

PRESS CUTTING

JungleDrums

June 2 2011

(c. 12,000)

Is a picture really worth a thousand words?

According to The Association of Independent Inventory Clerks (AIIC), poor and inadequate photographs are being used in inventories at both check-in and check-out, leaving landlords exposed to potentially costly disputes over wear and tear.

More often than not, the photographs submitted in inventories are little larger than thumbnails and hence make it extremely difficult to see detail. To back up a damage issue, photographs need to be a reasonable size so that the damage can be actually seen clearly.

In a recent 'a recent dispute, a landlord who had supplied his tenant with a photographic style inventory at check in. Since none of the photographs were dated and no other written evidence was produced, the tenant won his case and the landlord had to fund some expensive replacements.



Pat Barber, Chair of The AIIC, comments, "Inventory reports should contain a full description of a property and its contents with detail on every bit of damage and its exact location at the start of a tenancy. This can be supported with photographs – but they need to be of a high quality when printed up to A4 or A3 size, so that any damage can be seen clearly.

"Photographs are no substitute for an accurate and properly detailed inventory. A landlord has no evidence to prove that the property has been damaged in any way during the tenancy if he/she has to rely in poor quality, thumbnail photographs and therefore may find it almost impossible to withhold any deposit money from the tenants."

AIIC guidelines for photographs

- Ideally, 'before and after' photos should be taken with a clear narrative as to what the photo is showing e.g. colours, item description, marks on surfaces
- Photographs should include something to show scale within the photo and they should clearly show the condition of the property at the given time
- Even if the photographs are just to be incorporated in the inventory for reference they need to be a decent size
- Photographs should be dated, as in camera set to automatically put the date on the picture.
- If photographs are going to be printed out the printer used needs to be good quality. Too often cheap printers distort the colour. Even good printers give false colours when cartridges start to run out.

www.theaiic.co.uk