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Top Tips for Full Return of Your Security Deposit

Page 1 of 2

It is a stated goal of McCreary Realty Management, Inc., AMO, to endeavor to return the entire Security Deposit and any other deposit held at the end of the lease after you have moved out. McCreary does not profit or receive a single dollar of any portion of any deposit that is held. It all goes to the property owner to pay to put the property back into the condition it was when you moved in, less normal wear & tear.

Over the last several years, the most common items that we have to forfeit dollars from residents Security Deposits are not necessarily for Damages, but are in fact for lack of routine cleaning and maintenance.

The primary reason for this is lack of planning and not counting on how much time you will need to properly prepare the house for return of possession to Management. We are professionals and do this same task dozens of times a month. It always takes longer than you think, so prepare for that probability.

1. Please plan your move so that you have time to take care of the items you need to address at your current house
2. Give yourself time to come back and clean after all of your possessions are removed from the property
3. Make sure you leave the utilities on long enough, at least through the final day of your lease, if not a day or two longer, so you are able to clean the property properly
4. Make sure all of the trash is removed from the property BEFORE you turn in the keys. Leaving it at the end of the driveway for a future pickup will result in a charge for hauling off the trash. Keep up with the yard work during the last month you are in the property so the final maintenance you have to perform is not a large cleanup.

The first mistake that residents make is not returning all keys, garage door remotes, HOA access cards/keys, etc. that were issued to you. Don't leave them in the property, bring them to our office. Even after hours, you will be able to fit them into the drop slot in our door.

The top 3 things that are not correctly taken care at the time the keys are returned are:

1. Property Not Cleaned

Follow the Vacating Checklist (given to you when your notice is accepted) for best results. If you are not sure, clean it! Appliances, fixtures, cabinets, floors, blinds, etc, all need to be cleaned.

Most residents that didn't clean are shocked and angry at the cost to have the property cleaned. We have to use professional cleaners that are licensed and insured. Depending on the level of cleanliness with which you leave the house, it can cost between \$150 and \$350 or more to take care of that on your behalf.

2. Trash, Debris & Misc. Household Goods not removed from the property

It will cost you a minimum of \$100 per pickup truck load for us to have the trash, debris, household goods, etc, picked up and hauled to the dump and could run as high as \$300-\$500 or more to take care of that on your behalf.

If you return possession to Management and leave trash at the end of the driveway for a trash company to be picked up and it is still there when we perform the move out inspection, we will charge you for hauling off the trash. Make sure all trash is removed from the property BEFORE you return possession to Management.

3. Yard not freshly maintained

If lawn maintenance is a part of your responsibility in your lease, then make sure you give yourself time to mow the grass, trim the shrubs, rake the leaves, weed the beds and police the yard for trash BEFORE you return possession. If you don't stay on top of the yard, it can take a full day or more to put it back in the shape it was when you rented it. If in doubt, take care of it! Be sure to make time to take care of the yard. It must be freshly done at the time you return possession to Management.

If you run out of time, the costs to take care of the maintenance on your behalf can be substantial. It can cost from a minimum of 1-2 hours at \$60 per hour to as much as the full day or more and end up running as high as \$500 or more to take care of the yard on your behalf.

Other common issues we observe:

1. No Flea & Tick Treatment Receipt if you have ever had any pet at the property, even visiting pets too!

Even if the pet was just in the house for even just a day it triggers the flea treatment requirement in addition to it being a lease violation. Some people will unfortunately lose a pet during the term of their lease; the flea & tick treatment is still a requirement as the pet was at the property for a period of time. This is primarily due to the flea egg life and entomology.

2. Broken/Damaged Blinds

If the metal blinds are bent or vinyl/wood blinds are broken during your tenancy, it will cost less for you to replace the blinds with like kind using the existing mounting brackets already present than it will for us to do it for you.

3. Body oil stains on walls in Bedrooms (with no headboards) and around doors/door jambs/switches

The human body excretes oils through the skin and scalp that is transferred whenever anyone touches any part of the walls, trim and doors. These oils require cleaning and then sealing/priming in order to prepare the wall to accept the final coat of paint. This is NOT considered normal wear & tear. If you have this condition, please contact our office for a solution.

The following is a model plan/timeline for you to follow as a part of your final month with us:

1st to 5th of the month

- a. On or before the first day of the last month of your lease, complete the **Notice to Vacate Form** that you agreed to use and signed for when you signed your lease. Provide this completed form and your last month's rent in order for us to be able to accept your notice.

5th to 15th of the month

- a. Prepare for moving by packing up non-essentials
- b. Arrange for rental truck and help or a Moving Company
- c. Pay attention to the yard; don't leave it to the last day. Get some of it done now. Go ahead and trim the shrubs and remove ground debris (leaves, limbs, pine cones, etc.)
- d. Start clearing areas that you seldom use

15th to 25th of the month

- a. Call the utility companies and arrange for disconnect. Make sure to leave the utilities on through the final day of your lease & notice. We recommend that you keep them on for at least one or two extra days.
- b. If you use satellite TV, arrange for the removal of the dishes and for sealing holes in the roof/siding from the mounting of the dish.
- c. Continue packing and boxing your possessions
- d. Be aware of your grocery purchases and time it so you have less to move

25th to Next to final day of lease & notice

- a. Perform the final yard maintenance (mow grass, rake leaves, trim shrubs, weed shrub beds and islands, edge walks and driveways)
- b. Complete your move, removing ALL possessions from the property, yard, lot, house, garage, basement or storage areas
- c. Remove all trash, debris, misc. household goods and personal items from anywhere on the property
- d. If you have had any pet at the property for any time, arrange for flea & tick treatment on final day of the Notice
- e. Begin final cleaning following the Vacating Checklist
- f. Gather together all keys, garage door remotes, gate remotes, access cards/keys for HOA and put them in a Ziploc bag and place them in your primary car so they won't get misplaced, packed or left in the other car in the new city.

Final Day of lease & notice

- a. Continue cleaning following the Vacating Checklist
- b. Meet exterminator for flea & tick treatment (if you have pets)
- c. Check that any burned out light bulbs have been changed and fresh ones are installed in all fixtures
- d. Make sure that all trash, debris and such are removed from all areas of the property (house, yard, lot, driveway, etc)
- e. Make one last pass through the house, checking all closets, every cabinet & drawer in kitchen and baths, check the inside of all appliances. You want to make sure you have everything and that all are properly cleaned.
- f. If you hired a cleaning service, check behind them. We have seen issues where the Resident did not get what they paid for and areas were left dirty or unfinished.
- g. Make one last walk around the entire yard to make sure that all maintenance has been accomplished
- h. Set the thermostat for heat at 60 degrees or cooling at 80 degrees and leave the system on during all seasons
- i. Make sure all windows & doors are closed and locked. Make sure the entire house is secure.

No later than 9 AM on the day after the Final Day of lease & Notice

- a. You have the absolute right of possession for every day you are paid through until 11:59 PM on the Final Day of Lease & Notice.
- b. As long as you retain the keys and remotes, you have possession of the property.
- c. Bring all keys, garage & gate remotes, HOA access cards/keys to our office and place in the drop slot if the office is not open or bring into the office during regular business hours (M-F; 9AM-5:30PM)
- d. Remember to provide to us with a **forwarding address**, **e-mail address** and **mobile numbers** so that we may contact you and mail you the security deposit refund!

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