

Property Manager interview questions

careertips.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Property manager interviews focus on how candidates handle the practical, day-to-day pressures of the role: arrears, disputes, inspections and owner reporting. Expect a mix of process questions checking you know the mechanics, and behavioural questions checking how you handle conflict and pressure.

- **Process:** Checks whether you understand the actual steps involved in tasks like arrears management, inspections or lease renewals.
- **Behavioural:** Draws on past experience to see how you've handled tenant disputes, difficult owners or compliance issues.
- **Client-facing:** Tests how you communicate with tenants and owners, particularly when delivering unwelcome news.
- **Compliance:** Probes your knowledge of tenancy legislation and how you stay current with it.

Interviews for this role are usually a single conversation with an agency principal or senior property manager, often 30 to 45 minutes. Expect it to open with your background and licensing status, move into scenario and process questions, and close with questions about portfolio size, software used and availability for inspections or after-hours calls.

1. Walk me through how you'd handle a tenant who is two weeks behind on rent.

Why they ask

This checks whether you know the correct process and timeframes for arrears, and whether you'd follow legislation rather than improvise.

How to structure your answer

Answer as a step-by-step process: first contact and documentation, escalation timing, notices required under tenancy law, and when you'd involve the owner or take further action.

Example answer

"I'd contact the tenant directly as soon as the account falls behind, by phone and in writing, to understand what's going on and set a repayment expectation. I document every contact in the property management software. If there's no response or repayment plan within a few days, I issue the formal breach notice required under the tenancy legislation in that state, and I keep the owner updated throughout so there are no surprises. If it continues past the notice period, I'd prepare the file for tribunal action, whether that's NCAT or VCAT depending on the state, while still leaving the door open for the tenant to resolve it."

2. Tell me about a time you had to deliver bad news to a property owner.

Why they ask

Owners are the client in this role, and how you manage their expectations under pressure says a lot about your judgement.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"An owner's property needed an urgent repair that was going to cost more than expected, right after a tenant had reported a leak. I got quotes from two tradespeople straight away so the owner had options, then called rather than emailing so I could explain the urgency and answer questions on the spot. The owner approved the higher quote because it came with a faster turnaround, and the tenant

relationship stayed intact because the repair was done within days rather than dragging out.”

3. How do you approach a routine property inspection?

Why they ask

Inspections are a core recurring task, and interviewers want to know you have a consistent, defensible process.

How to structure your answer

Answer as a walk-through of your method, from scheduling through to documentation and follow-up.

Example answer

“I schedule the inspection with proper notice to the tenant as required by tenancy law, then use an inspection app to work through a standard checklist room by room, photographing anything of note. I compare against the previous condition report to flag any changes. Afterwards I send the report to the owner with a summary of anything that needs attention, and if there are maintenance issues I follow up with quotes rather than just noting them and moving on.”

4. A tenant and a tradesperson disagree about whether a repair was done properly. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

This is a scenario question testing judgement under pressure and your ability to stay neutral while protecting the owner's interests.

How to structure your answer

Talk through the decision-making process: what information you'd gather, how you'd weigh it, and what outcome you'd aim for.

Example answer

“I'd go back to the original scope of work and any photos or notes from before and after the repair, then ask the tradesperson to explain what was done against that scope. If it's not clear-cut, I'd arrange for someone to inspect the work in person rather than relying on descriptions over the phone. I keep the tenant informed throughout so they don't feel ignored, and I make sure the owner isn't paying twice for the same job if the work wasn't done properly.”

5. What tenancy legislation changes have affected your work recently, and how did you adjust?

Why they ask

This is a compliance question checking that you keep your knowledge current rather than relying on what you learned when first licensed.

How to structure your answer

Answer directly: name the change, explain the practical impact, and describe what you did differently.

Example answer

“When minimum standards for rental properties were tightened in several states, I went through my portfolio to check which properties needed upgrades, like smoke alarm compliance or minimum insulation standards, and flagged the costs to owners early rather than waiting for a tenant complaint or an inspection failure. I also keep an eye on updates from the relevant fair trading body and my industry association so I'm not caught off guard.”

6. How do you manage a portfolio when you're juggling inspections, maintenance requests and lease renewals at the same time?

Why they ask

This behavioural question tests organisation and prioritisation under a realistic workload.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, focusing on a specific busy period rather than a general description of being organised.

Example answer

“During a period when several leases were due for renewal at the same time as a run of maintenance requests, I used the property management software to flag deadlines and set myself daily priorities rather than working purely on whoever contacted me first. Urgent maintenance, like anything affecting safety, went to the top regardless of what else was on. Lease renewals I handled in batches, preparing paperwork a few weeks ahead. Nothing slipped past its deadline, and owners weren't left wondering about the status of their property.”