

# GUIDE FOR LANDLORDS

MAY 2011

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 001



*Make Letting your Property Easier.*



*It's the simple things that people forget to mention!*

*“What day is the rubbish collection?” and “Where is the fuse box?”*

## Before you Rent

Before a property can be let, there are several matters which the owner will need to deal with to ensure that the tenancy runs smoothly, and also that he/she complies with the law. A brief description of some of the details can be found below. If the tenant has all the information then there is less opportunity for things to go wrong. If you require further advice or assistance with any matter, please do not hesitate to contact us:

## Important Items to Consider

*Some important items that should not be ignored before you let your home:*

- *Mortgage*
- *Insurance*
- *Safety Regulations*
- *Inventory*
- *Decoration and Maintenance*
- *Appliances*
- *Furnishings*
- *Information for Tenants*

ASHGROVE PROPERTY SERVICES LTD

Unit 1A Oakhill Court, Waterwells Business Park  
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## Important Safety Regulations

The following safety requirements are the responsibility of the owner (the landlord), and where we are to manage the property, they are also ours as agents. Therefore to protect all interests we ensure full compliance with the appropriate regulations, at the owner's expense.

### Gas Appliances & Equipment

Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994 (amended 1996) and some other regulations, all gas appliances in tenanted premises must be checked for safety at intervals of not more than 12 months, by a Gas Safe registered gas engineer, and a safety certificate issued. Records must be kept of the dates of inspections, of defects identified, and of any remedial action taken.

### Electrical Appliances & Equipment

Under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, the Plugs & Sockets etc. (Safety) Regulations 1994 and some other regulations, electrical installations and equipment in tenanted premises must be safe. Although (unlike gas) no safety certificate is legally required, and therefore it may be adequate to perform a visual check of electrical equipment, fittings and leads, it is recommended that a qualified electrician be engaged for this purpose.

### Energy Performance Certificates

Landlords offering property for rent are required by law to provide prospective tenants with an EPC for that property. This will have to be provided free, either when or before any written information about the property is provided to prospective tenants, or a viewing is conducted. A new certificate will not be required on each new let, since the EPC will be valid for ten years from the date of issue. Enforcement Agencies have the power to issue penalty notices. When a person receives a penalty notice and pays the fine for failure to provide an EPC, they must still provide the EPC. This means that if, following the fine they still failed to provide the EPC another penalty notice could be issued. The penalty charge specified for the second breach is £200, but be aware that this could be levied at £200 per day for each day that the property is being marketed without the paperwork in place.

*“Grants are available for landlords wishing to make energy saving improvements”*



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## *Don't Forget!!!*

- *Obtain the mortgage providers permission if necessary*
- *Check the terms of your Lease if you have one*
- *Ensure that you are suitably covered for letting your property under both your buildings and contents insurance*
- *Council tax is the responsibility of the occupier but remember if it is unoccupied but furnished - you are liable for 50%.*

## Furniture & Furnishings

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (amended 1989, 1993 & 1996) provide that specified items supplied in the course of letting property must meet minimum fire resistant standards. The regulations apply to all upholstered furniture, and beds, headboards and mattresses, sofa-beds, futons and other convertibles, nursery furniture, garden furniture suitable for use in a dwelling, scatter cushions, pillows, and non-original covers for furniture. They do not apply to antique furniture or furniture made before 1950, bed clothes including duvets, loose covers for mattresses, pillowcases, curtains, carpets or sleeping bags. Therefore all relevant items as above must be checked for compliance, and non-compliant items removed from the premises. In practice, most (but not all) items which comply must have a suitable permanent label attached. Items purchased since 1.3.90 from a reputable supplier are also likely to comply.

## General Product Safety

The General Product Safety Regulations 1994 specify that any product supplied in the course of a commercial activity must be safe. In the case of letting, this would include both the structure of the building and its contents. Recommended action is to check for obvious danger signs - leaning walls, broken glass, sharp edges etc., and also to leave operating manuals or other written instructions about high risk items, such as hot surfaces, electric lawnmowers, etc. for the tenant.

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## Preparing your Property

We have found from experience that a good relationship with tenants is the key to a smooth-running tenancy. As Property Managers the relationship part is our job, but it is important that the tenants should feel comfortable in their temporary home, and that they are receiving value for their money. This is your job. Our policy of offering a service of quality and care therefore extends to our tenant applicants too, and we are pleased to recommend properties to rent which conform to certain minimum standards. Quality properties attract quality tenants.

### General condition

Electrical, gas, plumbing, waste, central heating and hot water systems must be safe, sound and in good working order. Repairs and maintenance are at the landlord's expense unless misuse can be established. The same applies to any appliances that are left.

### Decorations

Interior decorations should be in good condition, and preferably plain, light and neutral.

### Furnishings

It is recommended that you leave only minimum furnishings, as most tenants have their own. It is preferable that items to be left are in the property during viewings.

### Gardens

Gardens should be left neat and tidy with any lawns cut. Tenants should maintain the gardens and are expected to leave it as they found it, provided they are left the necessary tools.

### Cleaning

At the commencement of a tenancy the property must be in a thoroughly clean condition, and at the end of each tenancy it is the tenant's responsibility to leave the property in similar condition. Where they fail to do so, cleaning should be arranged at their expense.

*"It is helpful to leave any operating instructions for the appliances that are left – including the central heating system"*



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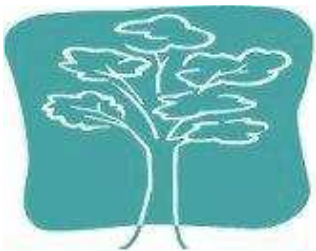
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## Inventory

One of the most important items to have when renting your property in order to protect your assets is an inventory of contents and schedule of condition. A comprehensive one, preferably with photographic evidence of the state of the property should be prepared in order to avoid misunderstanding or dispute at the end of a tenancy. Without such safeguards, it will be impossible for the landlord to prove any loss, damage, or significant deterioration of the property or contents.

In order to provide a complete service to the landlord, we will if requested, arrange for a full photographic inventory to be prepared before the property is let.



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