

# The Landlord Starter Kit

5 checklists every self-managing  
landlord needs, in one place.

Practical Landlord | [practicallandlord.co](https://practicallandlord.co)

# 1. Tenant Screening Checklist

- ☐ Require a written application for every adult occupant - no exceptions.
- ☐ Run credit, criminal, and eviction history (applicant typically pays the fee).
- ☐ Verify income at 3x monthly rent with pay stubs or bank statements.
- ☐ Call previous landlords - ask: did they pay on time, give notice, leave damage?
- ☐ Check for consistency: employment dates, addresses, and references must line up.
- ☐ Apply the same criteria to every applicant and document your decision.
- ☐ If denying, send an adverse action notice as required by the FCRA.

## 2. Move-In / Move-Out Checklist

- ☐ Photograph every room, wall, floor, appliance, and fixture - with timestamps.
- ☐ Complete a written condition report and have the tenant sign it.
- ☐ Test smoke and CO detectors; confirm fire extinguisher present.
- ☐ Record appliance model and serial numbers.
- ☐ Confirm locks rekeyed and all keys/fobs accounted for.
- ☐ At move-out: repeat the same checklist within 72 hours, before cleaners arrive.
- ☐ Distinguish wear and tear (not deductible) from damage (deductible).
- ☐ Return deposit with itemized deductions inside your state's legal deadline.

### 3. Turnover Cost Worksheet

- ☐ Cleaning: professional deep clean typically \$200-\$400.
- ☐ Paint: \$300-\$800 per unit depending on size and condition.
- ☐ Repairs: budget 1-2% of annual rent per turnover for minor fixes.
- ☐ Vacancy: every vacant week on a \$2,000 unit costs ~\$460 - speed beats perfection.
- ☐ Marketing: listing is free on most platforms; great photos are the highest-ROI spend.
- ☐ Rule of thumb: budget one month's rent per turnover, all-in.

## 4. Tax Deduction Checklist (Schedule E)

- ☐ Mortgage interest and property taxes.
- ☐ Landlord insurance premiums (100% deductible).
- ☐ Repairs and maintenance (not improvements - those depreciate).
- ☐ Property management fees and software subscriptions.
- ☐ Travel to and from the property (mileage at the IRS rate).
- ☐ Professional services: legal, accounting, tax prep.
- ☐ Depreciation: residential rental property over 27.5 years.
- ☐ Keep receipts for everything - digital copies are fine.

## 5. Monthly Bookkeeping Checklist

- ☐ Reconcile rent received against leases - flag late payments immediately.
- ☐ Log every expense with receipt, date, property, and category.
- ☐ Review the security deposit account - never commingle funds.
- ☐ Check insurance, mortgage, and tax autopay status.
- ☐ Set aside reserves: 8-10% maintenance, 5-7% CapEx, 5% vacancy.
- ☐ Snapshot P&L per property - know each unit's true cash flow monthly.