

Wear and Tear vs. Damage

"REASONABLE" WEAR AND TEAR consists of unavoidable detriment to the rental unit, even though reasonable care has been taken to avoid and minimize it. "Reasonable" wear and tear does not include anything that might be corrected by cleaning. The following distinctions, between "reasonable" wear and tear and damage, were published in the Santa Barbara Rental Property Association's monthly newsletter to help property providers determine which repairs they could legitimately charge for and which were made necessary by normal wear and tear.

These examples are not legal definitions!



Wear and Tear

1. well-worn keys
2. sticky key
3. faulty door lock
4. depressurized fire extinguisher with unbroken seal
5. worn pattern in plastic countertop
6. rust stain under sink faucet
7. discolored ceramic tile
8. carpet seam unraveling
9. threadbare carpet in hallway
10. scuffing on wooden floor
11. worn linoleum
12. wobbly toilet
13. faded paint
14. rust stain under bathtub spout
15. chipped paint
16. discolored light fixture globe
17. faded shade
18. paint-blistered Venetian blinds
19. ants inside after rain storm
20. sun-damaged drapes

Damage

1. missing keys
2. key broken off inside lock
3. door lock replaced by tenant
4. depressurized fire extinguisher with broken seal
5. burn in plastic countertop
6. sink discolored by clothing dye
7. chipped or cracked ceramic tile
8. carpet burn
9. rust marks on carpet from plant pot
10. gouge in wooden floor
11. ripped linoleum
12. broken toilet tank lid
13. tack or nail holes
14. chip in bathtub enamel
15. graffiti
16. missing light fixture globe
17. torn shade
18. Venetian blinds with bent slats
19. fleas left behind by tenant's pet
20. pet-damaged drapes

REPAIRING DAMAGE

If your unit has acquired minor or major damages, the unit must be repaired as completely as possible to receive a larger refund of your security deposit. Depending on the amount of repair, you may mend the damages yourself, hire a service, or consult with your property provider. Property providers may advise you to abstain from doing your own repairs because it is usually cheaper to have it repaired by the rental company's contractor. Costs for repair jobs are based on the nature of the job and how long it takes.

PLUMBING TIPS

Toilets – Tampons or excessive amounts of paper are often responsible for stopped up toilets. In most cases, a plunger will be enough to clear the blockage. Inexpensive plungers may be purchased at any hardware store.

Garbage Disposal – You must run water to help flush food away while you run the garbage disposal. Do not use the disposal to get rid of fibrous foods, like celery, parsley or potato peelings.

Shower & Tub – Accumulated hair is usually responsible for slow draining in showers and tubs. Inexpensive hair traps can be purchased at any hardware store.