

Move-out cleaning checklist: room by room, printable

Short answer: Clean an empty home from top to bottom and back to front: start with the insides of the fridge, oven, cabinets and drawers, then bathrooms, then walls, doors, baseboards, sills and closets in every room, and finish with the floors on your way out. Check the list below room by room, then take dated photos of every room before you hand over the keys. For a 2-3 bedroom home, plan on a full day for one person.

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Before you start

Move everything out first: furniture, boxes, food, toiletries and anything in closets, cabinets and the garage.

Keep the water and electricity on until the cleaning is done.

Read the cleaning section of your lease or the landlord's move-out instructions, and your move-in condition report if you have one.

Defrost and empty the freezer a day ahead so it isn't dripping while you clean.

Work top to bottom (ceiling, walls, counters, floors) so dust falls onto areas you haven't cleaned yet.

Supplies

All-purpose cleaner, Glass cleaner, Bathroom cleaner or disinfectant, Degreaser or baking soda paste for the oven, Microfiber cloths, Non-scratch scrub sponges, Grout or detail brush, Magic eraser for scuffs, Vacuum with crevice tool, Mop and bucket, Step stool, Trash bags, Rubber gloves.

Kitchen

- ☐ Empty, wipe and dry the inside of the refrigerator and freezer, including shelves, drawers and door bins
- ☐ Wipe the fridge door seals, top and handle; pull it out if you can and sweep behind and under it
- ☐ Clean the inside of the oven, racks and broiler drawer
- ☐ Degrease the stovetop, burner grates or drip pans, knobs and the range hood and filter
- ☐ Clean the inside and outside of the microwave, including the turntable

- ☐ Run the dishwasher empty and wipe the door, edges and filter
- ☐ Wipe the inside of every cabinet and drawer, then the fronts and handles
- ☐ Clean the sink, faucet and drain, and wipe the backsplash and counters
- ☐ Wipe light switches, outlet covers and the top of the fridge and cabinets
- ☐ Sweep and mop the floor, including under the edges of the cabinets

Bathrooms

- ☐ Scrub the toilet inside and out, including the base, behind it and the hinges
- ☐ Scrub the tub and shower walls, glass door or track, and grout; remove soap scum and hard-water spots
- ☐ Clean the sink, faucet, mirror and medicine cabinet inside and out
- ☐ Wipe the inside of vanity cabinets and drawers
- ☐ Dust the exhaust fan cover and light fixtures
- ☐ Wipe towel bars, toilet paper holder, doors and baseboards
- ☐ Mop the floor, getting into the corners and around the toilet

Bedrooms and living areas

- ☐ Dust ceiling fans, light fixtures and the tops of door and window frames
- ☐ Wipe walls and doors where there are marks; spot-clean scuffs gently so you don't remove paint
- ☐ Wipe window sills and vacuum window tracks; clean the inside of the glass
- ☐ Dust or wipe blinds
- ☐ Wipe baseboards, light switches, outlet covers and vents
- ☐ Remove nails, hooks and tape only if your lease asks for it, and ask before patching holes
- ☐ Vacuum carpets, including edges, and vacuum then mop hard floors

Closets, laundry and storage

- ☐ Wipe closet shelves and rods and vacuum closet floors
- ☐ Wipe the washer and dryer tops; clean the dryer lint trap and wipe the washer door seal
- ☐ Sweep the laundry area, utility room and any storage room
- ☐ Check that nothing is left in the attic, basement, garage or storage unit

Entry, stairs and outside the door

- ☐ Wipe the front door, the inside of the storm door and the door hardware
- ☐ Wipe stair railings and spindles, and vacuum the stairs
- ☐ Sweep the entry, porch or balcony and the garage floor if your lease asks for it
- ☐ Take all trash and recycling to the bins or the dumpster, and leave the bins how your lease says

Before you hand over the keys

Walk every room with the checklist and look inside every cabinet, drawer and appliance one more time.

Take dated photos or a video of every room, the inside of the fridge, oven and cabinets, and the floors.

Replace dead light bulbs and HVAC filters if your lease makes you responsible for them.

Return all keys, garage openers and fobs, and get a written receipt or email confirming the handoff.

Give your landlord your forwarding address in writing so they know where to send your deposit and any itemized statement.

Questions

What do landlords usually check at a move-out inspection?

The places that are easy to see and hard to fake: inside the fridge and oven, inside cabinets and drawers, the toilet, tub and shower, floors and carpets, walls and doors for marks and holes, and whether anything was left behind. Your lease and your move-in condition report are the best guide to what your landlord expects.

How long does a move-out clean take?

For one person, plan on most of a day for a 2-3 bedroom home in average condition, longer if the oven or bathrooms need heavy degreasing or descaling. Empty homes are faster per room than lived-in ones, but the insides of appliances and cabinets add a lot of time.

Is a move-in clean different from a move-out clean?

It's the same checklist. The difference is timing: a move-in clean happens in the empty home before your things arrive, so shelves, drawers and the fridge are clean before you unpack.

What Illinois law covers security deposits?

The Illinois Security Deposit Return Act (765 ILCS 710) sets the rules for when landlords covered by the Act must return a deposit and itemize deductions. Cleaning can't fix damage, and this checklist isn't legal advice; read your lease, and for disputes contact the landlord in writing or a legal aid office.

Can someone do this for me in the Peoria area?

Yes. Wrenly Home does move-out and move-in cleans in Peoria, Peoria Heights, Dunlap, Morton, Washington, Germantown Hills, East Peoria, Chillicothe and Pekin, with the inside of the fridge and oven included. See move-out cleaning prices.

You may print, copy and share this checklist for free, including with tenants and clients, as long as you keep the Wrenly Home name on it. Please link to <https://wrenlyhome.com/move-out-cleaning-checklist/>.

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