FREE CHECKLIST

Property Management Software Selection Checklist

The 7 capability areas to score before you sign — accounting, payments, marketing, applications, maintenance, growth and the resident portal.

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How to use this checklist

Most owners buy property management software the way they buy a car: on the demo. Then they discover the accounting module doesn't reconcile the way their CPA wants, or online rent payments cost the tenant $9 a transaction, or the maintenance portal is an email inbox with a logo. This checklist walks the seven capability areas that matter in day-to-day operations — the same seven a mature platform is organized around — and gives you the questions to put to every vendor before you sign.

> Score each item 0 (missing), 1 (partial / workaround), 2 (built in and tested). A platform under 60 of 84 possible points will cost you the difference in staff hours.

1. Property accounting & financial reporting

- [ ] True double-entry general ledger (not a spreadsheet export) with owner, property and unit-level books
- [ ] Bank feeds with automatic reconciliation, not manual CSV imports
- [ ] Owner statements generated per property with distributions, management fees and reserves shown separately
- [ ] 1099-NEC / 1099-MISC generation for vendors and owners at year end
- [ ] Trust-account (escrow) accounting for security deposits, separated from operating funds
- [ ] Accounts payable with approval workflow and vendor payment by ACH or check
- [ ] Exportable to your CPA's tool (QuickBooks, Xero) or a clean CSV/GL export

2. Online payments

- [ ] Tenants can pay by ACH, debit and credit card; ask who pays each fee and how much
- [ ] Autopay with tenant-controlled scheduling and cap on amount
- [ ] Partial payments can be blocked or allowed per lease (important during eviction proceedings)

- [ ] Owner distributions sent electronically, with a paper trail per payout
- [ ] Settlement time in business days — 1–2 is standard, 5+ hurts cash flow
- [ ] Cash payment option (retail cash network) for tenants without bank accounts

3. Marketing & listing syndication

- [ ] One listing pushes to the major rental sites (Zillow group, Apartments.com network, Facebook Marketplace, your own site)
- [ ] Vacancy page on your own domain that updates automatically
- [ ] Lead capture with auto-reply and showing scheduling
- [ ] Photo and video hosting with unit-level templates so a relisting takes minutes
- [ ] Days-on-market and lead-source reporting so you know which channel actually fills units

4. Managing rental applications

- [ ] Online application with configurable questions and fair-housing-compliant defaults
- [ ] Integrated credit, criminal and eviction screening with applicant-paid fee option
- [ ] Income and identity verification (bank-linked or document upload)
- [ ] Consistent scoring criteria you can document — this is your fair-housing defense
- [ ] Adverse-action letter generated automatically when an applicant is declined
- [ ] Application-to-lease conversion in one click, with e-signature

5. Maintenance

- [ ] Tenant submits requests with photos from a phone; emergency vs routine flag
- [ ] Work orders assigned to vendors with status tracking and completion photos

- [ ] Vendor portal so contractors update jobs without calling you
- [ ] Recurring preventive maintenance schedules (HVAC filters, gutters, inspections)
- [ ] Costs post to the property ledger automatically and appear on owner statements
- [ ] After-hours emergency routing (in-app or partner call center)

6. Portfolio growth

- [ ] Per-property and portfolio-level KPIs: occupancy, delinquency, NOI, maintenance cost per unit
- [ ] Pricing per unit or per door scales sensibly at 20, 50, 200 units
- [ ] Owner portal that makes you look good to investors you want to win
- [ ] Multi-entity support (LLCs per property) without separate logins
- [ ] API or Zapier access so you are not locked in

7. Resident portal

- [ ] Mobile app, not just a responsive web page
- [ ] Rent payment, maintenance, documents and announcements in one login
- [ ] Lease renewal offers and e-signature inside the portal
- [ ] Renters-insurance tracking with proof-of-coverage reminders
- [ ] Community announcements and package notifications for multifamily

Scorecard

Area	Points possible	Your score	Deal-breaker?
Accounting & reporting	14		
Online payments	12		

Marketing & syndication	10
Rental applications	12
Maintenance	12
Portfolio growth	10
Resident portal	10
Total	**80**

Ten questions to ask every vendor

1. What does a tenant pay to send rent by ACH? By card?
2. How long until owner distributions settle?
3. Is the ledger true double-entry, and can my CPA export it?
4. Which listing sites receive syndication, and how often is it refreshed?
5. Who runs screening, and is the fee applicant-paid?
6. Can I set and document consistent applicant scoring criteria?
7. Does maintenance post to the ledger automatically?
8. What is the per-unit price at my current size and at double?
9. How do I get my data out if I leave?
10. Is support by phone, and what are the hours?

This guide is general operational information for property owners and managers. It is not legal, tax or accounting advice; landlord–tenant and fair-housing rules vary by state and city, so confirm requirements with a local attorney before using any form or process in a live tenancy.