The Importance of Energy Efficiency by Eva Peter

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Established or potential landlords in Texas need to be aware of any factors that can cause them or their tenantsâ€™ undue costs. Perhaps the greatest cost increase comes from wasted energy in your properties. Whether you or your tenants are responsible for paying all or partial utilities, both parties want the lowest rates possible. Obviously you, as a landlord, have little control over how often your tenants turn off the light or run their air conditioner, but what you do have control of is energy efficient appliances and pre-emptive methods for conserving energy. A common misconception is that you have to be wealthy to run an energy efficient unit; however these are some inexpensive tips that can save you and your tenants up to hundreds of dollars per year.

Inexpensive Energy Efficient Tips:

We have broken down these tips into four categories; each contains simple ideas that you can implement in your units to increase energy efficiency. The first general rule is to be familiar with the area around your properties. Whether your units are in Dallas, Houston, Austin or San Antonio your tenants will use their air conditioning, possibly constantly during the summer. Is it humid or is your area prone to droughts as this could have an effect on your water usage. What time does it get light or dark during the seasons; how much many hours a day might your tenants require electrical lighting? Tenants want to be assured that they will enjoy all the comforts they are used to without incurring huge prices. That is where you come in; these methods are designed to help increase comfort while keeping cost under control.

1.Insulation:

1. With an average price of less that $2/yard, insulation is a necessary instalment that will help keep the unit at stable temperature and protects from the elements. This needs to be in place in your walls, attics and basements. This is a proven method to reduce energy bills and is a must in any property that you own or are looking to purchase. If the property that you currently own in your rental portfolio is lacking in that area, then you can show your tenants that you are proactive and want to have long term tenants.

2. An additional option is to insulate or double-pane your windows. While this may incur additional costs it prevents heat transfer and will reduce any sun damage to furniture (a money saver if you furnish your units).

2.Lighting:

1. People have a tenancy to leave light on much longer than they need; you can't stop that. However, you can replace normal incandescent light bulbs with new compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) which produce a lot less heat and energy and last on average 7,500 hours.

2. Paint your units' walls white or light cream; the rooms will naturally feel brighter via reflecting 65%-85% of the sun's natural light.

3. Provide dark curtains which keep out unwanted heat during the winter (they also provide privacy and hide stains).

3.Appliances:

1. This may appear to be an expensive method, but in the long run it will save you the most money long term. Over 14% of energy comes from dryers, washing machines and refrigerators. If you buy Energy Star certified products you could save up to $200/year in electricity and water bills.

4.General Tips:

1. Weather strip doors to keep out elements

2. regularly check the caulk on windows to seal any cracks

3. tighten pipes and install energy efficient shower heads and faucets

4. Clean air filters regularly and replace once a year to ensure air quality and the most efficiency from the air conditioner.

Another option is to have a professional energy audit on a sample unit to see what other options may be available to you. Simple and quick fixes in your rental properties will save you tenantâ€™s money and increase your investment for the future. The world is becoming more energy efficient savvy; if you can show that you are doing your part to help the environment (and your wallet) you will have happier tenants and may even qualify for tax breaks.

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Jay and his team have been in the a rental property management business for the past 6 years, and manage over a hundred fifty residential (single family home) properties in the Houston area, and they have recently entered the Dallas rental property market in 2011. Additionally, Jay is the President of the Houston Chapter of the National Association of Residential Property Managers (an organization dedicated to the management of residential property). To get more great articles or ideas, you can also visit Ashoka Lionâ€™s Facebook page or Twitter Account. For more information, please visit: a http://rental-property-management.ashokalion.com/

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