

“WEAR AND TEAR” VS. DAMAGE

Normal wear and tear is the natural, minor damage that happens in a rental over time, no matter how careful a tenant is. It depends on factors like how long the tenant lived there, the condition at move-in, general use, and whether pets were allowed. Collection of rent is your sole compensation for normal wear and tear. The security deposit is the remedy for damage beyond normal wear and tear.

Examples include small scratches on walls, minor carpet wear or stains, loose hinges, or nail holes. These are considered normal and cannot be charged to the tenant. However, bigger issues—like torn carpet—are considered damage and may be charged.

Repairs are often needed after a tenant moves out, however, landlords should expect some level of normal wear. To avoid disputes, it's best to take clear photos at both move-in and move-out. These can be crucial if disagreements go to court.

Wear & Tear

- Worn out keys
- Loose hinges/handles
- Carpet seam unglued
- Linoleum worn thin
- Stain on ceiling from rain/bad plumbing
- Faded/chipped/cracked paint
- Bent drapery rod
- Heat blistered blinds
- Sticky window
- Toilet runs/wobbles
- Closet/bi-fold door off track
- Loose/stubborn locks
- Worn/dirty carpeting
- Scuffed wood floors
- Worn countertop
- Settlement cracks in plaster
- Loose Wallpaper
- Faded curtains
- Musty odor in basement
- Loose/inoperable faucet handle

VS

Damage

- Lost keys
- Damage to the door from forced entry
- Rust/oil stains on carpet
- Linoleum with tears/holes
- Stain on ceiling from over-flowing bathtub
- Unapproved, bad tenant paint job
- Broken drapery rod
- Blinds with bent slats
- Broken window
- Broken toilet seat/tank cover
- Damaged/missing bi-fold door
- Broken/missing locks
- Torn/stained/burned carpeting
- Badly scratched/gouged wood floors
- Burned/cut countertop
- Holes in walls (from carelessness)
- Ripped or marked up wallpaper
- Torn/missing curtains or drapes
- Odors from pets, smoking, cooking, etc.
- Broken/missing faucet handle