



The Houston Rental Make-Ready & Leasing Checklist

Every step from vacant to signed lease, in the order we do them.

Greater Houston edition



Illustration. Not a property we manage or list.

Why order matters

Most vacancy days are lost between steps, not inside them: a vendor booked after the walkthrough instead of during it, photos taken before the paint dried, an application that sits overnight. Work the list top to bottom and start each step the moment the one before it allows.

1. The day notice is given

- ☐ Confirm the move-out date in writing and send the tenant your move-out instructions.
- ☐ Schedule a pre-move-out walkthrough so you can book vendors before the unit is empty.
- ☐ Pull the move-in condition report and photos; you will compare against them for the deposit.
- ☐ Check the lease for showing rights and notice requirements before you market an occupied home.
- ☐ Set your target ready date and work backward from it.

2. Make-ready

- ☐ Rekey or change every exterior lock after the tenant moves out (Texas requires this within 7 days of turnover).
- ☐ Confirm the required security devices work: keyed deadbolts, keyless bolting devices, door viewers, sliding-door pin locks and window latches.
- ☐ Test or replace smoke alarms; replace batteries.
- ☐ Service the HVAC and replace the filter; note the filter size on your checklist for the next turn.
- ☐ Check the water heater, under-sink plumbing and every faucet for leaks.
- ☐ Look for water staining on ceilings and around windows; Houston storms find weak flashing.
- ☐ Clear gutters and confirm the yard drains away from the slab.
- ☐ Patch, prime and paint with a standard color you keep on file.
- ☐ Deep clean, including appliances, blinds, baseboards and the garage.
- ☐ Replace burned-out bulbs and missing outlet or switch covers.
- ☐ Mow, edge and trim; the curb is the first photo renters judge.
- ☐ Walk the property as a renter would and fix anything you would ask about.

3. Price it

- ☐ Pull comparable rentals within about a mile, same bedroom count, listed or leased in the last 90 days.
- ☐ Separate asking rents from leased rents; an asking rent is not proof of demand.
- ☐ Set aside furnished rentals, different bedroom counts and listings older than 90 days.
- ☐ Price for the season: Houston leasing is strongest in late spring and summer.
- ☐ Decide your first price review date before you list (we use 7 to 10 days with no qualified applications).

Want this done for you? Our Free Houston Rental Analysis shows the comparable rentals behind the number.

4. Market it

- ☐ Take bright, level photos after the make-ready is finished, not before.
- ☐ Write the listing with the facts renters filter on: beds, baths, square feet, pets, parking, schools, utilities.
- ☐ Publish your written rental criteria with the listing.
- ☐ List on HAR.com and the major rental sites; add a yard sign.
- ☐ Answer inquiries the same day and offer showing times within 48 hours.

5. Screen applicants

- ☐ Hand every applicant your printed selection criteria with the application and get a signed acknowledgment (Texas Property Code §92.3515).
- ☐ Apply the criteria the same way to everyone, in the order complete applications arrive.
- ☐ Verify identity, income, rental history and credit with the applicant's written authorization.
- ☐ Never screen on a protected class or ask about one; follow federal and Texas fair housing law.
- ☐ Send any denial in writing and follow the adverse-action notice rules when a report was used.

6. Lease and move-in

- ☐ Use a current Texas residential lease form (most brokers use the Texas REALTORS® lease, TXR-2001).
- ☐ Give the required flood disclosure (Texas Property Code §92.0135) and owner/manager contact information.
- ☐ Collect the deposit and first month's rent in certified funds or through your portal.
- ☐ Do a move-in walkthrough with the tenant; both sign a condition report backed by dated photos.
- ☐ Hand over keys, remotes, the filter size and how to request repairs.
- ☐ Set up rent reminders and a renewal reminder about 60 days before the lease ends.

Want this done for your rental?

Request a free Houston Rental Analysis at gablewaypropertymanagement.com, or call (713) 766-1197. GableWay leases and manages Houston rentals, and as a licensed brokerage we can help you buy, renovate or sell them.

General information for Texas rental owners, not legal advice. Laws and court rules change; confirm current requirements with a Texas attorney before relying on them.

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