

Apartment (Home) Maintenance

Your apartment is your space—it's your home! You will appreciate your home more if it is clean. The following cleaning and maintenance suggestions may help get you started, but **remember**, sometimes it's best to leave things to the pros. Call your landlord to report situations which jeopardize your health, safety or property and malfunctioning appliances/mechanicals that belong to the landlord that you can't safely or easily fix. This can include water you can't turn on or off, clogs that don't respond to plunging, unexplainable lack of heat or electricity.

Some people have a weekly routine when they clean their home. Other people clean when they start seeing dirt build up and clutter pile up. Keep toilet paper, cleansing wipes, rags and paper towels available.

Daily chores:

- Wash dishes and clean your sink, the table you eat off, your countertops and stove top. Food on dishes/counters are an invitation for ants, cock roaches and other bugs.
- Put your dirty clothes a laundry basket or laundry bag.

***TIP-** Make a habit of putting things back where they belong when you are done using them. This will reduce clutter and not knowing where things are.

Every couple days or so:

- Sweep/vacuum your kitchen floor along with any other areas that see heavy traffic.
 - Empty your wastebasket every time your trash gets full. Overflowing trash invites pests.
- *TIP-** Use mats inside and outside your door to reduce the amount of dirt tracked into your home.

Chores that need done weekly:

- Do your laundry every time you get a full load or set aside time once a week to do all your laundry.
- Clean your bathroom toilet, shower/bath, sink, mirrors, and floor.
- Vacuum/sweep low-traffic areas and mop hard floors with a product recommended for the floor type.
- If you have a kitchen garbage disposal, grind some ice in the disposal.

***TIP-** Search the internet for natural cleansers like vinegar and baking soda which can be safer and cheaper.

Monthly or as needed

- Wipe up spills in the refrigerator and range with Baking soda and water.
- Immerse stove vent hood filters in hot sudsy water, rinse and dry before putting back in.
- Wipe kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to remove spills and smudges
- Remove the cover from below the refrigerator door and vacuum out the dust.
- Defrost your freezer if more than 1/4 inch of ice has accumulated on the walls. Don't chip ice with a sharp object. Instead, remove the food to a cooler, turn off the freezer and open the door, place a pan underneath the ice to catch drips, and either let the ice melt at room temperature or use a blow dryer.

Preventing damage or maintenance problems

- Vacuum heat register vents before using the furnace for the first time each year. Vacuum more often if needed. If you are responsible for furnace filters, change filters as soon as they become soiled.
- Don't set hot utensils or pans on the kitchen counter without a trivet or potholder underneath.
- When cutting food, always use a cutting board.
- Avoid pouring oil, coffee grounds or other solids into the kitchen sink or garbage disposal. Don't wash hair down the bathroom sink and tub. Do not flush grease, garbage, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, paper towels, cardboard paper rolls or any other type of synthetic material.
- Use a plastic shower curtain to prevent water from dripping on the bathroom floor.

Preventing injury

- Keep furniture and window coverings away from register vents, especially heat vents.
- Don't plug too many appliances into one outlet or use appliances with frayed or damaged cords.
- Follow the directions carefully for any cleaning agent you use. If you have a kitchen garbage disposal, always keep hands, utensils and foreign objects away from your kitchen disposal when it is operating. Use as follows: 1) turn on the cold water and run a steady stream into the drain. 2) Turn on your kitchen disposal 3) Feed small amounts of garbage into your disposal. Don't use the disposal for stringy or hard foods like celery and corn husks, for example. 4) After you have switched off your disposal, continue to run the water for a few seconds to prevent odors and residue. If something does become jammed in the mechanism, turn off the unit immediately. Although your disposal may shut off automatically, flip off the switch as a safeguard.

***TIP-**Learn the location of the circuit breakers and sink, tub and toilet water shut-off valves.

Electrical problems

When you suddenly lose power, first check to see if neighboring apartments have electricity. A blackout in all apartments should be reported to the power company. If only your apartment seems to be affected, try to find the cause of the power failure and correct it before you return the circuit breaker to the ON position. Try to locate the cause of a power failure- If you have a circuit breaker box in your home and need to restore power, push all switches to the OFF position, wait a few moments, and switch them back to the ON position. If you cannot restore power by tripping the circuit breakers or unplugging possible defective appliances, call the landlord for assistance.

Plumbing problems

Sink and toilet clogs usually can be unstopped with a plunger- Fill the clogged vessel with water and then push the plunger straight down in a quick, firm motion. You may need to repeat a number of times before the clog is removed. Sometimes blockages will make your toilet or sink overflow. Turn off the water. (The shut-off valve for your toilet is located underneath the tank; the bathroom sink valve is under the fixture.) If you can't unplug the blockage with a plunger, call the landlord for maintenance assistance.

Remember! An emergency situation that jeopardizes your health, safety or property requires immediate attention. **Seek Help!**