



The Ultimate Commercial Leasing Checklist & Tips Guide

Introduction

Leasing commercial space is a major decision for any business. Whether you're launching your first retail store, moving your office, or expanding into a warehouse, understanding how to approach a lease can save you time, money, and stress. This guide is designed to help you lease with confidence by giving you a step-by-step checklist and actionable tips.

Section 1: Leasing Prep Checklist

✓ Budget Planning

- Monthly rent budget
- Additional costs (utilities, CAM, insurance, taxes)
- Move-in costs and deposits

✓ Define Your Needs

- Square footage
- Type of space (retail, office, industrial, flex)
- Must-have features (restrooms, parking, kitchen, loading dock)

✓ Location Factors

- Customer traffic
 - Accessibility
 - Zoning laws
 - Proximity to partners/suppliers/employees
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Section 2: Top 10 Leasing Tips

1. **Start Early** – Begin your search at least 6–12 months in advance.
 2. **Know Your Lease Types** – Understand the difference between gross, net, and modified gross leases.
 3. **Negotiate Everything** – Rent, terms, improvements, renewal options.
 4. **Read Every Clause** – Watch for hidden costs and vague language.
 5. **Understand Total Cost** – Include CAM charges, taxes, insurance.
 6. **Use a Tenant Rep Broker** – They work for you, not the landlord.
 7. **Ask for TI Allowance** – Get help with build-out costs.
 8. **Get Signage Rights in Writing** – Don't assume you can advertise.
 9. **Review Default & Exit Clauses** – Know your responsibilities and how to leave.
 10. **Hire a Real Estate Attorney** – Always have legal review before signing.
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Section 3: Advanced Leasing Strategies

Limit Personal Guarantees

Negotiate to reduce or remove personal financial liability with a Good Guy Clause or limited guarantee.

Negotiate Rent Escalation Terms

Instead of automatic annual increases, negotiate based on CPI or flat percentages.

Secure Co-Tenancy Clauses

Protect yourself if anchor tenants leave or if the center's traffic declines.

Plan for Growth

Ask for the first right to lease adjacent space if you plan to expand.

Section 4: Red Flags to Watch Out For

- Vague language in maintenance and repair responsibilities
 - Uncapped CAM charges
 - Excessive rent escalations
 - Poor landlord reputation
 - Restrictions on subleasing or signage
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Section 5: Questions to Ask Landlords or Brokers

1. What is included in the rent?
 2. Who handles maintenance and repairs?
 3. What are the CAM charges, and how are they calculated?
 4. Can I make changes to the space?
 5. Is the space zoned for my use?
 6. What are the lease renewal options?
 7. Is there a grace period for late rent?
 8. Can I sublease the space?
 9. What signage is allowed?
 10. How long has the property been vacant?
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Section 6: Additional Resources

- Websites: LoopNet, Crexi, 42Floors, CityFeet, OfficeSpace.com
- Glossary of Leasing Terms (consider linking or adding an appendix)
- Sample Lease Clause Breakdown (available on our site or newsletter)

Conclusion & Call to Action

A commercial lease can shape your business's future. This guide is your foundation, but every situation is unique. Stay informed, ask questions, and never sign anything you don't fully understand.

Need help with a lease?

Visit laleasings.com for more leasing tips, free tools, or to connect with a trusted broker.

Disclaimer: This guide is for informational purposes only and not a substitute for legal advice.