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Some students cringe at the responsibility of cleaning residence hall rooms or houses at the end of the year and fixing damages to avoid extra fines.
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End-of-year cleaning can prove challenging

Students share experiences about cleaning and offer tips about how to deal with damages and stains

Jonah Schrogin
Freelance Reporter

While the prospect of moving can be exhilarating, the thought of cleaning a residence hall room or an apartment before moving out may be more than depressing. Some students risk getting fines or losing their cleaning deposits for neglecting their rooms. Students must find various ways to mend the damage, from nasty stains to clouds of dust.

"The end of the year is just not as much fun (as moving in)," sophomore Terry Siriphatnaboon said. "You're pissed off because you've just had to go through finals, and studying for that is hell. Then you have to spend hours and hours trying to clean up your room in between studying for finals."

She said it takes several days to completely clean a room.

"You don't even realize how much junk you crammed into this room until you try to clean it out," she said. "Everything has to be spotless; everything has to be gone."

In the residence halls, damages are assessed according to the Room Condition Report that all residents fill out at the beginning of the year. If the custodian finds damage in the room that was not originally marked in the Room Condition Report, residents will be charged accordingly.

Another campus veteran, sophomore Greg Bilstad, had some advice about avoiding fines.

"If you put anything like tape or adhesive on the window sill, or around the window, you're going to need to scrub for a long time because the sun bakes it on there," he said.

He suggested using Windex or other liquids that help dissolve substances that stick to the walls or windows. Some other things he found helpful include using white correction fluid to cover up holes in the wall and a gob of sticky tack to collect sticky remnants on the wall.

Other residence hall residents had ideas about how to avoid damage charges, such as flipping the bed board upside down in order

to hide stains and moving the upper bed board to the lower position to hide scratches. Residents also suggested using Oxi Clean to remove stains on the carpet, using a wet sponge to loosen tape the sun has baked onto the window and filling holes in walls with toothpaste or putty.

Some damages to the room are easy to fix, but others like stains and broken furniture are more difficult.

"The barbecue sauce is going to be pretty bad," said freshman Robert Stroup, who stained the area around his desk while watching a DVD. "(It's) all around the computer. It's the only place to eat when you watch a nice DVD."

Students living off campus also may have to do extensive cleaning. Some residents have an easier job cleaning than others.

Sophomore John Robinson-Wilson is moving out of a four-bedroom house with hardwood floors. He said the hardwood floors are much easier to deal with than carpets because there aren't any stains.

In contrast, senior Josh Herr will have his hands full when it comes time to clean his two-bedroom apartment. He said there is red hair dye

on the ceiling because his roommate's girlfriend left the cover on a bottle, and it exploded. He is planning to repaint it.

Herr said he has a dog and a cat, and at times the pets leave unwelcome surprises on the carpet. Trash is also piling up on his deck, and some of the trash bags are leaking, making an awful stench. Herr's plan is to take the garbage bag and "run like hell" to the garbage bin to avoid excess leakage.

"All of our mishaps are from love," he said.

Junior Greg Bresnitz, who lives in a two-bedroom house, also has a big job on his hands. He said he has not cleaned his roof gutter the whole year.

"The leaves decomposed in the gutter, and the seeds took root and became a garden," he said. An assortment of plants and grasses now are sprouting on his roof.

Whatever type of cleaning is required, students need to be prepared.

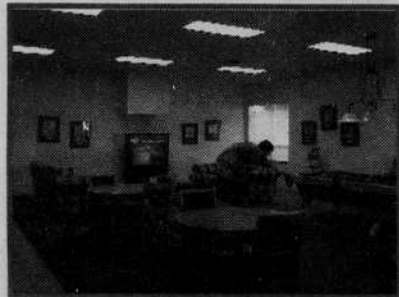
"Start early, because it takes twice as long as you think it will," junior Rachel Osofsky said.

Jonah Schrogin is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

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