

## Steve's Top Ten Things You Should Know If You Live In An Apartment

- 1) During winter months, be sure to leave your furnace on, even if you are away on vacation. You can turn the thermostat down to it's lowest setting but don't ever turn it completely off! **Water pipes in the house will freeze and break if temperatures inside the house dip below freezing.** You are responsible if the water lines break because you turned off the furnace while you were away. Again, this can lead to costly flooding damage, especially if you're not home to notice! If the power goes out, call emergency maintenance. They will tell you how to turn off the water and drain the pipes or take other necessary preventative measures.
- 2) If your toilet starts to overflow, immediately turn off the toilet's water supply line. The valve is located behind the toilet near its base. You will see a line coming out of the wall or floor that supplies water to the toilet. The valve should be on this line and can be turned off by twisting it clockwise. This will prevent the toilet from overflowing and flooding your bathroom. Also, invest in a plunger. If you stop up the toilet, you should be the one to plunge it.
- 3) Roof leaks cannot be repaired during a rain or snow storm. If you see a small leak start to develop after a light rain or snow, report it to the maintenance department at once so they can get it fixed before a real storm hits! Most roofs, especially flat ones, require dry conditions to be properly sealed and repaired. Early detection prevents serious interior damage.
- 4) Invest in a renter's insurance policy. This inexpensive coverage protects the contents of your apartment in cases of theft, fire, and most other disasters. It also insures the contents of your vehicle in case of a break-in. The property owner's insurance policy only provides coverage for the actual building and for general liability. Don't leave valuables in plain sight inside your vehicle and close your blinds when you aren't home. Thieves will seek easier, more obvious targets.
- 5) Change your smoke detector batteries once a year, even if they don't need it yet. When your smoke detector makes a chirping sound, that means the battery needs to be changed. Don't just take out the battery to make the chirping stop. This little device will save your life if a fire starts while you are sleeping!
- 6) Don't wait for little maintenance problems to become big maintenance problems. Report that leaky faucet or running toilet when you first notice it. It saves us time and money in the long run, and the problems won't be there to annoy you every day. Also, reporting a problem in the morning significantly increases the chance it will be fixed that same day. Waiting until late in the day or the weekend delays your service.
- 7) If you have a washing machine, be sure to periodically change the washer's hoses. These exterior rubber hoses, which supply the water to your washer, can crack and break over time. This can lead to costly flooding damage, especially if you're not home to notice! It is also a very good idea to turn off the water supply valve(s) when you are away.
- 8) Give a spare key to someone you really trust (like a relative) in case you lose your keys. If your keys are lost or stolen, a close friend or relative is likely to be able to get you into your apartment at 3 AM... we aren't. Lost keys are the tenant's responsibility. Having a spare key could save you the cost of a locksmith and a whole lot of inconvenience.
- 9) Test your Heat before it gets really cold and your Air Conditioning before it gets really hot. The mild days of Spring and Fall are great opportunities to kick on the old system to see if it's working. The first really hot day and the first really cold day are the absolute busiest days for Heating & Cooling Companies. If you wait until then to find out your system isn't working, you're going to be put on a list.... a long list. Report a problem on a mild day and you'll get it fixed long before you need it.
- 10) Be nice to the maintenance staff. They didn't build your apartment or install the electric and plumbing. They are here to help you, and being nice makes them want to help you more. I can tell you, from experience, that screaming at them about a problem they didn't cause doesn't motivate them to fix it more quickly.