Check your lease and the DeKalb city ordinances to determine what obligations the landlord has placed on you for move-out procedures and cleaning. The DeKalb City ordinances on the landlord-tenant relationship is located at http://www.cityofdekalb.com/CityClerk/Municipal%20Code/Chapter%2010.pdf

Look to see if your lease

- Requires you to give several days notice to schedule a walk-through (move-out inspection) with your landlord.
- Has a set time and date for turning in your key and being completely moved out.

Thoroughly clean your apartment before moving out. The law requires that you return the apartment in as good condition as the apartment was at move-in, with an exception for “reasonable wear and tear.” Be sure to

- Obtain a check list from your landlord on what items he/she expects you to clean prior to moving out. Landlords commonly charge tenants for the following:
  - Not cleaning the oven
  - Not cleaning behind the oven and refrigerator
  - Not dusting ceiling fans, the tops of cabinets and the refrigerator, lighting fixtures, etc.
- Talk with your roommates about splitting up cleaning duties. Do not avoid cleaning certain areas because you feel that your roommates are not doing their share.
- Vacuum and steam clean all carpeting, sweep and mop hard surface floors, dust all surfaces, remove all personal belongings from the apartment, etc.
- Use magic eraser to remove scuffmarks from the walls.

Do not attempt to repaint your apartment without the consent of your landlord. Do not even attempt minor touch-ups. If you do have your landlord’s permission, remove a paint chip from the wall so a paint store can match the color.

Document the condition of the apartment in great detail before you move out and after you have thoroughly cleaned the apartment and removed all of your personal belongings. You can document the condition of your apartment by taking pictures and/or making a video recording.

Schedule a walk-through with your landlord early enough so that you can do extra cleaning or repairs. The purpose of a walk-through or move-out inspection is to correct problems so that the landlord won’t charge you for the items later. During the walk-through,

- Ask your landlord if there are any items that need to be cleaned or repaired so that you can correct the problems and avoid being charged.
- Bring copies of your move-in condition form and any other paperwork that documents repair problems throughout your lease term.
- Point out to your landlord items and areas that were already damaged, stained, or dirty when you moved in. If the damage was listed on your move-in condition form, notify your landlord of that fact.
- You and your landlord should fill out a move-out condition form detailing the condition of the apartment when the inspection is complete. Your landlord might provide the form, or you can hand-write the condition of the apartment and have you and your landlord sign the paper.

**Be careful what you sign during your walk-through and before you move out.** Do NOT sign any document in which you agree that
- You caused damage to the apartment, even if the landlord says that you must sign in order to turn in your keys.
- The landlord can make unnecessary repairs, painting, or steam cleaning.
- You forfeit your right to an itemization of the landlord’s expenses for damage to the apartment.

**Remember to turn in all of your keys to the landlord.** If you forget, your landlord will most likely charge you for re-coring door locks.

**Provide your landlord with your forwarding address.** The law obligates your landlord to return your deposit with an itemization/reconciliation statement within 30 days of move-out.

If you have any questions, please contact our office for a free consultation.

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