CHAPTER 1

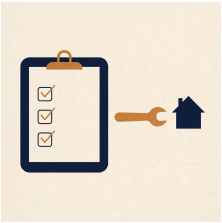
Remote works if you build the system first

Most remote-landlord horror stories share a cause. The owner left town first and built the system later - usually during the first emergency.



Rule 1: Nobody improvises

Every common problem gets a written answer before it happens. Leak? The tenant sends a photo, shuts the valve you labeled, and texts your handyman - not you at 2 a.m. in another time zone. You wake up to a photo of a fixed pipe and a bill under your pre-approved limit.



Rule 2: Photos or it did not happen

Quotes, completed work, move-in condition, turnover cleaning - all of it arrives as dated photos. Photos end arguments with vendors, tenants, and your own memory.

Rule 3: Money moves online, on a schedule

Rent in by automatic payment. Vendors paid by transfer with the invoice and photos attached. No cash, no checks in the mail, no "I will drop it off." A clean money trail is your bookkeeping, your tax record, and your proof in any dispute.

NOTE:
Build the system before you leave town — don’t write your first rule at 2 a.m. from another time zone.

Numbers first: Expect to spend **2-4 hours a month** per property once the system runs - mostly approvals and a monthly 15-minute review of statements and photos. If you are spending 10 hours, a rule is missing. Find which one.