

8 Ways to Get Your Security Deposit Back

Essential steps to maximize the amount returned by your landlord.



Moving out of a rental can be stressful for property manager and residents alike. During this time, it can be easy for a good relationship to turn sour due to miscommunication of the expectation of each party. Property manager and landlords want their unit to be returned to them in the same condition that you received it and of course every resident wants as much of their security deposit back as possible. Following the steps below will help you ensure that you and your property manager are on the same page, and that your unit is in the best possible condition when you hand over the keys.

1. Call or meet with your property manager.

The first thing on your list should be to speak with your property manager. Review the exact requirements of your move out and lease. Be sure to get clarity on anything you don't fully understand.

2. Remove ALL personal belongings.

Hopefully you've packed all of your belongings, but make sure to do a thorough sweep of the unit before you leave. Leaving behind personal belongings, especially large or bulky items is a sure-fire way to lose some or all of your deposit.

3. Deep clean

Be sure to thoroughly clean the home or apartment. Deep clean the refrigerator, oven, dishwasher and washer/dryer if applicable. Sweep, vacuum and mop all floors once you have all your belongings out. Wipe down and clean all surfaces on the final walk through before taking pictures as you want to leave the home or apartment in the condition it was received upon move in minus normal wear and tear.

4. Professionally shampoo the carpets.

When you moved in the carpets were professionally shampooed so please be sure to have the carpets professionally shampooed upon move out and provide us with your receipt. (This is also in your lease agreement).

5. Patch any holes and repaint the walls.

This can be tricky because if the holes are not properly filled then it causes more damage. If this happens, we end up hiring a vendor to sand down the poorly patched holes and re-do all the work you did so please be sure to fill the holes correctly so the patching does not cause more damage and subsequently becomes a cost to you. Minor marks or nicks on a wall does fall under normal wear and tear so use your best judgment and ask your property manager if you need assurance on specifics. Also, if you painted an accent wall then you need to primer and paint it back to the original color unless otherwise agreed upon with the owner and property manager.

6. Pay ALL remaining utilities.

The last thing you want to do is leave with an outstanding balance. This will be removed from you deposit and could result in a negative recommendation should you need a landlord reference for future home applications.

7. Make sure the yard is in good condition.

Mow the lawn, pull any weeds and make sure that flower beds or shrubbery is in good, cared for condition.

8. Take pictures.

Documentation is KING! Keep evidence of your MOVE OUT because we all know you work hard on returning the home or apartment to the condition it was received. Then, if your property manager does take part or all of your security deposit than you can go back and reference your documentation and photos to dispute unexpected charges. Keep in mind, a final move out walk through together with your property manager should assist you with any and all move out expectations.