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# The Do’s and Don’ts of Fair Housing Advertising

By THE FAIR HOUSING INSTITUTE

Advertising is an essential part of day-to-day business for the housing industry. But is your advertising fair-housing compliant? How can you avoid common mistakes that lead to violations? In this article, we will discuss the do’s and don’ts when it comes to fair housing and advertising.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDIA

There are many forms of advertising media available today. The law says you can’t “make, print, or publish. . . any notice, statement, or advertisement . . . that indicates any preference, limitation, or *See ‘Understanding’ on Page 15*

# Rent Growth Continues in April

## RENTAL HOUSING JOURNAL

National rents continued upward with a national index increase of 0.9 percent over the course of April, according to the latest report from Apartment List.

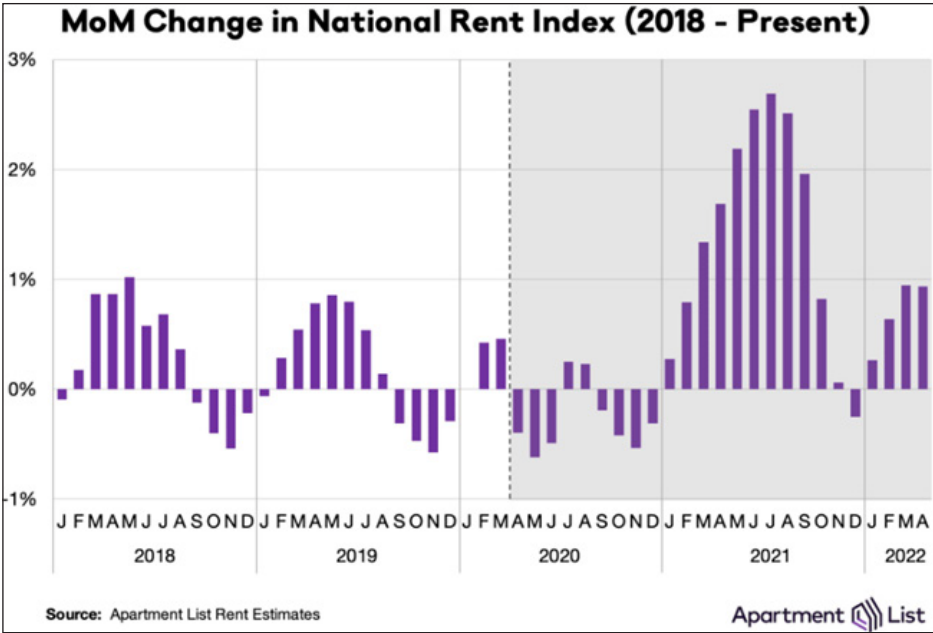
While rents are growing more slowly than they did in 2021 at this point in the year, they are still growing faster than in the years immediately preceding the pandemic.

In April, rents were up in 93 of the 100 largest cities.

Year-over-year rent growth currently stands at a staggering 16.3 percent, but most of that growth took place last spring and summer.

“Over the first four months of 2022, rents have increased by a total of just 2.5 percent, though we’re only beginning to enter the busy season for the rental market, when the bulk of annual rent growth typically occurs,” according to the Apartment List Research Team.

“Even if prices don’t rise as rapidly as they did in 2021, it’s likely that this year will continue to bring rent growth in excess of the pre-pandemic trend,” the report says.



## VACANCY REMAINS LOW ENTERING BUSY RENTAL SEASON

“As we’ve explored in detail, much of the 2021 rent boom was attributed to a tight market in which more households were

competing for fewer vacant units. “Our vacancy index spiked above 7 percent at the onset of the pandemic in 2020, as many Americans moved in with family or

*See ‘Rents’ on Page 8*

# Why Screening Must Be Nationwide



## By DAVID PICKRON

For the first 100 years of being a country, the United States was comprised of small, rural family or ethnic groups that thrived upon sharing resources to support their entire communities.

Over the last 100 years of our history and with the massive population growth in our major cities, many of us have become strangers to even our closest neighbors. Being a landlord today requires so much more than in the past.

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*See ‘Screening’ on Page 13*

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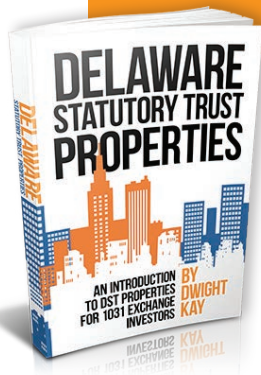
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# Kay Properties Publishes New Issue of the “1031 DST Digest,” a Magazine Written for Investors Who Want to Educate Themselves on the 1031 Exchange Process and Delaware Statutory Trust (DST) Investment Vehicle

Kay Properties & Investments, a national leader in Delaware Statutory Trust equity placements and in educating DST investors nationwide, announced it recently published its exclusive 1031 DST Digest magazine, a publication designed exclusively for 1031 Exchange and Delaware Statutory Trust investment strategies and education.

According to Dwight Kay, Founder/CEO of Kay Properties and editor of the magazine, the 1031 DST Digest was designed to help educate investors on the DST 1031 Exchange marketplace, while also answering specific questions his firm’s team of expert representatives hear from investors daily.

“Inside this accessible magazine, readers will find out what makes Delaware Statutory Trust 1031 investments so popular, how to build a defensive DST real estate portfolio, and how DSTs help investors replace debt in a 1031 Exchange. The magazine is offered free of charge as part of our commitment to providing educational resources to 1031 exchange DST investors nationwide. Request your complimentary copy today and in addition to a print version delivered to your doorstep, you’ll

also receive instant access to an electronic version of the magazine,” said Kay.

People can receive a copy of the limited-edition periodical by going to <https://www.1031dstdigest.com>.

“The intent of the 1031 DST Digest magazine is to help educate existing and potential clients about DST 1031 properties, the potential benefits and risks of DST investments and whether they might be a right fit for investors considering a 1031 exchange,” said Kay.

Specifically, the Kay Properties “1031 DST Digest” will cover topics like :

- How 1031 Exchanges into Delaware Statutory Trust Investments Can Unlock More Quality Time for Investors
- Why Now Might be a Good Time to Sell the Income Property you Love
- What Real Estate and DST Investment Opportunities Should be Considered after the Pandemic recedes?

View the newest issue of the 1031 DST Digest now.

*The 96-page glossy magazine dissects present-day investment themes and explores investment strategies for today’s 1031 Exchange and DST real estate investor.*



# 4 Market Fundamentals That Will Affect Your Properties in 2022

By JOAN ROHRER

It has been a difficult few years for property owners. With the events of 2020 and 2021 creating uncertainty and upheaval on a universal level, we have dealt with so many challenges – from eviction bans and rising inflation to new tax laws that plagued investors and property managers. We have even seen the single-family home real estate market explode, flooding the rental market and contributing to rising prices for everyone.

In this environment filled with pressure and uncertainty, there are four fundamentals that property owners and managers should be watching closely as the market evolves. These factors can have an impact on market rental rates and the cost of doing business, determining how profitable your properties will be in the coming year:

## 1. INFLATION LOOMS LARGE

As products shrink and prices rise, consumers are feeling the pinch of inflation from every corner. Renters are especially susceptible to the rising cost of living. Inflation was higher than predicted in 2021, and the Federal Reserve has already raised rates twice in 2022. The Fed also stated that they may increase the interest rate at least one more time this year, with a potential total increase up to 0.9 percent. The rate of inflation often affects renters’ willingness to pay premium prices, since rent is typically tied to consumer prices and rises with inflation. It’s a tricky dynamic with the demand for rentals continuing to surge. Your properties will need to be priced

aggressively, but flexibility will be needed throughout the coming year.

## 2. REMOTE WORK IS HERE TO STAY, AND SO ARE CHANGED LIVING PRIORITIES

The pandemic brought us to remote work, and it looks like as a culture, the home office is here to stay. Home offices were once a “nice-to-have” feature but are now a critical factor for potential tenants. Do your properties offer a flex space or extra room for virtual work or schooling? Is there an opportunity to add or make simple renovations to accommodate work spaces in your properties? Additionally, with all of this isolation at home, millennials and Generation Z are also seeking community and connection. Ask yourself what the community around your property offers: Are there opportunities for tenants to engage with others in shared activities? The addition of outdoor spaces for small gardens or common areas to create the “feel” of a neighborhood can add value that justifies premium rates and generates fully leased units. A final checklist item for renters is technology. Does your building have good WiFi/data access? That factor alone is a deal breaker for new renters.

## 3. MORE DEMAND THAN EVER BEFORE

Overall, the market for rentals has never been stronger. As we emerge from the pandemic, property owners are strongly positioned to make up for lost profits.

Millennials, who make up the largest population of renters, are the biggest participants in the gig economy, and value flexibility and freedom more than the generations before them. Because they are less interested in purchasing homes that will lock them down to one location long-term, they will continue to be a strong market for rentals. With the explosion of the real estate market in the past year, more people are cashing out of homes and turning to rental units for a place to live, adding more boomers and Generation Xers to the mix. Since the housing crisis in 2008, the supply of rental properties has not caught up with demand, and construction of new complexes has essentially halted. It will be years before supply matches demand again, so rentals will continue to be a premium.

## 4. BE AWARE OF 1031 EXCHANGE LAWS AND POTENTIAL CHANGES

These laws will only affect those who wish to sell or transfer ownership of rental properties, but for them, that impact could be huge. Many property investors began to panic when they saw that the current administration was considering changing the tax laws around 1031 exchanges. However, in the final draft of the law, this provision was not included. The new law would have placed a cap on gains above \$500,000 per year on an investment-property exchange. While this addition may be revisited in the future, the current 1031 exchange laws remain intact for now.

Overall, the outlook for the rental property market is stronger than ever, especially for



investors that stay aware of what is happening in the market and adjust accordingly. We know that along with increasing rental unit prices, tenants’ expectations for their rental experiences have also elevated. Many multifamily property owners are rising to the occasion to meet these additional demands, while taking advantage of the larger number of renters in the marketplace. Even though there have been plenty of reasons for concern over the last two years, property owners have every reason to look at the future with high expectations for growth and profitability.

*Joan Rohrer is the founder and president of JMR Company, Inc., a certified Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) entity in the state of Missouri. With more than 20 years’ experience as a private investor and helping property owners manage their investments, she is passionate about helping individuals and families find homes as tenants with her clients. Joan is a member of the St. Louis Realtors Association, the Missouri Realtors Association, the National Realtors Association, and the Institute of Real Estate Management.*

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# Inside a Successful Multifamily Resident Event

By Stephanie Mathrusse

In a new age of enhanced technology, remote work and less in-person interaction, cultivating a community feeling of connection and appreciation at your property is more important than ever. Complementary to providing a 5-star level of service, a community-like atmosphere is a key element of making residents feel at home.

How can you create a connected community of residents? Resident events are an excellent way. Successful resident events are often determined through trial and error. Nevertheless, it is important to devise an event plan that can be managed, implemented and refined in the future

Mark-Taylor focuses on the following components to host an exceptional resident event:

## ADOPT A RESIDENT-FIRST MINDSET

Events are for the enjoyment of your resident; therefore, their needs and interests must be at the forefront. Accommodation is everything — for example, if your team plans to serve food, it is important to also offer alternatives for those who may possess special dietary restrictions (i.e. gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan).

It is a best practice to also involve residents in the planning process when you can. Polling or initiating a discussion can be helpful in deciding what type of events will generate the most enthusiasm.

## GIVE RESIDENTS SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN THEIR FREE TIME

After deciding what type of event to host, selecting an ideal date and time for a resident function is an important step. Friday evenings into the weekend usually see a better turnout as most residents will



be free from work and are actively seeking entertainment.

A good rule of thumb is to create a consistent resident event schedule (bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually), allowing residents to make it a known part of their routine.

## HOST THE EVENT IN A COMMUNAL SPACE

Communal areas on the property are often excellent options for the event space. These curated spaces are convenient, familiar and naturally promoted while in use. As a result, interested residents are more likely to feel comfortable attending the event as well as recognize the added value of the amenity space firsthand and utilize it accordingly.

## CREATING BUY-IN IS KEY

Buy-in stems from timely and strategic communication, from community management to residents. Share event details on mass communication platforms such as email, text or through a resident portal. Flyers or coupons have also been an effective means to spread the word as foot

traffic presents itself in the leasing office. Also, keep in mind that buy-in from your community team members is equally as important as generating excitement from residents.

A sample of an ideal communication sequence is as follows:

- A month in advance – announcement of the event
- Before the event – event reminders
- Day of the event – final reminder

By completing the outlined outreach, top-of-mind awareness is generated and maintained.

## OFFER CROWD-PLEASING INCENTIVES

A free event already entices residents but incorporating in a “wow factor” adds value to the overall experience created. Popular incentives include tasteful catering, alcohol service (through a licensed bartender), raffles, and desirable prizes.

## REMAIN CONSISTENT AND SEEK AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

Consistency works – events that only see upwards of fifty residents may double and

triple in size as events become regularly scheduled, activities or incentives are improved, and communication is elevated. In the same sense, if a challenge is presented at a function (i.e. running out of food or supplies), teams should consider flagging it as an area of improvement to be tackled in the future. These efforts not only better future events but prove that community management listens to their residents.

Residents are the best measurement of success. The big question that remains is how does one measure the success of a resident event — through data, social media posts, number of attendees, etc.? The quick answer is all of the above. However, the most telling factor is community sentiment and feedback.

- Was the event well-received? Did residents arrive and leave on a positive note?
- Have residents expressed interest in future events?

These guiding questions can assist your community management team in evaluating whether your event helped create a positive reaction from your residents.

In today’s multifamily housing industry, a thriving community sets you apart. Thoughtfully planned resident events will foster connectivity and help your community invite, inspire and feel like home.

*Stephanie Mathrusse is an Associate Managing Director of Multifamily Investments for Mark-Taylor Residential. She provides strategic direction for a large portfolio of the Mark-Taylor luxury communities across Arizona and Nevada. She utilizes her expertise to lead her communities to achieve optimal operational success, while staying true to Mark-Taylor exceptional standards of service.*



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# Are You Ready for the Green-Resident Wave?

By **REGAN HARTLEY**

Environmental measures have faced slow adoption in the multifamily industry. The reluctance is understandable. After all, owner/operators, along with everyone else, have been told for years that the green boom was on the way.

The truth, however, is that the green-resident wave is already bearing down on the multifamily industry. As more environmentally conscious residents begin to dominate the leasing market, it's the green buildings that are set to rise above the competition. Multifamily communities are faced with taking action now to adapt and thrive in the shifting leasing environment. Those that don't will face the inevitable consequences of needing to rebuild.

## GREATER DEMAND FOR SUSTAINABILITY PUSHING MULTIFAMILY INVESTING

About 36 percent of multifamily developers are involved in green projects, a number that's expected to increase to 47 percent in 2022, according to a recent report by the National Association of Home Builders. In addition, a recent analysis by Bloomberg predicted that global environmental, social and governance (ESG) assets are expected to top \$53 trillion by 2025, which is more than double what they were in 2016 and which make up around 33 percent of the market.

Sound environmental preparation is not only important for a community to distinguish itself from competitors, but it's also developing into a necessity to secure investment funding for new projects, updates and conversions. ESG is becoming an important factor for investors, looking at the increased demand by society and becoming more green-conscious themselves. Fannie Mae offers preferential pricing on loans for multifamily projects that seek one of the lender's recognized green building certifications

ESG certifications, such as LEED, significantly raise the value of a building, making them necessary moving forward. The multifamily industry is reaching the point where ESG certification and sustainable building practices will become an unavoidable part of projects. ESG is no longer daunting, and both private and public companies are putting greater focus on it.

The race to be at the forefront of ESG allows owner/operators to begin implementing the amenities that are soon

to be must-haves, not nice-to-haves.

Electric vehicle (EV) demand among consumers has been on the rise for years. It regained steam after a brief dip in sales during the pandemic, bolstered by economic and global turmoil. Sales of EVs more than doubled from 2020 to 2021 and tripled from 2019, according to sales data from Green Car Report.

Nearly 23 percent of licensed U.S. drivers stated they would purchase a new or used electric vehicle, according to a YouGov poll conducted for Forbes Wheels. While this may not seem jarring, this number is significant, as it's eight times the number currently on the road. In the same group, 65 percent of respondents said they believed EV is the future of the automobile industry.

The auto industry is in agreement with this view, developing fully electric and hybrid vehicles at unprecedented and accelerated rates. There are more than 50 electric vehicle and plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) models currently available on the market. Acura, Audi, Chevy, Chrysler, Ford, GMC, Honda and every other major car manufacturer is slated to release at least one, if not many, EV models in the next five years.

As the number of electric vehicles on the road begins to increase, owners need EV chargers – and they're going to put their rental dollars into housing and communities that offer this amenity. This is going to create a snowball effect: As the number of communities that supply chargers increases, sales of electric vehicles are predicted to increase, thus creating greater demand for chargers.

## SMART TECH NOW A PRIORITY FOR RESIDENTS

A recent study by NMHC/Grace Hill showed that close to half of millennial and Gen Z renters put a greater emphasis on smart tech than other generations. In 2021, Gen Z was the only generation that saw an increase in the number of leasing applications, and they are credited with the recent resurgence in urban multifamily leasing.

Of the top two smart tech gadgets these green residents desire, one of those is smart thermostats, which provide residents greater control over energy use and access to local usage programs. They aren't just for residents, however. Owner/operators can utilize smart tech to control utilities in

unoccupied units to maximize savings.

In addition, there is smart tech that can detect leaks, control water usage, control lighting and HVAC in common areas, and improve building health, along with a whole host of other environmentally friendly, cost-saving measures. Not only will these increase net operating income, but they're also the green items residents are seeking out.

## THE NEXT WAVE

When it comes to the environment, "As California goes, so goes the nation" tends to hold true. The state has been a bellwether for social change for a while now, even if many don't want to agree. California ushered in a composting requirement, which includes multifamily, at the beginning of 2022. There are several other states, counties and municipalities that have also started efforts to require or encourage composting efforts.

Denver ran a pilot program for recycling to reduce waste in the near future. The goal is to eventually make proper recycling a condition of a resident's lease.

The number of people who grew at least a portion of their own food rose to around 35 percent in the summer of 2020 during the pandemic. Now that restrictions have eased, community gardens in multifamily housing is a great amenity that brings residents together and can provide people with a new skill.

After years of false starts and predictions, the green resident wave is arriving on the shores of the United States with full force. Multifamily owner/operators will need to begin a serious evaluation of their current portfolio and upcoming projects to determine if they're ready for this unstoppable change in the culture.

*Regan Hartley serves as the vice president of sales for Xeal Energy, where her focus is on strategic partnerships and new business development, sales strategy and collateral development, national accounts, marketing and brand development, and product and market growth. Regan is an investor, innovator, and advisor with more than 8 years of experience in the multifamily industry.*



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#2	New Orleans (+6%)	Orlando (+28%)	Miami (+38%)
#3	Orlando (+6%)	Tampa (+28%)	Phoenix (+38%)
#4	Salt Lake City (+5%)	Phoenix (+23%)	Riverside (+37%)
#5	Nashville (+5%)	Las Vegas (+22%)	Las Vegas (+36%)
#6	New York (+5%)	Nashville (+22%)	Tucson (+35%)
#7	Dallas (+5%)	Austin (+22%)	Orlando (+33%)
#8	San Diego (+4%)	Tucson (+21%)	Jacksonville (+31%)
#9	San Jose (+4%)	Jacksonville (+21%)	Rochester (+29%)
#10	Louisville (+4%)	Raleigh (+21%)	Atlanta (+29%)

Source: Apartment List Rent Estimates  
Data Available: [apartmentlist.com/research/category/data-rent-estimates](https://apartmentlist.com/research/category/data-rent-estimates)

Apartment  List

# Rents Continuing to Grow

Continued from Page 1

friends amid the uncertainty and economic disruption of the pandemic's onset. After that, however, vacancies began a steady decline, eventually falling below 4 percent," the report says. After bottoming out at 3.8 percent last August, "Our vacancy index slowly ticked back up for seven consecutive months, until dipping slightly this month. Our index fell from 4.7 percent in March to 4.6 percent in April.

“We should be hesitant to put too much stock into a single data point, but it’s possible that as we enter the traditional busy season for the rental market, the gradual easing of our vacancy index may begin to level off. The vacancy situation remains historically tight, and even if it were to continue gradually easing, it will likely be some time before we get back to the pre-pandemic norm.”

The Miami metro has seen the nation's fastest growth over the past six months (+7 percent), nearly tripling the growth rate of the national index over that period.

The Miami metro also ranks No. 1 for year-over-year rent growth, and No. 2 for growth since March 2020.

“As we enter the spring and summer months, rental activity is likely to pick up, and rent growth is likely to accelerate. Despite a recent cool-down, many American renters are likely to remain burdened throughout 2022 by historically high housing costs,” the report says.

*Apartment List is a technology-driven rental marketplace with over 5.5 million units on the platform, reaching millions of renters on their path to find their next home each month. Apartment List was founded with the mission to deliver every renter a home they love and the value they deserve. Apartment List offers a unique success-based business model with aligned incentives - connecting renters who want a curated concierge experience with properties that want flexible marketing solutions.*

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The image is a vertical advertisement for Lakeridge Paving Co. At the top is the company logo, which features a yellow semi-circle with the text "Since 1968" in a small, black, cursive font. Below this, the word "Lakeridge" is written in a large, black, cursive font. Underneath "Lakeridge" is a black horizontal bar with the words "PAVING CO." in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below the bar is a yellow banner with the words "over 50 years" in a black, cursive font. The banner is flanked by two yellow diagonal stripes. Below the logo, the text "GENERAL CONTRACTOR SINCE 1968" is written in a black, sans-serif font. This is followed by "COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL, INDUSTRIAL & MUNICIPAL" in a bold, green, sans-serif font. Below this, a list of services is provided in a black, sans-serif font: "Site Development • Underground Utilities", "Asphalt Grinding & Removal • Grading", "Petromat • Asphalt repairs • Subdivisions", and "Parking lots • Roadways". At the bottom, the contact information "LAKERIDGE@LAKEPAV.COM • (253) 631-8290" is written in a black, sans-serif font. The entire advertisement is set against a white background with a thin black border.



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# Supporting the Industry Through Education

Washington Multi-Family Housing Association (WMFHA), Washington’s trusted community partner and foremost rental housing resource, provides opportunities for career development in many ways.

With an increased focus on team associates’ personal and professional development and creating a culture of valuing team members, it has never been more important than to give back to employees by exposing them to life-long learning.

The industry has had to innovate over the past few years. Keeping up with new ideas and best practices is crucial to getting back to a sense of normalcy.

Last month, after a two-year hiatus due to

COVID-19, WMFHA held the largest one-day educational conference and trade show exhibition in the area – EdCon. More than 1,100 attendees enjoyed a robust day of learning, connecting, and growing.

There certainly was an enhanced excitement in the air, with obvious pent-up demand for an in-person networking and training event.

### LEARN

The day included 24 separate training sessions taught by outstanding subject matter experts. They provided relevant content on subjects related to customer service, leadership, legal, leasing and marketing, and operational best practices.

Several sessions focused on topics relevant to maintenance service personnel, such as appliance repairs, hot water heater repairs, budgeting for maintenance, and top 10 plumbing issues.

Russ Pengelly from ApartmentAdvisor and Greg Cerbana from Weidner Apartment Homes kicked off the day with inspirational words on why investing in our associates and future leaders is important to our member companies and the industry as a whole.

Both Russ and Greg have leadership ties to the National Apartment Association and can attest to the success and quality of our local member organizations and their extraordinary teams.

Brett Waller, General Counsel for HNN

Communities, spoke on post-eviction moratorium operations and legal compliance. It is more important than ever to keep up on all the changes to laws at the state and local levels, Brett explained.

Jessica Fern-Kirkland, who never disappoints with her thoughtful classes, spoke of the critical skills needed to succeed on purpose and avoid six common pitfalls leaders face when transitioning from surviving into thriving.

You Bet Your Assets, taught by Victoria Cowart from PetScreening, Inc., covered the complicated topic of service animals vs. support animals and what you need to know about reasonable accommodations.

Other valuable classes included: Multifamily Tech Trends, Surviving the Great Resignation, Who is Interviewing Whom, The University of Life, and It’s All About Conflict (Resolution).

### CONNECT

The Learn. Connect. Grow. Executive Leadership Panel once again thrilled attendees with real-world advice from proven leaders of their field, inspiring attendees to chart their own rewarding career paths.

Learning from others always gives inspiration to attendees to pursue their passion, build their professional network, and connect with peers and mentors. Each of us has had relationships with people who have helped us in our career path, and giving back to others so they can grow their career is rewarding, panelists shared.

### GROW

The most powerful session of the day focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, led by Greystar Management’s DEI team. They discussed how embracing diversity and building inclusive spaces has a ripple effect far past your organization.

This experienced team brought the audience real-world insight into why the stakes are so high and the rewards so great

*See ‘EdCon’ on Page 11*





# EdCon Returns in Person, Delivers Value to Attendees

*Continued from Page 10*

when everyone is valued and heard. They also shared valuable tips on how a company and its employees can participate in DEI conversations personally and professionally.

One of the most popular classes for maintenance associates was the series on appliance repairs, covering GE laundry room and kitchen appliances. The skill level of onsite teams to make repairs to appliances saves a property a lot of money in contract repair costs. These savings can get passed along to residents.

National speaker Zach Howell from BEAR Consulting Services, a fan favorite, presented classes on preventive maintenance and post-COVID maintenance trends.

## BETTER TOGETHER

Over 80 industry supplier partner companies exhibited the most updated products and services in the expansive EdCon trade show, meeting with attendees to offer advice and help solve daily problems.

The innovation of our member supplier partner companies in their products and services never disappoints.

WMFHA has the best supplier members in the industry and the promotion of a Members Using Members (MUM) philosophy ensures mutual support among our entire membership.

Once again, the highlight of the day was the Maintenance Mania! skills competition, a maintenance Olympics of sorts, with



seven challenging timed games built from maintenance materials and representing repairs or installations done at most apartment communities.

Awards and cash prizes rewarded competitors vying for the lowest times of the competition, with a chance to go to the national Maintenance Mania! event hosted by the National Apartment Association in San Diego this summer.

The pinnacle of the Maintenance Mania! games is the car race event. Soapbox derby-style cars, made in part from everyday maintenance materials, pits cars head-to-head for bragging rights and cash.

The thrill of building a car and racing it down a steep ramp, and hitting the finish line in top time, brings back the kid in all of us.

**INVEST IN YOURSELF**

No matter the career path, interpersonal relationships are essential in the apartment industry. Your interactions will range from your colleagues and residents to supplier partners. Your ability to network with

different people daily can open you up to opportunities you never knew existed.

That is why participation in your local housing association is a critical part of your long-term career strategy and helps to give back to the industry that serves you and your companies.

By investing in your employees' training and success, your company can increase property performance, and better serve the valuable residents of our apartment communities.

*WMFHA supports the rental housing industry by providing quality educational opportunities, coordinating networking events for personal growth, and by advocating for legislation equitable to our industry and the broader community. To learn more about membership in this passionate organization, simply call us at 425.656.9077 or visit our website at [www.wmfha.org](http://www.wmfha.org). Follow us on Facebook and our other social channels for up to date information on association activities.*




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# 4 Signs of Faulty Electrical Wiring in Rental Property

By Phil Schaller

There are a few telltale signs that you may have some bad wiring at your property. If you or your tenants hear, see, or smell any of these indicators your electrical infrastructure needs to be inspected.

Electrical malfunction can be very dangerous (fires), not to mention that you need consistent electricity to power many components of the home (which you are legally obligated to provide based on landlord/tenant laws and the lease with your tenants). Not only should tenants be encouraged to report any issues with the property, electrical systems should also be inspected regularly (we suggest a couple of times a year).

Be alert for any of the following:

**1. WARM ELECTRICAL WALL OUTLETS**

If a wall outlet is warm to the touch, this is a sign of faulty wiring and should be addressed immediately. Another indicator is if the outlet is vibrating; call an electrician!

**2. FREQUENT CIRCUIT-BREAKER TRIPS**

The reason circuit breakers exist is to provide a safety net for the electrical systems of a property. When an electrical system is overloaded, the circuit breaker will shut off



the power. This happens occasionally and is normal here and there. But when the breaker trips too often (once a month or more) it's a sign something is off. Either the electrical load is too high or you may have faulty wiring. This is another reason to call an electrician (you may see a theme here!).

**3. ABNORMAL NOISES OR LIGHTING ISSUES**

If you hear any clicking or flickering noises coming from lights or outlets, this is another sign something may be wrong. Buzzing is another noise to look out for. If you notice lightbulbs dying quickly or dimming, this should be addressed by an electrician.

**4. SIGNS OF SCORCHING AND/OR SMOKE**

Probably the most obvious of wiring woes.

If you or a tenant sees or smells smoke or odd odors coming from an electrical outlet, be ready to call 911 in case of a fire. If there are signs that heat has caused a stain or discoloration around an outlet, this could mean the wiring is faulty and is producing heat (and hence a big fire hazard). If left unchecked, major damage could ensue.

It's important to be diligent about the state of a property's electrical infrastructure. We advise not to take the inexpensive route when doing electrical work, especially the more complex work requiring

a permit. Hire an electrician and invest in your property.

*Phil Schaller is an experienced landlord and the founder/CEO of RentalRiff, an alternative service to traditional property management that provides ongoing oversight and upkeep of rental properties, while serving as the main point of contact for tenants. Maintenance and repair costs are included and property specialists are licensed/insured. Phil is a Pacific Northwest native, father of two, and fly-fishing addict. If you are interested in learning more about RentalRiff's rental property maintenance service, give us a call at 541-600-3200.*



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# Screening Must Include Nationwide Checks

*Continued from Page 1*

town-wide, but now people can live and move anonymously within our neighborhoods. How does that affect you as a property owner? And how does that affect your ability to operate “successful, lazy landlord,” a concept I teach and live by? I’ll tell you; it affects both dramatically.

A disclaimer before you read too far: I’m not advising you to never rent to any individual with a criminal history. I am advising you to utilize criminal history checks as just another tool in your landlord “toolbox.”

### CRIMINAL HISTORIES

When it comes to understanding criminal behavior, we have to rely on the criminal statistics to give us a true and accurate look at our current situation. Recidivism, the tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend, and the rates of reoffending are a powerful indicator for you as a landlord as you analyze a potential tenant. The Bureau of Justice recently released the results of a 10-year study of individuals who were released from prison in 2008. This is what they found:

- 66 percent of prisoners released across 24 states in 2008 were arrested within three years.
- 82 percent were arrested within 10 years.
- Of those that were arrested within 10 years, 47 percent were arrested for offenses involving property and another 47 percent for drug-related offenses.
- The average inmate committed nine crimes before they were sentenced.

Based on just this data, what risks are you willing to take? Though this is federal data, state recidivism rates closely mirror them.

### A COUNTRY ON THE MOVE

The moving industry reports that more than 15 million American households move annually, with an average of three people per household: great news for us as housing providers. That equates to 45 million people a year calling somewhere new “home.” More than three million of those moves are considered interstate, meaning they are leaving one state for another.

What that means for you as a landlord is that a “current state only” search of any history, criminal or otherwise, for your applicant is likely insufficient. Specific to criminal, 16 percent of those who were arrested within 10 years of release from prison were arrested in a state other than the one they were convicted in.

Would you as a landlord be happy with a one in six chance for anything, but especially when searching an applicant’s criminal history?

One reason individuals with a criminal history move is to get away from their communities, especially in small towns. For better or worse, it’s hard to escape the stigma of being the



town drunk when the whole town knows your history. Also, individuals with criminal histories often move to states that have less stringent research and reporting laws, seeking asylum where their history can’t even be reported to you as a landlord, leaving you feeling handcuffed in managing your property.

And finally, 33 percent of the individuals released from prison could not find active employment within the first three years of their release. These factors combined with the transient nature of our country indicate that including a nationwide check shouldn’t just be an option, it should be a necessity for successful landlords.

### APPLYING CONSISTENT CRITERIA

What kind of criteria do you have when it come to an applicant’s criminal history?

If you don’t have one, I’d encourage you to visit with your attorney to determine what is fair and legal in your state when it comes to criminal background research and use in housing.

We have a sample criteria you can request at [info@rentperfect.com](mailto:info@rentperfect.com). If you do have criteria, make sure you are applying it fairly and equally across the board for each applicant.

A question I get often is “Is it okay to have property-specific criteria?” Not only is it OK, but I would also

encourage you to make this a key part of your practice. Your portfolio may contain properties of varying locations, values, and restrictions, and each of these will affect how you manage the property.

For example, you may have a property that qualifies as low-income housing. Would the criteria you use for a tenant there differ from the criteria you might have in place for a property in an age-restricted community?

Of course it would. What doesn’t differ is your enforcement of whatever criteria you use for each specific property. Consistency is king whether you are considering criminal, credit, or eviction history.

As much as we might like a return to the old days where agreements were sealed with a handshake, our future is much different.

Knowing criminal histories, seeing moving patterns, and using consistent criteria make us better landlords and more profitable investors. This is why it is so important to include a nationwide criminal history check on every tenant from whom you receive an application.

*David Pickron is president of Rent Perfect, a private investigator, and fellow landlord who manages several short- and long-term rentals. Subscribe to his weekly Rent Perfect Podcast to stay up to date on the latest industry news and for expert tips on how to manage your properties.*



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# Renter-Preferences Survey Shows the Future is Remote Work

## RENTAL HOUSING JOURNAL

The 2022 renter-preferences survey report shows that renters have been on the move over the past 18 months and clearly seek more space in their living arrangements.

And, more telling is that a quarter of respondents who moved reported that their moves were due to a shift to remote work during the pandemic, according to the 2022 Renter Preferences Survey Report from National Multifamily Housing Council and Grace Hill.

“In general, renters are teleworking with higher frequency than ever before. And there’s little expectation of that changing. In fact, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of survey respondents said they expect to be teleworking about the same amount over the next year as they are now. This shift is driving demand for home offices and meeting space,” the report says.

The Renter Preferences Survey Report’s hot trends and key findings include:

### DEMAND FOR MORE SPACE

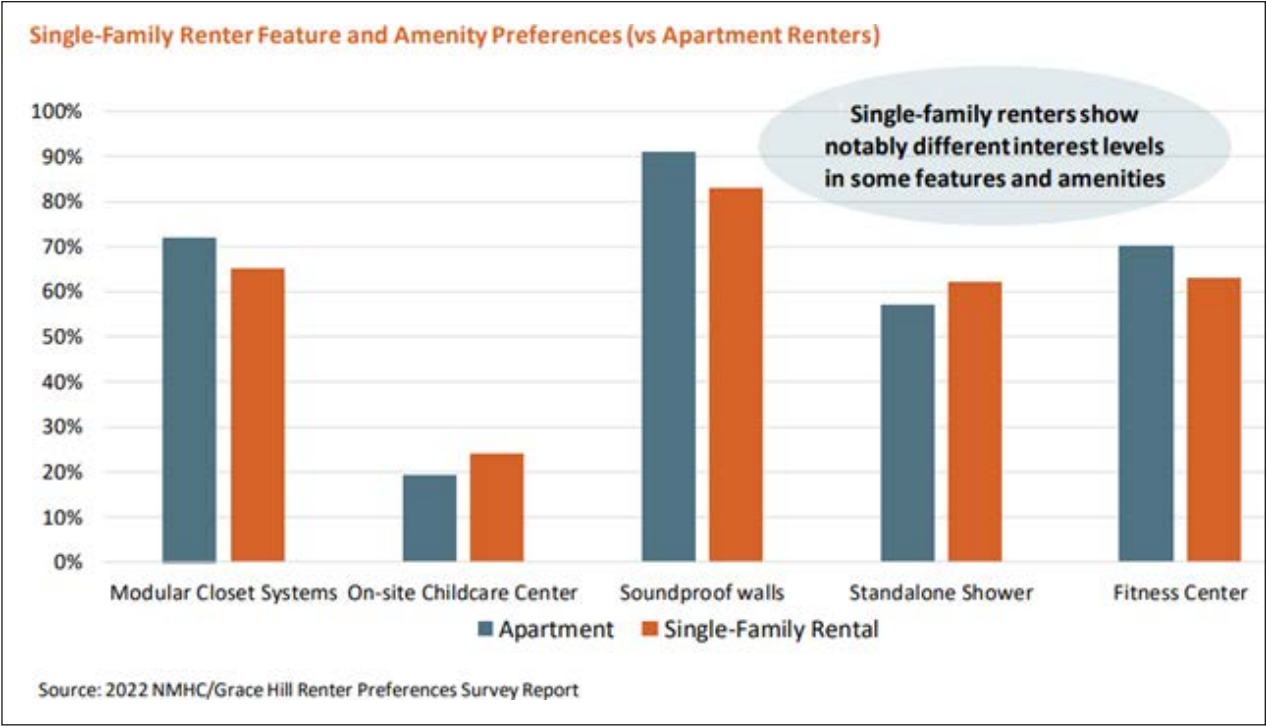
“Lockdowns seemingly led to a strong desire for additional space; twenty-eight percent of renters who said they intend to move to a different rental community when their lease expires cited “additional living space” as a reason, up from just 19 percent two years ago.

### WASHERS AND DRYERS, AIR CONDITIONING, SOUNDPROOF WALLS AND HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

“Now, more than ever, home is proving to be a sanctuary, and renters have a great desire — and are willing to pay a premium in additional monthly rent — for certain amenities.

Reported must-haves include: washer/dryer in-unit (92 percent of renters interested, \$54.73 monthly premium), air conditioning (91 percent, \$54.73) , soundproof walls (90 percent, \$46.21), high-speed internet access (89 percent, \$47.93) , and walk-in closet (88 percent, \$43.46).

### PACKAGE DELIVERY INCREASE



“The share of renters who received two or fewer packages per month dropped from 45 percent in 2019 to just 24 percent this round, while the share who received three or more packages per month increased from 55 percent to 76 percent over the two-year period,” the report says.

### RENTERS WANT CHOICES

“Our survey asked residents what types of rental homes they considered during their last home search. While traditional apartment homes garnered a majority of responses (57 percent), townhomes and single-family rentals were also in the mix at 23 percent and 19 percent of responses, respectively.

“There were also strong correlations between what type of rental home they ultimately ended up in and their preferences for features and amenities like storage solutions, fitness centers and package management,” the report says.

### INTEREST IN SMART HOME TECHNOLOGY

Renters’ interest in smart home technology is tied to its ability to add convenience or drive savings. Survey results show that the most popular smart home feature for renters is a smart thermostat, with 70 percent of respondents saying they were interested in or wouldn’t rent without this feature.

Smart sensor technology is also feeding renter interest in leak detection systems (67 percent) and water-saving features (67 percent).

Also connectivity is an issue with reliable cell service and internet service a requirement.

“Reliable cell phone service ranked as the No. 1 community amenity, with 86 percent of survey respondents indicating interest. Renters are even more serious about their internet

connectivity, with nine out of 10 respondents saying they were interested in or wouldn’t rent their home without it.”

### PET-FRIENDLY AMENITIES

Roughly one-third of renter respondents indicated they lived with a pet or service animal.

Dogs are proving to be a renter’s best friend, with 70 percent of pet owners indicating their fur babies were dogs.

The preference is driving interest in—and premiums for—four-legged friendly amenities like community dog parks, pet washing stations and on-site pet services like doggy daycare and grooming.

Moreover, survey results show that pet breed restrictions may be falling out of favor with renters, with 77 percent of respondents indicating that pet breed restrictions would either have no effect on their leasing decisions or would make them less likely to rent a property with restrictions in place.

### NOISE-RELATED ISSUES STILL A PROBLEM

Noise remains a leading environmental pollutant at rental communities, detracting from renters’ wellbeing and living experience.

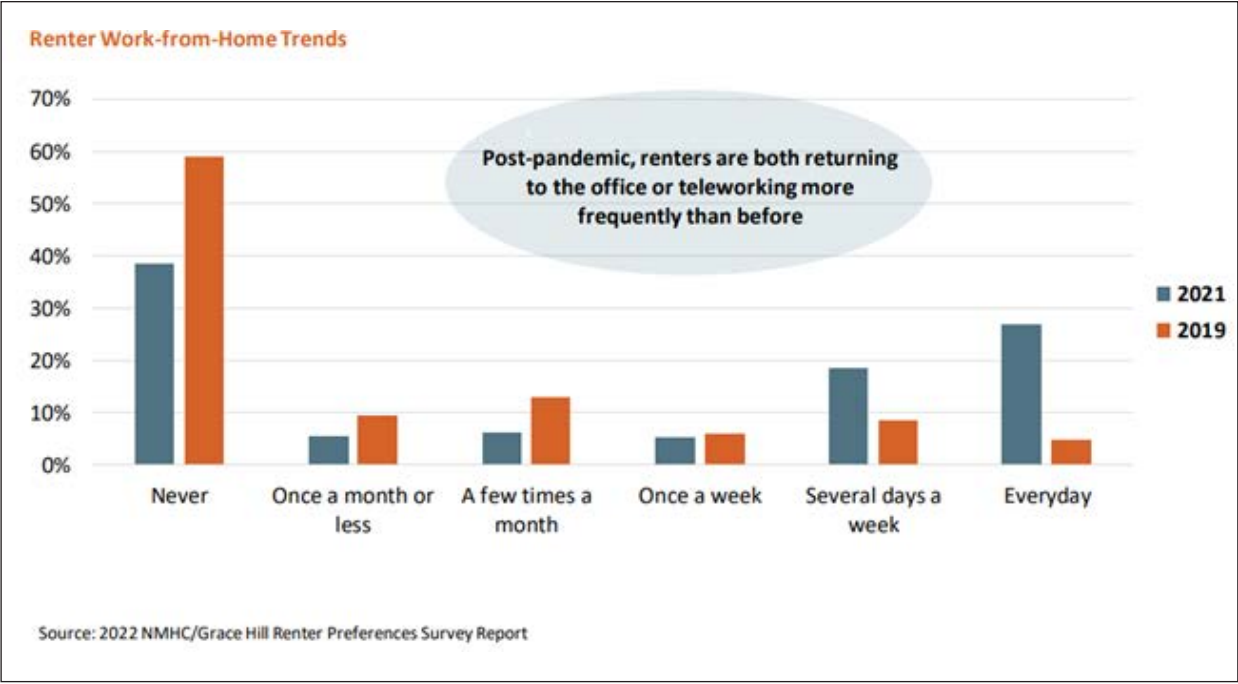
“As a result, renter interest in sound mitigating tech in windows and walls remains sky high. In fact, soundproof walls are the third most popular home feature after air conditioning and an in-unit washer/dryer, with 90 percent of respondents indicating they were interested or wouldn’t rent without them.”

### A PREFERENCE FOR OUTDOOR SPACE ALSO

“Renters have long put a premium on private outdoor space like patios and balconies, as well as other community outdoor amenities.

“Nationally, nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of survey respondents indicated strong interest in a community pool, with the strongest interest levels coming mostly from fairer climates in the Southeast and Texas. Geography also factored into interest levels around amenities like rooftop space and common area barbecue grills as renters in higher density areas in and around some of the nation’s leading cities showed stronger interest levels,” the report says.

About the Renter Preferences Survey: “Our team conducted the survey in September and October 2021. Web-based surveys were distributed to more than 1 million residents. Along with the national report, metro-level reports are available. To qualify, each market needed at least 150 responses from five properties and at least two participating firms.” A total of 221,559 renter responses were received.



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# Understanding the Rules of Fair Housing Advertising

*Continued from Page 1*

discrimination based on a person’s race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.”

So as you can see, the law is very, broad and covers a range of media like flyers, brochures, deeds, signs, banners, posters, billboards, and even pictures in your office.

The law also covers what we say about a property, whether over the phone or in person. Expressing an illegal preference or limitation to one of your fellow agents, brokers, employees, prospective sellers, renters, or any other person in connection with the sale or rental of your property is illegal.

### PHOTOS AND DECORATIONS

Our rental offices are usually the first thing a prospect sees. We all like to showcase different amenities with eye-catching photos of residents enjoying them. But do your pictures show only people of the same race or perhaps the same age group?

This can give the impression that your property only leases to people of a certain age and race, which is considered illegal advertising and is a violation of the Fair Housing Act.

Instead, you should use a variety of both resident images and images that include models so that a variety of both sexes, people who have disabilities, and, when appropriate, children of all ages are represented.

### WRITTEN CONTENT

The law says you can’t use “words, phrases, symbols or forms of any kind” that would tend to give the impression that your property is available (or not available) to certain types of people.

For example, when advertising a unit for rent, it’s common to see “No Pets” in the ad, which is fine. However, adding statements like “Christian Roommate,” “No Children,” or “No Wheelchairs” is illegal.

## What if Tenant Doesn’t Report Bad Smoke Detector?

By HANK ROSSI

**Dear Landlord Hank:** Who is responsible for replacing a dead smoke detector — tenant or landlord? If the landlord is, what actions can I take, as landlord, if the tenants know about it and won’t replace it? — Travis

**Dear Landlord Travis:** This question comes down in part to your lease. Is the



responsibility for a working smoke detector clearly defined as the tenant’s responsibility? My lease indicates the tenant is responsible for smoke detector batteries and, if the detector is not working, for notifying the landlord.

If smoke-detector responsibility is not addressed in the lease, then, in my opinion, you can’t blame the tenant for its functionality. If tenants are responsible for batteries and it is a dead detector, then I as the landlord would buy new ones and install them.

If the lease states the smoke detectors are clearly the tenants’ responsibility, I would talk to them and then put a seven-day notice for non-compliance on their door, since they are in default on the lease and could be evicted.

This is a serious issue for the health and safety of your tenants, not to mention that your property could be at serious risk of fire with no warning. Move quickly on this — it seems a small issue but it could be life-threatening.



Using phrases such as “great view,” “walk-in closets” or “walk to bus stop” is acceptable. However, there are certain buzz words you should still avoid. These are words or phrases that have been associated with discriminatory practices in the past. They include such words as “restricted,” “exclusive,” “limited,” and so forth.

Also, while religious discrimination is illegal, using words like “kosher meals served on the premises,” or including phrases such as “Merry Christmas” or “Happy Easter” in an ad is not considered discriminatory.

A great tip to remember is that HUD will consider your use of certain kinds of advertising words and slogans to be evidence of your compliance with the

Fair Housing Act. For example, using HUD’s “Equal Housing Opportunity” or fair housing logo in your ads will be viewed with approval.

### FAIR HOUSING ADVERTISING - FINAL TAKEAWAY

Every company should have a clear understanding of the laws and guidelines that HUD and The Fair Housing Act provide. Along with that, every employee should have access to targeted training to ensure that when it comes to advertising, they are fair-housing compliant.

*In 2005, The Fair Housing Institute was founded as a company with one goal: to provide educational and entertaining fair-housing compliance training at an affordable price at the click of a button.*

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