

## Getting the most return on your Security Deposit

It can be frustrating when you do not get your security deposit back after renting an apartment especially when you feel you have left your space in good condition upon move out.

Note whether you paid a Security Deposit or Redecorating Fee. Security Deposits are refundable pending any assessed charges at the end of your lease term. Redecorating Fees are usually non-refundable and may cover the cost of small repairs or painting needed after moving out.

Here are some tips in getting your security deposit back.

- **Complete a move in checklist:** Be thorough! Mark any pre-existing damage, take photos and submit the checklist and photos to your landlord in the time frame that they have listed after you move in.
- **Report Maintenance issues in a timely manner:** Reporting a leak or broken item in your apartment keeps your apartment in good condition and can also ensure that things are all in working order upon your move out.
- **Coordinate with your roommates:** Plan ahead with your roommates to decide how to share the responsibility of cleaning and emptying the unit.
- **Read your move out packet.** Most landlords or rental companies will provide residents with a detailed move out packet on what to do prior to move out to get the most of your security deposit back. Follow the cleaning guidelines. Are you required to get your carpets professionally cleaned? If so, be sure to provide a receipt and use a preferred company or a company that guarantees their work in case the job is not to the standard of your landlord.
  - Many landlords will deliver, mail, and even provide a copy of the move out packet on their website for reference.
- **Remove all personal belongings and furniture from the apartment.** Leaving furniture and trash behind can add up charges quickly.
- **Schedule a move out inspection:** If your landlord provides this opportunity, move out inspections are helpful and can give you an idea of what to expect with regards to the deposit return and an opportunity for the landlord to identify small problems while you still have a chance to fix them and avoid being charged. It is important to note that final charges may differ based on pricing from contracted cleaning and maintenance jobs cost.
- **Document:** Create a new video or photographs after the apartment is clean and empty to document the condition of the space. Be sure to capture the insides of closets, cupboards, and appliances.
- **Utilities:** If applicable, remove your name from all utilities and pay the final utility balances. Check your lease, many leases provide that you can not turn off the utilities until the last day of the lease contract.
- **Turn in keys by your lease end date and time.** There can be hefty hold over fees for staying late to finish cleaning or moving out. Be sure to surrender all paperwork and keys by the date listed on your lease to avoid additional charges.
- **Provide a valid forwarding address.** Providing a written forwarding address at move out provides legal protections to you and failing to provide a forwarding address can delay your security deposit statement and any refund owed.