

Housing inspections

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After several sessions with the state of the houses we have finally seemed to come up with something simple and workable for us. The Fed Farmers latest contracts have a good updated piece in the back of their contracts. It is a service tenancy as opposed to plain residential- this makes it clear that the place is available for full time employees (make sure you put full time if necessary) and has clear provisions for giving 2 weeks notice which can be shortened if you think the place could be damaged or you need it for staff. My understanding is that if you need to evict you can use the Tenancy tribunal.

We also make it very clear that we have house inspections every 3-4 months based around the Performance review. It is written as an attachment to their contract. This means we actually get around to doing it. I have adapted a Fed Farmers house inspection/property sheet and as the family move in we go with the whole family around and check everything. I have become more aware about making sure the bath is not blocked and the wall paper is not marked and the oven is presented to all in a very clean state. If I have noticed anything needs repair then it is noted and we organise to do it in that first week. We point out we expect to see the house in similar state every inspection and would like to be notified if anything is not working, i.e. let me know if the elements on the stove are playing up so they can be looked at the next time the electrician is around. I have ended up being very clear but in a kind voice. I do say that I am not looking at the house keeping but would like to be able to see the carpet etc.

We also have a clause that says we can deduct up to \$150 for commercial cleaning over and above any damage caused, if the place is not up to scratch when they move out. The damage can be deducted from final pay as agreed in the Fed Farmers contract. Then just to top it all off we have a house hold book that covers stuff like what to do with the rubbish , where the water taps are, where the septic tank is and a carpet care guide. It also includes a checklist of the things we expect done when they move out. Right down to clean out the fireplace, remove rubbish etc. It sounded all terribly obvious when I first did it and I felt a little like a Hitler but I had just finished with a chisel in the new fan bake oven!!!!!!

And since then we have had very little problems. The tenants/staff like having an opportunity to show you that the light switch really does not work and that the firebricks are all cracked knowing it will be fixed if is it maintenance and I like to be able to point out things like the broken window, the rubbish etc and how long has that water been leaking under the house - did you notice the burst pipe??

The last staff who moved out seemed to find it quite helpful and we are not half as stressed and irritated with them at work about the state of the house.