



# Owner Handbook

Fickling & Company

**Real Estate Services**

151 S. Houston Lake Blvd.

Suite 140

Warner Robins, Ga. 31088

Phone: 478.953.2244

Fax: 478.953.3913

## Welcome!

Thank you for choosing Fickling & Company to manage your property.

This owners' handbook was prepared to help answer frequently asked questions and to provide you with clarification of our policies and procedures. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## General Office Information

### Address:

151 S. Houston Lake Blvd.  
Suite 140  
Warner Robins, Ga. 31088

### Communication:

Phone: 478-333-6472  
Fax: 478-953-3913  
email: [rentals@fickling.com](mailto:rentals@fickling.com)

(This email account goes to numerous property managers and staff members, enabling us to better assist you.)

### Office Hours:

8:30 to 5:30 Monday through Friday

### Communication:

In an effort to communicate with our owners, tenants, and vendors; the above email address is the best way to communicate with our Property Management Department. Any email to this address goes to everyone in the Property Management Department. Although you may have worked with one of our Property Managers, anyone in this department can assist you and should one or more be out at a time, this insures that someone is available at all times during office hours to assist.

Should any of your information change; such as phone number, email address, address, etc., please email this information to [rentals@fickling.com](mailto:rentals@fickling.com).

# Getting Started

## Initial Property Visit

A Fickling & Company Property Manager will visit the property prior to agreeing to manage it and before we can advise you of what rent would be appropriate.

At this initial visit, the Property Manager will advise you as to any repairs or cleaning that will be necessary to accomplish prior to our placing the property on the market for rent, as well as, advise you of what comparable properties are renting for and what you may expect as a rent amount.

## Items Needed From Owner

Before we can begin our marketing efforts and managing the property, we need the following:

- A signed Management Agreement
  - Georgia Law prohibits us to manage your property without written authorization by you.
- Owner information
  - This information allows Fickling & Company to set up your account
    - Should this information change at any time, please notify us as soon as possible.
- A W-9 form
  - This form enables Fickling & Company to send you a Form 1099 for your tax preparation.
- Electronic banking authorization
  - This form enables Fickling & Company to send your funds directly to your bank
- Provide a Property Disclosure
- Provide completed Lead-Based Paint Form (If applicable)
- 3 sets of keys to the property, 1 for Fickling & Company and 2 for the tenants; including any storage buildings, etc.
- Codes for alarm systems and/or garage entry codes
- Garage door remotes
- Names of utility companies
- Covenants for the neighborhood
- Home Owner Association information

## Owner Responsibilities

- Maintain property in a condition that is marketable and habitable
- Notify Fickling & Company of any ownership change or imminent owner change for the property
- Supply Fickling & Company with accurate information for proper management of the property
- Support Fair Housing Laws and guidelines, as well as all necessary legislation
- Maintain a current insurance policy for the property and supply Fickling & Company with the name and contact information for the policy holder
- Treat Fickling & Company personnel with courtesy. Notify the Fickling & Company Broker if there are problems with a Fickling & Company staff member so they can be resolved quickly
- Provide Fickling & Company with emergency contact information
- Respond to request from Property Management in a timely manner

## Property Condition Requirements

At Fickling & Company we only market homes for rent that are in move-in ready condition and all repairs are complete. Before we can begin the marketing and showing process, the following must be met:

- Carpets must be stretched and cleaned (if needed)
- All interior paint must be freshly painted or appear to be freshly painted
- All electrical systems operating
- All appliances must be operable
- Landscaping must be in good condition; lawn mowed and edged, shrubbery and trees trimmed
- Gutters cleaned

## Rental Insurance

- All tenants are encouraged to obtain renters insurance.

## Lead-Based Paint

- All properties constructed prior to January 1, 1978 require disclosures to all tenants and owners. As an owner, you must sign a disclosure of what you know about lead-based paint in your home. The tenant must sign the same form and receive the required EPA pamphlet, "Protect Your Family from Lead in the Home".

## **Processing Tenant Applications**

Fickling & Company requires all applicants to fill out a detailed application for processing and approval.

The following are reports and verifications that we obtain:

- Credit Report
- Criminal Background report
- Employment
- Income
- Previous rental history

These reports and verifications together provide the criteria to qualify or disqualify prospective applicants.

## **Co-signers**

There are sometimes conditions that may warrant taking a cosigner. If this is the case, Fickling & Company will notify you, discuss the reasons, and obtain your authorization.

## **Pets**

Fickling & Company recommends that when the property is on the market that pets are negotiable. This can solve two problems:

- This encourages prospective tenants to disclose any pets. Then, based on the owner preference on pets, we can automatically notify the applicant that the owner does not allow pets.
- By listing pets as negotiable, it avoids eliminating an excellent tenant who has an excellent tenant history and owns a pet that may be suitable to your property.

## **Service Animals**

Service animals for people with handicaps are not pets by Federal Law, and owners cannot discriminate against handicapped/disabled people with a service animal. Fair Housing Laws do not allow owners or property managers to collect deposits of any kind for service animals.

Landlords can still process applicants who are handicapped or disabled on the same criteria as other applicants. If they fail to qualify in these areas, they can be denied, handicapped or not.

## **Tenant Move-in Process:**

### **Rent and Security Deposits**

The rent and security deposit, normally equal to the rent amount, is collected prior to move-in. The security deposit is held in an escrow account, as required by law, until the tenant moves out of the property. At time of move-out we will perform an inspection which will determine whether any or all of the security deposit should be retained for damages.

The lease is signed by the new tenants and our property manager and forwarded to you for your signature.

### **Move-in Inspection**

A vital part of the rental agreement is a detailed move-in inspection performed with the tenant, documenting the condition of the property when they move-in. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the property manager completes the move-in inspection with the tenant before the tenant takes possession of the property.

### **Fickling & Company Procedures for Late Rent**

Rent is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month and late after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month.

At Fickling & Company, we take placing a new tenant very seriously and only place tenants that are credit worthy. However, there are times when tenants are late. The following is our process for obtaining the late rent.

- A Property Management staff member will contact the tenant by phone, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the month, or first business day thereafter if the 6<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday, for the reason the rent is late and when we can expect payment.
- On the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the month, all tenants whose rent has not been received will be sent a late letter. This letter notifies the tenant that rent has not been received and instructs the tenant to bring the rent current, including late fees.
- Fickling & Company will inform you if the rent is paid late, and will inform you of our actions regarding collection
- On the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, all tenants whose rent has not been received will receive a Notice of Eviction and Demand Letter, which states that Fickling & Company will file a dispossessionary warrant with the County Magistrate Court if rent and late fees are not received within three business days.

- When a dispossessory warrant has been filed, a fee of \$250.00 for legal fees is added to the rent and late fee. This fee is our expense for filing the court documents and is added to the tenants cost owed.
- The county Marshall will serve the dispossessory warrant at the property. If the tenants are not present, the Marshall will attach the warrant to the door and a copy will be mailed to the tenant. The date for appearance in court will be included.

Fickling & Company does not take pleasure in evicting anyone from their property. However, it is our duty to you to protect your property and investment.

## **Evictions**

If an eviction is necessary, Fickling & Company handles every part of the process. We will file all necessary documents, monitor legal proceedings, attend court if necessary, hire a crew to perform a set-out by the county Marshall, and prepare the property to be marketed to a new tenant. Professional and correct legal action by a property manager both reduces the owner's expense in an eviction and avoids the risk of a lawsuit for wrongful eviction.

## **Notices of Violation**

Fickling & Company serves notices as situations warrant, such as a notice to clean up the landscape, a notice to enter the property, a notice to perform survey/inspections, a notice regarding an illegal pet, illegal tenants, etc. These tenant violations may be in the form of a letter or a legal notice form. Often, these notices are simply to correct minor tenant problems and most tenants comply. However, if necessary, Fickling & Company will contact you with the information to discuss the situation.

## **Tenant Problems**

Fickling & Company has years of experience handling the wide range of tenant difficulties that can occur. Our policy is to obtain good tenants, eliminating many tenant problems. However, even good tenants can have problems. Fickling & Company treats each problem with a common-sense approach, follows Georgia landlord/tenant law and uses the appropriate documentation. If the situation is serious, Fickling & Company will contact you and will work to find a solution for the problem.

## **Disbursement of Funds**

### **Procurement Fees**

Procurement fees are collected from the first full month's rent. No management fee is collected the month that the procurement fee is paid.

## **Monthly Funds**

Owners' checks and statements are processed on or around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. The statement will show the amount of rent paid, the management fee and any repair payment deductions that have been paid for the property.

## **1099s**

Fickling & Company is required to file 1099s for our owners and vendors that we have paid on your behalf. Security Deposits are not included. Fickling & Company will prepare and send your 1099 by January 31 for the previous tax year.

## **Maintenance**

### **Preventive Maintenance**

Fickling & Company takes preventative approach to maintenance by:

- Completing a detailed lease with the tenant that outlines their responsibilities regarding maintenance
- Completing a move-in inspection documenting the condition of the property before the tenant takes possession
- Giving each tenant our Tenant Handbook, explaining additional instructions on the care of the property and how to request maintenance
- We use competent and insured vendors for repairs

We will contact you regarding maintenance issues.

## **Emergencies**

When an emergency occurs, Fickling & Company moves quickly to insure protection of tenants and to prevent greater financial risk for you and your property.



# When the Tenant Vacates

## Giving Notice to Vacate

Prior to the tenants' lease expiration, we will contact you to discuss whether you want to invite the tenant to renew their lease and if you want an increase in the rent amount currently paid.

We will then contact the tenant to invite them to renew their lease. We will inform you of their intentions and renew the lease, proceed on a month to month basis, or vacate.

## Notice to Vacate

When there is a notice to vacate, we will inform you and proceed with placing the property on the market for re-lease and make necessary appointments for move-out.

## Tenant Move-Out

Fickling & Company will conduct a move-out inspection. Fickling & Company records any maintenance required and discloses a list of damages to the vacating tenant. Digital photos are taken to support any deductions from the security deposit.

After the move-out inspection is performed, Fickling & Company will inform the owner of any damages and/or any repairs or maintenance required to re-rent the property.

## Security Deposit Refunds

Both Georgia Law and Tenant/Landlord Law have precise rules as to how Security Deposits are handled. Fickling & Company complies with these laws. Any tenant deductions are determined in a timely manner, and a Security Deposit transmittal is prepared in accordance with Georgia License Law.

**Our goal is that your time as an Owner with Fickling & Company is an experience that will surpass your expectations. We hope that this Owner Handbook is informative and useful. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.**

**Thank you for your business!**