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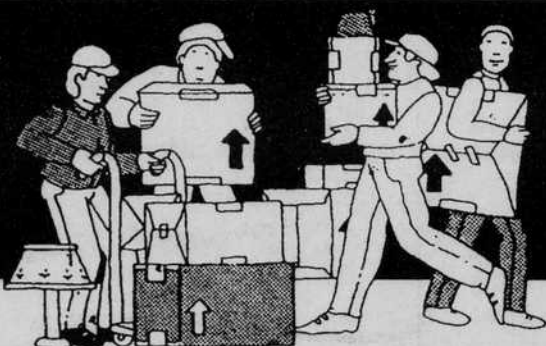
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Prevention saves deposit

■ Some basic care for apartments and residence halls can save students money

By Bethany Larson
for the Emerald

For many college students, every penny counts. Security and cleaning deposits can often make or break a student's budget. With some common sense, a few preventive steps and a lot of ongoing cleaning, students have a good chance of getting back all of their deposit.

The level of required maintenance depends upon the residence and the landlord. However, whether a student lives in an apartment, a house or a residence hall, the same basic rule applies: Return it to its original condition.

Moving in

The first preventive step happens at the beginning of a lease. Most property managers have an inspection sheet for tenants to fill out when they move in. If a company does not provide a sheet, students should write their own and give a dated copy to the landlord. Photos taken before anything is moved in are also good records to have.

Charges for damage to common areas are often divided between all tenants, so roommates play an important role when it comes to deposits. Kyle Gray, president of Emerald Prop-

erty Management, said tenants should try to choose roommates with similar values of cleanliness and responsibility.

During the lease

Tenants can protect their deposits from charges with regular cleaning and general maintenance. Because some landlords may charge for repainting the walls, students should follow the contract rules about smoking and honor restrictions on pets. If pets are allowed, students should treat the residence for fleas before they move out.

Tenants can avoid excessive cleaning charges by taking care of spills immediately. Also, keeping carpet stain remover on hand can be helpful. To avoid damage charges, tenants should notify management, without delay, of any plumbing and electrical problems.

Preparing for inspection

Cathy Engebretson, office manager of Duck's Village, recommends doing a final "deep" clean of the residence, starting about a month before the tenant moves out.

"Do a couple rooms a week and really scrub it, and clean all those weird places you would never clean normally," she said.

A deep clean includes getting cobwebs off the ceiling, wiping off the light fixtures, vacuuming

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