



Protecting Your Investment and Your Tenants: Securing a Rental Property

If you own a rental property, security is one of your most pressing responsibilities. Unfortunately, it can also be one of your biggest challenges, especially when you're trying to manage things from a distance. However, advances in electronic surveillance and automation have made it possible to keep tenants safe while discreetly maintaining effective surveillance. Here are a few tips to help you manage what can be a difficult situation.

Security Cameras and More

A [security camera](#) is a good way to kill two birds with one stone — it allows your tenants to track activity, and it lets you monitor the property conveniently through your computer, smartphone, or other handheld devices. Tenants receive timely alerts if suspicious activity is detected. [Video doorbells](#) are another powerful yet affordable way to maintain security and help renters feel secure. Or, you could go with a motion-activated exterior camera and get real-time notifications via email when visitors (or intruders) are detected. Another option is to install a [digital lock](#). Some management companies offer [digital lock installation](#) (and other services like tenant screening and housekeeping) if you partner with them.

In many parts of the country, you must inform tenants if you're setting up a security camera on the premises. In 2013 in East Hampton, New York, a landlord was fined more than [\\$4 million](#) for violations involving everything from invasion of property to child pornography. As such, be aware that you're not allowed to take still images or record video in any part of the house. However, that rule doesn't apply to external areas, which makes outside surveillance cameras a popular item among landlords.

Security Systems

A comprehensive [security system](#) is a good way to attract tenants who expect premium amenities and are willing to pay for them. With a home security system, your tenants can relax knowing that the authorities will be alerted if there's an attempted break-in. Shop around for the best one,

but be aware that the kind of security system you install will largely depend on whether you're using a landline, cellular, or broadband connection and, depending on your budget, whether you can afford to add automatic lock, temperature, and lighting controls.

Automatic Alerts

As a landlord, you can't always rely on tenants to be attentive when it comes to protecting your property. Fortunately, there are monitoring systems that will warn you of impending damage to your plumbing and other areas of your infrastructure. For example, you can purchase simple devices that will warn you if there's a [water leak](#), if smoke is present in the house, and if carbon monoxide levels get too high. Many of these devices will send alerts to apps on your smartphone or tablet, giving you instant updates when something goes awry.

If you're not sure whether you should install security cameras, consider the benefits of keeping guests safe and maintaining the physical integrity of one of your most important investments. It's especially important if you're an absentee landlord trying to stay involved and looking out for your clients' best interests. If you do decide to install cameras, research [laws](#) involving security monitoring and privacy statutes in your state. If you have any doubts, consult an attorney who can explain the ramifications of using security cameras in a rental property.

Image courtesy of [Pixabay](#)