

Caretaker interview questions

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What to expect

Caretaker interviews focus on reliability, practical skills and how you handle the unexpected. You'll be asked about your experience with cleaning, repairs, security and safety, and how you communicate with tenants and managers.

- **Process and prioritisation:** How you manage daily tasks, urgent requests and scheduled maintenance across a site.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of repairs, cleaning, security incidents or teamwork that show your approach.
- **Scenario and judgement:** What you would do in a leak, break-in, angry resident or other unplanned event.
- **Safety and compliance:** Your understanding of WHS, chemical handling, manual tasks and reporting hazards.
- **Client-facing and communication:** How you deal with tenants, visitors and property managers, including written updates.
- **Technical and tool-based:** Your experience with hand tools, power tools, CMMS software and security monitoring systems.

Typically a single interview with a property manager or facilities supervisor, sometimes followed by a short practical task. You might be asked to walk through a site, describe how you'd handle a maintenance issue, or complete a basic repair. Expect a mix of conversation and scenario-based questions.

1. Walk me through how you prioritise your daily tasks when you have a list of cleaning, maintenance and security checks to complete.

Why they ask

This shows your ability to manage time, spot urgency and keep a site running smoothly without constant supervision.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: describe your step-by-step approach, from the first site check to the final security round, explaining how you decide what comes first.

Example answer

"I start each shift with a quick site check to spot anything urgent, like a spill or a broken lock. Then I group tasks by area to save time. I always put safety first, so if I see a hazard I deal with it immediately or cordon it off. After that, I follow my regular schedule for cleaning and grounds, and I log any repairs I can't finish in the CMMS for the property manager. At the end of the day, I do a final security round."

2. Tell me about a time you identified a maintenance issue and resolved it before it became a bigger problem.

Why they ask

This reveals your attention to detail, problem-solving and whether you take ownership of repairs rather than waiting to be told.

How to structure your answer

STAR: describe the situation, the task you took on, the action you took and the result you achieved.

Example answer

"At a previous residential complex, I noticed a damp patch on a hallway wall. I investigated and found a slow leak from a pipe joint. I isolated the water, dried the area and patched the wall. I then reported it to the property manager and arranged for a plumber to check the joint. The early fix avoided mould and a much larger repair bill."

3. You arrive at work to find a burst pipe flooding a common area. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests how you react under pressure and whether you can keep people safe while dealing with an emergency.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: outline immediate safety steps, then containment, then notification and follow-up.

Example answer

"First, I'd make the area safe by checking for electrical hazards and putting up wet floor signs. Then I'd shut off the water at the main valve if I can access it. I'd call the property manager and emergency plumber straight away. While waiting, I'd use mops and buckets to contain the water, and document everything with photos. After the plumber leaves, I'd clean up and write an incident report."

4. What steps do you take to ensure you work safely when using chemicals or power tools?

Why they ask

Safety is central to caretaking, and employers need to know you follow procedures and won't put yourself or others at risk.

How to structure your answer

Safety-first checklist: describe your preparation, protective gear, safe use and reporting process in a logical order.

Example answer

"Before using any chemical, I check the safety data sheet and wear the right PPE, like gloves and goggles. I make sure the area is ventilated. For power tools, I inspect the cord and blade, use a residual current device, and keep the work area clear. I never rush, and if I'm unsure I ask for training. I also follow the site's WHS procedures and report any hazards."

5. How would you handle a tenant who is angry about a repair that hasn't been fixed yet?

Why they ask

Caretakers often face frustrated occupants, so this shows your customer service, empathy and ability to de-escalate.

How to structure your answer

Empathy then action: listen first, acknowledge the issue, explain what you can do and commit to a clear next step.

Example answer

"I'd listen without interrupting, acknowledge their frustration and apologise for the delay. I'd explain what has been done so far and give a realistic timeframe if I can. If I can't answer, I'd take their details and promise to follow up with the property manager. I'd keep a record of the conversation and make sure they get an update. Staying calm and respectful usually helps defuse the situation."

6. What experience do you have with CMMS software or security monitoring systems?

Why they ask

This checks your technical comfort with the tools that keep maintenance and security organised and documented.

How to structure your answer

Describe experience: name the systems you've used, give a specific example of how you used them, and mention your willingness to learn new ones.

Example answer

"I've used a CMMS to log maintenance requests, track work orders and record completed tasks. At my last site, I set up recurring schedules for gutter cleaning and fire door checks, which helped us stay on top of compliance. I've also monitored CCTV and access control systems, reporting any incidents to the supervisor. I'm comfortable learning new software quickly."