

How important is security in the rental market?

 By [Adrian Goslett](#)

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Security has been a major influence in property buying decisions, with South Africans among the most security-conscience home buyers in the world. However, what about the rental market, is security as important?



Due to financial and various other reasons, a large portion of the population remains in the rental market. Just because they do not own the property they are living in, does it mean that safety will be any less of a factor? Of course not. Whether a tenant or owner, security is a top consideration which is impacting both sectors of the market.

Where the challenge comes in is that while rental properties can be more cost effective and are less responsibility than owning, tenants are restricted in what they can do to the property themselves. Because of this, tenants should inquire about the security features a property has before they commit to signing a lease agreement. It might be difficult for tenants to get the landlord to upgrade the security after the fact.

Additional security

While landlords have a responsibility to ensure that the property is in good condition and well maintained with reasonable security precautions such as door and window locks, landlords are not required to provide any additional security. If there is a particular property that the tenant would like to rent, they could request permission in writing to install additional security features at their own cost. It is possible that the landlord may pay a portion of the upgrade, as it will increase the value of the home, along with the future potential rental income.

Before searching for a property to rent, tenants should have an idea about their security criteria and type of property they want. While sectional title properties are perceived to be safer than stand-alone homes, they are not untouched by criminal activity. Security goes beyond the property itself. If the rental property is within a sectional title complex, the tenant should find out about the security features of the complex as a whole, such as access control, security guards on site or patrols. There might be cameras or surveillance of some kind, which will vastly increase the security of the development.

Property lighting

Tenants should ask whether access codes or door locks are changed once tenants move out of the rental property. Another

aspect to consider is the lighting surrounding the property - dark areas make it easier for intruders to approach and gain access unnoticed. Outdoor floodlights can mitigate the risk to some degree, and motion-sensor models are a value-for-money, effective option. The exterior is not the only place that requires good lighting. Goslett notes that a lighting timer for inside the home can create the illusion of someone being home even when the tenant is travelling.

As an extra safety precaution, tenants should check whether there are fire extinguishers and where the fire escape stairs and exits are. Another important aspect to consider is the parking area and access from the property to where the car is parked - check whether the area is well-lit and if there is a garage to park the car in.

Tenants should only sign a lease agreement and move into a rental property once all their security criteria have been sufficiently met - feeling safe is an important part of feeling at home.

ABOUT ADRIAN GOSLETT

Adrian Goslett is CEO and regional director of RE/MAX Southern Africa. He joined RE/MAX Southern Africa in 2005 as a franchise development consultant, supporting various regions and offices. Throughout his career at RE/MAX he has held various positions. In 2010, after successfully leading 160 offices and over 1500 agents in six countries through the worst years real estate has ever seen in South Africa in 30 years, Goslett was appointed as CEO of RE/MAX Southern Africa.
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