



Residential Leasing, Property Management & Sales

Tenant Handbook

Version 3.26.10

**Please keep this document in a safe
place for future reference.**

8400 N. Mopac Expwy., Ste. #200 ♦ Austin, Texas 78759
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www.recar-realtors.com

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8400 N. MOPAC EXPRESSWAY, STE. #200
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78759

Our welcome message to you

Thank you for selecting one of our properties for your new rental home. We value you as a resident and want to make sure you are aware of important information that will make your tenancy more enjoyable. This handbook outlines our responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to us and to the home. Please feel free to call upon us if there is anything you do not understand or if there is anything we can do to assist you.

The Staff and Management of
Recar & Associates, Realtors



Communications

At Recar & Associates, we believe that communication is the essential element in the success of our company. That is the underlying reason for the creation of this "Residents Handbook" for all of our tenants.

You may communicate with us through the following venues:

By Phone @ (512) 345-9886

Our phones are answered by a live person between the hours of 8:45 AM – 5:15 PM Monday through Friday (closed for lunch 11:30-12:30). After hours, our phones are answered by an automated system which can direct calls to the appropriate voice mailbox and, in the event of a maintenance emergency, automatically pages the maintenance person on call. Your questions and comments are always welcome.

By Fax @ (512) 345-2302

Our fax machine is on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may fax work orders or correspondence to us any time.

By U.S. Postal Service @

**8400 N. Mopac Expressway, Ste. #200
Austin, Texas 78759**

By email @ the following addresses, as indicated:

To verify notices/rents/etc. received: frontdesk@recar-realtors.com

To inquire about non-maintenance issues: rsc@recar-realtors.com

To submit routine maintenance requests:

Send an email to maintenance@recar-realtors.com; or

Visit our website to submit the request via our online forms

When You First Move In

A. **Be sure that you have transferred your utilities!**

With the approval of your rental application, the utilities have been scheduled to be turned off. Should you forget to have the utilities transferred, you could find your home without service or be liable for the days the service was in the owner's name.

B. **Please let us know if you use a P.O. Box to receive mail.**

We will mail you important information during your residency. These may include: copies of contracts or forms that you request; letters informing you when we haven't received your rent; invoices for late fees, "tenant charge" maintenance items, or NSF fees; notices of lease violations; general "reminder" letters; notices regarding seasonal maintenance that we have scheduled for your home; and tenant newsletters.

C. **Get to Know Your New Rental Home:**

When you first move-in, locate the breaker box and note the locations of any ground fault circuit breakers (the plugs with the reset switches on them). Also note the locations of the stove, hot water heater and air conditioner breakers. Locate the water shut off for the house - it is usually in the front yard near the street; there is often a secondary shut-off valve a few feet toward the property from the main valve. Also, locate the water shut off for the hot water heater and for under the sinks. Locating these items now may eliminate damages in the future.

Be aware that pull-down attic accesses are locked and attics are not to be accessible to tenants because electrical/plumbing connections could be disturbed, because most attics are not finished out to support storage weight, and because we do not want our tenants falling from those access ladders.

D. **Put this Handbook where you can find it:**

Before calling Recar & Associates, see if the answer to your questions are in this handbook. We love to hear from our tenants, but need to keep our time free for emergencies and urgent matters.

E. General Resident Responsibilities

Condominiums, duplexes and houses generally require greater upkeep than apartment dwellings. There is also greater responsibility required by the renters and you will be expected to care for the property as if it were your own. Your obligations in caring and maintaining the property are similar to those of an owner.

Unlike apartment complex maintenance, we do not have a staff maintenance crew. All of our maintenance services are provided by contracted commercial vendors who will schedule approved repairs with you (we do not release keys to vendors for routine maintenance repairs).

Our goal is to provide you a clean and functional home. However, the property is offered "as is". If you have request for repairs of cosmetic nature during your occupancy, we will contact the Landlord to make such requests on your behalf. Your assistance in helping with minor repairs will keep costs down for the Landlord and could give you better standing for the Landlord's consideration for future requests.

F. Move In Inventory & Condition Form (MICF)

Included in your move in packet is a property condition report. Recar & Associates provides this form for you to note the condition of the premises at the time you take possession of the Property.

Please sign the form, date it, and return it to Recar & Associates prior to moving any items into the house. If this report is not returned within 48 hours after move in, the property will be assumed to be completely in satisfactory condition. You could be held liable for any defects or damages brought to our attention or occurring after that time, so time is of the essence in protecting both you and the Landlord's interest.

G. Pets

No pets (animals, snakes, or birds, etc.) of any kind are allowed on the premises unless you have written permission and have paid applicable pet deposits. Additional pets, if allowed by the owner, require additional Pet Agreements/Deposits – "visiting" pets are not allowed for any length of time under any circumstances.

RENT COLLECTIONS

A. Rental Payments

All rent is due in full on or before the first day of each month, and late after the 3rd. Weekends and holidays are no exceptions, as we do pick up rents daily. Rents must be **received** in our office by the 3rd, so please allow extra time for postal delays if you are sending your payment by mail; postmark dates are not applicable for determining receipt.

Payment should be in check, money order, or certified funds and made payable to:

**Recar & Associates, Realtors
8400 North Mopac Expressway, Suite #200
Austin, TX 78759**

Payments submitted after the 3rd of the month must be paid in CERTIFIED FUNDS ONLY. We do not accept cash payments at any time (no excepts).

You may pay in person, Monday-Friday 8:45am-5:15pm, or use our after-hours drop slot to the left of our front door. **PLEASE WRITE YOUR ADDRESS** on all payments to assure proper credit. All accounting is done by the property address. Also, to avoid any misunderstanding, please put your address on every correspondence with the office.

B. Late Fees – All rents RECEIVED after the third (3rd) of the month will be assessed applicable late fees until the rent is paid in full. All payments will first be applied to non-rent items and outstanding balances, so it is crucial that late fees be paid so that it doesn't leave your rent payment short (and subject to further late fees).

C. Default of Rental Payment – Any resident whose rent is not paid in full by the 3rd of the month will be considered in default of the Lease and eviction procedures will be initiated. A prerequisite Notice to Vacate will be mailed/delivered if we have not received rent by the 4th of the month. **Delinquent Tenants will be charged the certified postage for those mailed notices.** We have a strict contractual obligation with the Landlord regarding rent collection and therefore must enforce strict guidelines. If you receive a notice in error, please contact our Resident Services Coordinator immediately.

D. Returned Checks

The amount of any bad checks, plus the returned check charge and applicable late fees must be paid in certified funds or a money order (no checks, no cash) within 24 hours of notification, or legal action may be taken. After a check is returned to use for insufficient funds, you may be required to pay either with a money order or certified funds for all future rent payments. All fees will be applied, regardless of the reason. Your bank may reimburse you if they were at fault. We will not, under any circumstances, re-deposit an NSF/returned check.

E. Current Phone Numbers

All residents are required to have phone accessibility and to provide Recar & Associates with their home and work numbers - even unlisted numbers must be provided to Recar & Associates so that we can communicate effectively and in the event of an emergency. Please be sure to notify Recar & Associates when you change phone numbers!

While not required under the Lease, we will attempt to call you if we haven't received your rental payment by the deadline date.

GENERAL LEASE PROVISIONS

A. Guests

Any person or persons staying more than 10 consecutive days requires written permission obtained from Recar & Associates. Only those persons listed on your rental application have permission to occupy the premises. Additional persons will be considered unauthorized occupants and could put you in default of your Lease. Contact our Resident Services Coordinator about adding additional occupants to your lease, if needed. You are responsible for the behavior of your guests and all portions of your Lease also apply to your guests.

B. Lease Renewal

Approximately 90 days prior to the expiration of your Lease, we will send you the renewal forms for your review and signature. The Renewal must be returned to our office before the end of your current lease period. For your convenience, a Move Out Notice will also be sent along with the renewal in the event that you choose not to renew your Lease.

C. Sixty Days Written Notice

A sixty (60) day written notice must be given to Recar & Associates prior to your move-out. THE WRITTEN NOTICE IS REQUIRED EVEN IF YOU PLAN TO VACATE AT THE END OF THE LEASE. The notice should state a definite moving date and your forwarding address.

D. Breaking the Lease (default)

Under the terms of the Lease, it is possible to move out prior to the end of the Lease without "breaking" it and being in default.

There are very specific steps to be followed:

1. Submit a written notice that indicates your move-out date; it is in your best interest to notify us with as much advance notice as possible.
2. Pay the "cost of reletting" fee; this fee is equal to one month's rent and must be submitted with your written notice. Upon receipt of the fee, we will assign a leasing agent to market the property.
3. You shall remain responsible for rents until the property is relet and the new tenant takes possession and begins paying rent; Texas statutes preclude an owner from collecting double rents, so it is possible you could be refunded for the days that the new tenant occupies the property. Rent payments will be required to be paid at the first of each applicable month until the property is relet.
4. You must leave the premises clean, undamaged and ready for occupancy. You should arrange to turn over keys to Recar & Associates as soon as your cleaning is complete.

Please refer to the lease for applicable penalties should the above guidelines not be followed. These Handbook guidelines given shall not supercede the provisions of the Lease, nor the penalties associated with default. You should review your Lease carefully and rely on that information as the prevailing source of information.

GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION

A. Keys and Locks

All locks are re-keyed with each new resident and properties will be certified to comply with the Texas Lock Codes. Alterations or replacement of locks, installations of bolts, knockers, mirrors, or other attachments to the interior or exterior of the doors requires the approval of Recar & Associates. Recar & Associates must have keys to each lock in the house. Recar & Associates may gain access and re-key if access is denied, and charge the cost to the tenant. Copies of the new keys will be available at the office during open hours. All keys are to be returned to Recar & Associates upon vacating the premises. If you are locked out of your house, you may borrow a key from the management Monday-Friday 8:45am-5:45pm. Should you become locked out, it is your responsibility and you may call any locksmith of your choice to let you into the property.

B. Trash, Garbage and Recycling

All garbage, trash and recyclable materials must be placed in appropriate containers. All containers are to be discreetly stored. Containers are not to be out of the storage area except during pickup days. Any recycling items collected must be properly contained and discreetly stored as well.

C. Disturbances, Noise and Nuisance

All tenants, residents and guests are expected to conduct themselves in a way that will not offend or disturb the neighbors. Any activity that causes extreme or excessive noise, traffic, or disturbance of any kind is cause for eviction. This includes loud music or domestic altercations. If music or other sounds can be heard outside the perimeter of the premises leased, it is considered too loud.

D. Periodic Inspections by Management

As part of our agreement with the owner of the property, Recar & Associates will conduct periodic drive-by and routine surveys of the condition of the property. We hope you will understand our concern towards maintaining your home and will cooperate by keeping the yards and interior looking their best. In the event that we schedule an interior inspection, we will make every effort to give you advance notice whenever possible. You will be notified of any problems found and given ample time to remedy them.

E. Parking/Vehicles

All vehicles shall be parked in assigned areas (garages, parking lots, driveways, etc.), or on the public street where allowed. You are not allowed to park on lawns, sidewalks, and the areas not specifically designed for parking. All vehicles must be registered, licensed, and operable at all times. Only minor repairs to vehicles are allowed on the property. No oil/fluid stains are allowed on the garage floor, driveways, walkways, or any other area of the property. If your vehicle leaks fluids, place a protective covering or pan under the vehicle to catch the leaks.

F. Insurance

While there is no legal requirement for you to carry renters insurance, we strongly recommend it. Regardless of cause (broken pipe, leaking roof, etc.), the owner's insurance will not cover your personal possessions! The cost of renter's insurance is minimal compared to costs involved in loss or damage.

In and Around the House

A. Heat/AC units

All air conditioning filters need to be changed once a month in order to reduce excess airborne debris in the systems and ductwork. A good rule of thumb is to change your filter and check your battery each month when you pay your electric bill. A clean filter will also increase air flow, put less stress on the system, and save you money on your utility bills.

During our hot summers, the cooling systems may not keep the house as comfortable as you desire. When the heat index is high, the unit may not lower the inside temperature more than 10-15 degrees below the outside temperature. Closing the window coverings, keeping doors closed, and not running hot appliances (oven, stove, etc.) will improve the cooling ability inside your home. Poor cooling may also be due to a clogged filter. If water drips from the inside unit, it is usually a clogged condensation drain line. If this occurs, turn the unit off and the water should stop. Notify Recar & Associates so that we can send out a technician to clear the line.

B. Circuit Breakers

If you experience partial loss of electricity in your home, a tripped breaker is probably to blame. Be aware the circuit breakers still move slightly when tripped, and may appear to be ON when it has “popped” or tripped. To reset, turn the breaker to the OFF position, then back to ON again. You should also check for tripped GFCI plugs – these are the plugs that have a reset switch on them. The ground fault circuit (GFCI) breakers detect even slight voltage changes and cut the power during fluctuations. They are usually used for bathrooms, sinks, exterior plugs, garages, and some lights. If you lose power to a plug near a water source, it is usually the GFCI circuit. Most GFI’s located at the breaker box are marked with a red or yellow button. Many homes have a GFI at the plug at the outlet. When those “pop”, simply reset the breaker as outlined above, or per the instructions on the outlet cover.

C. Extermination

Residents are responsible for their own pest control, with the exception of wood destroying insects (ie. termites or carpenter ants). Every attempt is made for your new home to be pest free at the time you move in. Should you notice any pests upon your move-in, please notify management immediately. We will schedule a general extermination (inside only). To get the most from the treatment, you will need to empty kitchen and bath cabinets where pests tend to hide. Federal law prohibits the technicians from spraying any food or cooking/eating utensils, so be sure to remove/cover them. Pets should also be removed from those rooms to be treated; completely removing them from your home is encouraged.

Residents are responsible for fire ants and other exterior pest treatments. It is your responsibility to deal with squirrels, insects, wasps and bees, etc. due to the conditions in Austin that increase the likelihood that they will exist in and around your rental home. Recar & Associates assumes no responsibility for roaches, mice, ants, fleas or other pests. Please be aware that you will be charged for any damage caused by uncontrolled pests (e.g. ants building nests in the air conditioning unit and damaging the unit). Please notify Recar & Associates if you suspect any termite or wood destroying insects around the house or grounds.

MAINTENANCE, DAMAGE, & REPAIRS

I. **Move In Repairs**

Any items which need attention after you move in, must be submitted on a Request for Repairs form so we can assess them promptly. Maintenance will not be dispatched from your Move In Condition Form, as it is only a statement and record of condition. Please note that unless special requests were made in your Application for Rental, the property is being offered "as is". While it is our intention to maintain our rental properties, we can not fix/correct non-mechanical items not agreed to in advance of your application's approval.

II. **Routine Maintenance Repairs**

You are expected to maintain the home and keep it in as good a condition as when you took possession. Only repairs required because of normal wear will be made by Recar & Associates. You will be charged for repairs caused by misuse, neglect, or requests for which no problems are found by the vendor.

A. **Maintenance Requests**

In order to provide you with better service, all routine (non-emergency) maintenance requests are required to be submitted **in writing**. They may be brought, sent, faxed to our office or submitted via our website.

When making a request for maintenance, please be specific about the problem so that we can dispatch the correct vendor who can make the needed repairs.

Right: The left burner on the stove is not working.

Wrong: The stove is broken.

Write clearly and legibly. Please notify our Maintenance Services Coordinator if you have not been contacted by our contracted repairman within 24 hours (not including weekends and holidays). The vendor will schedule the repair visit with you. Appointments can only be arranged during business hours Monday thru Friday. Vendors will invoice us for missed appointments; if that occurs, we assess the invoice cost as a Tenant Charge to reimburse the Landlord.

B. Who Does What

All "breakdowns", system failures and structural defects must be reported to Recar & Associates immediately. If an urgent repair is needed, you are responsible for stopping further damage from occurring, if possible. If there is a leak, stop the water source immediately. If the problem is electrical, turn the breaker serving that appliance or area OFF until the repairperson arrives. You will not be reimbursed for any unauthorized repairs you make or pay for. Please consult management before making any repairs on your own – many of our units are new, with warranties still in effect. Because all dispatched maintenance is contracted out, it is crucial that we work as a team to keep repairs to a minimum; high maintenance expenses can affect your Lease renewal terms.

Some examples of maintenance that is considered Tenant responsibility:

- Replace light bulbs
- Replace torn, damaged screens
- Replace A/C heat filters (every month)
- Relight gas heaters or hot water heaters
- Treat for fire ants and other lawn insects
- Keep flowerbeds weeded, lawns mowed/edged, hedges trimmed
- Replace smoke detector batteries

Some examples of maintenance that is considered Landlord responsibility:

- Repairs to heat/AC systems from normal use
- Replace heating units or hot water heaters from normal use
- Repair leaks in roof
- Replace or repair any part of plumbing that fails from normal use
- Remove broken electrical components
- Repair/paint rotted wood
- Treat for termites or carpenter ants

Examples of repairs tenants will be responsible for reimbursing the Landlord for ("Tenant Charges") :

- Replace heating elements/hot water tanks if caused by empty tank
- Repairing burst water pipes when caused by freezing weather
- Any unusual damage or extraordinary wear on any floors, walls, ceilings, caused by pets, animals, children, guests, smoking or any unusual or unreasonable use.
- Damage to fences, outside walls, shrubbery, trees or plantings

C. Unauthorized repairs

Please do not make any repairs or authorize any repair without written permission from Recar & Associates. We must authorize all repairs – residents will be liable for work initiated without proper approvals. Per the Texas Property Codes, you may not withhold rent for maintenance repairs, so we want to assist you in knowing what the owner will or will not do in advance of your needing the service.

D. Lawn and Grounds

You are expected to care for and maintain the lawn and grounds of your new rental home. This includes regularly cutting the grass; fertilizing the lawn; trimming shrubs; edging all walkways, curbs and driveways; treating fire ant beds; and keeping vines from growing on the house. Please keep shrub and tree growth away from the roof, eaves and side of house. You are required to report any condition, which can cause damage, permanent or temporary, and to treat for lawn pests. Flowering trees must be pruned at the proper time of the year for their species and all flower beds must be kept free of weeds, grass, etc. Whatever is in the bed as a cover (pine straw, bark mulch, etc.) must be maintained by the tenant. Lawns should be maintained at 2-4 inches in length. When cutting or trimming around air conditioner units, please remember to keep clippings from getting in the the exterior unit, as accumulation can cause the unit to overheat, shut down, and cause higher electric consumption.

In the event that the landscaping is not being properly cared for, management will contact you and/or send a letter requesting that this work be done. If corrective action is not promptly taken within a reasonable period of time, management will send out a landscaping crew and bill the tenant for the work performed. In most neighborhoods, there are Homeowner Associations that require residents to conform to a reasonable standard of visual care and appearance; this insures that you have a desirable place to live and that expectations are made of the neighbors around you as well.

E. Light Bulbs

At move in, all light fixtures will be equipped with the proper light bulbs. All burned out bulbs are to be replaced during the tenant's occupancy (including floodlights) with the proper bulb styles and wattage. Upon moveout, all lights must be equipped with the proper number and kinds of bulbs.

F. Plumbing/Septic Systems

You are responsible for keeping all sinks, lavatories and commodes free of clogs. Please do not allow anyone to throw anything into the plumbing system or use it for any purpose other than what it is designed. You will be responsible for any damage or stoppage after five days of occupancy unless it was caused by mechanical failure of the plumbing system or caused by the presence of tree roots in the system. Tenants should administer enzymes into septic systems twice per year (unless otherwise instructed) and should redirect drain fields twice per year; please ask your Resident Services Coordinator for special instructions if your property has a septic system.

G. Waterbeds

Tenant will be responsible for any damage caused by a waterbed. Please alert your renter's insurance carrier to the presence of any water furniture in order to assure coverage.

H. Walls and Ceilings

Please keep walls of the homes clean and unmarred. Do not paint or wallpaper the walls without prior approval from Management. You are welcome to hang pictures on the wall with small nails and picture hangers – toggle bolts and wall anchors are not acceptable! IF YOU ARE A SMOKER, YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL RESIDUE AND DAMAGE.

I. Vinyl Floor Coverings/Hardwood Floors

With normal household use, vinyl and hardwood floors may be washed with a solution of warm water and soap. A thorough cleaning is necessary three or four times a year. Do not use gas, benzine, naphtha, turpentine, or waxes containing these solvents. Rubber heel marks can easily be removed with the proper products. Do not apply varnish, lacquer, or shellac to the floor. When waxing, use a water-emulsion for hardwood floors, avoiding any solvent based waxes. You will be responsible for damage to flooring, such as broken tiles or torn floor covering or improper cleaning procedures.

J. Carpet Care

Routine carpet care requires a thorough vacuuming at least once a week to remove the soil from the carpet. Heavy traffic areas require more frequent vacuuming to eliminate the coarse particles that can act as an abrasive to the fibers. A motor driven brush and a beater type vacuum cleaner is best if the home you rent has carpet. Shampooing is recommended once or twice a year and is your responsibility. Before moving in, the carpets were professionally cleaned. We do require that residents have carpets professionally cleaned when vacating; a copy of the cleaning company's bill is required at time of key drop. Please check with Recar & Associates before moving out for a list of acceptable carpet cleaning companies.

K. Stoves

If the oven or broiler will not operate, check the timer on the stove. Generally the knob will pop out if the timer is off. Turn the knob until it pops out. Instructions for other types are on the face of the stove. Be careful when cleaning the oven that the oven cleaner does not drip onto the cabinets below or on the floor. Do not use oven cleaner on self-cleaning or continuous-cleaning ovens. You will be charged for damage to an appliance caused by improper use or cleaning, or by lack of maintenance.

L. Dishwashers

Use at least once a week. Seals may dry and the motor may be damaged by long periods of not being run. Clean the door and check the bottom of the dishwasher each use for items that may fall from the racks. Check the perimeter and top of the door for food items falling from the counter.

M. Garbage Disposals

Garbage disposals are not for bones, greasy items, meat, or any other similar materials. If the motor hums, but does not appear to be grinding food, turn the switch off. Unjam the disposal with a broom handle or Allen wrench – NEVER reach into the unit with your hand! Reset the circuit breaker on the bottom or side of the disposal (this is usually a red or yellow button). If the unit turns easily by hand but not with power, call for service. All non-mechanical jams and stoppages will be considered to be tenant responsibility; service calls will be billed to you.

N. Washer/Dryer Hookups

When you install your washer and dryer, it is a good time to check your hoses and washers to eliminate leaks. IF you are going to be absent from the property for an extended period of time, turn off the hot and cold water supply. Check the wall and floor monthly for evidence of a hidden leak. Be sure that your renter's insurance coverage will protect you in the event that your hoses burst and flood the property...it is very expensive to replace flooring and damaged sheetrock.

O. Maintenance Hints & Helps

Sometimes it is possible to avoid unneeded maintenance calls. Please go through these questions before submitting a Request for Repairs. Although we do not expect you to be able to repair everything that breaks down, here's some suggestions which might help keep maintenance costs down for the owner, and avoid unnecessary inconvenience and delays to you.

IF YOU HAVE AIR CONDITIONING AND/OR HEATING PROBLEMS:

- 1) Did you check your inside and outside breakers? Be sure to flip all breakers off and back on.
- 2) Is your filter clean? It should be changed every 30 days.
- 3) Is your thermostat set to "AUTO" instead of "ON"?
- 4) Is your thermostat set to "COOL" or "HEAT" instead of "OFF"?
- 5) Is your thermostat set higher or lower than the present temperature inside the house?
- 6) Is the cover to the filter compartment securely in place. Most units have a switch which will prevent operation if compartment door is not properly in place.
- 7) Inside most AC closets, near the unit, there is a "light switch" type switch. This must be "ON" for proper operation.
- 8) If you are operating heaters for the first time of the season, you may smell a burning smell as the system burns off accumulated dust. If you have a gas system, you will probably have to light the pilot if it has gone out during the year. You may request that our vendors light the pilot (at your own expense).

IF YOU HAVE PLUMBING PROBLEMS:

- 1) If the toilet starts to overflow, turn off the water underneath the toilet. Try to unclog the stoppage with a plunger.
- 2) If the sink drain is clogged, try to use a plunger to clear the stoppage. Use extra precaution when using chemical solvents to clear grease and hair clogs.
- 3) If the sink or toilet plumbing is leaking, turn off the water valves underneath to minimize damage. Water that can be controlled is not considered an "emergency" situation.

IF YOUR GARBAGE DISPOSAL JAMS:

- 1) If unit makes no noise at all when the switch is turned on, TURN THE SWITCH OFF. Then, try to reset the unit with the button located on the side or bottom of the disposal unit.
- 2) If unit makes a noise but does not appear to be grinding the food, it is probably jammed. TURN THE SWITCH OFF! Use a broom or mop handle to free up the blades by placing it into the (SWITCH OFF!) disposal and working it back and forth until you feel the blades spin freely. Some properties may have a metal L-shaped wrench that can be inserted into the exterior bottom of the unit to free the blades. After blade spins freely, check the reset button again. Then, try the power switch. NEVER ATTEMPT TO PLACE YOUR HAND INSIDE A GARBAGE DISPOSAL.
- 3) Avoid garbage disposal jams. Do not put toothpicks, pop tops, celery leaves, onion tops, bones, grease, banana peels, coins, rubber bands, egg shells, potato peels, or excessive amounts of anything that might cause stoppages into the unit. When in doubt, throw it out.

IF YOUR DISHWASHER ISN'T OPERATING CORRECTLY:

1. Make sure the switch above the countertop is on. Most of the time, it will be located next to the garbage disposal switch.
2. Make sure the door is in the "lock" position.
3. Check the breaker if the unit still does not get power.
4. Do not use any detergent/soap in the dishwasher that is not specified for dishwasher use. It will cause the dishwasher to leak.

III. Emergency Maintenance/Repairs

After hours, weekends and holidays, our phones are forwarded to our voice mail system. Should you have a maintenance emergency, you are encouraged to call and report the nature of your problem. Simply follow the voice mail directory instructions to reach the Emergency Maintenance Voice Mailbox.

Per your Lease, a maintenance emergency is defined as those problems which materially affect the health or safety of an ordinary Tenant and is not a condition that merely causes inconvenience or discomfort.

Please be aware that the emergency on-call technician has specific instructions as to what does or does not constitute an emergency and will not argue with you to the contrary. Emergency calls will generally be restricted to fire and uncontrollable water flow (from broken pipes, valves, etc.) Although we realize that cooling or heating or other appliance malfunctions can be uncomfortable and inconvenient, they are not considered emergencies and will be dispatched on the next regular business day.

When leaving your message, be sure to be specific about the emergency and include your telephone number in your message, as the on-call tech will not have your number or address. If the emergency involves a fire or similar emergency, please call 911 before calling our voicemail!

IV. Seasonal Maintenance / Freezing Weather

Precautions:

During freezing weather, be sure to take proper precaution to prevent pipes from bursting.

- ◆ Leave cold water faucets running. A small stream of water the size of a pencil lead is generally enough to prevent pipes from freezing.
- ◆ Leave your outside hose faucets dripping or cover them with insulated housing devices.
- ◆ If you go out of town over the holidays or during the cold weather season, we suggest you shut off the water main outside your home and then open all your faucets and let them drain. If this is not possible, have a neighbor check your home to keep the water running.
- ◆ If the pipes do burst due to freezing, residents will be held responsible for any and all damages. Be aware of where your water shut off valves are located so you can turn them off.

CLEANING AND HOW TO'S

We work hard to deliver to you a clean, well-maintained and comfortable home with all the mechanical equipment operating properly. Proper cleaning and maintenance will keep your home and its equipment safe and usable to you. The key to proper cleaning is to do it often. Set up a weekly schedule. Monitor the work and ensure that cleaning is performed as often as needed. A properly maintained home is a team effort involving:

- a) the owner who keeps structural and mechanical maintenance up-to-date;
- b) the property manager who keeps a record of necessary maintenance and places responsible people in the property; and
- c) the tenant who keeps the property clean, performs cosmetic maintenance and promptly reports any structural or mechanical failure to management.

A. Minimum Cleaning Standards

1. Wash interior doors and doorway trims in heavily traveled areas every 1-2 months.
2. Clean dust, dirt and debris from the upper and lower sliding glass door tracks monthly.
3. Clean stove, drip pans, under drip pans, oven racks, and drawer, broiler pan, hood, filter, and vent biweekly.
4. Mop and wax vinyl floors biweekly.
5. Dust baseboards, window sills, and window grids, tops of windows, ceiling fans, ceilings, and corners of the room monthly.
6. Clean AC/Heat air return grate and change filter each month. (A good rule is when you pay your light bill, change your filter).
7. Clean and sweep out fireplace. Clean fireplace grate, screen and glass.
8. Replace burned out light bulbs as needed, clean lighting fixtures as needed.
9. Curtains and blinds, if provided, should be cleaned or washed semiannually.
10. Bathrooms should be cleaned weekly. This includes toilet bowls and base, sink, mirror, floor, bathtub, and shower (including walls). Wipe out medicine cabinet, drawers and cabinets. Mold and mildew should be prevented on caulked areas to avoid staining.
11. Sweep out garage as needed.

B. Counter tops and Cabinets

Always use cutting boards and hot pads when chopping, cutting or placing hot items on counter tops. Do not use abrasive cleaners on counter tops, as they will scratch or remove paint from resurfaced areas. All unpainted cabinets need to be cleaned regularly with a wood cleaner and treated with a wood preserver (ie. lemon oil). All cabinets must be vacuumed out and the drawer/door fronts cleaned as above before vacating.

C. Kitchen Appliances

Each kitchen appliance must be cleaned regularly. In particular, the stoves hood, the filter in the stove hood, the oven, under the burners on the stove and the drip pans. Upon moving out, all drip pans must be brand new. Please clean under the refrigerator, washer and dryer regularly. Not cleaning all these items regularly can cause excessive wear and tear, for which you will be responsible, and can limit the function of the units and cause higher utility usage.

D. Fireplaces

If there is a fireplace in your home, please do not burn pine, or any other "sappy" wood. This causes build-up of residue in the chimney and increases the possibility of a fire. The fireplace is not a place to burn cardboard, holiday wrappings, pine needles, etc. Because of our climate, fireplace usage is typically minimal and therefore chimney sweeping is rarely needed with any frequency; should you be concerned about soot accumulation, you can elect to have the chimney cleaned at your own expense or refrain from using the fireplace entirely.

MOVING OUT

A. Written Notice

A 60-day written notice is required prior to your moveout. Verbal notice will not be accepted. The notice must include the date you will move out and your forwarding address.

B. Marketing During the Notice Period

After you have given notice that you intend to move, a sign and lockbox may be placed on the property so that leasing agents can show the property to prospective tenants. You must give us a daytime phone number if you would like to be called prior to showings; the property will be listed as a "call and go" showing, so the agents should attempt to reach you before showing the home (but the showings are not by scheduled appointment). If there is no answer or no answering system, the call is still considered notice. The most probable showing hours are between 9:00am-6:00pm. The property must be available and in good condition during the market time. Illness and children's birthdays are acceptable reasons for rescheduling a showing. Inconvenience, guests and no one home are not acceptable reasons to reschedule. Minimum showing condition:

1. All beds made and rooms neat.
2. Floors are recently vacuumed, clutter free, especially no piles of dirty clothes.
3. Kitchen and baths are clean; sinks are clean and empty.
4. Walls are cleaned and unmarred.
5. Dogs are out of the way, litter boxes are clean and odor free.
6. TV is off or volume turned low so as not to be intrusive.
7. Yard is mowed, trimmed, and in good condition.
8. Blinds/curtains are open and home is well lit (when possible).

The better a home shows, the more likely the home will rent quickly. The faster a new resident is found, the less you will be bothered by showings. A home that shows well benefits everyone!

c. Return of the Security Deposit

This section will give you an overview of the minimum you must do to receive your Security Deposit refund. It will also give you a checklist of some of the things Recar & Associates will inspect when you move out of your rental home. We strongly recommend that you use this list and your Move-In Inventory and Condition Form to guide you in your moveout procedures.

1. Contractual obligations:

- a. Rent paid in full – The Security Deposits can not be used to pay your last month's rent!
- b. End of lease or renewal period
- c. Written 60-day notice
- d. Written forwarding address given to management.
- e. All keys returned immediately upon moveout. Do not leave keys in the property! You are still in possession of the property until you return your keys to our office. You continue to be liable for rents and the property condition as well.

- #### 2. **Security Deposit Deductions:**
- We will use the Move-In Inventory & Condition Form you completed upon move-in as a primary reference to evaluate the move-out condition. Deductions may be made from your Security Deposit, as explained in your Lease. No "automatic" charges (sometimes referred to as "redecorating" or "cleaning" fees) are made to Security Deposits. In an effort to avoid any misunderstandings and to assure that you receive as large a refund as possible, Recar & Associates has included a list of cleaning instructions for you to use as a guideline when cleaning your home upon move-out. **You will not be charged for "normal wear and tear"**. (See "Normal Wear versus Damage Guidelines" in our website Resident Resources section.)

3. **Security Deposit Refunds**

We will disburse Security Deposit refunds and/or accounting via certified mail no later than 30 days after you surrender possession of the property or the end of your lease, unless any necessary maintenance cannot be completed/invoiced within that time period of the Lease was defaulted. In any case, you will be notified of the disposition of your deposits as required by the Texas Housing Statutes. All deductions will be itemized in writing upon final processing of your Statement of Deposit Accounts.

D. Checklist for Cleaning

The following are some of the items that will be inspected after your move-out. Please remember to refer to your Lease Agreement regarding Move Out Procedures and Security Deposit deductions.

Kitchen:

- ___ **Oven:** Clean inside oven and broiler, oven racks, wipe down inside and out, remove cleaner residue
- ___ **Stove:** Clean top thoroughly. Don't forget drip pans and underside of cook top. Clean vent hood.
- ___ **Refrigerator and Freezer:** Remove all food. Remove food bins and clean bottom; clean racks, bins, and door shelves. Clean top, front, and visible sides of refrigerator.
- ___ **Dishwasher:** Clean all debris from inside and wipe down exterior. Run dishwasher on a full cycle with a little bleach to sterilize and remove minor stains.
- ___ **Cabinets and Drawers:** Remove all food. If shelf paper is peeling up, remove it. Wipe out insides of cabinets to remove dust and crumbs. Wipe down fronts of cabinets and drawers.
- ___ **Counters:** Wipe down thoroughly. (Soft scrub works great on stains!) Remove all grease spots. Do not use steel wool on countertops, as this might remove the surface material.
- ___ **Sinks:** Scour sinks and polish fixtures.
- ___ **Lights:** Clean light fixtures and switches. Clean fixtures should be free of cleaner streaks and water spots. Clean outlets with a dry cloth.
- ___ **Walls:** Wipe any food particles or grease off walls. Wipe down any cobwebs. Do not attempt to cover nail holes unless they are excessive and you intend on painting the entire wall. Do not assume that walls will be painted; homes are not typically repainted as frequently as apartments.
- ___ **Floors:** Sweep under and between appliances and cabinets. Mop floors thoroughly. Wipe down baseboards to remove dirt and residual grease.

Bedrooms and Living Areas:

- ___ Wipe down all shelves, including closet shelves and rods.
- ___ Use glass cleaner on any mirrors and clean windows.
- ___ Clean light fixtures. Clear fixtures/bulbs should be free of streaks and water marks.
- ___ Wipe down ceiling fans to remove dust buildup, especially on fan blades.
- ___ Dust corners for cobwebs.
- ___ Clean all switch plates and outlet plates. Be careful!
- ___ Wipe down mini-blinds and vertical blinds to remove dust and dirt.

Bathrooms:

- ___ **Tub/Shower:** Clean tile with non-abrasive cleaner. Scour tub. Wipe down outside of tub/shower. Clean sliding tracks for shower (if applicable). Remove mildew (Tilex works great). Polish fixtures.
- ___ **Toilet:** Clean and disinfect toilet bowl. Wipe down base, seat, top, and sides.
- ___ **Cabinets and Drawers:** Remove any peeling shelf paper. Clean out and dust debris from cabinets and drawers. Wipe down exteriors of cabinets and drawers.

Counters: Wipe down thoroughly. **Use non-abrasive cleaners!**

- ___ **Sink:** Scour sink and polish fixtures.
- ___ **Walls:** Clean any debris from walls and doors. Dust for cobwebs.
- ___ **Floors:** Sweep and mop floor thoroughly. (Remember behind the toilet)
- ___ **Towel bars/rings, toilet paper holders, and other chrome fixtures:**
Polish to a shine.

General:

- ___ Wipe down all window sills, baseboards, and woodwork.
- ___ Remove dust and debris from sliding window and door tracks.
- ___ Remove ashes from fireplaces and wipe down fireplace area (if applicable).

- ___ Clean all window glass and mirrors.
- ___ Clean all light fixtures and decorative bulbs.
- ___ Dust all surfaces to remove dust and cobwebs.
- ___ Clean door facings and wipe down front and/or back doors.
- ___ Mop all floors.
- ___ Steam clean all carpets. To verify service and expedite processing, please provide management with a copy of your receipts upon returning your keys. With advance written notice and authorization from you, we will be happy to schedule carpet cleaning after your move-out and deduct it from your deposits.
- ___ Replace A/C filters and smoke detector batteries. Sweep out HVAC closets.
- ___ Sweep patios/decks/porches and garage/carport/storage areas.
Remove any oil spots from garage floors and driveway.
- ___ Clean all switch plates, light switches, and electrical outlets.
- ___ Mow and edge yard areas. Trim shrubs. Remove leaves and debris.

Please be very thorough in your cleaning. Missed areas will require the hiring of professional cleaning services, which will be charged to your Security Deposit account. What can be done in a few extra minutes by you can get expensive when vendors have to do it. It is our hopes that we can help you avoid this in providing you with this Checklist.

If you do your cleaning several days before you actually turn in keys, please go by the property and do a final check – even a vacant property will get dusty. Yards should be given a final inspection as well, especially during the growing season – it only takes a few days to look overgrown. In that regard, we will inspect the property within 24-72 hours after you return your keys so that we have an accurate assessment of condition.

Emergency Procedure Guidelines

The key to handling any emergency is to be prepared before it occurs. Here are some recommendations for handling a fire emergency.

FIRST

Be sure to test your smoke detectors regularly by blowing out a match or candle and letting the smoke drift up to the unit; pressing the "test" button only insures the unit functions but does not test its ability to react to smoke. Change batteries twice a year.

SECOND

Have an escape plan that is posted in a highly visible area, to be viewed by all on a regular basis. A good plan will show a diagram of the property, all exits from each room (including windows), arrows to point to each exit; and a central meeting place outside where everyone is to meet after exiting the building.

THIRD

Meet as a family or group to discuss what will happen if a fire were to occur. Be sure each person has a responsibility to fulfill, knows the escape plan, and where to meet.

Emergencies happen without warning. Be prepared and stay safe!

Summary

A. This Handbook is for You

In the excitement of moving, we often don't remember all the instructions and requirements of the lease. This handbook was written to be used as an ongoing reference for you. Place it where you can easily find it. Before calling the office, look and see if the answer you seek is here. If you find something you think would be helpful to others, but is not included, please notify your property manager. We are always looking for additional ways to serve you.

B. Welcome to Recar & Associates

Again, we welcome to our area and your new rental home. Please take advantage of the many opportunities to enjoy the beautiful and friendly Austin metroplex. We look forward to a pleasant relationship and a happy renting experience with you.

Should you decide to make Austin your permanent home, we would welcome the opportunity to assist you in buying a new home.

By the way, if you know of anyone else who might be interested in leasing or buying a home, please let us know. Your referrals are always welcome!

C. Tenant Handbook Updates

From time to time, it will become necessary to make changes to our Tenant Handbook and the Resident Policies therein. You will be notified of policy changes by mail or email (so you must be sure we have a designated email address for you at all times) at least 30 days in advance of the change. Claims of non-receipt of notice will not excuse any Tenant from changed policies, so you should periodically check our website. We are anticipating a new "Updates" section so that any changes or notices you should be aware of are made obvious.

The most updated version of the Tenant Handbook will always be available on our company website in the section for Tenant/Resident Resources.