

HVAC GUIDE FOR PROPERTY MANAGEMENT GROUPS

When tenants complain that their air conditioner isn't working, they don't want excuses or delays—they want an immediate response. Your property management group has its hands full with other responsibilities, which is why you should rely on a licensed commercial HVAC company to handle your tenants' heating and cooling needs. We've put together this guide to help you determine the best HVAC solutions for your property management group.



Types of HVAC Systems for Rental Properties

Repairing and replacing your rental properties' HVAC systems is a significant portion of your ongoing costs. The systems you install could even affect rental cash flow, so make sure you choose efficient, cost-effective solutions. Here are some of your options.

Packaged vs. Split Air Conditioners

Packaged ACs contain everything they need to operate in a single unit. This simplicity has a downside, however—the entire AC is installed outside, where it's exposed to the weather and pests. For this reason, packaged units are often reserved for properties in the South.

Split air conditioners are the more traditional option. They contain an outdoor condensing unit and indoor air handler. Split systems are more complex to install, but the air handler does double duty by circulating heated air as well, which simplifies the process.

Furnaces vs. Heat Pumps

If you're sticking with forced-air heating, you have two primary choices for your rental properties. Furnaces are the conventional choice, working opposite the air conditioner to ensure comfortable temperatures in the winter.

Another option is a heat pump, which provides electric heating as well as cooling in the summer. Because it moves heat rather than generating it from a fuel source, a heat pump can deliver superb energy efficiency for maximum tenant satisfaction.

You can even install a furnace and heat pump instead of a furnace and air conditioner. In this dual-fuel system, the heat pump provides efficient air conditioning in the summer, and the furnace acts as a backup heat source when the temperature falls below freezing in the winter. This is the most energy-efficient option you can provide your tenants.

Boilers vs. Ductless Mini-Splits

If your rental property is older and doesn't have ductwork, the traditional option is to heat with a boiler using baseboard heating or radiators. However, this leaves your tenants with no air conditioning, which could hurt your rental profits.

To make your building more attractive to future tenants, consider installing ductless mini-splits. These work like miniature heat pumps, providing heating and cooling from up to five wall-mounted air handlers connected to a single outdoor condensing unit. It's a much more cost-effective solution than installing ductwork, but it provides the year-round comfort your tenants crave.

Maintenance Requirements for Property Management Group HVAC

If you're willing to take on a small short-term cost, you can pocket substantial long-term savings. All you need is to make yearly HVAC maintenance a priority for your rental units. Routine cleaning, lubricating, testing, and tuning up each system promotes fewer mid-season breakdowns and a longer lifespan for the HVAC equipment. Plus, this service lowers operating costs for your tenants, which improves their satisfaction.

Property Management Group HVAC Problems & Solutions

If you're considering taking on the property management responsibilities for a new building, watch out for common HVAC problems before you agree to it.

Centralized vs. Decentralized HVAC

Large multi-family properties in New York sometimes have centralized heating and cooling, where the temperature in every unit is controlled from a central location. This is more expensive to install than a decentralized system, in which each unit has its own equipment and thermostat.

Tenants may be happier with a decentralized system that gives them full control of the temperature, but the energy consumption could end up being higher. You can counteract this problem by making the tenants responsible for paying their own energy bills.

Uneven Heating & Cooling

While an equipment malfunction could be to blame for uneven heating and cooling, it's also possible that the building has been renovated without subsequent upgrades to the HVAC system. A licensed contractor can help you rethink air duct and vent placement, if necessary.

Low Airflow

The simplest reason for low airflow could be that furniture is blocking the return registers. The air filter might also be clogged. If you troubleshoot the problem to no avail, leaky ductwork could be to blame. An HVAC professional can check for this and other issues that might be contributing to low airflow.

Poor Maintenance

If an in-house team of handymen and DIYers has been in charge of preventive maintenance, the job may have been done poorly or not at all. Make a change by choosing a qualified HVAC contractor to take on the maintenance responsibilities from here.

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