

A Checklist for Landlords: Preventing and Avoiding Alcohol-Related Problems at Your Rental Properties

Attract and rent to respectful tenants.

- Maintain the property** inside and out.
- Ask tenants or contacts you hold in high regard** to spread the word about vacancies.
- When advertising, **describe the kind of behavior** you expect of tenants.
- Throughout the application process, **express the pride** you take in your property and **talk about behavioral expectations** you have for tenants.

Have tenants sign a comprehensive lease outlining responsibilities/expectations.

- Include an “illegal activities clause”** stating that tenants are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws and ordinances, including those relating to alcohol/drugs. Consider stating that the suspicion of illegal behavior will be reported to the authorities.
- Address tenants’ responsibility for their guests’ behavior**; set a maximum number of guests per unit.
- Designate parking areas** and give suggestions for guest parking.
- Define acceptable noise levels** and relevant codes.
- Detail acceptable and unacceptable uses of yards and porches**, including hours of use.
- Designate where trash should be deposited** and what items are not allowed in the yard (such as couches).

Be visible and monitor the property.

- Drive by and walk around the property**, especially on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday nights after 10 PM when gatherings typically occur.
- Check the noise level** outside the property and in common areas such as hallways.
- Address parking issues**. This is a good way to let the tenants know you are paying attention.
- Be seen taking care of the property** and talking with neighbors – this will send the message that you care about the property and the neighborhood.

Open the lines of communication.

- Encourage tenants and neighbors who have minor complaints to address them** directly with the source of the problem and to describe how the behavior affects their quality of life.
- When there are more severe or re-occurring complaints, **address them promptly, directly and clearly**. Focus on the behavior – not the person – to reduce the likelihood of tenants feeling defensive.
- Discuss with both parties** measures which can be taken to avoid future problems.