



Cleaning at the end of a tenancy

When a tenancy is over, tenants want their security deposit back. If the tenant has left the unit clean, undamaged and has no outstanding rent, getting the deposit back is usually a simple process. However sometimes landlords and tenants disagree over who should get the deposit.

In most tenancies, landlords take a security deposit at the beginning of the agreement. Before a tenant moves their belongings into a rental unit the Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB) suggests completing a move-in condition report. This is a detailed report of the condition of the rental unit before the tenant moves in.

It is a good idea to do the move-out portion of the condition report at the end of the tenancy. This is a detailed report of the condition of the unit after tenants have moved out their belongings and cleaned the unit.

If there is a disagreement between landlords and tenants at the end of a tenancy over who should get the security deposit, either party can come to the RTB for help. When deciding who should keep the security deposit, the RTB looks at evidence like the condition report and whether the unit was left “ordinarily clean”.

What is ordinarily clean?

In the RTB Policy and Procedure Guide, ordinarily clean is explained as follows:

- Wipe or vacuum (to remove dirt and dust):
 - air conditioners
 - baseboard heaters
 - fans and vents
 - carpets (shampoo or steam if stained by tenant)

- Clean the following appliances:
 - stovetop, elements and oven
 - refrigerator and freezer (defrost if necessary)
 - microwave
 - dishwasher
 - in-suite washer and dryer

Note: *If these appliances are on rollers, tenants are responsible to pull them out and clean underneath them. If they aren't on rollers and the landlord expects the tenant to pull them out, they must tell the tenant how to move them without damaging the floor.*

(see over)

- Clean all fixtures in the bathroom (tub/toilet/shower/cabinets/mirror etc)
- Wipe out cabinets and cupboards
- Wash or damp-mop the floors
- Wash scuff marks, fingerprints, food and tar build-up from smoking off walls
- Make sure curtains are left clean. Curtains must only be washed or dry-cleaned if they were deliberately or carelessly stained by the tenant. If a tenant does need to clean curtains, they should ask the landlord for special cleaning instructions.
- Clean the following:
 - the inside of all windows
 - the tracks and inside panes of sliding windows
 - the inside and outside of accessible windows (pivot windows, windows/doors that open onto a balcony)

For more information:

Tenants who have questions about cleaning at the end of their tenancy should speak with their landlord. If a tenant is still unsure of what they are responsible to clean, the tenant can contact the RTB for more information.

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This information is available in multiple formats upon request.

Cette information existe également en français. Composez le 204-945-2476.