are responsible for their guests

Thanksgiving often means out-of-town guests arriving for dinner or even staying overnight for a few days. Tenants need to know that they are responsible for the actions and behavior of their guests. Whether it's violating the noise regulations as outlined in the rental lease agreement to swimming in the pool after hours to illegal activity, if the guests of the tenant are not following the lease agreement, the tenant can be penalized for it.

Introducing alcohol at a Thanksgiving party may cause otherwise mindful guests and tenants to act a little more recklessly, so an advanced warning about behavior may minimize issues. Notifying tenants of this can help them keep their guests under control early on, before their actions become a problem.

Safety Tip #2. Open flames inside

Thanksgiving and other holiday decorations often include candles, scented wax warmers and other open-flame decorations. Remind your guests about the dangers of open flames when there are lots of people in a living space. It doesn't take much to jostle a table, tip over a candle and cause a fire.

Open flames and children or pets is generally a recipe for disaster and can quickly cause your tenant's Thanksgiving preparations to go up in

flames. Discuss fire safety and decorations, emphasizing any open flame regulations that appear in your lease agreement.

Remind tenants of where the fire extinguishers are and how to use them.

Safety Tip #3. Deep frying turkeys

A fast-growing trend in preparing turkey for Thanksgiving is to deep fry it in the backyard in a large vat of hot oil. The potential for injury and property damage is huge with deep frying turkeys, so be very clear with your tenants on whether such food preparation techniques are allowed on the property.

Safety Tip #4. Overloading electronics

Thanksgiving dinner preparation in a small space like an apartment can mean lots of extra appliances, like electric frying pans, slow cookers, griddles and more. Add in anything that overnight guests bring in, such as hair dryers, curling irons, and other electronic devices and the outlets may get overloaded. Besides, a lot of people put up holiday lights inside and outside during Thanksgiving to get a jump on decorating for Christmas.

Tenants should limit the number of appliances and electronic devices in use simultaneously. Encourage tenants to use power strips rather than overloading the rental property's outlets and reduce the risk of electrical-related problems and even an electrical fire.

Safety Tip #5. Parking

If your tenant is hosting a Thanksgiving gathering, there will likely be a need for increased parking. Make sure the tenant knows where the available guest parking spots are and that guests park their cars properly. When cars are squeezed into spaces that are set aside for other residents, double parked or even parked in places that aren't even meant for parking, it could cause fender benders as other cars try to maneuver around them.

Ice and snow can add danger to an already crowded parking lot, so make sure your snowplow crew is on time and ready to work. Talk with your tenant about having guests carpool or park nearby and walk in order to keep things safe and peaceful on Thanksgiving Day.



Finding Good Tenants Close to the Holidays

By E-Renter Tenant Screening, October 31, 2011

If you are a landlord who has just closed on your first rental property, you may be wondering if this is a good time of year to find good tenants. After all, Thanksgiving is a few weeks away, and that means the winter holidays can't be far behind. We often hear new landlords ask, "Do people move this time of year?" or "Will my rental property be sitting vacant until after the New Year?"

Of course, every situation is different, but the short answers to the above questions are "yes" and "not necessarily." Tenants move at all times of the year, and depending on their circumstances, plenty of people move just before or after Thanksgiving, or the week of Christmas, or even on New Year's Eve.

If you have a rental property ready for your first tenant, you should create a plan for marketing the property right away. Here are a few tips for filling a vacant rental property fast, no matter what time of year it is:

Remember you may not screen out any tenants on the basis of race, color, religion, marital or family status, gender, or disability. New landlords should become very familiar with the Fair Housing Act and all state and local rental ordinances.

Define your best-fit tenant: Who do you want living in your rental unit (staying within the FHA, of course)? Is it a high-end property with a higher rent, or is it middle- or low-income? Will you seek out Section 8 tenants? Is it perfect for students? What is the income requirement to rent your property? Who can afford it?

Post plenty of signs: Place "Now Leasing" or "For Rent" signs in the windows and on the lawn. If possible, put "For Rent" directional signs at intersections, pointing the way to your rental property. Your signs should include the number of bedrooms and bathrooms and your phone number, along with a website where prospective tenants can view photos.

Put up a few fliers: Post fliers where your best-fit tenant will see them. This could be a coffee shop in the neighborhood, a Laundromat, a grocery store, or a community center bulletin board. Include a thorough, well-written description of the unit, and provide tear-off tabs with your contact info. Highlight any features that will sell the tenant on living there. Is it bright and sunny? Are there details like a fireplace or hardwood floors? A patio? A view? Close to trails, the grocery store or library?

Advertise: Craigslist.org is probably the most popular rental advertising site, although you can also post on Rentals.com, ForRent.com and ApartmentFinder.com. The more you advertise, the more exposure you'll get and the faster you can fill the unit. Write a good ad that appeals to your best-fit tenant.

Incentivize: When you get closer to the holidays, you may find it tougher to get prospective tenants to agree to move. You can always offer an incentive, such as half off the first month's rent, waiving the application fee, or offering an appliance upgrade if they sign a one-year lease before Thanksgiving.

Pre-screen tenants: Don't get so antsy about filling the rental unit that you skip the tenant screening process. Background checks and tenant credit checks are vital to starting the landlord-tenant relationship off well. Protect yourself, your property and any other tenants you may have by properly screening each prospective tenant.



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WAA Newsletter Dates & Procedures

1. Items for newsletter should be forwarded to kristy@waaonline.org, electronically whenever possible.
2. Please submit news articles in the following formats: MS Word, Html copy, PDF, MS Works, eps, jpeg, tiff or text format.
3. Your articles, either by email, fax, or US mail must be received by the 3rd of the preceding month.

Please send your articles to:

Kristy Weincke
PO Box 2922
Oshkosh, WI 54903



Conference Wrap-Up

If you missed **Catching the Rental Wave** at the 2014 WAA Conference and Tradeshow, you missed a fantastic weekend! A beautiful location, good food, informative speakers, lots to learn at the trade show booths, and a fun time networking with other landlords! We had 99 registered attendees and 17 trade show vendors join us at the Three Bears Resort in Warrens.

Friday afternoon and Saturday were filled with a variety of sessions providing information on estate planning, protecting our assets, smoke free housing, evictions, screening, and the recent legal changes and how they affect our businesses. All of our speakers were well received and provided new information and reinforced some information that we all need to hear again. Our keynote speaker, Toni Blake (Totally Toni), helped all of us understand more about the importance of good marketing and gave us great ideas on how to use social media and technology to make our businesses stand out. Gary Goyke, Chris Mokler, and Dale Hicks updated us on things happening in Madison that affect us all and discussed the upcoming election.

The annual meeting and banquet featured wonderful entertainment by Prairie Smoke, good food, and the installation of the WAA officers for 2015. The 50/50 raffle and silent auction offered fun and excitement as attendees bid on the many fabulous items. Thank you to all for your wonderful donations and purchases! Because of the generosity of our members, a good amount was raised for the WAA Legal Defense Fund.

Thank you to all of the attendees who completed and turned in their conference surveys at conference! Congratulations to Kris Mueller, Marshfield Area Apartment Association, for winning your WAA dues for 2015! Please remember that if you still have not returned your survey, mail or email it to Kristy at the WAA office so we can use your comments and suggestions to plan for more great events.

Social time, learning time, and networking time – all wrapped together for a successful conference. **Plan now to join us at Chula Vista in the Dells October 9-11, 2015!**

Congratulations...



Member of the Year 2014:
Kathy Haines, AANW



Hall of Fame
Member 2014:
Dale Goshaw, CVAA

Conference Wrap-Up



Toni was a hit...



Above: **Toni Blake**,
Keynote Speaker, was entertaining
& informational!

Right:
Toni poses
with WAA
members
from Beloit.



Left:
Prairie Smoke
provided music for the
annual banquet.

THANK YOU

to these businesses for joining us at this year's trade show:

American Express OPEN, Bader Company, Clear Gains, Cost Segregation Services,
Dean's Satellite Service, Diamond Vogel Paints, Focus on Energy,
Great Lakes Commercial Sales, Inc., Hallman Lindsay Paints, Inc.,
Landlord Services, PPG Paint, WASH Multifamily Laundry Systems,
Waterstone Bank, Wisconsin Legal Blank, Wisconsin Realtors Association, WI Rental
Housing Legislative Council (WRHLC), and Wons Background Investigations!

Visiting with vendors...





Tips to Improve Landlord-Tenant Communication

By Gregory Lester, *TenantAlert.com*, October 16, 2014

Good communication is an important aspect of running a successful property management business. Whether you are dealing with tenants or service providers, clear and effective communication affects your business or property deals positively.

In a property management business, landlords need to communicate with their potential and current tenants effectively to run the business efficiently. Great communication not only helps you crack profitable deals but also minimizes your stress. It also keeps you out of legal issues. That is why it is important for every landlord to establish good communication right from the beginning with every tenant.

Here are some useful tips to improve landlord-tenant communication.

Be a good listener

Tenants want to be heard. You can respond to them appropriately only when you focus on what your tenants are trying to say. Be a good listener. Give your tenants time to express their needs and feelings, instead of simply sharing yours.

Identify different styles of communication

Every tenant communicates in a different style. Some tenants talk fast and want quick solutions to their issues. Get right to the point with such tenants. Others want more details and explanations so provide them the same. By taking out a little time to learn about your tenants, you can respond to their requirements effectively.

Share expectations

Landlords must be clear about what they expect from their tenants. Be clear with your policies and procedures. For instance, if you have a no-pet policy then tell it to them clearly. Let the tenants clearly know if you want them to change their behavior when residing in your property.

Make it collaborative

Make your communication sound more collaborative than authoritative. Say 'I need your help to sort out the garbage issue outside your apartment entrance' instead of 'Just clear out the garbage you dumped in my property.' This will help you resolve issues and accomplish your expectations from the tenants easily.

Be polite

Communicate courteously with manners with your tenants. Say 'Good Morning' when you come across any of your tenants in the morning. Call tenants 'Sir' and 'Ma'am'. Ask the tenants whether you can come in even if it is a scheduled maintenance visit. If their kid is crying, ask if it would be better for you to see them later.

Avoid getting emotional

If things get heated, manage them with a calm mind. Be professional. It will help you appease the situation and solve the issue in a better way.

If you follow these six effective tips when communicating with your tenants you can adapt to their style of communication, understand their needs, share your expectations with them, and establish a good landlord-tenant relationship. Better communication can also help you to reduce stress, experience fewer tenant turnovers, and better profits.





Reach Out to Former Good Residents

By Jeffrey Taylor, Founder, MrLandlord.com

I received a letter in the mail today from my local cable company which offers phone, internet and TV service. I bring this up, because this is a company that is doing what I suggest landlords do. The cable company is reaching out to me almost one year since I used to be one of their customers but switched to another company. I strategically received their letter about 10 to 11 months after "moving" away from using their services. In other words, the cable company kept track of when I left and thereby knew that I was coming up on the time of year when I would be making a decision on whether I would renew and continue staying with my current provider or possibly switching to another. Soooooo, during this "decision making renewal period" they made a point of reaching out to me, INVITING and RESELLING me on the idea of once again coming back to them.

On the outside of the envelope from the cable company it stated:

IT'S AN EXCITING TIME TO COME BACK TO....

On the inside letter, it started out: (Top of the letter):

**Is your contract (lease) with your current provider expiring soon?
Come back to us for this exciting offer!**

The letter went on to read in part:

Dear (my name)

We really enjoyed doing business with you. And we would like you to be our customer again. That's why we have this special offer.....

And of course they go on to try and resell me on what they believe would appeal to me becoming their customer again.

Likewise, with the ease of today's technology, you as rental owners can easily be alerted/ reminded (even done automatically) 10 to 11 months after any of your good residents move out. Send them a letter (email at a minimum) inviting/reselling them on the idea of coming back to one of your rentals. I have had MANY former residents come back and rent from me again. The thing is, for most landlords this happens by mere chance. The landlord does not do anything proactively to make this happen. I'm recommending to you today, that you systematically reach out, perhaps close to one year intervals, to former residents and make it part of your business model to invite GOOD former residents to come back to your rentals, especially since this can be done very easily and inexpensively.

If you have a current or upcoming vacancy, test out this suggested strategy. Go back to the applications of former good residents and identify email addresses or reference or emergency contact information and send out **"Invite You Back"** letters. And yes, I realize, that some emails or addresses may no longer be valid, that's why you try reaching out to ALL your former good residents (even GOOD applicants for that matter). With email, reaching out to one address can be just as easy as reaching out to dozens or even hundreds. Filling just one vacancy with a former good resident will prove how worthwhile this simple strategy can be to your cash flow!



Local Affiliate Updates

APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

(AANW), GREEN BAY

Info submitted by Kathy Haines

At our November meeting Greg Bruenning, the Compliance Inspector with The City of Green Bay will be our guest speaker. We do not meet the month of December. January will be our holiday party and Installation of the 2015 Officers.



Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1015 Lombardi Ave., Green Bay

APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE LA CROSSE AREA (AALA)

Info submitted by President Pamela Strittmater

A big thank you to SWLA for their generous contribution to our legal fund to fight landlord licensing in La Crosse and, potentially, throughout the state. We are still waiting for the judge to rule on one portion of our complaint, accept the written order, and close the case so we can move forward to the next step. On Thursday, Oct. 23rd, we celebrated our association's 25th anniversary with a great dinner, many memories, and had the opportunity to look forward. A good time was had by all!



Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Moose Lodge

CHIPPEWA VALLEY APARTMENT ASSOCIATION (CVAA), EAU CLAIRE

Info submitted by President Diana West

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Elks Club

JANESVILLE AREA RENTAL PROPERTY ASSOCIATION (JARPA)

Info submitted by Dale Hicks

JARPA has held Landlord training classes together with Beloit for the last four or five years. This year Janesville provided the class on September 13th. John Fischer was the instructor and we had 11 people in attendance.

Moving into October, Dale Hicks will be traveling to the Dells on October 4th to teach a class to law enforcement officers. This will be a refresher and follow up from a couple of years ago. Dale has reached out to police departments across the state and is building a relationship with officers by helping them understand Landlord/Tenant law. Dale has received a number of calls from officers asking questions about some particular issue they are dealing with. Education is still the number one issue to help Landlords be on the right track.



Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Commercial Bank, 1400 Blackbridge Rd., Janesville



KENOSHA LANDLORD ASSOCIATION (KLA)

Info submitted by President Mark Nausieda

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Kenosha VFW, 6618 39th Ave., Kenosha
Networking with refreshments at 6:30 p.m. & meeting at 7:00 p.m.

MARSHFIELD AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

Info submitted by President Kris Mueller

Educational seminars are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Belvedere Supper Club, Marshfield
Networking & dinner (at your own expense) at 6:00 p.m. & seminar at 7:00 p.m.
Board meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of every month at the Sunrise Restaurant. Everyone is welcome!

WAUKESHA AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

Info submitted by President Adele Vogel

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Waukesha Eagles Club, Grandview Ave, Waukesha
Networking/dinner at 6:30 p.m. & speaker begins at 7:00 p.m.; Business discussion to follow.

WISCONSIN RAPIDS AREA RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS

Info submitted by Helen Streekstra

Meetings are held 4 times per year: Next meeting is Monday, December 8th at the Hotel Mead
Social/dinner at 5:00 p.m. & meeting at 6:00 p.m.

WINNEBAGO APARTMENT ASSOCIATION, OSHKOSH

Info submitted by President Donn Lord

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at Benvenuto's Grill, 300 S. Koeller St., Oshkosh
Board meeting at 5:30 p.m., social (in the bar) at 6:30 p.m., & business meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the back room.

We're waiting to hear from you . . .

Beloit Property Managers Association, Fond du Lac Area Apartment Association,
Southern WI Landlord Association (Racine) and Wausau Area Apartment Association.



How Landlords Should Advertise Their Rental Property

Setting out your basic rental terms is your first step to finding great tenants.

By Janet Portman, Attorney, Nolo.com



Finding and choosing tenants is the most critical decision any landlord makes, and to do it well you need a reliable system. Savvy landlords follow specific steps to maximize their chances of selecting tenants who will pay their rent on time, keep their rentals in good condition, and not cause any legal or practical problems later.

Your first step is to define all of the terms of the rental so that you can properly advertise the space.

Determine Your Basic Rental Terms

Before you advertise your property for rent, make a number of basic decisions -- including how much rent to charge, whether to offer a fixed-term lease or a month-to-month tenancy, how many tenants can occupy the rental unit, how big a security deposit to require, and whether you'll allow pets. Making these important decisions should dovetail with creating your lease or rental agreement.

Amount of rent.

There's only one rent you should charge for any rental -- the market rent, or slightly below. No matter what your carrying costs are for this property, or the return you'd like to see, you won't see any return unless you have a tenant. Tenants know the market and you'll simply waste time with an unoccupied unit if you set an above-market rent.

Lease or month to month?

Decide whether you want a fixed-term lease (typically for a year), or a month-to-month rental agreement. If the market is soft, you may want the assurance of knowing your tenants will be tied in for a year. On the other hand, if you want the ability to raise the rent (with the right amount of notice, of course), you may want a month-to-month agreement.

How many tenants?

Decide how many people may occupy your rental, taking into consideration the physical layout, such as the number of bedrooms. As a general rule of thumb, allow two persons per bedroom, but in some states, you may need to allow one more tenant.

The security deposit.

Most landlords will require a deposit, which covers damage beyond normal wear and tear and any unpaid rent. Many states limit the amount you can collect, setting limits based on the monthly rent -- twice the monthly rent is common.

Pets.

If you wish, you may prohibit pets, but not if the animal is a service or comfort animal needed by a disabled person. However, many landlords have found that allowing pets gives them a competitive edge in a tight market -- and pet owners may be extra conscientious when they know that there are limited rentals that will take them with their pets.

(cont'd on page 17)



(cont'd from page 16)

Terms to Include in Your Rental Listing

Write out the basic details you've decided on, including:

- rent
- size
- location
- lease length or month-to-month rental agreement
- special features
- how many tenants allowed
- whether pets are allowed
- phone number for more details
- date and time of any open house.

To stay out of legal hot water when you advertise, describe the rental unit accurately. Your ad should be easy to understand and scrupulously honest. And try to avoid abbreviations and real estate jargon.

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RED CARPET SERVICE



WRHLC Brief

By Dale Hicks, WRHLC Co-Chair

The Apartment Association of South East Wisconsin (AASEW) Trade Show was held on September 19 in Milwaukee. Gary Goyke, Norm & Adele Vogel, Dale & Trudy Hicks, Pam Strittmater, Jessica Olson, and Gus Orozco were all in attendance at the show. There were many great seminars along with a drawing for door prizes. Dale won a Makita drill, although the drill stays in the house for

Trudy as Dale's truck is already tooled up. This show was a great time of building relationships with the AASEW (Milwaukee). They are planning on joining us on Legislative Day in March.

Be sure to mark you calendars now for that... **Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at the State Capitol!**

We are already gearing up to be in Madison as soon as the legislators start gathering. We have over 50 freshmen legislators and we need all the help we can get to communicate the needs and issues of the Rental Housing Industry, one being the need to clear up language in the ACT 76 Law. This is important to the battles in LaCrosse and Wausau.



Wisconsin Required Landlord Disclosures

Learn about the disclosures that landlords in Wisconsin must provide tenants, usually in the lease or rental agreement.

By Marcia Steward, Nolo.com



Wisconsin requires landlords to make the following disclosures to tenants:

Move-in checklist.

Tenant has a right to inspect the rental and give landlord a list of defects, and to receive a list of damages charged to the prior tenant. (Wis. Admin. Code §134.06)

Owner or agent identity. Landlord must disclose to the tenant in writing, at or before the time a rental agreement is signed, the name and address of the person or persons authorized to collect or receive rent and manage and maintain the premises, and who can readily be contacted by the tenant; and the owner of the premises or other person authorized to accept service of legal process and other notices and demands on behalf of the owner. The address must be an address within the state at which service of process can be made in person. (Wis. Admin. Code §134.04)

Nonstandard rental provisions. If landlord wants to enter premises for reasons not specified by law, landlord must disclose the provision in a separate written document entitled "NONSTANDARD RENTAL PROVISIONS" before the rental agreement is signed. (Wis. Admin. Code §134.09)

Uncorrected building and housing code violations. Landlord must show prospective tenants the portions of the building affected, as well as the notices themselves, before entering into a rental agreement or accepting a deposit. (Wis. Admin. Code §134.04)

Habitability deficiencies. Landlord must disclose serious problems that affect the rental unit's habitability. (Wis. Admin. Code §134.04)

Utility charges. If charges for water, heat, or electricity are not included in the rent, the landlord must disclose this fact to the tenant before entering into a rental agreement or accepting any earnest money or security deposit from the prospective tenant. If individual dwelling units and common areas are not separately metered, and if the charges are not included in the rent, the landlord must disclose the basis on which charges for utility services will be allocated among individual dwelling units. (Wis. Admin. Code §134.04)

Security deposit. Before accepting the deposit, landlord must inform tenant of tenant's inspection rights, disclose all habitability defects, and show tenant any outstanding building and housing code violations, inform tenant of the means by which shared utilities will be billed, and inform tenant if utilities are not paid for by landlord. (Wis. Admin. Code ATCP 134.06)

Check the Wisconsin statute (Wis. Admin. Code §134.04, 134.06, 134.09, ATCP 134.06) for details on these disclosures. See the Laws and Legal Research section of Nolo for advice on finding and reading statutes and court decisions.

Also, check your local ordinance for any city or county disclosure requirements. To find yours, check your city or county website (many are listed on State and Local Government on the Net), or contact the office of your mayor, city manager, or county administrator.

Finally, see the Required Landlord Disclosures article for details on federally-required landlord disclosures and other information on disclosures about the rental property.

Editor's Note: This is not a complete list of disclosure requirements for Wisconsin, for additional info refer to WI SS 704 as well as ATCP 134.



15 Things Landlords Can Do Today to Prepare for Winter

By Jennifer Maughan, RentPrep.com,
September 29, 2014

There's no doubt that in most parts of the country, winter weather is just around the corner. As a landlord, you may think of fall maintenance at your rental properties as raking leaves and tending to flower beds. However, fall is the best time to prepare your rental property for winter weather. The Farmer's Almanac is predicting another nasty winter for much of the country during 2014-2015, so if your rental property is located in a place that is at the mercy of cold, wind, snow and ice, take the time now to prepare for the upcoming winter season.

If you don't deal with potential issues now, before they actually happen, you could end up with some significant repairs to work through that could have been prevented. Here are 15 ways that landlords can prepare their rental properties now for the coldest months of the year.

1. **Prune hedges, shrubs, and branches.** Snow and ice can weigh down trees and shrubs with large surface areas and the weight can snap them easily. Check the perimeter of the rental property for any plants that may benefit from a good trim. This practice also gives plants a better start in the spring, keeping them healthier.
2. **Clear rain gutters.** It's important that you don't skip this fall task, because it could have a big impact on the rental property in the winter. Clear out leaves, sticks and other debris so the gutters can easily drain water from the roof. If the gutters are clogged, the roof could suffer damage from poor drainage, ice dams and melting snow.
3. **Inspect the roof.** It's much easier to repair or replace shingles in the non-winter months and that ensures your rental property roof will be strong enough to withstand even the biggest winter blizzard.
4. **Winterize yard sprinklers.** If the rental property has a sprinkler system, you can empty them of any leftover water to ensure they don't freeze and burst. Whether you do this yourself or hire a service, it's a small task that could have a big impact if not done.
5. **Seal sidewalk and driveway cracks.** Water gets into cracks in sidewalks and driveways and expands them via freezing and thawing. What was a small crack in the fall can turn into an eyesore or a safety hazard by spring. Use a concrete sealer manufactured for just this purpose to stop the process.
6. **Take care of the A/C unit.** If your rental property has an A/C system, fall is a wonderful time to safeguard it for the winter. Clean out any debris and cover it up, especially if you live in an area of heavy snow or ice. Protecting the A/C unit will ensure that it will be ready to kick on next year when it is needed.
7. **Arrange for snow removal services now.** Whether you will be doing snow removal, or you are working with the tenant or a professional company, work out the details about snow removal right now. It's better to have everything arranged in advance rather than try to negotiate as the first flakes fall.
8. **Inspect doors and windows.** Locate areas around doors and windows where heat is most likely to escape, such as loose caulking, torn weather stripping and gaps where doors and windows meet frames. Take the time to repair these areas now before the cold weather arrives, because it is easier and will save your tenants money on their heating bill.

(cont'd on page 20)



Maintenance Tip (cont'd) | Quick Safety Tip

(cont'd from page 19)

9. **Wrap pipes before winter.** Look for un-insulated pipes and wrap them with foam sleeves to ensure they won't freeze when temperatures drop. Frozen pipes can easily burst, causing all kinds of water damage. By getting a jump on it, you can prevent this kind of catastrophe. Don't forget to detach garden hoses from spigots and draining those lines as well.
10. **Inspect the heating system.** Turn the heater on to ensure that everything is working properly so you can get a service person out before it's the middle of winter and the waiting list is very long. Also, replace the furnace filter and make sure vents open and close properly.
11. **Arrange for a furnace tune-up.** Many professional services offer winterizing tune ups for furnaces, and it's always a good idea for a professional to perform maintenance on the furnace than it is to wait for it to break.
12. **Check alarms.** Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are a critical part of keeping tenants safe, and it's your duty to ensure that they are all in proper working order. Carbon monoxide detectors are particularly important in winter, as people tend to keep windows closed.
13. **Clean ducts out.** Every few years, it's a smart idea to get the ductwork of the rental property vacuumed out. Debris can build up, restricting the flow of air and putting strain on heating and cooling systems.
14. **Inspect the chimney.** If your rental property has a fireplace and chimney, make sure it is taken care of before tenants use the fireplace for the first time. Arrange for a professional to inspect and clean the chimney, clearing it for debris and checking to make sure no other repairs are needed. A faulty chimney can become a health hazard as well as a safety and fire hazard.
15. **Consider adding more insulation.** While there is a cost involved, many home owners add insulation to the attic in the fall to help with heating and cooling. Adding to the existing insulation can make a big difference in how well the rental property stays warm or cool.

Sooner than you think, winter will be unleashing its full fury, and it is up to you to make sure your rental property is ready for the serious ice, snow and cold that the Farmer's Almanac is predicting. The time to prepare is in the fall, well before the first winter storm arrives in your area. While your rental property may not be able to withstand every single winter-related disaster, by being prepared you can minimize the damage and problems, thus saving yourself time, stress and money.

Avoid Showing Vacant Rentals After Dark in Winter

By Robert Machado, CPM, MPM, American Apartment Owners Association (AAOA)

Each winter the subject comes up about whether it is advisable to show vacant rentals after dark. This time of year it is getting dark around 5 pm which is pretty early.

We have a policy not to show after dark. That means we do not show past 5 pm during the winter. The reason is simple, the safety of our showing agents.

We do get an occasional complaint about this, but most people understand and stick to daylight showings. I sleep better knowing that we are not walking around vacant property at night.



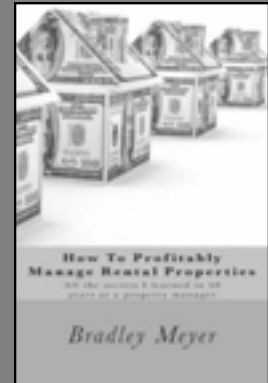


How to Profitably Manage Rental Properties: All the Secrets I Learned in 40 Years as a Property Manager

By Bradley Meyer

Overview

Rental property management expert- Bradley Meyer tells how to make money with rental properties, using his 40 years of first hand experience as a property manager, real estate agent and investor. He tells all of the tips and secrets on making rental profitable.



HVAC Maintenance Checklist

From www.energystar.gov

Maintain your equipment to prevent future problems and unwanted costs. Keep your cooling and heating system at peak performance by having a contractor do annual pre-season check-ups. Contractors get busy once summer and winter come, so it's best to check the cooling system in the spring and the heating system in the fall. To remember, you might plan the check-ups around the time changes in the spring and fall.

A typical maintenance check-up should include the following:

- **Check thermostat settings** to ensure the cooling and heating system keeps you comfortable when you are home and saves energy while you are away.
- **Tighten all electrical connections** and measure voltage and current on motors. Faulty electrical connections can cause unsafe operation of your system and reduce the life of major components.
- **Lubricate all moving parts.** Parts that lack lubrication cause friction in motors and increases the amount of electricity you use.
- **Check and inspect the condensate drain** in your central air conditioner, furnace and/or heat pump (when in cooling mode). A plugged drain can cause water damage in the house and affect indoor humidity levels.
- **Check controls of the system** to ensure proper and safe operation. Check the starting cycle of the equipment to assure the system starts, operates, and shuts off properly.

Cooling Specific

- **Clean evaporator and condenser air conditioning coils.** Dirty coils reduce the system's ability to cool your home and cause the system to run longer, increasing energy costs and reducing the life of the equipment.
- **Check your central air conditioner's refrigerant level** and adjust if necessary. Too much or too little refrigerant will make your system less efficient increasing energy costs and reducing the life of the equipment.

Clean and adjust blower components to provide proper system airflow for greater comfort levels. Airflow problems can reduce your system's efficiency by up to 15 percent.

Heating Specific

Check all gas (or oil) connections, gas pressure, burner combustion and heat exchanger. Improperly operating gas (or oil) connections are a fire hazard and can contribute to health problems. A dirty burner or cracked heat exchanger causes improper burner operation. Either can cause the equipment to operate less safely and efficiently.

Actions To Do Yourself

Inspect, clean, or change air filters once a month in your central air conditioner, furnace, and/or heat pump. Your contractor can show you how to do this. A dirty filter can increase energy costs and damage your equipment, leading to early failure.



WAA Contact Information



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WAA RENTAL HOUSING CERTIFICATION CLASSES

Rental Housing Certification 100 Series

The Basics, is devoted to keeping rental property owners informed and education on new laws. Comprised of seminars on basic property management aimed at the new rental property owner, property manager, leasing agent; it is also suggested as a refresher series for those who have been in the business a number of years. Classes in this module are:

- 101 The Law and the Landlord I: Wisconsin Statute Chapter 704
- 102 The Law and the Landlord II: Consumer Protection (ATCP) Chapter 134
- 103 Fair Housing Laws
- 104 Lead Paint Awareness
- 105 Credit Reports
- 106 Basic Recordkeeping
- 107 Screening Your Applicants
- 108 Screening Workshop
- 109 Nuts and Bolts of Eviction
- 110 Bonding and Garnishment

NEW for 2014: "Landlord & Tenant Law in Wisconsin" by John H. Fischer – This is a 8-hour educational session that takes an in-depth look at Wisconsin-specific landlord-tenant regulations and also covers some of the most important federal regulations that deal with rental housing."

Why Join WAA?

The WAA is your portal to the rental housing business in Wisconsin. Membership gives you access to what you need to know and what you need to do to run your rental properties successfully, ethically, and responsibly.

10 things every successful landlord needs to know. Do you?

- Fair housing information
- Applicant screening and processing
- Eviction procedures
- Rental forms specific to Wisconsin
- Lead based paint requirements
- Rental disclosures required by law
- Bills and rental housing policies under discussion of the Capitol.
- Best rental housing management practices
- Document storage, security, and disposal
- Property marketing techniques

**Information in these articles should be used as a guide only and should not be relied upon as the sole source of information relating to its content. Additional sources of information may be listed herein. No warranty, either expressed or implied, is made with respect to the information contained herein. Neither WAA nor RHR is responsible for any loss, inconvenience, damage (whether special or consequential) or claims arising out of the use of the information contained. You should always seek advice from your attorney regarding any legal matters.*



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