



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE COMMUTER STUDENT SERVICES

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(207) 780-4090**

**<http://usm.maine.edu/commuter/>
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BEFORE YOU MOVE OUT

Give sufficient notice

- Notify your landlord in writing (and keep copies for yourself) when you intend to move out.
- Landlords are allowed to require their tenants to make an initial “security deposit” payment that will protect them against damage caused by their tenants to the apartment. This security deposit must be returned to the tenant unless the tenant has caused damage to the apartment *beyond* “normal wear and tear.” The landlord is required to return your security deposit or provide a written statement of the reasons for keeping the deposit. If you are a tenant at will, this must be done within 21 days after you have turned the apartment over to the landlord. If you have a written lease, the landlord must return your deposit within the time stated in your lease; but, in no event, can this period exceed 30 days. Remember, a landlord may keep all or part of your security deposit for non-payment of rent or utility charges or the cost of disposing of unclaimed property. (Ref. Section 14.3 Maine Consumer Law Guide - <http://www.state.me.us/ag/contents.htm>)
- You should also give plenty of notice to the utility companies providing services (phone, power, water, cable, etc.) so that your service will be turned off at your old place in a timely fashion, and so that they will be activated upon your arrival at your new home.

Clean your rental unit - After your stuff is moved out, do some cleaning. (Hint: clean the bathroom and the major parts of the kitchen, like the stove and the refrigerator for instance, especially well) Even though a landlord might not be able to withhold the security deposit for the unit being dirty, s/he may be able to withhold part of it, and will usually be much more agreeable if the unit is at least as clean as you found it.

Make any small repairs - If there are small repairs which need to be made to the rental unit, you may be better off taking care of them yourself instead of leaving them. The landlord will simply hire the work out at the prevailing rate and remove the money from your security deposit. **HOWEVER**, any repairs that involve structural changes should not be attempted without landlord approval and licensed contractors.

Inspect the property with your landlord - Schedule a time to go through the rental unit with your landlord to ensure that everything is in the same condition it was when you moved in. Ask the landlord if there are any damages for which you will be charged.

Leave your forwarding address - Notify your landlord of a forwarding address. If you do not notify your landlord of your forwarding address you may jeopardize your chances of getting your security deposit back.

Turn in your keys - Make sure you turn them in when you move out.

Change your address

- There are complete change-of-address kits available for free at the Post Office (or online at <https://www.moversguide.com/>). Complete one of these immediately so that you don't have a significant delay in getting your mail.
- Write a note to ALL the banks, credit card companies, etc. that you deal with and give them your new address and phone company. Moving will not be considered sufficient reason for being late with bills.

If you have more questions, contact U.S.M. Student Legal Services at (207) 780-4792.