

Don't forget to **clean house**

Cleaning is usually a thankless chore that people put off until the last minute. This is especially true for college students moving out during hectic times.

However, cleaning an apartment well can make the difference between losing hundreds of dollars or walking away with deposit money.

When renting an apartment from property management companies, it can be hard to know their standards of cleanliness. It's even harder to remember to clean every corner in the midst of packing, moving into a new place and coordinating with other deadlines.

Faye Caswell, vice president of Umbrella Properties, said the main thing to remember is to leave the unit as clean as it was upon moving in.

"Most people forget the little things, like moving the stove out, or the refrigerator, but keep in mind while you're cleaning that you wouldn't want to move into a place that had grimy fingerprints all over the walls or cover-plates," she said.

Caswell said last year tenants owed the company a total of over \$300,000 for inadequate cleaning.

"This is especially important for students to understand," she said. "If they owe us money and we send them to collec-

tions, that can adversely affect their credit rating. It's not a good way to try to start out in life."

Like most companies, Umbrella Properties provides a move-out checklist that includes the cleaning fees it charges. This list is provided when the tenant gives notice, allowing 30 days to ensure proper cleaning.

Carmen von Klein, owner of von Klein Property Management, said one problem is that most people leave cleaning until the last day or two.

"My best advice to students is to start cleaning two to three weeks prior to move out," she said. "And call your company to see what their cleaning guidelines are."

Von Klein's move-out checklist is so extensive that it even provides suggestions for cleaning products that work well on

Leaving places in good condition can help ensure tenants receive their security deposits back

By Lindsay Burt • Freelance Reporter

things like showers and stoves. It gives descriptions such as "clean under burners, do not use oven cleaner, hot soapy water and a scouring pad work best."

Von Klein said the cleaning fees are exactly what cleaning companies charge them. Schedule a walk-through before turning in keys in to ensure nothing is missed.

University graduate Randy Stokes agreed.

"I got this advice out of an OSPIRG handout and made sure I did a walk-through at the last place I moved out of," he said.

Stokes also said to double check that the inspector is marking down everything not sufficiently cleaned to avoid getting charged for it.

Theater arts major Katherine Lewis said she was charged for cigarette butts in the front yard of her corner house rented through von Klein. Although this isn't necessarily stated in the guidelines for cleaning, it is important to remember that

the tenant is responsible for every part of the rental. This includes lawns and porches, and both von Klein and Umbrella Properties clearly state that these areas must be taken care of as well as the inside of the apartment or house.

Lewis said many college students are new to renting and don't know their rights or responsibilities as tenants.

"Read the tenant landlord act so you know your rights," she said. "Also, save your receipts for everything so you and your landlord know that you've paid rent in full and paid it on time."

Von Klein said giving back the full deposit to tenants also simplifies things for them.

"We want to give back as much as we can," she said. "It saves time and money for us too."

Lindsay Burt is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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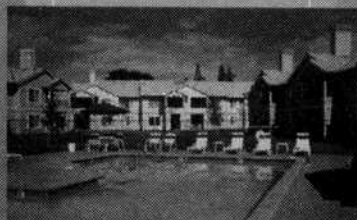


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