

THE PROBLEM WITH SQUATTERS

Squatters can cause a surprisingly wide range of damage—some accidental, some deliberate—especially if a property sits vacant for a while. It's not always catastrophic, but the longer they stay, the higher the risk.

Physical damage to the structure

They may break in through doors or windows, which often leads to:

- Broken locks, smashed glass, damaged frames
- Holes in walls or ceilings
- Damaged flooring (especially from moisture or heavy use)

Utility and system damage

Unauthorized occupants often tamper with utilities:

- Illegal electrical hookups → fire hazards
- Plumbing misuse → leaks, flooding, sewage backups
- HVAC systems stripped, damaged, or run improperly

Theft and stripping of materials

In some cases, squatters (or others taking advantage of an unsecured property) remove valuable components:

- Copper wiring and pipes
- Appliances

- Fixtures like sinks, cabinets, or light fittings

Sanitation and health hazards

Without proper waste disposal:

- Garbage buildup
 - Human waste issues
 - Mold growth from poor ventilation or leaks
- These can turn the property into a biohazard and make cleanup expensive.

Fire risk

Improvised heating, candles, or unsafe wiring significantly increase the chance of fire.

Pest infestations

Food waste and neglect attract rodents, insects, and other pests that can spread beyond the property.

Legal/financial damage

Even beyond physical harm:

- Costly eviction process (especially under laws in places like California)
- Lost rental income
- Potential liability if someone gets injured on the property

Neighborhood impact

Vacant properties with squatters can attract vandalism or

additional trespassers, lowering nearby property values and increasing crime risk.