



The Association of Independent Inventory Clerks
Central Office, PO Box 8200, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 9QP
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Code of Practice

And

Guidelines for Professional Practice



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INTRODUCTION

The Association of Independent Inventory Clerks (AIIC) is a nationally recognised membership association for Professional Inventory Clerks.

The aims and objectives of the Association are as follows:

- To promote an understanding of the importance of the profession within the lettings industry and the importance of the protection that inventory services provide.
- To provide a standardisation of training and delivery amongst its membership and an understanding of the legal aspects of the work.
- To ensure that all AIIC members provide a high quality service to all letting agents, landlord and tenants by regular monitoring of documents produced.
- To provide good communication between members with easy access to information
- To provide members with help and support in the form of telephone help-lines for legal and other matters, access to ongoing training & continuing personal development.



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Excellence Through Independence

Membership of the AIIC is only available to Independent Inventory Clerks and not to in house clerks who are employed by a residential letting agent.

It is important that all Inventory Clerks adhere to the same principles to ensure a consistency of service and quality is supplied.

All members will provide a clear, detailed and unbiased report for all areas of their business and will operate such business in an honest and ethical manner.

The AIIC offers a full Complaints Procedure, please refer to page 20

All AIIC members must abide by our Code of Practice.



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Code of Practice

1	The Inventory Clerk will compile inventories, and conduct check-outs and check-ins in accordance with the Guidelines for Professional Practice.
2	The Inventory Clerk will carry out commissions objectively, in a fair and impartial manner.
3	The Inventory Clerk will be prepared to assist in the event of a dispute, and to attend Court if required, at an agreed fee.
4	The Inventory Clerk will declare, prior to accepting a commission, whether he/she has any vested interest in the property, or connection with the parties concerned.
5	The Inventory Clerk or any company owned or financially connected with the aforementioned Inventory Clerk, will not undertake any cleaning or maintenance services, or receive any financial gain in connection with any property for which said clerk has carried out a check out inspection and prepared the subsequent check out report for which cleaning and / or maintenance services have been recommended.
6	The Inventory Clerk will provide details of his/her Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance on request.
7	The Inventory Clerk will abide by the decisions of AIIC in the event of a dispute concerning a breach of the Code of Practice of the Association which has been referred to the Association.



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Guidelines for Inventory Compilations

An inventory forms part of the contract between landlord and tenant and should be:

- Accurate
- Highly detailed
- Unbiased
- Written in layman's terms, for ease of understanding by any and all parties.

An inventory will contain detailed descriptions and will be an accurate record for the condition and contents of a property at the start of a tenancy. Such detail will also include gardens and outbuildings.

Details of the Inventory Company preparing the report should be displayed clearly on the document. The AIIC professional logo should also be displayed.



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GENERAL INVENTORY LAYOUT NOTES

Each inventory will clearly show the address of the property, the date of compilation (or update as appropriate), the author of the document and the instructing principle (i.e. agent or landlord).

All items listed should be identified by number for ease of reference.

The inventory should be a column style format for clarity, each item having a separate line where appropriate with sufficient space to allow additional comments relating to each item at time of check in and check out.

The listing of furniture, fixtures and fittings on the document should be in the following format:-

- Door frames & doors, door furniture & other fittings
- Ceiling & all fittings thereon
- Walls & all fittings/fixtures thereon
- Skirting
- Floor covering
- Furniture and smaller items - listed from left to right around the room.



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An inventory should provide a full description of interior décor, windows, power points, light fittings etc. in addition to the full listing of the contents.

Comments must be made in regard to the presence or absence of the relevant safety labels for soft furnishings in accordance with the Act and in regard to window blind safety (presence or absence of securing devices for overlong/looping cords, in accordance with Blind Safety Regulations 1st October 2014). Any health and safety issues should be reported, both verbally and in writing to the instructing principle with urgency.

The inventory should include a full key list to enable keys given at time of check in to be compared at time of check out, this ensures the ongoing safety of all keys to the property.

A list of appliance manuals will be included where appropriate.

All relevant meter readings should be taken. Information regarding the exact location and meter reference number must be given to the Inventory Clerk at time of booking. If no information is supplied the Clerk is expected to make best efforts to locate meters but cannot guarantee to provide these readings. The instructing principle will be informed of any problem with completing this task.

Cellars, lofts, attics, eaves and similar are not usually within an Inventory Clerk's jurisdiction unless these areas are considered by the clerk safe to inspect. Lofts will not be inspected unless access is via a safe staircase which complies with building regulations.



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Electrical items will not be checked apart from: light bulbs and extractor fans in kitchen and bathroom. Inventory Clerks are not responsible for the following: -

1. Testing showers / taps
2. Testing appliances
3. Moving furniture
4. Checking electrical items
5. Opening windows
6. Flushing toilets
7. Checking heating systems / radiators
8. Checking alarms of any type
9. Inspecting loft contents
10. Removing and inspecting boxed items - it is the duty of the landlord / tenant to have all accountable items ready to check.

Specifying names of plants / shrubs and trees - a general description only will be made. It should be noted that Inventory Clerks are not experts in paint colours, woods, antiques, fabrics, materials and are not a qualified surveyors.

All inventories and reports will carry the relevant disclaimers as recommended by the AIIC.

Copies of the inventory will be supplied, as required, within 3 working days of date of compilation.



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Guidelines for Check In Procedure

It is imperative that the tenant is present during the check in process, although this may not always be possible for a variety of reasons.

The Clerk must check, with the tenant if applicable, each item listed on the inventory and make note of any discrepancies/changes in condition, addition or omission of content, changes in décor etc.

The inventory should be an accurate reflection of the condition of the property at point of check in.

Meter readings should be taken, meter reference numbers checked.

A full list of keys must be prepared and the tenant must sign their receipt of such keys.

Photographs must be taken to accompany the report, the quantity of these will be at the discretion of the clerk, minimum requirements are follows:-

- Front & back gardens
- Interior of garage & any outbuildings
- Interior - room shot/s
- Keys, including any permits
- Meter readings



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A 'declaration' sheet should be completed containing the following information:-

- Date of tenancy commencement
- Instructing principle
- Attending clerk's initials
- Property address
- Meter readings with serial numbers & locations
- Brief condition summary of the property
- Tenants contact information including telephone numbers & email address
- Key list
- Space for tenant and clerk signature.

Any updated inventories to be supplied, as appropriate, should be received by the instructing principle within 3 working days.



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Guidelines for Check Out Procedure

The check-out should be conducted against the inventory that was signed and agreed at the start of the tenancy. If possible the Clerk should be given any additional information relevant to the condition of the property with regard to changes during the tenancy.

The Clerk will only check and make notes against the items listed on the inventory or any addendum given by the instructing principle. Where no evidence of check in condition is present the Clerk is unable to make judgements on deterioration/cleaning issues etc.

At the end of the check-out meter readings will be taken and meter reference numbers recorded. If the Clerk is unable to access or read any meter the reason for this will be clearly stated on the report.

If present, the Clerk is expected to, verbally, inform the tenant of the findings of the check-out inspection to ensure that they are aware of all issues.

Information must be obtained if possible regarding: telephone disconnection, utility suppliers, heating and water left off (or on as decided by the instructing principle & season), fridge freezers left off & doors open, or on and doors closed as appropriate.

Tenants contact details must be taken - forwarding address, telephone number, email address etc.



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Keys returned by the tenant will be checked (& tested) against the list provided at time of check in.

The Inventory Clerk will take all possible steps to ensure that the property is left secure. Any security issues will be reported immediately to the instructing principle both verbally and confirmed in writing.

As with Inventory Compilations electrical items will not be checked apart from: light bulbs and extractor fans in kitchen and bathroom. Inventory Clerks are not responsible for the following:-

1. Testing showers / taps
2. Testing appliances
3. Moving furniture
4. Checking electrical items
5. Opening windows
6. Flushing toilets
7. Checking heating systems / radiators
8. Checking alarms of any type
9. Inspecting loft contents
10. Removing and inspecting boxed items - it is the duty of the landlord / tenant to have all accountable items ready to check.

Unless otherwise instructed a check out report will be compiled from the notes made during the check-out inspection.



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- The check-out report will be a separate document from the check-out inventory.
- It will only report on the differences between check in and check out condition
- Check out report will list all damage for which the tenant could be liable for charges.
- The report will identify issues for which maintenance is required.
- The report will identify any major signs of wear and tear
- The check-out report, where appropriate, should be returned to the instructing principle within 2 working days.



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Guidelines for Best Business Practice

The Inventory Clerk should ensure that records of appointments made, all reports compiled and commissions undertaken should be kept for a minimum of 6 years.

It is recommended that some form of disclaimer be included. The exact form and content is discretionary, however the AIIC recommend the following:-

This inventory is undertaken by (Your Company Name Here) and provides a fair and accurate record of the condition and contents of the property, and the property's internal condition. It is the responsibility of the landlord and the tenant or the respective agents to agree between themselves the accuracy of this report.

The person preparing the inventory is not an expert in fabrics, woods, materials, colours, paint colours, antiques etc., nor a qualified surveyor. The inventory should not be used as an accurate description of each piece of furniture and equipment, or as a structural survey report. Plants and shrubs are not listed. If any additional items are to be listed, this will be at the Landlords request only.

Property left in lofts, cellars and locked rooms, which have not been inventoried, are the sole responsibility of the landlord. The Fire and Safety Regulations regarding Furnishings, gas, electrical and similar services are ultimately the responsibility of the Instructing/principal.



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Where the inventory notes 'fire label seen', are seen this should not be interpreted to mean that the item complies with the "Furniture and Furnishings (fire) (safety) (Amendments) 1993." This is a record that the item had a label as described or similar to that detailed in the Guide to the Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations as published by the Department of Trade and Industry, January 1997, (or subsequent edition), attached at the time of the inventory compiled.

It is not a statement that the item can be considered to comply with the regulations. Also, whilst all care and diligence will be undertaken regarding sleeved plugs, heavy appliances and obstructing furniture will not be moved, and therefore full responsibility will remain with either the acting agent or the landlord.

All AIIC members will be responsible for registering their accounting details with HMRC.

All AIIC members must be fully covered by both Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance.

All AIIC members will be responsible for their own personal health & safety risk assessments and lone working policy.

All AIIC members will have their own internal complaints procedure according to the size and structure of their organisation.



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EQUALITY POLICY

As set out in the guidelines of the Equality Act 2010 members will not discriminate against anyone because of:-

- Age
- Being or becoming a transsexual person
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or having a child
- Disability
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief or lack of religion or belief
- Sex & sexual orientation.



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DATA PROTECTION

Members will be aware of their responsibilities in regard to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Members must ensure that information is:

- Used fairly and lawfully
- Used for limited specifically stated purposes
- Used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Accurate
- Kept for not longer than is absolutely necessary
- Handled according to people's data protection rights
- Kept safe and secure
- Not transferred outside the UK without adequate protection

Members must ensure that all clients are aware, in writing, of the member's terms of business, cancellation policy and internal complaints procedure and fees for work to be carried out must be clear and transparent.

Members will ensure that all aspects of their business are carried out in a safe and professional manner - this includes security of all properties visited, health and safety requirements and assessments and security of all keys held during the completion of their business.



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AIIC members are required to be:-

- Be independent & impartial
- Be observant & accurate
- Maintain high professional standards
- Conduct all parts of the job competently and consistently
- Produce factual reports and be comply with the laws of slander & libel.

The member must not, by their conduct - verbal, written or physical action - dishonour or discredit the AIIC.



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AIIC Complaints Procedure

Prior to any investigation in relation to complaints against an AIIC member, the following procedures must have been followed:

- 1) Contacted the inventory clerk concerned to discuss and utilise the clerks own internal complains procedure relating to the matter to try to find a resolution.**
- 2) Contacted your letting agent as the instructing principle of the clerk (if appropriate) and asked them to act as mediator**

The AIIC is a self-regulatory membership organisation and as such all clerks applying for membership must comply with our **Code of Conduct** and **Guidelines for Professional Practice** - please refer to the above.

If after a full and frank discussion, as listed on procedures 1) and 2) above, you still wish to file a complaint, please complete the online complaints form located on our website.

All complaints must be made within **30 days** of the relevant completed work.

Should we find cause to believe the inventory clerk / company concerned has breached our code of practice, the complaints committee will contact the clerk for a full explanation of events so that the matter can be investigated impartially and from both points of view.

All parties will be informed of the committee's findings within **14 days**.



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When it has been deemed that an Inventory Clerk has breached the AIIC's Code of Practice, as a self-regulatory membership organisation, the AIIC will take the following course of action:

First Complaint - Written warning

Second Complaint - Final written warning

Third Complaint - Automatic suspension / expulsion from the Association.

The AIIC also reserves the right to take the following action as and when deemed appropriate:

- Apologise in writing to both the person complaining
- Caution the member against repeating the conduct / action or omission
- Recommend to the member a refund for all or part of their fees be made
- Recommend the members changes their procedures or documentation arising from the facts disclosed from the complainant be upheld
- Member undertake such action AIIC considers appropriate to rectify, or redress the conduct actions or omissions
- To recommend to the parties other ways of resolving the complaint or dispute including mediation or arbitration
- To reprimand or severely reprimand the member for the conduct actions or omissions
- To suspend the member from membership of AIIC
- To expel the member from membership of AIIC
- Any combination of the above or any other reasonable action which AIIC feels appropriate in order to support high standard within the industry amongst its membership



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The AIIC will not normally consider a complaint unless and until it is satisfied that the complainant has exhausted the members own internal complaints procedure nor if the matters are subject to formal legal action

Members must comply promptly and fully with any investigation or assessment of a complaint or dispute carried out by AIIC or its appointed adjudication, expert or arbitrator

All members must, subject to any appeal process comply with the result recommendations or requirements of the evaluation of a complaint or dispute carried out by AIIC or it's appointed adjudicator, expert or arbitrator