

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE HANDBOOK

The Housing Authority for LaSalle County

526 E. Norris Dr.
Ottawa, IL 61350

815-434-0380
TDD 815-434-0929

www.halc.org

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A **Handbook** for Residents of the
Housing Authority for LaSalle County

The hood vent is located above your stove and usually has a fan and a light. A screen filter covers and protects the fan from grease. Remove the filter screen and soak/wash with hot, soapy water. When the filter screen is completely dry, place it back in the hood.

WALLS

The walls in your home have a glossy finish. They are best cleaned with a damp cloth or by a gentle washing with soap and water.

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ENERGY CONSERVATION

It is the policy of the HALC and HUD to promote and encourage the conservation of energy and resources. The HALC will replace appliances with Energy Star rated products as financially possible. Please assist in this effort to conserve energy by turning off lights, closing and locking windows and properly adjusting thermostats. If you notice a dripping faucet or running toilet, and cannot adjust the fixture, please contact your Maintenance Department as soon as possible.

In most developments, the charges for gas, heat and hot water are included in your rent. Because the HALC furnishes all major appliances and pays the utility bills in most developments, we are responsible for running energy conservation programs aimed at reducing the amount of energy used and cutting utility costs. Please join us in our efforts to avoid wasting energy.

Heating

During the heating season, you can help conserve energy by keeping your thermostat turned to a reasonable level. Be sure that your windows and doors are closed. Heating pipes may freeze and break if a window is left open or heat is turned off in your apartment.

During winter months, you may occasionally notice frost or ice forming on your windows. Generally, this condition is a result of cooking, a high humidifier setting or lack of air circulation. Ice on your windows will damage the window frame and surrounding walls. If frost begins to form, turn your humidifier off until the frost disappears. Using your kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans will help alleviate this problem.

so that dirt and grime can be removed.

If you have carpet installed in your home, regular vacuuming will prevent premature carpet matting and soil stains. Staining can be avoided by cleaning up spills immediately.

- Carpeting should be vacuumed at least once a week
- Spills are to be blotted, not wiped, dry
- A carpet cleaner solution may be used to remove stubborn stains

REFRIGERATOR

Use a mild soap detergents to wash both the inside and outside of your refrigerator. Remove the drawers and clean them in your sink. Clean the areas under the drawers before re-installing them.

SINKS

For cleaning sinks, use mild soap powder detergents. **DO NOT** use bleach or abrasive scouring powder.

STOVE

Thoroughly clean your stove and hood inside and out. The top of the stove can be lifted up for cleaning. Use warm soap and water. When cleaning stovetops be sure to use a non-abrasive cleanser. Also clean oven and racks as needed.

Keep the burners on your stove clear and properly adjusted. Burners should light automatically when you turn the knob. A blue flame means more heat and will not blacken pots and pans. If burners are not operating properly make sure that all the little holes on the burners are unclogged. The burners can be lifted out and soaked in hot soapy water and placed back on the stove once they are completely dry.

- keep the kitchen fan on, or a kitchen window open, while cooking and washing dishes

CABINETS

For routine care of wood cabinets, wipe with a soft, dry cloth. For soiled cabinets, wipe with a damp cloth and polish dry with a clean, soft cloth. In case of heavy soil and for occasional cleaning, use a wood cleaner preservative. Polish with a soft, dry cloth.

COUNTERTOPS

For routine care of laminated plastic counter tops, wipe with a clean cloth dipped into mild dishwashing detergent and water. For stubborn stains, you may apply a small amount of mild powder cleanser with a clean, damp cloth. Rinse several times and wipe dry with a clean, soft cloth.

To protect the finish, please do not place burning cigarettes, other burning objects or heated containers directly on the counter. Always use a cutting board when chopping food. Wipe up spills immediately as this will help prevent stains.

FLOORS

The floors in your home are usually inlaid with vinyl tile (VCT). For daily care, you can just dry clean with a mop or broom. For a more thorough cleaning, use a mild cleaning solution. Go easy with the water. "Drowning" the tiles will loosen them. For waxing, apply a thin coat of liquid wax on the tiles and allow it to dry thoroughly. Never use paste wax.

If there is vinyl flooring in your home that is not VCT, follow the care mentioned above, but **DO NOT APPLY WAX**. This will ruin the floor and void the warranty.

Wipe up spills immediately. Tile floors should be cleaned on a weekly basis

Gas and Electricity

We suggest the following ways to save on gas and electricity. Following these simple suggestions year-round should create a significant reduction in energy consumption.

- When you leave a room, turn the lights off and turn off the television or radio when you're not watching or listening.
- Built-in light fixtures in ceilings and walls are designed for light bulbs with a maximum of 60 watts. For your own lamps, use the minimum wattage light bulb necessary. You do not need a 100 watt bulb where a 75 or 60 or 40 will do. It is recommended that you do not use halogen lamps because they use too much electricity and, if left on for too long, could become fire hazards. Fluorescent bulbs are now made to fit into most fixtures. In addition to providing sufficient light they also last longer, making them more economical.
- Keep the use of electrical appliances, such as irons, hair dryers, toasters, broilers and microwaves, to the practical minimum. If you're buying any of these items new, buy models that are labeled "energy-efficient."
- Do not run extension cords out the window.
- In the event of an electrical interruption, use flashlights instead of candles. Always keep spare batteries on hand.
- Only use air conditioners and fans when you really need them. Once again, don't forget to check with your Property Manager before purchasing an air conditioner to find out about any specifications or fees associated with it.
- **NEVER USE YOUR STOVE TO HEAT YOUR APARTMENT.**

MAINTENANCE

AIR CONDITIONERS

When installing an air conditioner in your home, you must have the proper sleeve and/or braces for holding it safely in place. Any installation of air conditioners must be approved by the HALC.

If you reside in one of our high rise buildings, you may only install an air conditioner if a sleeve is currently installed in your home. Otherwise, they are not allowed as this is a safety precaution.

APPLIANCES

Refrigerator

You should not overload your refrigerator or freezer as this does not allow the air to properly circulate throughout the appliance.

If the food compartment is too warm or too cold, check the control to see if it may have been moved.

Be sure to keep the coils, located on the back or underneath your refrigerator, clean. A quick brushing or vacuuming of the coils every few months will help to keep it running properly and help prevent costly repairs.

Please keep your refrigerator as clean as possible. Inspect your door gaskets (the gasket is the soft rubber seal around the doors, located between the door and the main body) and make sure you clean any debris or food from it. A tear in the gasket is usually caused by the gasket not being kept dry and clean.

wood sub-floor.

Please do not use decals or adhere anything to the tub or shower. They are almost impossible to remove and will not come off with normal cleaning thus creating a problem for us and the next resident.

Toilets and tubs should be cleaned on a weekly basis.

You may have a condensation problem in your bathroom if there are symptoms such as:

- condensation on the fixtures, windows or walls
- mold and mildew between ceramic tiles, in the corners or on the ceiling
- peeling paint; rotting, blackened window sills; damaged drywall under windows; curling floor tiles; musty smells; or water dripping from vents

Condensation is caused by:

- excessive house humidity
- moisture from hot baths and showers
- dampness from wet bath mats, towels and drying clothes
- inadequate ventilation
- vent ducts that are not insulated
- paint or wallpaper not designed for use in bathrooms
- cold outside air leaking through insulation

While you can't change the structural causes, there are a number of things you can do to reduce condensation:

- turn on the bathroom fan or open the bathroom window while you are showering or bathing (be sure to keep the fan running or window open until the condensation has evaporated)
- turn on the heat lamp during your bath or shower

CLEANING TIPS

GENERAL CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

Using improper cleaning agents can make tasks more difficult and cause damage to surfaces. The following should be kept in mind before beginning any cleaning task:

- Products labeled for specific tasks should be used for those types of tasks only
- Read instructions on cleaning products before usage
- Most cleaners are designed to be used on specific surfaces and may cause damage if used on unapproved surfaces
- Never mix solutions together. A chemical reaction may occur and lead to permanent damage of the surface
- Most spills and accidents can be removed easier if cleaned promptly and regularly
- The management should be contacted with questions regarding cleaning products or technique
- The management should also be contacted in the event of an emergency or to report maintenance problems. Do not attempt to make repairs in your apartment

BATHROOMS

Please use a gentle non-abrasive cleaner on bathtubs, sinks and toilets. A rough cleaner will scratch the surface and make the fixtures harder to keep clean.

You will need to supply your own shower curtain before you can use the shower. Make sure the shower curtain is **inside** the tub when showering. Clean up immediately any water that gets on the floor.

Do not allow water to remain on the floor as it will damage the tile and

Hot Water Heater

Do NOT turn up the temperature on your hot water heater. They have been set to the proper temperature for your safety.

If you have a water heater and you do not have hot water, check to see if the pilot light on the water heater is lit. If the pilot light is out, re-light it per the instructions on the water heater.

Stoves

If the stove does not heat properly, make sure that burners are properly installed. They are removable for easier cleaning and must be correctly replaced after being cleaned. The removable broiler pans may be washed in the sink. Please use professional oven cleaner to clean the interior of the oven as needed. We suggest a monthly cleaning of the kitchen fan to remove grease and other foreign materials.

Cooking and smoking are the causes of most fires in homes in the United States. So, in addition to keeping your stovetop clean, remember to keep flammable materials, such as potholders, towels, newspapers and plastic bags away from the stove. When you have something cooking, don't leave the stove unattended. If there is a grease fire, never use water to put it out; cover the pot or pan with a lid to smother the fire. You may also douse the fire with baking soda.

Stoves must be kept clean to operate properly. Immediately clean up any spills with a damp cloth. If you should get a spill on the bottom of the oven, wait for the oven to cool and then clean it up. Do not use abrasives when cleaning your stove or oven as this will damage the finish.

CIGARETTES

If you or any of your guests smoke, please be extremely careful and responsible by making sure all cigarettes and matches are fully extinguished.

ELECTRICAL

It is important to know where the electrical panel is located in your home. This panel controls all the electrical lights, outlets and appliances in your home. **DO NOT BLOCK ACCESS TO THE PANEL.**

If an outlet is not working, first check to see that all circuit breakers are in the ON position. If not, flip the breaker completely OFF and then to ON. If all the breakers are ON and the outlet still doesn't work, call the HALC.

NEVER TAKE APART OUTLETS OR SWITCHES.

If a light is not working, first check to see if the bulb is burnt out (remove old bulb and insert a new one). Also, check the electrical panel to make sure that all the breakers are ON. If so and the light(s) still does not work, call the HALC.

Some outlets in your home are called GFI outlets and are located in your kitchen, bathroom (and laundry room, if applicable). This type of outlet is equipped with its own circuit breaker and reset button. If this outlet should trip its breaker, it may also shut off other outlets in the room. You can reset the outlet(s) by pushing in the red button located on the outlet. If after pushing the button the outlet does not work, check the circuit

If you have a window that is difficult to open or close, clean the track, then apply a lubricant (such as WD-40). Do not try to force a window open or closed as this could break the glass.

If the glass in a window is broken, call the Maintenance Department for repairs.



Sink Plunger



Toilet Plunger

Never over pack the cabinets under your sinks. This could cause leaks by loosening the pipes and will prevent you from reaching shut off valves in an emergency.

Never push down on your kitchen faucet. This causes unnecessary wear and tear and will cause leaks.

DO NOT put anything other than soap and water down any of your sinks or tubs. Therefore, no solid articles, disposable diapers, rags, rubbish, or feminine hygiene products should be placed in them (these items should not be placed down your toilet drain either). All such waste should be placed in trash containers. Your home is not equipped with a garbage disposal and putting food down the drain will cause the sink to clog. It is also unacceptable to pour grease down the drain. To properly dispose of grease, pour it into a container with a lid and place in your refrigerator until it solidifies. Once it is solid, you may dispose of this in your trash.

SCREENS AND WINDOWS

If a screen is torn or the frame is bent or damaged, you can take it to have it repaired, or call your property management center to have a maintenance work order issued.

breakers in the panel. If you still have a problem, call the HALC.



Standard



GFI outlet

You are responsible for purchasing and changing the light bulbs in your home.

FLAMMABLES

Your lease states you may not store any combustibles (gasoline or other flammable liquids) inside your home. It is also important to keep the area surrounding clothes dryers, furnaces and hot water heaters clear. Do not store anything, particularly boxes and rags, near these fixtures as they could cause a fire.

MOLD AND MILDEW

Mold and mildew are fungi that grow on, and sometimes in, damp surfaces and objects. In nature, molds help break down dead materials and can be found growing on soil, foods, plant matter, and other items. Molds produce microscopic cells called "spores" which are very tiny and spread easily through the air. Live spores act like seeds, forming new mold growths (colonies) when they find the right conditions. Mold is most likely to grow where there is water or dampness, such as in bathrooms.

Most types of mold that are routinely encountered are not hazardous to healthy individuals. However, too much exposure to mold may cause or

worsen conditions such as asthma, hay fever, or other allergies. The most common symptoms of overexposure are similar to reactions to plant pollen, such as, coughing, congestion, runny nose, eye irritation, and aggravation of asthma.

Preventing Mold

All molds need water to grow, and are most often confined to areas near water sources. Removing the source of moisture — by repairs and by providing sufficient ventilation — is critical to preventing mold growth.

The Fresh Air Cure

Letting *fresh air* into your apartment will help to lower the moisture, and at the same time this will help reduce dust mites and cockroaches. Keep your apartment well ventilated by opening windows, using fans, and arranging furniture so that windows are not blocked.

Other Ideas That Will Help:

- Use your stove only for cooking, **never** for heating. When cooking, keep pots covered and windows open, even keeping windows slightly open will help
- Keep your drapes open during the day
- Request repair of leaky plumbing or other water leaks as soon as possible
- Keep the “drip pans” in your air conditioners, refrigerators and de humidifiers clean and dry
- Keep your bathroom window open even a little, when weather permits, especially when you are showering
- If you have an exhaust fan in your bathroom, make sure it is working; inform your Housing Manager if it’s not
- Hang wet clothes to dry in *open areas*, such as on bathroom shower rods, or on drying racks; thoroughly wring out clothes prior to hanging; take slow drying heavy items to the Laundromat

Cleaning Mold

Once you have detected mold, **act quickly!** Mold should be cleaned as

soon as it appears. Wear gloves and protective eye goggles and clean only small areas at a time using TSP, following the manufacturer’s instructions. The cleaned area should then be thoroughly dried, and any sponges or rags used to clean mold should be thrown away. Absorbent materials that contain mold, such as linen or carpets, might need to be replaced.

If The Problem Persists

When you’ve tried cleaning fluids and proper ventilation and nothing seems to help, report the mold/mildew problem to your Property Manager. A returning mold condition may indicate an underlying problem such as a leak.

PLUMBING

If you discover a minor water leak, use a bucket or pan to catch the water and call HALC as soon as possible. If necessary, shut off water at nearest valve. Sink water valves are located at the back of the cabinet under the sink. The toilet water valve is located on the wall behind the toilet. Turn the valve to the right to shut it off. If you are having trouble with a broken pipe or if your toilet runs constantly and threatens to “run over”, use the water shut-offs and CALL THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY.

Damages from unreported leaks could result in you being held responsible for the cost of repairing the leak and any other damages caused by the leak.

Before you call the Maintenance Department for your plugged toilet, please try plunging it first using the proper plunger.