

# Orlando Investment Properties

## Should You Allow a Tenant to Paint?

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Often current or prospective tenants will negotiate with property owners on painting. The owner usually will consent to this with one thought in mind – saving money. However, they do not realize the problems that it can create, particularly if they do not outline any limitations when it comes to the painting.

If while showing the property to rent, the paint is in poor condition, a prospective tenant will offer to paint to offset the rent or the security deposit. While this may sound like an ideal situation, landlords should consider many factors about an offer to paint.

- Can the tenant properly paint the property?
- What type of paint and color will the tenant use?
- Who will monitor the painting job to see that it is completed and properly done?
- Are there any legal issues that could arise from allowing a tenant to paint?
- Why would a qualified tenant pick a property in poor condition and offer to paint?
- Here is a true story about an owner allowing a tenant to paint the property. Property owner, Mr. Johnson, agrees to allow

- the new tenant, Mr. Morton, to paint in lieu of paying a security deposit and reducing the first month's rent by fifty percent. The tenant does actually buy the paint and do the work. While painting, Mr. Morton damages flooring, woodwork, and more. The paint job is sloppy with poor quality paint. To make matters worse, he decides to use intense paint colors in the teenager's bedrooms - fuchsia and black – because it makes them happy.
- Mr. Johnson inspects the property, is appalled with the condition, and demands that Mr. Morton repaint and clean up the damage. Mr. Morton, of course, refuses. Mr. Johnson had not put anything in writing on what was required for the paint. The tenant has moved in and now there is no security deposit. Mr. Johnson decides to give the tenant notice to vacate. Mr. Morton challenges the notice as retaliation and it goes to court. The court decides the tenant has not violated his rental agreement and Mr. Johnson loses the court action and ends up paying all attorneys' fees. Eventually, Mr. Morton, not being the best of tenants, defaults on his rental payments and forces Mr. Johnson to evict him. He leaves

- the property in even poorer condition.
- Now, the owner has a poor paint job that will require more money in the future to clean up any damage and put the walls in good condition. The flooring and woodwork need major cleaning and they may not clean up. Special primer and additional coats will be necessary to remove the bright colors. In addition, there is no security deposit to cover the painting damage, other repairs, and loss of rent. This was a costly lesson to Mr. Johnson.
- This horror story simply did not have to happen. One mistake was not having a specific

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954 South Orlando Avenue  
Orlando, FL 32789  
Toll Free (800) 458-6863  
Bus: (407) 629-6330  
Fax: (407) 628-1119

info@ORLrent.com  
**ORLrent.com**

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**RE/MAX 200  
Realty Property  
Management Division**

954 South Orlando Avenue  
Orlando, FL 32789

**Toll Free (800) 458-6863**

**Bus: (407) 629-6330**

**Fax: (407) 628-1119**

**info@ORLrent.com**

**Fred Thompson, MPM ®**  
Director of Property Management  
(407) 571-3650  
Fred@ORLrent.com

**Shawn Beard**  
Senior Property Manager  
(407) 571-1404  
Shawn@ORLrent.com

**Angel Hidalgo**  
Property Manager  
(407) 571-3659  
Angel@ORLrent.com

**Liz Jovanovski**  
Property Manager  
(407) 949-5205  
Liz@ORLrent.com

**Angela Rodriguez**  
Property Managers' Assistant  
(407) 571-3628  
Angie@ORLrent.com

**Jorja Farnham**  
Bookkeeper  
(407) 571-3668  
Jorja@ORLrent.com

**Dominic Alfano**  
Property Manager  
(407) 571-3643

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- agreement in writing on the type and color of paint, as well as requiring the tenant to fix any damage. To compound this mistake, the tenant was allowed to move in without a security deposit for any future damage or loss of rent. The first and worst mistake was not asking why a good tenant would accept a property in poor condition. Good clean properties attract good tenants. Mr. Johnson was so anxious to rent the property and save money that he did not check out Mr. Morton's qualifications.

Whether the tenant is renting the property or has lived there several years, it is simply more cost effective to have painting done by a professional. It eliminates many problems. In some states, allowing a tenant to paint in lieu of payment could cause payroll or tax problems.

Our company will always advise and promote putting the property in the best condition to obtain quality tenants. After all, our goal is to avoid horror stories and provide you with happy endings for your investment.