Timely Unit Turn Best Practice



One Team. One Goal.
Affordable Housing for All!
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AHMA PACIFIC SOUTHWEST
THE VOICE OF QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This training provides suggestions, recommendations, and some best practices. Always follow your company policy and guidance.



What We'll Cover Today

Understanding Unit Turns
What it means and why timing matters

Pre-Turn Planning
Scheduling, scoping & vendor coordination

Turn Execution
Day-of workflow and quality checkpoints

Common Pitfalls
Delays, miscommunication & how to avoid them

KPIs & Benchmarks
Measuring turn performance over time



Efficient Unit Turns Drive Results

UNDERSTANDING UNIT TURNS

A unit turn is the process of preparing a vacant rental unit for a new resident — from move-out inspection to move-in readiness. Every day of vacancy is lost revenue.

7–10
Avg. Days for a Turn
industry standard

$50–$150
Daily Vacancy Cost (per unit)
lost rent + overhead

30%+
Renewals Prevented
by slow turns signaling neglect

The goal: shorter turns, higher quality, happier residents.

The 4 Pillars of a Successful Pre-Turn

Early Scheduling

Begin planning 30–45 days before move-out

Confirm move-out date with resident ASAP

Block vendor calendars immediately

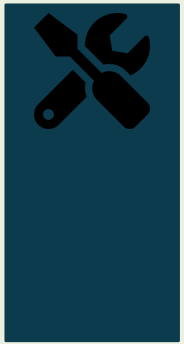
Scope Assessment

Walk unit 2–3 weeks before move-out

Identify paint, carpet, appliance needs

Create itemized work order list

PRE-TURN PLANNING

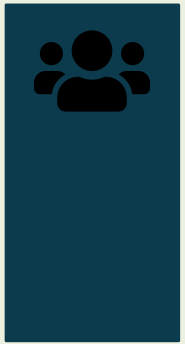


Vendor Coordination

Pre-qualify trusted vendors for each trade

Share scope in advance — no surprises on turn day

Sequence trades: clean → repair → paint → floors



Leasing Alignment

Communicate expected ready date to leasing team

Avoid committing move-in dates before scoping

Overlap marketing with final turn days

The Day-of Turn Workflow

1

Move-Out Inspection

Document all damage with photos. Compare to move-in report.

2

Deep Cleaning

Full unit cleaned before trades enter. Incl. appliances & HVAC.

3

Repairs & Punch List

Address damage items, patch drywall, fix fixtures & hardware.

Target: Complete all steps within 7 business days or fewer

The Day-of Turn Workflow

4

Paint & Finishing

Touch up or repaint. Check caulk, grout, cabinets, trim.

5

Flooring & Final Clean

Shampoo/replace carpet. Hard floor polish. Final detail clean.

6

Quality Inspection

PM walks unit with checklist. Sign-off before keys are released.

Target: Complete all steps within 7 business days or fewer

COMMON PITFALLS

⚠ Waiting Too Long to Schedule

FIX: Use move-out notice as the trigger to schedule vendors — not the actual move-out date.

⚠ Scope Creep Without Budget Approval

FIX: Establish per-unit turn budgets. Require PM approval for any work above threshold.

⚠ Vendor No-Shows or Delays

FIX: Maintain a backup vendor list. Require 24-hour confirmation before turn day.

⚠ Skipping the Final Walkthrough

FIX: Never release a unit without a PM or inspector sign-off with a completed checklist.

COMMON PITFALLS

⚠ Poor Communication with Leasing

FIX:

Share a live turn tracker so leasing always knows the confirmed ready date.

⚠ Letting Perfect Be the Enemy of Done

FIX:

Cosmetic issues that don't affect habitability can be handled post-move-in with resident awareness.

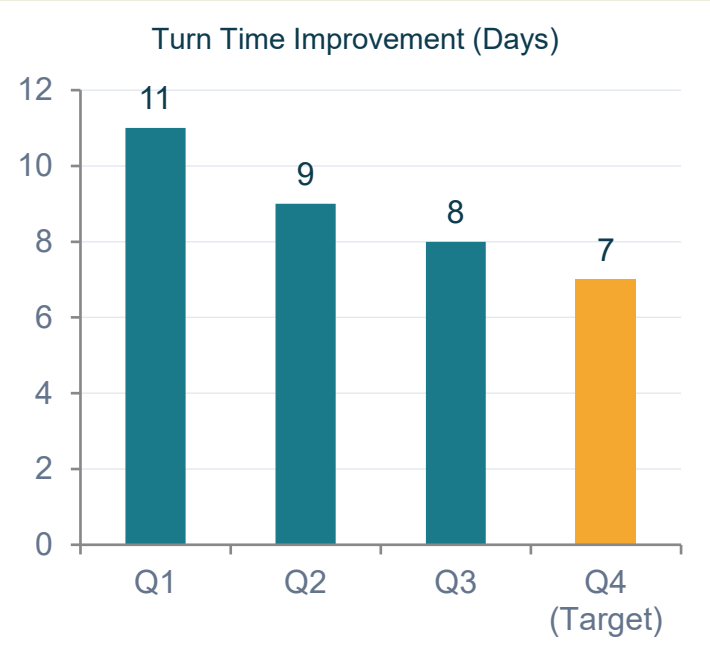
Measure What Matters

Average Turn Time — ≤ 7 days
From move-out to move-in ready

Vacancy Loss Rate — < 2%
Vacancy days ÷ available days

Turn Cost Per Unit — Track & set cap
Materials + labor + appliances

On-Time Ready Rate — > 90%
Units ready by committed date



Review KPIs monthly in team meetings. Celebrate wins. Investigate outliers. Continuous improvement = competitive advantage.

TURN CHECKLIST

- Notice received → Schedule vendor slots within 48 hours
- Pre-turn walk 2–3 weeks before move-out → Create work order
- Confirm vendors 24 hours before move-out date
- Sequence trades: Repairs → Paint → Floors → Final Clean
- PM final walkthrough with move-in checklist
- Confirm utilities are active and HVAC is serviced

TURN CHECKLIST

- Move-out inspection with photos → Send deposit disposition
- Deep clean unit before any vendor work begins
- Set move-in ready date in system — notify leasing immediately
- Collect move-in survey within 48 hours of occupancy

UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Unit turns in affordable and low-income housing carry higher stakes — for residents, for operators, and for the community. The same best practices apply, but the context demands greater urgency, care, and equity.



Residents Have Fewer Options

Vacancy in affordable units doesn't just mean lost revenue — it means a family on a waitlist stays without stable housing. Every extra day matters deeply.



Deferred Maintenance Is Common

Older affordable properties often have aging systems — HVAC, plumbing, electrical — that require more time and cost per turn than market-rate units.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Budget Constraints Are Real

Subsidy programs like Section 8 and LIHTC set strict per-unit cost limits. Turns must be done right without overspending available reserves.

HUD & Compliance Requirements

Subsidized units must meet HQS or UPCS inspection standards before occupancy. A failed inspection means more vacancy — plan for it.

Adapt Your Approach for Affordable Housing

1

Build HQS/UPCS Into Your Timeline

Schedule the compliance inspection before the turn is complete — not after. Catching issues early avoids re-work and re-inspection delays.

2

Partner with Local Trade Programs

Many cities offer workforce training programs that provide affordable labor for painting, cleaning, and basic repairs — good for budget AND community.

3 Create a Turn Reserve Fund

Set aside a per-unit annual reserve (even $200–$400/yr) so major turn costs don't come as shocks to operating budgets or impact residents.

4 Prioritize Habitability Over Aesthetics

Safety, working appliances, weatherproofing, and pest control come first. Cosmetic upgrades should be secondary in budget-constrained turns.

EQUITY MINDSET

"Residents in affordable housing deserve the same quality move-in experience as market-rate tenants."

"Treat every unit as if your own family will live there."

"Communicate clearly — families plan their lives around move-in dates."

"Respect residents' time and dignity throughout the transition."

Funding Sources for Affordable Turns

Capital Reserve Funds

Required by most affordable financing programs. Use for major systems, not routine turns.

CDBG Grants

Community Development Block Grants can fund rehab and habitability work in low-income housing

HOME Program

HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships fund rehab for affordable rental units.

LIHTC Operating Income

LIHTC properties generate operating cash — budget a turn reserve line item annually.

Local Utility Programs

Many utilities offer free weatherization, HVAC servicing, or appliance replacement for affordable housing.

Compliance Checkpoints

- ✓ **HQS Inspection**
  Required for Section 8 / HCV units before move-in
- ✓ **UPCS Standards**
  Used for HUD-assisted public housing properties
- ✓ **Lead Paint Protocol**
  Pre-1978 buildings require RRP-certified contractors
- ✓ **ADA Accessibility**
  Ensure accessible units meet Fair Housing Act standards
- ✓ **State Habitability Law**
  Meet state & local landlord-tenant law requirements

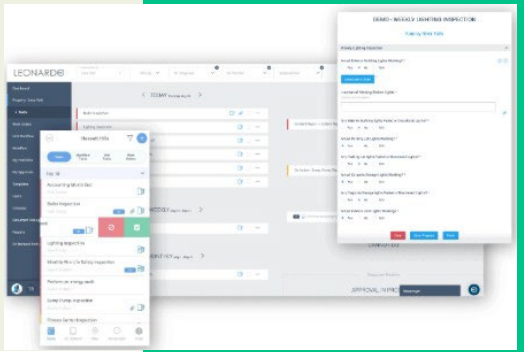
THOMAS SAFRAN & ASSOCIATES

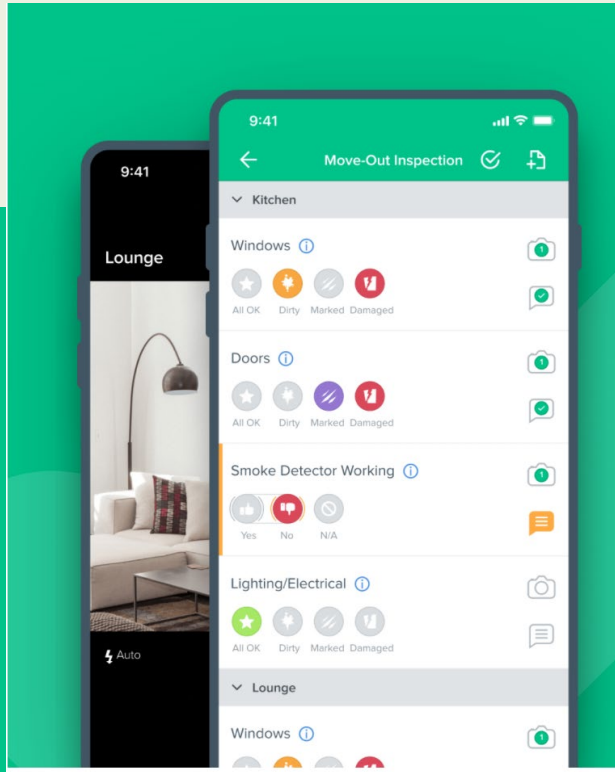
Tools and Technology

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EVERY DAY MATTERS.

A well-executed unit turn is the first impression your new resident has of your team and your property.

Plan early. Communicate clearly. Inspect thoroughly. Move fast.

Questions