

A LEVEL OF CLEAN

Housekeeping and Cleaning Guide



Introduction

This housekeeping and cleaning booklet is designed to help you maintain your unit in a clean, safe, and sanitary condition. We are required by HUD to do complete inspections and housekeeping is the greater part of the inspection process.

This guide may present to you methods that you are already aware of. It may also present some *new ideas* for the easiest way to clean and organize.

How difficult these chores are for you will be determined by *your desire* to live in a clean and appealing environment.

Have you ever noticed how someone you know will have everything clean and orderly any time you visit and they never seem to work real hard at it? Cleaning methods and a system make housekeeping easier and less time consuming.

You probably have never heard anyone say, "I am excited about cleaning." It does not have to be hard or boring but it is *never ending*.

A clean and organized place to live depends on you.

How would "you" answer the following questions?

- Is a clean home important to you?
- Is a clean home necessary for your family?
- Can good housekeeping habits be learned?
- Can poor housekeeping habits be changed?

Every person has a level of clean, but that level *must meet* the cleanliness and sanitary requirements for housing quality inspections.

This housekeeping guide is divided into twelve sections. It is designed to be a guide or starting point. Create a system from this information that will work for you so your space is clean and in order on a daily basis, not just for "inspection day". Actually, it is **less work** than letting all the chores add up. Having a plan helps overcome the temptation to put off housekeeping. Housekeeping is less of a hassle if household chores are done regularly and at certain times of the day, or certain days of the week. Routine, far from taking the fun out of our lives, helps deal with housekeeping calmly and efficiently. Once a routine has become a habit, many people find they have finished the work in the time it used to take them to decide what needed to be done. It is more enjoyable to *relax* at home when the space is clean and orderly.

Floors

Hard surfaced walks or paths leading to entrances help cut down the *amount of dirt* that may cling to shoes. Mats or scrapers placed near the doorways and frequent sweeping of porches, steps and walks also help to keep dirt out.

- ❖ Floors should be swept or vacuumed often (at least once a week).
 - ❖ Clean up spills or dry soil when they occur.
 - ❖ A good broom and mop are necessary. A good vacuum cleaner is also a *valuable* tool for all types of floors. The attachments work great on *upholstered furniture, walls, window sills, and draperies* that collect dust.
 - ❖ Hard surface floors should be mopped at least once a week with a good mild cleaning solution.
 - ❖ Dirt and dust should not be allowed to collect and be ground into the surface.
-

Kitchen

The best place to begin is in the kitchen. It is the most difficult to keep clean and organized. It is also one of the first places to accommodate pests, such as roaches and mice.

Food any food particles left on plates, table, counters, and cooking surfaces become the main dining area and the main course for these uninvited guests.

Dishwashing may be one of the most disliked chores in housekeeping and cleaning, so do it first...

- ❖ Clean all dishes, pots and pans of leftover food.
- ❖ Store food to be kept in a *covered container* in the refrigerator.
- ❖ Place throw away food inside used foil or plastic bags from your local store, close tightly, then place in the garbage container for trash day.
- ❖ One day's dishes *should not* be left over to accumulate into the next day.
- ❖ Wipe counters, table, stove and refrigerator.
- ❖ Dishwater should be as hot as is comfortable. Wash non-greasy items first, then greasy items. Change the dishwater if necessary.
- ❖ Complete the job: **Wash, Dry, Put Away....**

It is much harder to prepare meals in a kitchen that is greasy, dirty and disorganized. It is also not sanitary.

Grease splatters and spills seem to cause most of the major stove/range problems when they are not cleaned immediately and left to build up.

- ❖ Before you use the stove/range, turn on the ventilating fan to help control cooking odors. Clean the fan and filter often. The filter can usually be washed in sudsy warm water or it can be replaced.
- ❖ Wipe up food spills and splatters with a clean, damp cloth or paper towel.
- ❖ Remove and wash the drip pans in hot sudsy water, then rinse and dry completely.
- ❖ Wipe off the metal ring around electric surface units.
- ❖ Clean burner ports (holes) with a pipe clean on gas units.
- ❖ In most cases, the stove top will raise to allow you to wipe any spills that pass through the drip pans.
- ❖ Do not use any abrasive cleaning pads on the knobs and stove surface. These products will scratch and cause surface damage.

The oven is much easier to clean if done after each use. Ovens should be cleaned as soon as the oven is cool.

If the oven needs more cleaning, a warm sudsy cloth can be used to help loosen any baked on food, then rinse clean with a clear water damp cloth. Oven cleaning products are available for ovens with a heavy build up. Be sure to follow product directions carefully and **do not use them on any other surface of your stove**. Use **extra caution** when children are in the household.

A good time to clean the refrigerator is the day before grocery shopping when the food supply is lowest.

- ❖ Your refrigerator should be cleaned inside and outside at least once a week.
- ❖ Usually only a sudsy cloth will be necessary. Abrasive pads will damage the surface.
- ❖ Clean the folds in the gasket seal around the door with mild sudsy water, rinse and dry completely.
- ❖ The condenser coils located on the back or at the bottom of the refrigerator should be vacuumed or brushed periodically. Removing dust from this area will help the refrigerator run more efficiently.
- ❖ Do not restrict the air flow vents in the freezer section and do not overfill as it will cause severe damage to the unit.

Laundry

Laundry may be one of the more time consuming jobs, so be organized.

- ❖ All soiled laundry should have a *designated place* until “wash day”. Note: Hampers can be placed in the bedrooms for soiled clothing. Children should not be allowed to throw dirty clothing on the floor.
- ❖ Clothes should be washed at least once a week, more often for a larger family.
- ❖ *Sort* the laundry before washing. (White and light clothes together, dark clothes together, jeans together, towels and washcloths together, etc.) Note: Clothes will last longer and look better if sorted.
- ❖ Do not overload the machine.
- ❖ Make sure the machine is level.
- ❖ Complete the job: **Wash, Dry, Fold, Put Away...**
- ❖ Some washers and almost all dryers have a lint filter. Locate the lint filter and clean it after each use. Also the lint filter leading from the machine to the outside should be cleaned regularly.
- ❖ Wipe washer/dryer with damp cloth after each use.

If you get in the habit of completing the process, your home will be less cluttered and the job will be complete. Also, family members can find their clothes easier and your clothes will be less wrinkled.

Clothes closets and chests should always be kept orderly. Routinely discard unused clothes that are no longer useable or no longer needed. Clothes in good condition can be passed on to others.

Bathroom

Bathrooms are also a place for germs and pests to collect.

- ❖ Place a basket or hamper for laundry in the bathroom. If space is a problem, use a small one and remove the laundry after each day. Note: Hang wet clothes, damp towels and washcloths to dry before placing them in the laundry hamper.
- ❖ The sink should be cleaned after each use. Organize all supplies (soap, tooth brushes, toothpaste, hair brushes, deodorant, etc.) in a manner that is quickly and easily available for use. Note: Hairsprays, perfumes, mouthwash, etc. should be kept **out of the reach of small children**.
- ❖ The bathtub should be cleaned after each use and showers at least rinsed.
- ❖ Bathtubs, showers and sinks should be thoroughly sanitized at least once a week. They should be cleaned with cleaning solutions designed specifically for them.
- ❖ Toilet bowls should be brushed and sanitized with the appropriate cleaner at least once a week. With the seat raised, be sure to brush under the inside rim of the bowl. With a mild cleanser and cloth wipe the outside of the toilet including the base.

Bathrooms do not need to take a lot of time if they are **organized and cleaned regularly**. Do not put off cleaning the bathroom until it takes more time than it should to get the job done.

Beds

All beds should be made each day. If age appropriate, children should be responsible for their bed.

All *bed linens* should be changed at least once a week, more often if necessary.

Comforters and heavy bedspreads last longer and require less washing if they are taken off the bed during sleep.

Dusting

The same amount of dust settles on upholstered furniture as on smooth-top surfaces, even though you can't always see it.

- ❖ *Remove dust* at least once a week.
- ❖ Remove light covers periodically and clean with sudsy water, rinse and dry completely before replacing.
- ❖ Wipe TV screens with damp cloth or glass cleaner, when TV is turned OFF.

Windows and Glass Doors

- ❖ Exterior of the windows should be cleaned as often as necessary. (Check with your landlord to see if this is your responsibility.)
- ❖ Inside of the windows should be cleaned and inspected regularly for broken panes.
- ❖ Glass doors should be cleaned with appropriate glass cleaner at least once a week.

Window Blinds

Window blinds collect dust and dirt and sometimes it is overlooked as “not important”.

- ❖ Dust window blinds regularly with dusting mitts or clean absorbent gloves.
- ❖ Plastic blinds can be removed from the brackets and washed by dipping them in a bathtub of warm soapy water. Brush or wipe lightly each individual blind, then rise and let dry before inserting back into the brackets.
- ❖ Raise or open the blinds to look outside. Raise or open blinds for children. Opening an individual blind will bend or break the blind and string.

Garbage/Trash

Garbage is definitely high on the list to attract all kinds of pests and animals.

- ❖ **Bag all garbage** appropriately and store in a closed container to wait for “garbage day”.
- ❖ *Know the schedule* of your garbage pickup.
- ❖ Be sure your garbage/trash is in the *appropriate place* for pickup. Note: You definitely do not want to hold over any garbage/trash for the next cycle.
- ❖ If your area has dumpsters/large metal containers, be sure the person taking the trash is tall enough and strong enough to get the trash *completely into the container*.



Clutter

Clutter is the disorder produced by having a lot of things around that are *not put away or thrown away*. Clutter uses up space, makes it difficult to find things, and gets in the way when you want to clean.

- ❖ Pick up clothes, newspapers, mail, toys, and other items at the end of each day. If left, they require a large block of time to sort through and put away.
- ❖ Provide places for things to be kept when they are not in use, preferably near where they are used. There are many devices available, such as shelving, hooks, bins, and boxes that are inexpensive and greatly improve storage space. Be creative. You can take an ordinary box and cover with shelf paper for decoration.
- ❖ A wastebasket in each room makes trash disposal easier.
- ❖ Get rid of things in all rooms, including the kitchen, that are no longer usable or you are no longer interested in.
- ❖ Encourage family members to put things away after each use.

Young children do not always know where to begin when it is time to put things away. A general request of “*put away your toys*” or “*clean up your room*” may not be as successful as specific statements. Using statements such as “*pick up your crayons, then your puzzles*” or whatever the specific object may be will help your child to understand what is required.

Products

There are a lot of products available for almost any cleaning job you may have.

- ❖ Buy wisely.
- ❖ Do not have products on hand that you do not need.
- ❖ Use the appropriate product for the job.
- ❖ Use the product brand that you feel does the best job for you. Note: A well known brand *may or may not* be the best.
- ❖ Read all labels and follow the directions.
- ❖ Always store products ***out of the reach of children***.
- ❖ Keep on hand a plunger for minor stopped toilets and a sink plunger for minor stopped bathroom and kitchen sinks.
- ❖ Use coupons to save money on the products you use.
- ❖ Be resourceful, recycle and save money. Note: Look around for items that can be recycled for another purpose.

Summary

- ❖ Make cleaning up a habit.
- ❖ Organize and use a system.
- ❖ Prevent unnecessary cleaning.
- ❖ Get rid of clutter.
- ❖ Provide places for storage.
- ❖ Reduce the amount of dirt that gets inside.
- ❖ Wipe up spills as they occur.

