



## Who's Responsible for Maintenance, Repairs and Care?

### Module Notes:

Tenant responsibilities for repairs and upkeep.

Landlords responsibilities for repairs and upkeep.

Check-in/check-out form.

The financial and personal value of caring for rental living spaces.

### Remember:

Responsibilities are shared by the landlord and tenant and identified by different resources. Most cities have housing codes that establish minimum quality standards that landlords must meet for residential rental properties.

### Keys to Determining Responsibilities

- Rental agreement terms
- Check-in forms
- Government regulations
- Common sense

It is best to do the check-in with the landlord, but doing it with a witness who does not live in the apartment is also a possibility.

### Questions to Consider:

- What do you look for in an inspection before moving in?
- Where should you keep the Check-In/Check-Out Rental Condition Checklist and other important rental documents?
- How will you plan the care for your living space?
- What happens if you don't care for your living space?

### References and Resources:

Landlord Tenant Guide:

<http://datcp.wi.gov/uploads/Consumer/pdf/LT-LandlordTenantGuide497.pdf>

Tenant Sourcebook, Legal Action of Wisconsin:

[www.legalaction.org/content/index.dfm?cm\\_id=83](http://www.legalaction.org/content/index.dfm?cm_id=83)

Tenant Resource Center:

[www.tenantresourcecenter.org/](http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org/)

Renter's Insurance:

[www.practicalmoneyskills.com/personalfinance/lifeevents/renting/insurance.php](http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/personalfinance/lifeevents/renting/insurance.php)

Bed Bugs in Wisconsin Questions and Answers:

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00489.pdf](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00489.pdf)

Lead-Safe Wisconsin:

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/index.htm)

References to websites used in this publication are for your convenience and not an endorsement of one product over other similar products.





## Repairs and Government Regulations

### Part 1: Landlord Responsibilities

1. Correct building or housing code violations affecting the unit or common areas.\*
2. Provide hot and cold water and operational sewage drains.\*
3. Maintain heating equipment so that it is safe and capable of keeping temperatures at least at 67 degrees at all times.\*
4. Keep electrical/plumbing system in safe operating condition.\*
5. Correct other defects that could cause a "substantial" safety risk to tenants.
6. Notify applicant in writing of deductions made from the previous tenant's security deposit for damage or defects, if requested by applicant.
7. Make repairs required due to normal wear and tear.
8. Maintain equipment (i.e., heating system, water heater, elevators, and air conditioning) that serves the unit and common spaces.

\*If any of these conditions are not met in the home or in the common areas of the building, the landlord must disclose the problem to the tenant before renting.

### Part 2: Tenant Responsibilities

1. Report problems to landlord as soon as they are noticed.
2. Unless otherwise agreed, the tenant is usually responsible for routine repairs. The tenant also must meet any maintenance and sanitation standards required by local housing codes. A tenant is financially responsible for any damages including infestations by insects or other pests caused by acts or inactions of the tenant.
3. Make repairs required because of tenant negligence or improper use. Landlords may choose to make such repairs at tenant's expense.

Resource Source: Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Landlord/Tenant Guide, 6/2016





## **Who is Responsible?**

Who is responsible for each of the following items, the tenant or the landlord?

1. Your son or daughter throws a ball through a windowpane.
2. Your garbage disposal is stuck.
3. Your bathroom lightbulb burns out.
4. Your front door lock doesn't work.
5. There is mold on the ceiling of your bathroom.
6. Your smoke detector batteries are dead.
7. The oven is dirty, but was dirty when you moved in.
8. Your sink drain is plugged.
9. There is no hot water.



## Check-In/Check-Out Rental Condition Checklist

This checklist is intended to be used both as a way to record the condition of the apartment when you move in and as a way to compare the move-in condition with the condition when you move out. This means that you should complete the move-in checklist carefully and be sure that both you and the landlord, or a witness who will not be living with you, sign the checklist. In the "Comment" column, describe any problems you find. Use a separate sheet of paper if you need it to describe the situation or add to the checklist, as each rental is item specific. Give a copy of the completed checklist to landlord for both Check-in/Check-Out.

Remember, you may be charged for correcting problems that aren't noted on the check-in sheet. Photos may be helpful, particularly if they are dated. Keep the completed checklist with other important papers/records about your apartment so you will have it when you move out. If the landlord promises repairs, ask that the promise be put in writing and signed with an estimated completion date.

Sample example of Checklist Use

ITEM	IN		OUT		
Kitchen	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	COMMENTS
Floor		Tile chipped in front of refrigerator.			
Refrigerator		Shelf missing Ice cube trays missing			
Counter Top		Burn marks			
Light Fixtures	✓				

SAMPLE

Address: 123 Anywhere Street Apt. #4, City, Wisconsin 00000

Move-in Date: July 1, 2016 Move-out Date:



## Check-In/Check-Out Rental Condition Checklist

ITEM	IN		OUT		COMMENTS
	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	
<b>Living Room/Dining Room</b>	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	COMMENTS
Floor					
Walls and Ceiling					
Doors and Locks					
Woodwork					
Windows/Screens					
Curtains/Blinds					
Closets					
Light Fixtures					
Electrical Outlets and Switches					
Other:					
<b>Kitchen</b>	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	COMMENTS
Floor					
Walls and Ceiling					
Doors and Locks					
Woodwork					
Windows/Screens					
Curtains/Blinds					
Pantry					
Light Fixtures					
Electrical Outlets and Switches					
Range Hood and Top					
Oven					
Refrigerator					
Counter Top					
Cabinets					
Sink and Disposal					





**Module D: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND CARE?**

ITEM	IN		OUT		
Faucets and Drains					
Other:					
<b>Bedroom 1 (describe location)</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Dirty/damaged</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Dirty/damaged</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Floor					
Walls and Ceiling					
Doors and Locks					
Woodwork					
Windows/Screens					
Curtains/Blinds					
Closets					
Light Fixtures					
Electrical Outlets and Switches					
Other:					
<b>Bedroom 2 (describe location)</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Dirty/damaged</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Dirty/damaged</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Floor					
Walls and Ceiling					
Doors and Locks					
Woodwork					
Windows/Screens					
Curtains/Blinds					
Closets					
Light Fixtures					
Electrical Outlets and Switches					
Other:					
<b>Bathroom (describe location)</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Dirty/damaged</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Dirty/damaged</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Floor					
Walls and Ceiling					





## Module D: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND CARE?

ITEM	IN		OUT		
Doors and Locks					
Woodwork					
Windows/Screens					
Curtains/Blinds					
Closets					
Light Fixtures					
Electrical Outlets and Switches					
Vanity or Sink					
Mirror					
Toilet and Seat					
Tub or Shower					
Shower Curtain					
Faucets and Drains					
Towel Racks					
Medicine Cabinet					
Other:					
<b>Other Interior Areas (Halls, Stairways, etc.) Location:</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Dirty/damaged</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Dirty/damaged</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Floor					
Walls and Ceiling					
Doors and Locks					
Woodwork					
Windows/Screens					
Curtains/Blinds					
Closets					
Light Fixtures					
Electrical Outlets and Switches					
Other:					





**Module D: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND CARE?**

ITEM	IN		OUT		COMMENTS
	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	
<b>Exterior Areas (Only areas you're responsible for, etc.) Location:</b>					
Yard					
Fences					
Garage					
Walks					
Driveway					
Other:					
<b>Miscellaneous Smoke Detector/ Carbon Monoxide unit</b>		Dirty/damaged	O.K.	Dirty/damaged	COMMENTS
Outside Door Locks and Keys					
Mailbox and Keys					
Thermostat					
Intercom					
Water Heater					
Furnace					
Other:					

Tenant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Landlord Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Move-in Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Move-out Date: \_\_\_\_\_





## Rental Records

### Records Keeping Listing for Resealable Gallon Bag

- \_\_\_\_\_ Rent Smart Certificate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of Rental Contract
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check-In/Check-Out Form and photos
- \_\_\_\_\_ Building Rules/Policies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letters/Notices from Property Manager
- \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Conversations Record Listing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copies of Written Requests/Letters
- \_\_\_\_\_ Record of Utility Payments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rent Receipts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of Credit Report
- \_\_\_\_\_ Renters Insurance Policy





## Family Records: What to Keep Where and For How Long

FE445 (Revised)

# FAMILY RECORDS: What to Keep Where and For How Long

Reviewed by Lori Scharmer

Family Economics Specialist • NDSU Extension Service

Families are like a small business with important records about each family member and the business the family does through time.

Keeping important family papers and records organized can save frustrations and hours of searching. Even on an everyday basis, organized recordkeeping makes paying bills, finding receipts and managing the family's finances much easier.

### Why Should You Keep Records?

Keeping family records in an organized manner saves time, trouble, money and frustration. Recordkeeping is important because:

- Income tax preparation requires information on tax deductions; records substantiate deductions.
- Death, fire or theft may call for records to establish ownership; records help in estate settlement and insurance or benefit claims.
- Records document certain transactions; if someone makes a mistake or official records are destroyed, your records may be needed.

- Records could shorten the time collecting insurance, military benefits, veterans benefits or an income tax refund can take.
- Evaluating records provides information for planning future spending. Records provide a summary of your financial situation and can help you keep tabs on where the money goes.

### What Kind of System Do You Need?

Use a system that fits your family's lifestyle. The family finance center might be as elaborate as a home office or as simple as a drawer in the kitchen or a file cabinet in the family room.

Deciding who will take major responsibility for recordkeeping in the family is important. All members – including children old enough to understand – should know how the recordkeeping system works and how information can be found easily. Some of the tasks can be shared or delegated, but one person with the skills and interest should take the leadership.

Develop a regular schedule for bookkeeping and resolve to stick to it. A routine will reduce the amount of time you spend on recordkeeping.

A well-organized recordkeeping system will eliminate confusion when you need important papers.

Getting started on a recordkeeping system may be time-consuming, but once it is set up to meet your family's needs, maintaining the system will be easy.

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## Module D: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND CARE?

### How Do You Organize a Record System?

You should carry some basic records with you at all times. Your wallet, billfold or purse is a small record system.

Keep identification, including your driver's license, name of the person to notify in case of an emergency, credit cards and organization membership cards, with you. You may wish to carry only one or two major credit cards.

You also should carry health, accident and auto insurance information, and information on allergies, health problems and blood type.

Other records require a different approach, but the approach does not need to be difficult. Use NDSU Extension Service publication HE446, *"Inventory of Important Family Records,"* as a guide for what type of records to keep and also as a record of where these records can be found.

The easiest way to keep track of your family papers and business records is to set up a filing system. A place to store file folders is more important than a fancy desk.

A metal filing cabinet, an under-the-bed storage chest or cardboard box, or an accordion folder will do the job as well as a desk drawer.

Gather your important papers from throughout the house. Divide your file folders into three major areas:

- Current records
- Inactive records
- Permanent records

The **current** files should include employment records, credit card information, insurance policies, family health records, warranties and guarantees, education records, bank statements, a household inventory, tax records and canceled checks. These headings may be used as a basis for your filing system.

The **inactive** files are used to store the items from the current files that are three years old. Go through the current files once a year. Discard unneeded items and transfer others to inactive storage. A good time to make transfers is the first of the year, when you work on your income tax forms. File headings would be the same as for current files.

**Permanent records are very important papers**, ones that should be kept safe in a safe-deposit box or fireproof (and waterproof) storage container.

Every family's file folder labels will be different. Divide each area into categories that make sense to you and meet your family's changing needs.

A good recordkeeping system will allow someone who is unfamiliar with the system to locate important documents, maintain records and prepare reports in case of an emergency.

### What Are Very Important Papers (VIPs)?

**Very Important papers Include:**

- Papers or records that prove ownership (such as real estate deeds, automobile titles and stock and bond certificates)
- Birth, adoption, marriage and death certificates
- Legal papers (such as divorce and property settlement papers)
- Contracts
- Household inventory
- Wills
- Advance directives, such as living wills or durable powers of attorney for health care
- Anything else that would be expensive or difficult to replace

### Where Should You Store VIPs?

A safe-deposit box in a financial institution or a home fireproof safe is the best place for your family's VIPs. Papers that cannot be replaced or would be costly or troublesome to replace belong in this type of storage. In general, bank account registers, canceled checks, transcripts, medical histories, employment records, tax returns and insurance policies do not need to be kept in a safe-deposit box or fireproof home storage.

### How Long Should You Keep Tax Records?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has a three-year statute of limitations on auditing a return. Keep all records of income or deduction expense for three years.

However, if you use the income averaging option available to farmers, you may need to prove your taxable income for four base years.

If you failed to report more than 25 percent of your gross income, the government will have six years to collect the tax or start legal proceedings.

Filing a fraudulent return or failing to file a return eliminates any statute of limitations for an audit by the IRS. If you hire a tax specialist, check to see how many years you should keep your records.

Keep records that show the original cost or value of your property. Also keep a record of home improvement costs to reduce capital gains tax if your home, land or property ever is sold for more than its original cost or value.

All canceled checks are not needed to support tax deductions. Save only those checks that substantiate an income tax deduction, such as checks paying for medical/dental expenses or charitable contributions.





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Putting a "T" for "tax" in the memo blank of a check when you write it might help you sort canceled checks faster. In cases where your only record is a duplicate check, you may need the monthly checking account statement to verify that the check went through.

Keep a copy of filed tax returns. **Should you need it, a prior tax return copy can be obtained from the IRS by calling (800) 829-1040.**

Taxpayers have two easy and convenient options for getting copies of their federal tax return information – tax return transcripts and tax account transcripts – by phone or mail.

A tax return transcript shows most line items from the tax return (Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ) as it originally was filed, including any accompanying forms and schedules.

It does not reflect any changes you, your representative or the IRS made after the return was filed. In many cases, a return transcript will meet the requirements of lending institutions, such as those offering mortgages and student loans.

A tax account transcript shows any later adjustments either you or the IRS made after the tax return was filed. This

transcript shows basic data, including marital status, type of return filed, adjusted gross income and taxable income.

Request transcripts by calling the IRS or ordering by mail using Form 4506-T, Request for Transcript of Tax Form. Specify the type of transcript you are requesting. The IRS does not charge a fee for transcripts, which are available for the current and three prior calendar years. Allow two weeks for delivery.

If you need a photocopy of a previously processed tax return and attachments, complete Form 4506, Request for Copy of Tax Form, and mail it to the IRS address listed

on the form for your area. The IRS charges a fee of \$57 for each tax period requested. Copies generally are available for the current and past six years. Allow 60 days to receive your copies.

### What to Keep Where and for How Long?

Records are kept in four places: in a home filing system, in a safe-deposit box or fireproof home storage, in the wallets and billfolds of household members and in each vehicle owned (refer to the Guide for Family Records).

## Guide for Family Records

Item	Where	How Long
<b>Personal and Family</b>		
Birth, marriage and death certificates	Safe-deposit box or fireproof home storage	Permanently
Adoption and custody papers	Safe-deposit box or fireproof home storage	Permanently
Citizenship papers	Safe-deposit box or fireproof home storage	Permanently
Divorce and separation papers	Safe-deposit box or fireproof home storage	Permanently
Settlement agreements	Safe-deposit box or fireproof home storage	Permanently
Military papers	Safe-deposit box or fireproof home storage	Permanently
Will	Signed original with probate division of circuit court or Safe-deposit box (if jointly rented); copy in home file	As long as in effect
Advance directive (living will/durable power of attorney for health care)	Home file, Safe-deposit box and copies with agents and family members	Permanently (update as needed)
Passports	Home storage or safe-deposit box	Until replaced
Social Security card	Original in safe-deposit box; copy in home storage	Permanently
Diplomas, transcripts	Home storage or safe-deposit box	Permanently
Medical history	Home file	Permanently (update as needed)
Employment records	Home file	Permanently
Inventory of valuable papers and advisers	Home file; copy with trusted family member or friend	Permanently (update at least annually)

*continued*







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### Guide for Family Records

Item	Where	How Long
<b>Property</b>		
Real property deeds, title papers, abstracts, mortgage and other lien documents (include rental property)	Safe-deposit box	Duration of ownership or longer if needed for tax purposes
Burial lot deed	Safe-deposit box	Duration of ownership
Tax assessment notices, purchase contracts, records of capital improvements (include rental property)	Safe-deposit box	Duration of ownership or longer if needed for tax purposes
Motor vehicle titles, purchase receipts and licenses	Safe-deposit box	Duration of ownership
Records of auto service/repair	Home file	Duration of ownership
Jewelry and other valuable items	Safe-deposit box if safety of family may be threatened if kept in home	Duration of ownership
Inventory of household goods and appraisals (include rental property)	Safe-deposit box; copy in home file	Permanent (update at least annually)
<b>Financial</b>		
Stocks, bonds and other securities	Safe-deposit box; listing in home file	Duration of ownership or longer if needed for tax purposes (usually up to six years)
Bank accounts, account registers and statements	Home file	Duration of ownership or longer if needed for tax purposes (usually up to six years)
Canceled checks	Home file for nontax deductible expenditures	Three years minimum
Savings certificates	Safe-deposit box; listing in home file	Duration of ownership or longer if needed for tax purposes (usually six years)
List of credit cards, credit contracts, agreements, records of credit payments and account statements	Home file	Duration of account or obligation or longer if needed for tax purposes (usually six years)
Insurance policies and records of claims made and paid	Home file; list of policies in safe-deposit box	Permanently (update as needed)
Copies of past tax returns	Home file	Six years minimum
Receipts and records of deductible expenses, including home improvement expenses, income and tax payments	Home file (current); fireproof home storage after filing of taxes	Six years minimum; life of property for improvements

*This publication was authored by Debra Pankow, former family economics specialist, NDSU, 2004.*

#### For more information on this and other topics, see [www.ag.ndsu.edu](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu)

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## A Brief Guide to Renter's Insurance

Like homeowner's insurance, renter's insurance protects your property against several types of losses like damage from a fire or theft. Renter's insurance also covers injury or damage stemming from your negligence or that of your family members.

### Types of Policies

There are several types of homeowner's insurance policies sold in Wisconsin. They vary according to the coverage in the policy and the type of dwelling being insured. HOMEOWNER'S FORM 4 (HO-4) *is especially designed for renters*. It covers your personal property for several different types of damage including theft, smoke, vandalism, fire, explosion, falling objects, building collapse, and rupture of steam or hot water systems. There is no coverage for the dwelling as that is the owner's responsibility and should not be insured by the renter.

### Additional Coverage

Other losses covered by a renter's policy are:

- A minimum of \$25,000 in personal liability for each occurrence of bodily injury and property damage to others arising out of your negligence.
- A minimum of \$1,000 in medical payments without regard to fault for injuries occurring in your home to anyone other than you or your family.
- Injuries occurring outside your home if caused by you, a member of your family living with you, or your pet.
- 10% of the limits of your personal property coverage for your belongings if destroyed or damaged away from your home if the cause is covered by your policy.
- Reasonable and necessary additional living expenses from residing in a temporary location because of damage caused by a covered loss.

### How Much to Buy

The main factor to consider in determining how much

insurance to buy is the actual value of your belongings. This involves establishing the "actual cash value" of all your possessions.

**Actual cash value** is usually determined by taking the replacement cost of the property when new and subtracting the amount of depreciation that has taken place. For example, a piece of furniture that cost \$500 to replace may have a reasonable "life" of 20 years. If this furniture is destroyed by fire after 10 years, its actual cash value at the time of loss is probably about \$250.

**Replacement cost coverage** on contents may be obtained for an additional premium. Replacement cost coverage pays for your losses on the basis of how much it would cost to replace or repair the item at current costs without deduction for depreciation.

*The easiest way to determine value is to make [a complete inventory](#) of your belongings and try and determine their value at the time of inventory. Reinventory and reevaluation of your belongings should be done annually.*

Some property, such as art objects and antiques do not lose value and should be scheduled separately on your policy. Other types of property are covered on a *limited basis* only because they are especially susceptible to loss. These include guns, cash, jewelry, and stamp and coin collections. All homeowner's policies can be modified at additional cost to protect you against such losses. *You may want to discuss these coverage and policy issues with your agent.*

### Costs

Costs for renter's insurance vary depending on the fire protection rating, type of building, the location, and the amount of insurance. As a renter, you will pay less for your insurance if you live in a fire-resistant building or a building with four or less apartments. This is primarily because the incidence of fires is less in these types of buildings.





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The costs also vary among communities in accordance with their fire protection rating. If you live in a large apartment building, you could expect to pay somewhat more than a smaller apartment building. Prices will vary so you should call several companies to find out exactly what coverage and price they are offering. Generally, the higher the deductible the lower the premium, but make sure you can afford the deductible.

### Items to Remember

- *Shop around.* Companies and agents differ not only in cost but also in claims service and coverage. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- If you don't have an agent, find out from a friend or relative the name of a company or agent *with whom they have had a good experience.*
- *Ask about discounts.* If you already have an auto policy with one insurer, ask if the insurer would give you a discount on renter's insurance.
- Keep a list of all your personal property *off premises* so that if it is damaged or disappears, you will be able to account for it. Pictures or video of personal property can be beneficial.
- Check the *theft* provisions of your policy. This is a very common loss for apartment dwellers.
- The laws of Wisconsin prohibit insurance companies from refusing, cancelling, or denying insurance coverage to a class of risks solely on the basis of past criminal record, physical, or developmental disability, mental disability, age, race, marital status, sex, sexual preference, "moral" character, location, or occupation.
- Report all theft claims to the police department promptly.
- Keep a record of the serial numbers of your most valuable possessions.
- You may wish to contact one of the following insurance industry associations or groups for further information:

Independent Insurance Agents of Wisconsin  
(IIAW)

725 John Nolen Drive  
Madison, Wisconsin 53713  
(608) 256-4429  
[www.iiaw.com](http://www.iiaw.com)

Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin  
Clock Tower Office Park  
6401 Odana Road #1

Madison, Wisconsin 53719  
(608) 274-8188  
[www.piaaw.org](http://www.piaaw.org)

Community Insurance Information Center  
600 West Virginia Street, Suite 101  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204  
(414) 291-5360  
[Insuranceinfo-ciic.org](http://Insuranceinfo-ciic.org)

### To file a complaint online or to print a complaint form:

OCI's Web Site  
[oci.wi.gov](http://oci.wi.gov)

Phone  
(608) 266-0103 (In Madison)  
or  
1-800-236-8517 (Statewide)

Mailing Address  
Office of the Commissioner of Insurance  
P.O. Box 7873  
Madison, WI 53707-7873

Electronic Mail  
[ocicomplaints@wisconsin.gov](mailto:ocicomplaints@wisconsin.gov)

Please indicate your name, phone number,  
and e-mail address.

**Deaf, hearing, or speech impaired callers  
may reach OCI through WI TRS**





## If You Don't Care for Your Living Space

- Increased chance of sickness and injuries
- Increased wear and tear to the rental unit
- Deductions from security deposits
- Move-out cleaning will be much harder
- Trouble with bugs and rodents
- More danger of fire
- Spend more time looking for things
- Embarrassed to bring friends home
- Could be grounds for eviction







## Cleaning Tips for Renters—Cleaning Institute

Cleaning Tips for Renters, [www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean\\_living/cleaning\\_tips\\_for\\_renters.aspx?print=y](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/cleaning_tips_for_renters.aspx?print=y)

### Cleaning Tips for Renters

Just because you don't "own" your place doesn't mean you shouldn't have a regular cleaning routine to keep your environment fresh and in good condition. Cleaning on a regular basis makes the job easier when you do tackle these tasks – and what's more, keeping your rental in good shape helps ensure that you'll get your deposit back when your lease is up! Follow these tips ... but always read the product label for exact household cleaning product usage instructions.

### In the Kitchen

#### Appliances

*Outside surfaces:* Avoid abrasive cleansers. Wipe up spills immediately with a dry cloth to prevent discoloration, and allow cooking surfaces to cool before cleaning.

*Inside the refrigerator:* Use a solution of baking soda and water to avoid scratching the surface.

Inside the oven (if not self-cleaning): Use oven cleaner. (Don't use oven cleaner on a self-cleaning or continuous cleaning oven because it may damage the surface.)

*Porcelain sinks:* nonabrasive, all-purpose cleaner disinfectant cleaner mild abrasive (liquid or powder cleanser) Glass cooktops: Use cleaner formulated for ceramic glass or a paste of baking soda and water and apply to a cooled cooktop with a clean nonabrasive sponge or paper towel; rinse and dry thoroughly.

#### Countertops

*Laminated surfaces:* Prevent damage by using a trivet or insulated pad to protect surfaces from hot pans, and always use a cutting board. Clean with nonabrasive, all-purpose cleaner (without bleach) and wipe up cleaning solutions immediately to prevent discoloration. Never use scrapers or abrasive pads; instead, try a soft vegetable brush to clean textured countertops.

*Solid surfaces:* Use a nonabrasive or abrasive all-purpose cleaner on matte (no-shine) surfaces, and nonabrasive all-purpose cleaners on satin or high-gloss finishes. Avoid damaging the surface by using trivets and cutting boards.

*Wood block:* Wipe up spills and liquids immediately to prevent warping, and clean with a wood cleaner.

#### Cabinets

Use a product that cleans finished wood to remove fingerprints, smudges and other soils. A polish or wax may be used if a shine is desired. Buff with a soft cloth. Be sure wood is properly finished. Any substance, even water, used on unfinished or improperly finished wood can damage the surface.





## In the Bathroom

### Toilet

*For the inside:* Use toilet bowl cleaner and a long-handled toilet brush to clean rim holes and the trap. Attach an in-tank (continuous) cleaner to maintain the freshness of the bowl (but remove it before using toilet bowl cleaner - don't mix the products).

*For the outside:* Use a nonabrasive, all-purpose cleaner or disinfectant cleaner on the exterior of the toilet and the toilet seat. Thoroughly rinse and dry hinge areas and bumpers.

### Tub/Shower/Sink

*Mold and Mildew Prevention:* Use the fan (or open a window) when showering. Wipe down the tub walls with a sponge after bathing; use a towel or a squeegee on shower walls. Keep shower doors and curtains open after use to allow them to air dry.

*Tub, Sink, and Tile:* Rinse the tub and sink after each use to prevent buildup. Clean regularly with a nonabrasive, all-purpose cleaner; tub/tile/sink cleaner; or liquid cleanser and rinse with clean water. Avoid using powdered abrasive cleansers that could scratch surfaces. Dry and buff tile, faucets and handles to prevent water spots. Try a daily shower cleaner to keep shower and tub surfaces free of buildup: just spritz it on and go – no scrubbing or rinsing required!

*Grout:* Clean with a solution 3/4 cup of liquid household bleach to 1 gallon of water or a mildew stain remover, applied carefully with a soft-bristled brush. Rinse thoroughly.

### *Stain-Solvers:*

- Mildew: Use liquid household bleach or cleaners with bleach to remove stains.
- Rust: Only use a rust remover for such stains (not a cleaner with bleach).
- Stubborn stains or soap film buildup: Use disinfectant cleaner; allow it to penetrate thoroughly, then rub or scour.

## In Living Areas

*Painted Walls:* Using a nonabrasive, all-purpose cleaner or a wood cleaner, test the "washability" of the surface first by washing an inconspicuous area. To clean, start at the bottom of the wall and work up to the ceiling, overlapping areas as you clean and using a circular motion.

*Woodwork:* Remove dust with a dusting product; spray it onto the surface or onto a dusting cloth. Remove stains and add shine with furniture cleaner, cleaner-polish or polish applied with a clean soft cloth.

*Flooring:* Mix a nonabrasive, all-purpose cleaner with warm water; use a mop, sponge or cloth dipped in the solution and wrung out. Some products require rinsing, others do not -- so check the label. A floor cleaner with polish can help fill in scratches and add shine.

*Carpet:* Vacuum regularly to remove dirt and allergens, and treat spills immediately with a carpet-cleaning product.





## Your Plan for Caring for Your Living Space

To be smart about cleaning and care for your living space, remember that some jobs need to be done more often than others. Jobs may need to be done:

- Every day or every other day
- Once a week
- Once a month

Check the jobs you will do.

### Jobs to do daily:

#### Kitchen:

- Wash dishes.
- Wipe off table, counter tops, range, and appliances.
- Clean sink.
- Empty garbage.
- Clean stove top after use.
- Sweep floor.
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### Living Room:

- Tidy up—pick up dirty dishes, clothes, and other clutter.
- Put away or throw out papers.
- Empty ashtrays.
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### Bathroom:

- Rinse out sink and tub/shower.
- Hang up towels.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Jobs to do weekly:

#### Kitchen:

- Mop floor.
- Disinfect counters, cutting boards, and sink drain with one teaspoon of bleach in a quart of water.
- \_\_\_\_\_





## Module D: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND CARE?

### Bathroom:

- Clean sink and tub with all-purpose cleaner or baking soda.
- Clean toilet bowl.
- Wipe toilet seat and outside of toilet bowl with all-purpose cleaner.
- Wash floor with all-purpose cleaner.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Living Room:

- Clean floors—vacuum carpets, mop vinyl floors.
- Dust shelves and furniture.
- Clean spots from walls and woodwork.
- Empty waste baskets.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Jobs to do monthly:

#### Kitchen:

- Clean oven.
- Clean range hood.
- Clean and defrost refrigerator.
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### Bathroom:

- Scrub mold on grout or walls with solution of  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chlorine bleach added to 1 quart of water.
- Clean drains with baking powder and vinegar.
- \_\_\_\_\_

Keep all cleaning products away from young children!

Adapted from "Develop a Plan for Cleaning" by Nayda I. Torres, published by North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. North Carolina State University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.





## Bed Bug Control

### Why Worry about Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are blood feeding insects that are tiny (3/16 inch long) but visible to the naked eye. They have a flat, oval shaped body and the adults are reddish-brown in color, whereas the nymphs are light colored. They feed during the night, and the bites are painless enough that they won't wake you up. Any exposed skin on your body at bed time such as your arms, shoulders, legs, face, and neck can become a hot spot for bed bugs attacks. Typically, a bed bug will feed for 3 to 10 minutes and return back every 5 to 10 days. People may notice the symptoms of an attack on their skin after a day or two, with small bite marks, reddish swellings, and itching. For some people, it may take longer for the symptoms to appear. But the good news is that the bedbugs do not carry any human diseases and do not breed from human blood.



Bedbugs are known to crawl quite a distance at nighttime in search of food, but they do not fly. According to the CDC, they can travel more than 100 feet in a night, but they tend to live within 8 feet of where people sleep. Usually mattress seams, headboards, inside box springs, wooden bed frames, furniture (nightstands, dressers, chairs), and photo frames are common hiding areas for bedbugs during the day time. But they can also hide under electrical plates, cracked wallpaper, around door and window casings, stereo speakers, curtain folds, and so on. This makes it very difficult to control bedbugs. Most common telltale signs of bedbugs found around the hiding areas include its molted skin castings, live eggs, rusty blood colored spots, black waste spots, and the presence of a sweet musty odor.



Bedbugs can go through a generation in about 5 to 6 weeks. However, they can live for several months to a year without feeding. Under warm conditions (70°F), a healthy well fed female bedbug can lay about 500 eggs in her lifetime and the eggs can hatch in about 6 to 10 days. The nymphs undergo 5 stages of molting to reach adult stage, and for each stage they need to feed. Under circumstances where no human hosts are available, they can feed on pets.

### How to Prevent?

Early detection is the best way to prevent bedbugs. When staying at hotels, motels or even in apartments check under the box spring, sheets and mattress for any telltale signs of bedbugs. Keep your luggage off the ground and away from the beds. When you return back from the trip, launder your clothes, travel bags, and sleeping bags immediately at a higher temperature (above 115°F) and dry in a hot dryer. Vacuum your suitcases thoroughly. Avoid bringing in any used furniture, couches, or discarded mattress from outside. Inspect under your beds and vacuum your mattress, bed frames, and box springs thoroughly. Special bedbug proof mattress covers and box spring covers are sold in stores these days. If you have a serious infestation, call a professional for effective treatment. For successful control, the treatment has to be thorough and it may take at least two or three follow-up treatments by a professional.

Source: Vijai Pandian, Horticulture Educator, Brown County UW Extension - UWEX State Entomology Specialist, Phil Pellitteri





## Roach Control

### Why worry?

- Cock roaches contaminate or damage food.
- They can damage wiring.
- Cock roaches contribute to allergies.

### Start with prevention

- Don't bring roaches with you.
- Don't feed roaches.
- Keep food in tightly covered containers.
- Don't leave dirty dishes out overnight.
- Take garbage out daily.
- Fix leaky faucets and pipes.

### Getting rid of roaches

- Use roach traps to determine where roaches are living.
- Apply insecticides where roaches live.
- Apply insecticides away from pets, children, dishes, and food.





## Lead Paint Hazards

### When should you worry about lead paint hazards?

- Only in homes built before 1978
- Only when paint is peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking
- On surfaces where children chew or that have a lot of wear like windows and doors
- In soil near outside of older homes

### How do you know?

- Landlords must tell you if they know of any lead hazard in the home before they rent to you.
- Landlords must give you information about lead paint hazards and what to do about them before you rent.
- A pin prick blood test is used to determine whether your child has lead poisoning.

