

Deposit Controversy

Point Of Disagreement: What Are Normal Wear and Tear?

landlord has to replace one coffee table, however, he buys it for \$35 or \$40 just like anyone else.

In a recent Detroit Free Press story, a chipped sink incident was cited. The landlord deducted the cost of replacing a chipped kitchen sink. The local tenants union said the sink chip should be repaired. Perhaps the tenants union knows of an unheralded process by which a sink may be repaired. According to three Detroit plumbing supply houses a chipped sink cannot be repaired but may be disguised with touchup paint. Touch - up repair on a chipped sink is not an acceptable alternative. Ask the FHA inspector.

Landlords and tenants most often disagree about what constitutes normal wear and tear. No standards of minimal housekeeping have been established. Apartment living is different from living in one's own home. Figures show that the average homeowner paints his interior walls about every five years. Apartments need to be painted twice in the same period.

Landlords generally accept the outlay for painting at two year intervals, but seldom does a tenant move out leaving the vacated apartment in shape for the next family.

Moving tenants leave a vast array of discarded and unwanted junk behind that must be disposed of, in many cases, in a truck. Broken furniture, rotting food, pets not permitted in the new home, used bars of soap stuck firmly to bathroom fixtures. New tenants expect an apartment to be clean, maybe not spotless. They don't expect to clean, scrub, and dispose of someone else's junk. Perhaps the wall isn't caved in, but a cleaning company must be hired. Why should the landlord absorb the cost of a cleaning job that the tenant really should have done.

MANY TIMES WHEN a tenant is moving, especially in a metropolitan area, he disappears without a trace. The money he owes, although he owes it, isn't enough for court action by the landlord. However, the damage

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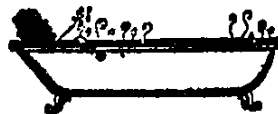
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