

Restoring a Smoke-Damaged Apartment

Property Owners/Managers

Curious about what to clean, restore, and replace when converting to a non-smoking unit?

Residents

Wondering what to ask your property manager to clean or replace when moving into a unit that has been smoked in?

According to [Kennedy Restoration](#) of Portland, Oregon, the following items in a smoke-damaged apartment will need to be cleaned, restored, or replaced. Individual units may vary, but a thorough restoration of a 2-bedroom apartment could cost up to \$15,000.

“But once the home is cleaned and restored, keeping it smokefree leads to many benefits for the property manager and the owner. We have seen more timely lease-ups, which leads to increased rents and a very satisfied client. It is definitely worth the time, investment and commitment.”

~Barb Casey, Marketing Director, Kennedy Restoration

Restoration Checklist

Clean (and replace if needed):

Baseboards and trim
Bathtubs and showers
Blinds
Cabinetry-inside and out
Ceiling
Ceiling Fans
Ceramic tile
Closet organizers and rods
Countertops
Dishwasher
Door chime
Doors and door openings
Exhaust Fans
Floors
Light fixtures
Mirrors
Outlets and switches
Range and hood
Refrigerator
Sinks
Shelving
Toilets
Vanity
Walls
Window units, frames, and sills

Seal (1 coat) and Paint (2 coats):

Baseboards and trim
Cabinetry
Doors and door openings
Floor underlayment (seal for odor control)
Shelving
Vanity
Window frames and sills

Remove and Replace:

Carpet
Carpet pad
Curtains
Smoke or burn-damaged countertops,
linoleum, furnishings, etc.
Vinyl

Other:

Floor protection (plastic film)
Ozone treatment
Prepping and masking for painting
Thermal fogging

Restoration Process

-Step 1-

It takes approximately four days and a team of three cleaning experts to clean a unit of this size. These four days includes a complete cleaning from ceiling to floor and includes cabinets, bathrooms and other rooms. This can be referred to as basic overall cleaning. When dealing with tobacco smoke, there are several additional detailed cleaning steps and all require an additional charge. The detailed cleaning list includes appliances, bath and lighting fixtures, tub surrounds, bath vanities and door and window openings, which include woodwork, frame and window glass.

Carpet has to be removed and replaced. If there is a sub-floor it has to be cleaned, sanitized/deodorized and sealed with "Kilz" or "Bulls-eye" primer.

If floors are yellow/brown from tobacco, they have to be removed and replaced.

If appliances are porcelain, they can be cleaned; if appliances are vinyl, they have to be removed and replaced.

The contractor should communicate all these steps to the on-site manager, the property management company and/or the owner.

-Step 2-

The next step is the ozone and thermal fogging process. For these purposes, a portable ozone machine would probably be used for 24 – 48 hours, depending on the complexity of the odor. A thermal fogger would also be used in conjunction with the ozone or separately, again depending on the situation. The ozone machine attacks the smoke molecules and the fogger is used to penetrate those surfaces that are not easily reached, i.e. behind trims, etc.

In some circumstances, if fixtures are too yellowed and odiferous, they may have to be removed and replaced.

If the odor has permeated ceiling fans and cabinets, those items may also have to be removed and replaced.

-Step 3-

The next step is the sealant process. Clear coat sealant if applied to cabinetry and doors if these items still retain the smoke odor. Smoke will penetrate porous materials like doors and cabinets, but laminate is non-porous so it can usually be cleaned.

"Kilz" or "Bulls-eye" primers are then used to seal all the cleaned areas (as outlined in Step 1). If the smoke odor is not cleaned thoroughly, the sealant process is not helpful, as smoke will "bleed" through the sealant.

-Step 4-

This step is to paint the entire apartment and the woodwork, replace carpet and pad, any appliances, any flooring and any doors that weren't able to be clear coated.

Of course, there must be pictures and documentation during the entire cleaning process.