

# 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 collections, 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 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

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

By Lindsay Burt • Freelance Reporter

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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together, we are more eager to see each other," she said.

In some cases, finances play a significant role in the decision to live with a partner.

"We both paid rent and had our own separate places, which cost a lot," Bennett said. "It just didn't seem logical financially because we were sleeping at each other's houses every night."

Despite the potential difficulties, the number of unmarried couples living together is increasing. The numbers have risen steadily from 439,000 in 1960 to 5.5 million in 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Michelle Golden is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

# Couple cohabitation

Some couples take the "next step" by moving in together

By Michelle Golden • Freelance Reporter

"Webster's New World College Dictionary" defines a cohabitant as a "person living together with another or others." Often, living together is seen as the "next step" for some couples.

Sophomore Malia Bennett said living together with her longtime boyfriend was hard in the beginning.

"We were together all of the time," she said. "It was a learning experience that I value. We learned from our mistakes. It is important to have separate lives as well as one together."

Bennett and her boyfriend took some time apart from their living situation and briefly separated.

"I think one of the reasons we did break up is because we were not living together," she said. "The influence by friends is so intense, especially in these developmental years."

Bennett added that the two learned to communicate to work out problems more effectively.

"That is one of the reasons we are doing so well today," she said.

Not all have a positive experience when they live with a significant other.

Junior Emily Birkland said her live-in experience had

some unpleasant effects on her relationship as well as her life.

"Living together you really get to know an individual," Birkland said. "In some ways it really made me like my boyfriend more, but adversely at times I really felt as though I did not have enough alone time because we spent all of our time together."

Many couples fault a lack of space as a main pitfall to of a live-in relationship, sometimes feeling the need to suppress their feelings to avoid an unmanageable situation, which can be unhealthy for the relationship and the individual.

"When I lived with my boyfriend, I would try to avoid a fight by bottling up my feelings, which eventually ended with an even bigger unnecessary dispute," Birkland said.

Birkland said because she and her partner are no longer living together, they have become closer and more receptive to each other's feelings.

"Because we spend less time

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