



# Routine and Non-routine Maintenance

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## *Work Orders and Routine Maintenance*

Housing and property management staff should be trained to help tenants who request assistance to complete work order forms. Staff should be directed to compile work orders in a designated area for review by the building manager (if applicable) and routing to the maintenance department. The tenant making the request should receive a copy for his or her records.

If the maintenance/repair problem is not an emergency, the work should be scheduled promptly by the maintenance department, and the planned date for completion should be entered on the work order form.

Sometimes the maintenance problem is an *emergency*. If there is a serious situation (for example, gas or water leaks — not just a faucet or running toilet — fire or electrical hazard, or a natural disaster) staff should be trained to contact the building manager or designated personnel for guidance.

## *Damage Within Normal Wear and Tear*

Some wear and tear on a unit is to be expected over time, and tenants should not be charged for costs associated with repairing such damage. Property owners know that appliances, fixtures and furnishings in the rental unit will not last forever and will need to be replaced or repaired when damaged or worn out.

- The rental agreement should define the expected life of various items within the unit, such as carpets and floor surfaces, stoves, refrigerators, bath fixtures and appliances, bed frames and mattresses.
- If an item in a tenant's unit needs to be replaced or repaired sooner than the timeframe defined in the rental agreement, the manager or designated representative should replace or repair that item promptly, at no charge to the tenant.

## *Damage Beyond Normal Wear and Tear: During Tenancy*

At times, it may be necessary to charge a tenant for causing extensive damage to a unit, if that damage does not reflect normal wear and tear. If such damage comes to the attention of management during tenancy, tenants should be notified using a form such as the sample provided in Appendix 1.

In the performance of maintenance and/or property management activities, or during formal inspections of units, supportive housing staff also may become aware of unsanitary conditions within tenant units. Such unsanitary conditions can pose a significant health risk for tenants and can make maintenance and upkeep of the units more challenging.



Appendix 2 includes a form that can be used to notify tenants of the existence of unsanitary conditions that must be corrected within the unit.

### *Damage Beyond Normal Wear and Tear: During Move Out*

Local landlord/tenant law typically defines how owners can address damage to the unit beyond normal wear and tear. Property owners should seek expert legal advice regarding landlord and tenant rights and reflect applicable local law in the rental agreement. The rental agreement should include sections on how security deposits are refunded, charge-backs to tenants for damage beyond normal wear and tear, and move-in and move-out unit inspection procedures. The rental agreement also should list any furniture and furnishings provided in the unit and indicate what the landlord considers the normal life for items such as furniture, furnishings, appliances, floor coverings and wall surfaces.

Upon move-out, exiting tenants can be charged for damage to the unit beyond normal wear and tear, as defined in the rental agreement. The building manager should conduct a Move-Out Unit Inspection, and use the Move-In Unit Inspection Checklist as reference to determine the condition of said items upon move-in, and damage(s) to the unit, appliance, and/or furnishings beyond the normal period(s) of wear and tear defined in the rental agreement.

Following are best practices that many property owners use to assess damage that can be charged to the exiting tenant:

- Require that the building managers or designated representative complete a Tenant Charge Back form (see sample in Appendix 1). This form must be sent promptly to the tenant's new address, along with a check for the balance of the tenant's security deposit.
- Depending on the state, the law may require that this be sent to the tenant no later than 21 days after the unit is vacated. If there is no forwarding address, then the check should be sent to the departing tenant at the vacated unit.
- Note that any unpaid rent can be deducted from the security deposit. If the tenant does not leave the unit clean, the reasonable cost of cleaning the unit can be deducted from the security deposit.

File copies as appropriate to the exiting tenant's file and to external agencies as required, for regulatory and financial compliance.

## Sample Maintenance Charge Back Notification Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tenant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Our Maintenance Team and/or outside vendors have completed repairs to your unit and/or to other areas of the premises that were caused by your actions and are beyond normal wear and tear.

Therefore, these repairs - material and labor - will be billed to your account in the following amount.

Repair	\$ Parts	\$ Labor	Total Cost
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
		<b>Total Cost</b>	\$ _____

Please contact the building manager to arrange for immediate payment (or a payment plan) for these charges.

Thank you,

*[insert organization name, address]*

cc: Finance Manager

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## *Sample Notice of Unsanitary Conditions*

To: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Dear Tenant:

We are very concerned about the condition of your housing unit. Recent pest control visits have indicated that you are accumulating debris and creating a health and sanitation hazard for yourself and other tenants.

This situation must be corrected quickly.

Please visit me in my office immediately so that we can address this problem together.

We want to work with you to restore your unit to a decent condition. Please contact us today.

Sincerely,

Building Manager

Cc: Tenant File