

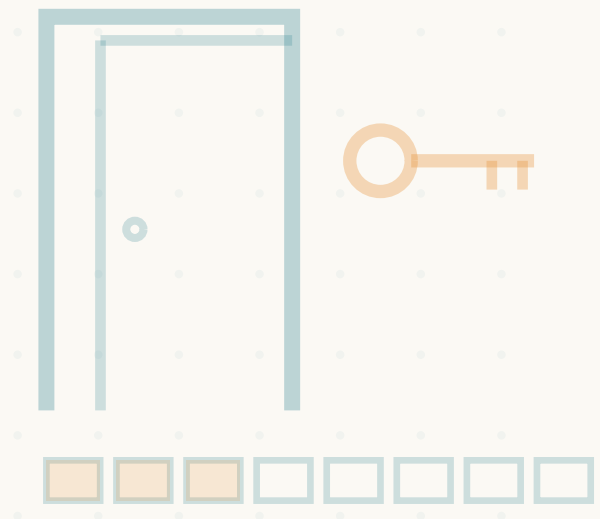


AN ARDENT WORKSHOP PRODUCT

The Move-In Condition Checklist

The day-one walk, on paper — with a worked example.

Free · 28 checks · print pages 5 and 6 of 7



The hour that protects the deposit

A deduction is hard to answer after the fact if nothing was written down on the day the keys changed hands. At move-out, two people look at the same worn carpet and one of them has a dated photograph of it. Whoever has the photograph is describing a fact. Whoever does not is offering a recollection.

This page is the cheapest hour in renting. Walk the unit before a single box comes in, and fill it in with a pen. **The blank is pages 5 and 6 of 7** — the two headed “Your move-in condition checklist”. Print those, and page 2 (this one) too if you want to tick the habits off as you walk; pages 3 and 4 are a worked example. (Those are the numbers your PDF reader shows — the small number in the footer is one lower, because the cover is not numbered.)

Ten habits that make a day-one record worth something

- ☐ Do it BEFORE a single box comes in. An empty room photographs honestly; a furnished one hides the floor and all of the baseboards.
- ☐ Take one continuous walkthrough video first — open every door, run every faucet, test every lock, every light, and every fan.
- ☐ Wide shot of each room first, then close on every mark. The wide shot is what places the detail in a room.
- ☐ Shoot floors low, from two opposite corners, in daylight. Flooring is expensive to replace and hard to argue about later without a day-one photograph.
- ☐ Fill in every row, including the ones where the answer is Good. A blank row is not evidence that something was fine; it is evidence that nobody looked.
- ☐ Keep the original files with their timestamps. Do not screenshot or re-save.
- ☐ Lay out every key, fob, and remote and photograph them as a group with the count visible — the count is the point, not the cut of any one key.
- ☐ Photograph every utility meter dial.
- ☐ Back it all up to a second place the same week. One copy is not a copy — and keep that folder as private as the keys, because it shows your address and your locks.
- ☐ Send both completed sheets to the landlord, and keep proof that you sent them.

What a finished checklist looks like

The same fictional tenancy the full binder opens on. Notice the two kinds of row that matter most: the ones already imperfect on day one and photographed anyway — those are the ones you will be glad of — and the single row with **No** in the photo column, which is how a deposit quietly starts leaking.

Condition key: G = good · LW = light wear · W = worn · D = damaged · M = missing · NP = not present

Area / what to check	Cond.	Photo?	Notes
ENTRY & HALLWAY			
Front door, frame, and weatherstripping	G	Yes	
Locks, deadbolt, and every key and fob you were handed	G	Yes	2 door keys, 1 mail key, 1 building fob
Entry flooring and the threshold strip	G	Yes	
LIVING ROOM			
Living-room flooring	G	Yes	
Walls and paint	G	Yes	
Ceiling — stains, cracks, and texture	G	Yes	
Windows, screens, latches, and locks	W	Yes	Left window latch does not catch; reported day 2
Blinds or window coverings	G	No	Missed this one on day one
KITCHEN			
Refrigerator — interior, shelves, drawers, and door seals	G	Yes	
Range or cooktop — burners, racks, glass, and knobs	G	Yes	
Dishwasher — racks, rollers, seal, and interior	LW	Yes	Lower rack tines already rusting
Countertops — burns, chips, and knife marks	G	Yes	
Cabinet doors, hinges, handles, and drawer slides	G	Yes	
Under-sink cabinet base and the plumbing under it	LW	Yes	Slight swelling at the back left corner
Kitchen flooring, especially in front of the sink and range	G	Yes	

The finished checklist, continued

Condition key: G = good · LW = light wear · W = worn · D = damaged · M = missing · NP = not present

Area / what to check	Cond.	Photo?	Notes
BEDROOM 1			
Flooring or carpet	G	Yes	
Walls, and every anchor or nail hole	G	Yes	
Closet doors, rod, shelving, and track	G	Yes	
MAIN BATHROOM			
Tub or shower surround, and the caulk line	G	Yes	
Grout and tile	G	Yes	
Toilet, seat, tank, and base	LW	Yes	Seat already scratched and loose
Vanity, sink, faucet, and stopper	G	Yes	
Exhaust fan, light, and flooring	G	Yes	
WHOLE UNIT			
Baseboards, trim, and door casings	G	Yes	
Smoke alarms and CO alarms — count, location, and test date	G	Yes	3 smoke, 1 CO; all tested day one
Any evidence of pests — droppings, traps, glue boards, or bait	G	Yes	Two old bait stations under the sink, photographed
Any evidence of damp, mold, or a past leak	LW	Yes	Bubbled paint under the bathroom window; reported day 4
OUTDOOR & STORAGE			
Window screens — counted and photographed as a set	G	Yes	6 screens, all present and intact

Your move-in condition checklist

Address: _____ Date: _____ Sheet 1 of 2

Key: G = good · LW = light wear · W = worn · D = damaged · M = missing · NP = not present · Photo? = write Yes or No

Area / what to check	Cond.	Photo?	Notes
ENTRY & HALLWAY			
Front door, frame, and weatherstripping			
Locks, deadbolt, and every key and fob you were handed			
Entry flooring and the threshold strip			
LIVING ROOM			
Living-room flooring			
Walls and paint			
Ceiling — stains, cracks, and texture			
Windows, screens, latches, and locks			
Blinds or window coverings			
KITCHEN			
Refrigerator — interior, shelves, drawers, and door seals			
Range or cooktop — burners, racks, glass, and knobs			
Dishwasher — racks, rollers, seal, and interior			
Countertops — burns, chips, and knife marks			
Cabinet doors, hinges, handles, and drawer slides			
Under-sink cabinet base and the plumbing under it			
Kitchen flooring, especially in front of the sink and range			

Signed by the tenant: _____

Keep this with your other tenancy papers. Never write an account number, a door or alarm code, or a login on it.

Your move-in condition checklist

Address: _____ Date: _____ Sheet 2 of 2

Key: G = good · LW = light wear · W = worn · D = damaged · M = missing · NP = not present · Photo? = write Yes or No

Area / what to check	Cond.	Photo?	Notes
BEDROOM 1			
Flooring or carpet			
Walls, and every anchor or nail hole			
Closet doors, rod, shelving, and track			
MAIN BATHROOM			
Tub or shower surround, and the caulk line			
Grout and tile			
Toilet, seat, tank, and base			
Vanity, sink, faucet, and stopper			
Exhaust fan, light, and flooring			
WHOLE UNIT			
Baseboards, trim, and door casings			
Smoke alarms and CO alarms — count, location, and test date			
Any evidence of pests — droppings, traps, glue boards, or bait			
Any evidence of damp, mold, or a past leak			
OUTDOOR & STORAGE			
Window screens — counted and photographed as a set			

Signed by the tenant: _____ Sent to the landlord on: _____

Keep this with your other tenancy papers. Never write an account number, a door or alarm code, or a login on it.

A checklist records. A binder compares.

This page does the part that works on paper, and it is the part worth doing first. What it cannot do is the other end of the tenancy — because the question at move-out is usually not “what condition is this in”, it is “what changed, and whose is it”. That needs both ends of the record in the same place, and something to compare them.

WHAT THE FULL BINDER ADDS

All **70** checks rather than 28, each scored again on the way out and compared — returning a verdict per row: pre-existing and documented, pre-existing but with no photograph, no change, ordinary wear worth arguing, undocumented, or likely chargeable — gated on whether you photographed it, whether the item wears with use, and how long you actually lived there. Then it totals only the rows your evidence cannot defend against the deposit being held. Plus the notice-to-vacate deadline worked backward from your lease end, a repair log judged against response windows by urgency, a rent ledger, an evidence index, and a deposit worksheet that answers their itemization line by line.

The Renter’s Home Records & Deposit-Protection Binder — ten tabs across Excel, Google Sheets & LibreOffice, plus three PDF guides. [See the full binder at ardentworkshop.com](https://ardentworkshop.com), or [browse all the free tools](#).

A note on what this is. A records aid you keep — **not legal advice**, and not an opinion about what your landlord may lawfully keep. Deposit limits, permitted deductions, return deadlines, notice periods, and where the line between ordinary wear and damage falls are set by your state, sometimes your city, and your lease; they differ enormously and they change, so look yours up rather than relying on this page. The worked example is fictional. Keep your filled-in copy with your other tenancy papers, and do not write an account number, a policy number, a door or alarm code, or a login on it. Free to use; please don’t resell or redistribute.