

Keep It Dry – What You Can Do

If you rent or own

- Wipe up spills right away.
- Dry wet clothes quickly.
- Wipe down shower walls.
- Use the exhaust fan when showering or cooking.
- Wipe down shower walls with a towel after bathing or showering
- Store clothes and towels clean and dry
- Check the humidity in your house with a kit from a home electronics or hardware store.
- If your humidity is more than 50%, turn on your air conditioning (if possible) and turn off your humidifier if you use one.
- If you can, use a dehumidifier to dry out damp areas.
- Throw away wet carpeting, cardboard boxes, insulation and other things that have been very wet for more than two days (if you rent, check with your landlord before you do this).

If you rent, your landlord should:

- Clean up mold
- Make sure downspouts direct water away from the foundation of your house or building
- Repair leaking roofs, walls doors or windows

Keep It Clean – What You Can Do

If you rent or own

- Vacuum or wet clean floors regularly.
- Wash bed linens regularly (at least every 2-3 weeks) in hot water.
- If you can, buy a walk-off mat and put it outside of your door so dirt and dust gets trapped there.
- Take your shoes off near the door and leave outside dirt and dust on your shoes rather than tracked through the house.
- Use a damp cloth for dusting and lightly mist a floor for broom sweeping. Wash or dispose of rags used for dusting.
- Use cleaning products that are labeled “non-toxic.”
- If you can, invest in a good vacuum that has a beater bar on the bottom and can be emptied quickly and thoroughly.
- If you can, set up storage areas to reduce clutter. Use plastic or cardboard boxes.

If you rent, your landlord should:

- Help you deal with pest problems by sealing up cracks and holes
- Consider putting in hard surface floors. They show dust more clearly, can be cleaned faster and can be damp mopped.

Keep It Ventilated – What You Can Do

If you rent or own

- Use exhaust fans when cooking or bathing and check that exhaust fans work properly.
- Check that smoke and carbon monoxide alarms work properly. Replace batteries twice a year.
- **Never** use charcoal grills or run engines inside your home, garage, or basement, even for a short time. Charcoal grills and small gasoline engines produce a lot of carbon monoxide that can kill you.
- If you use unvented kerosene or gas heaters OR a vent-free gas fireplace, follow instructions carefully and open a window for fresh air. Do not use them while sleeping.

If you rent, your landlord should:

- If necessary, install exhaust fans in the bathroom and kitchen that vent to the outside.
- Make sure that there are working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms installed.
- Check and take care of the furnace for your home or apartment
- Make sure that dryers are vented to the outside and that dryer vents remain unclogged.

Keep It Pest-Free – What You Can Do

If you rent or own

- If you rent, and you find cockroaches or mice or other pests in your apartment, **report it to YOUR LANDLORD right away.**
- Clean up any open, unsealed food or crumbs (wrap and seal any leftover food and put it in the refrigerator, or in a cabinet if tightly sealed).
- Do not leave dirty dishes out overnight. Cockroaches and mice need water to survive.
- Clean up spills or sticky substances from all floors and surfaces.
- Keep your kitchen clean; be sure to clean up any grease with soapy water and dry off any wet areas.
- Sweep, mop, and vacuum regularly.
- Take your garbage to the trash area at least once a week (or every evening, if there are any cockroaches or mice in your home).
- Clean up clutter and paper piles that can provide hiding places for cockroaches and mice.
- Minimize pesticide use. If you use pesticides, make sure to follow the directions on the label.

If you rent, your landlord should:

- Make sure that holes in walls, floors and ceilings are sealed to prevent cockroaches or mice from coming in from the outside.
- Use baits, traps, or gels to kill cockroaches or mice; and avoid spraying pesticides.
- Repair areas with water leaks or water damage.

Keep It Safe – What You Can Do

If you rent or own

Prevent Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Keep your floors clear of toys, shoes and other things that may cause tripping.
- Clean up spills right away to prevent slipping.
- If you have rugs, use non-skid mats and throw rugs.

Poison-Proof Your Home

- Put safety latches on all cabinets and drawers with harmful products – or put the products where children can't reach.

Prevent Fires and Burns

- A working smoke alarm should be near every sleeping area. A working fire extinguisher should be near the kitchen stove.
- Plan and practice a fire escape route.
- Keep space heaters out of doorways, halls, or other busy areas. Keep them at least 3 feet from curtains, bedding, or other things that could catch fire.
- Put outlet covers over unused electrical outlets.

Prevent Choking and Suffocation

- Keep young children away from curtains, window-blind cords and extension cords. They can get tangled up and suffocate in them.

If you rent, your landlord should:

- Make sure that working smoke alarms are installed near every sleeping area.

Keep It Maintained-What You Can Do

If you rent or own

- Call your landlord as soon as you notice moisture, cockroaches, mice, or holes in your apartment.
- If your toilet overflows and you can't get it to stop, report it to your landlord immediately.
- If you own, make sure to replace furnace filters on a regular basis.
- Clean the grease filter on your stove's range hood when any grease builds up; if you have questions about how to clean the grease filter, ask your landlord.

If you rent, your landlord should:

- Fix any water leaks or water damaged areas.
- Fix all cracks and holes.
- Work with you to get rid of cockroaches and mice problems.
- Maintain furnaces and hot water heaters in good condition and replace furnace filters on a regular schedule.
- Try to choose products for cleaning or repair that are labeled non-toxic.

Keep It Contaminant-Free-What You Can Do

If you rent or own

- Have children under age 6 tested for lead exposure. All children who receive Medicaid should be tested for lead at ages 1 and 2.
- Look for the statement “lead-free” when you buy products that are not made in the U.S.
- Do not smoke in the house. If you must smoke, go outside.
- Put all pesticides, including baits, out of the reach of children.
- Read and follow directions on pesticide product labels. When using a pesticide, keep children away until it has dried or for the time the label recommends.
- Protect your skin, your eyes, and your lungs while using pesticides. Always wash your hands after use. Never smoke, eat, or drink while using a pesticide.
- Put the Poison Control phone number next to your phone.
- Never mix two products together unless you are certain it is safe to do so. Never mix bleach and ammonia.
- Keep all hazardous products, including bleach, in a cabinet out of reach of children.
- Buy products in childproof containers and keep hazardous products in their original containers.

If you rent, your landlord should:

- Know whether your house or apartment building has been tested for lead-based paint (if built before 1978).
- If there is lead-based paint, take steps to deal with it in a safe way.