

## PREPARATION OF VACANT UNITS (A)

### OVERALL FOCUS AND GOAL

It took considerable money and risk to build the property you are challenged to maintain. As an employee, it is critical to protect the investment as well as help generate a return on that investment. With proper and timely maintenance your property should survive for many years. Therefore you will share in the responsibility of keeping the project physically and financially sound.

### GETTING STARTED

Vacancies occur in three ways:

1. 30-Day Notice of Intent to Vacate.
2. Abandonment or death.
3. Eviction

As soon as possible complete an initial walk-through of the unit. If still occupied, always give proper Notice of Intent to Enter. Your focus during this initial inspection will be two-fold. First, to document the extent of the repair/maintenance that will be required in order to plan for needed materials and possible outside labor. Second, to establish a time-line for any materials and replacement parts that may need to be ordered.

Residents are prohibited from additional paint; wallpaper and borders should not be added. The manager should point that out during the lease signing. The resident must undo what they have done prior to their move-out or pay the property to do so after they move.

Painting everything that does not move is unacceptable. If it started out without paint, it should stay that way.

## HINTS, SUGGESTIONS AND PRODUCTS

1. If you have a golf ball to fist size hole to repair, you can use scrap screen wire to make the repairs. Fold it into 3 layers and cut a piece an inch or two larger than the hole. Stick a long sheetrock screw through the center of the screen patch. Smear drywall mud over the total patch and stuff it through the hole pulling it back toward you once it is inside the hole. Allow it to set-up for a minute or two before continuing.
2. If you have a fist size or larger hole, use paper to make a pattern of the hole. Transfer the pattern to a scrap piece of sheetrock. From the finish (good) side of the sheetrock, use a case cutter or belt knife to score the good side of the paper and gypsum. Using gentle force, break the gypsum all the way around. Peel the broken gypsum away from the piece you want to keep, but leave the backside paper uncut or torn. Now, trim the backside paper so you in effect have a 1 or 2" flange around the gypsum plug you are going to use. Screw a long drywall screw into the center of the plug. Smear drywall mud on the paper flange rather thickly and also onto the gypsum edges of the patch. Turn the patch in a manner where it is at a 90-degree angle to the wall, and then knife it into the cavity. Once the patch is completely inside the wall cavity, turn it 90 degrees and pull it back toward you filling the hole with the patch and mud. You will need to stay with it for a couple of minutes to let the mud set-up. Once the patch has cured, remove the screw(s) and finish filling the cavity with mud. Depending on circumstances, another possibility here is to insert a 2by or 3by ¾ inch piece of wood into the cavity and attach it to each side with a drywall screw. This is backing. Insert the plug and attach to backing with another drywall screw. Now "mud" and repair the area with joint compound.
3. It is important to wear masks while sanding your repair work. It is also important to reduce the amount of air movement within the unit while

doing the surface preparation. Not running the heat and A/C system during the sanding time will minimize the dust particles from being moved into every nook and cranny in the unit, especially eliminating it from getting into the ductwork where it has a tendency to stick and dislodge at a later time. If at all possible, use a portable fan and position it where it will exhaust into the outside air.

4. If you do a good job of trowelling mud over the repair areas, especially nail holes, once the patch material dries a wet, stiff sponge will do a quicker job of "sanding the excess" than using sanding screens or sandpaper. It blends the mud onto the surface, while removing the excess. Mud is much better for patching than Spackle. Use Spackle for an "as you are going" quick fill material that will not be sanded. Where old, painted over, unsanding and/or poor patching exists, sand to proper finish and/or mud over areas and sand once dry. "The prior guy did it" is not a reason to leave it as is. Make it right.
5. If you have moisture or other heavy staining in the surfaces to be painted, using a product such as Kilz will prevent such stains from coming through the new paint.
6. Never use flat paint in the bathrooms and kitchens, or on wood trim and doors. Do use flat paint on the remaining wall surfaces. It will hide wavy walls and other imperfections from years of patching and sometimes from poor original construction.
7. While painting, if you must continue into the next day or through the weekend, you can seal paint rollers and brushes very well in aluminum foil. This will keep them ready to use for days. Placing the foil wrapped items in the "still running" refrigerator will also prevent them from drying out.
8. Purchase a complete set of hinges that will replace every hinge in whatever unit you have that has the most doors. This allows you to paint the doors while they are hung with out the need to tape up or scrape off paint overflow. You should still be careful when painting around the hinge

hardware. Once you are finished with the painting and it has dried, you can swap out the existing hinges for new or used/cleaned ones. Once old hinges are removed, place them in a container to be cleaned and lubricated with WD-40 for use in the next vacancy repaint. Hinges and door hardware are one of those things that make a unit look good without you really knowing why it looks so good!

9. If you must install new carpet, do not remove the old carpet before painting since this will cause the padding to get torn and ratted up. Most commercial padding is "re-bond", which is harder than the waffle type and lasts for a long time unless it is extensively pet or resident stained. When removing the old carpet, being deliberate and thinking out your moves will prevent the scuffing of any newly painted surface.
10. If the old carpet is fine other than a few cigarette burn holes, buy one of the circular carpet cutters. You can cut 50-cent size plugs from inside a closet and get a fresh plug to replace a burned one. If you keep some of the less worn sections from carpet that you have replaced, it too works well for plugging burn holes. Do not forget to line up the nap of the fibers so it matches the original. Use good glue to secure the plug to the padding. Do not use double-sided tape.
11. If you are replacing the vinyl in the bath, remove the toilet. Put down the new vinyl and then replace the toilet with a new wax ring. This eliminates the seam behind the toilet. Do NOT caulk around the base of the toilet. After you finish, put plastic caps on the toilet bowl hold-down bolts. The bolts should be trimmed to the proper height. Plumbers putty can be used to secure the caps onto the stud. Better still; use "snap on" caps.
12. If your bath has ceramic tile floors and/or ceramic tile on the tub or shower walls, do a good cleaning job to remove soap, hairspray and general scum. If the tile surface has tough soap grime, use a good Brillo type pad to clean it. This will remove all the grime but will not scratch the surface. For refreshing the grout, mix a batch of dry, non-sanding grout and water and

make a pancake batter-like mixture. This should then be trowelled over the floor. Allow to dry for 15-20 minutes, then wipe off the excess using a large "for grout tile cleaning" sponge. Keeping the sponge well dampened but rung out of excess water will leave a new surface of grout lines. This is much quicker than using a bleach pen or grout paint. Avoid the use of tub surrounds.

13. If a vertical blind is a total loss, new vertical blinds in alabaster can be purchased. Buy the "fluted" type if possible. The \$60-\$80 ones are a waste of money in the long run. Since so many residents are smokers, after 5 years of residency the mechanisms inside the blinds become brittle and gummed with nicotine.
14. *NOTE: (The following is instruction on how to repair mini-blinds. It is certainly good information to have, however, since mini-blinds are so inexpensive the labor cost of this may make it inadvisable. Please let your circumstances and time-line be your guide.)* If the mini-blind has a couple of slats that are damaged, take two old blinds and make one. Also, most blinds are actually longer than the window space. These should be shortened, which will provide you with several spare slats. Depending on the string design of the blind itself, most of the time you can cut out the old broken or wrinkled slat. Take the replacement slat and make a diagonal cut from the back of the slat to the lifting string hole at each end of the slat. Slide the slat through the control strings and then work it back and forth to force the lifting strings into the diagonal slits and into the hole. Alabaster (off-white) is the company recommended color.
15. If burner drip pans have baked-on grime, they can be sprayed with a degreaser cleaner or oven cleaner (use in well-ventilated area), and allow to soak. If the drip pans are burned and discolored, it will be less expensive to just replace them. Either way, the resident should be billed. Test each burner element for working condition and replace if needed. These can be removed and soaked in a degreasing solution.

16. If the vinyl flooring edge at the wall, cabinet or baseboard has caulk rather than quarter-round, cut out the caulk. Cut ½ inch quarter-round or shoe molding (which gives a neater appearance) to fit the area and prepare the pieces for painting at the same time as the door and wood trim are being painted. By painting them before putting them down, and then countersinking the finishing nail, filling the hole with spackle and a little touchup paint, it will leave you with no paint edge along the floor or wall.
17. Buy outlet and switch cover screws by the 100-pack and use them when putting back your covers. This gives a “can’t put your finger on it” finished look. Little trick: always make all your screw head slots align in the same direction – straight up and down. Quality look!
18. Use a black permanent magic marker and mark over the paint drips and other not easily removed matter on the black foam cover over the A/C Freon lines in the furnace closet.
19. If you have areas in the furnace closet where pipe or conduit come through a rough hole in the wall, cut an aluminum or chrome plumbing line cover and twist it into place over the ragged hole. Plumbers putty will hold it securely against the wall.
20. After cleaning the airhandler and water heater units, spray a clean rag with furniture polish and wipe the units down. Then wipe again with a dry cloth just as you do when polishing furniture. By being slick, they will be easier to be kept clean by the resident or by natural air movement.
21. Use Old English brand furniture polish to wipe down wood cabinets. This puts moisture into the wood, covers up scratches and damage, and extends the life of the cabinets. This product comes in more than one shade and can be purchased at most hardware stores and some drug chains. If Old English polish is not available, you can achieve the same look with the less expensive brands of liquid wipe-on furniture polish.
22. Use Formica Top Repair Caulk to repair cigarette burns or gouges in the counter surfaces. This can be found at most hardware stores.

23. Use a damp stiff sponge or damp towel to clean smoke, grease and gunk from the light switch or receptacle. To avoid contact with the electrical connection, use a switch or outlet-winterizing pad (a flat, thin, firm foam gasket used to seal out air from coming into the room around the outlets or switches) to slip over the toggle or outlet before cleaning them. Dirty outlets and switches make a clean or new cover look even worse. Sparkle sells!
24. Now is the time to get ahead of toilet flushing problems. Turn off the toilet tank water supply. Flush the toilet. Wearing rubber gloves, take a small drill bit or a long sheet rock screw and rout out each water flush hole around the inside rim of the toilet. Water minerals will build up and affect the flow of water, slowing down the flush action and eventually leading to a stoppage or problem. Most toilets have a finger size hole in the front bottom of the cavity of the bowl. Take a ½ inch drill bit and ram out the built up minerals inside this finger hole. This hole begins the initial flush vacuum by pushing high-speed water activity straight to the back of the "S" trap.
25. A/C condensation drains are prone to dry and clog during A/C season. If not plumbed to provide a "rodding" access port, then cut plastic pipe outside of the "A" coil in the vicinity where it turns down toward the floor. The close fit of today's PVC pipe allows you to splice non-pressure pipe situations with just a slip fit which then becomes your routine rodding port.
26. Door knobs on the inside of the utility rooms and closets are usually the least used and, therefore, show less wear. If you have non-locking knobs that look worn after cleaning, swap the "inside of the closet" knob for the outside one. As a last resort, if the most visible knob has a more worn look than its other half, reverse them. The only difference is the two screws will now be visible, but with the sparkle of the newer look no one will notice. For locking-type inside door knobs, with most brands the

most often seen knob of the set can be rotated 180 degrees so the worn area will be facing downward toward the floor giving a less worn look.

27. For caulking around countertops, bathroom sinks and tubs, using caulk packaged in a tube much like toothpaste allows you to make a much nicer, smoother, evenly distributed caulk line than using the old bulky caulking gun.
28. Put furniture polish on the countertops and you will be surprised as to how nice it will feel. Most prospective residents will run their hands over the countertops as they are looking at the apartment. That feel tells them this is a really nice unit.
29. An easy way to put the feel and shine on enamel kitchen sinks and fiberglass or acrylic bathroom sinks is to wipe them down with a vegetable oil rag. DO NOT, HOWEVER, USE THIS ON THE BATHTUB SURFACE. TOO SLICK!
30. There are two pieces of equipment that you should definitely have in your arsenal. (1) A vacuum cleaner with a hose and attachments. (2) A dehumidifier for removing excess moisture from the air after water leaks.

## PRODUCTS

1. Thund'r Blast - all-purpose cleaner. Helps remove even old paint overrun. Great to clean smoked, gummy, grimy surfaces. Dollar Store.
2. Greased Lightening - strong cleaner. Will soften paint, even on baked-on enamel. Dollar Store.
3. Mr. Muscle - a cleaner that will strip paint. Various hardware stores.
4. Old English - Furniture polish that is good for reviving the worn look and finish of cabinets. Comes in various shades. Dollar General, Wal-Mart, hardware stores.
5. Comet - scrubbing abrasive cleanser. Good for rust, pitted surfaces and rough grime. Sold everywhere.
6. Pledge - furniture polish for making a slick feel to surfaces. Sold everywhere.



7. Simple Green – cleaning solution you mix with water for general cleaning. Requires thorough rinsing to remove soap residue. Dollar General.
  8. WD-40 – great for removing gummy stuff and glue residue left by stickers, decals, and chewing gum from carpet. Sold everywhere.
  9. Scrubbing Bubbles – good for cleaning bathtub surfaces. Dollar General, etc.
- These products work well and are inexpensive.

## PREPARATION OF VACANT UNITS (B)

### UNIT LOCKDOWN

As quickly as the unit becomes vacant, change the locks. If you have other vacant units, swap locks. Do not forget to change the spare/extra key set identification tags you keep for those units whose locks are being swapped.

A Move-Out Inspection should have been done with the occupant, noting those items that will be billed upon move-out. If it could not be done at that time, now is the time to do it before getting involved in the overhaul. Don't forget pictures for documentation.

### CLEARING OUT

Remove all debris left by the resident. Do not forget to document that you removed debris, since such activity is billable to the exiting resident. If items other than trash are left, note what they are prior to donating them to an agency such as the Salvation Army.

### PREPARING FOR REFINISHING

Most people want to begin painting on the first day. Painting should be one of your last items. Preparation, preparation, preparation! If you will review FAM Form #056, Turnover Checklist, you will see that painting is at the very bottom of the list of things to do. The active word from top to bottom is CLEAN! The details you take care of now will make the unit rent before your competitors because of the sparkle it exudes. Details, details!

1. Remove all closet shelving. If not wood (which will be repainted), place them in the bathtub along with any mounting hardware for cleaning.
2. Remove all telephone jack, cable TV, wall outlet and switch covers. Place the undamaged ones in a container of warm soapy water.
3. Remove all door hardware of any kind, other than hinges, and place in a container for cleaning and repair later. Leave entry door hardware until you are ready to paint that door.
4. Remove all light fixture covers and hardware and place them in a closet for safekeeping. Insure that bulbs in the light fixtures are the proper wattage. Most incandescent fixtures specify no higher than 60-watt bulbs, but residents will oftentimes put fewer bulbs with a higher wattage. This creates a fire hazard.
5. Remove all heating and A/C grilles and covers. Place them in a large bucket of warm soapy water.
6. Remove fire extinguisher from bracket and the bracket from the wall, unless you can easily tape it up to prevent paint overrun.
7. Remove all blinds and window treatment from windows. Remove all mounting hardware as well. It is easier to put back up than to tape or edge paint around. If blinds are re-useable, after a quick minor cleaning they should be set aside.
8. If the unit has vertical blinds, they should also be removed. The blind panels are removable and can also be placed in the bathtub for cleaning. The blind panel mount and adjusting hardware can be replaced if necessary.
9. Pull back refrigerator and stove out from wall. Take care not to tear or mar kitchen flooring. Carefully clean refrigerator coils wherever located (in

- back or under the bottom). Clean evaporator pan. Some are in tricky locations such as on top of the compressor.
10. Clean appliance units inside and out and in the back. Pay special attention to gaskets, hinges, drawer glides, knobs, controls, and handle connections. Lift range top to clean cavity between burners and oven housing. Inspect oven roof from inside oven to insure it has not burned or rusted through. THIS WOULD CREATE A FIRE HAZARD. Check to insure that proper appliance bulbs are in these units. Some residents will place high wattage incandescent bulbs in appliances. This will cause the plastic cover to melt.
  11. Clean the HVAC equipment, water heater and any other provided appliances. Order any required parts that you missed during your initial inspection.
  12. Set the water heater controls to 120 degrees and the refrigerator to its lowest setting (usually 1 or A).
  13. Remove and clean burner drip pans.
  14. If there is a back-splash/grease splatter panel around the stove, the edge of it and the wall will be heavy with grease. This must be cleaned, NEVER paint grease.
  15. Remove range hood grease filter and place in a bucket of warm soapy water. Check hood bulb for correct wattage. Clean hood with degreaser solution. Range hoods usually exhaust through a duct located in the cabinet above the range hood. Check the ducting that is visible for evidence of leaking. Clean any grease build-up inside and repair any holes with metal tape.
  16. Remove smoke detector and drop mounting bracket down from the ceiling, then clean if in good working condition.
  17. If you have washer/dryer hookups in the unit, remove the faceplate from housing unit and place in the bucket with the grilles. Check for broken or overheated connections to drain. Replace if a good repair cannot be made.
  18. Clean laundry lint and grime from the water valves and the outflow drain tube.

19. Remove any entry door security devices such as a night chain or security bar/loop and set aside for cleaning.
20. Take down shower curtain rod. New rod ends can be purchased from Home Depot and they make a huge statement about the bath when it is finished.
21. Remove the showerhead and clean. White vinegar will dissolve mineral deposits. Use a safety pin to remove mineral deposits from small spray holes if unit cannot be disassembled for cleaning.
22. Using scouring powder on a scruffy pad works great to remove rust, stains, scum, and gunk from chrome bath fixtures. Brillo type pads work well also, however the soap inside a Brillo pad can dry quickly and become difficult to completely rinse out of crevices.
23. Remove all doorstops whether hinge type or the spring type that is mounted on baseboard or other hard surfaces. They can be purchased in quantities of 50 and are not worth the labor expense of cleaning.
24. Remove bathroom exhaust vent cover and place in a bucket of warm soapy water. Vacuum the vent. Check the motor for "rattle." Replace motor and fan if there is excessive "rattle". Remove the motor and fan if in good working order, and then remove the blade. Place in soapy water for cleaning.
25. Remove and replace any under-sink cabinet bottoms that have deteriorated or rotted out due to leakage or under-cabinet spillage. If replacing, do not leave them unfinished! Finish them with stain and a sealer.
26. Check bath and kitchen cabinet drawer glides, knobs/handles and door hinges, for proper working condition and correct if needed.
27. The kitchen faucet will generally have a sediment screen in the tip. Remove and clean out mineral and sediment contents, being careful not to mar the finish or collapse the screen with too much pressure on the tool being used to unscrew it.

#### PAINT SURFACE PREPARATION

1. Remove any and all decals, stickers, borders, wallpaper, adhesive backed hangers, etc. Anything that has been added to the walls since the unit was first placed into service should be removed. Any resulting hole, depression, bump, etc. should be repaired.
2. Repair all other holes or gouges in the walls.
3. Go over each wall surface and give each nail, pin, screw, tack hole, etc. a love tap with a ball peen hammer. This creates a small recess that can be trowel/spatula filled with dry wall "mud" or Spackle material.
4. Remove items from the ceiling that were not part of the originally built units and fill those holes and /or repair damage.
5. While waiting for patching material to dry, clean patio/deck debris, as well as window and door tracks. Check sliding door for proper operation. If rollers are rusted or distorted, replace them.
6. Check that the patio/deck outside light bulb is working, correct wattage and the globe is clean.
7. Clean shelving placed in tub as well as blinds placed in tub.
8. Clean the heat and A/C grilles that have been soaking.
9. Remove fuse panel/breaker panel cover and paint the area around where the panel fits. This can be put back in an hour for safety reasons. You cannot tape around the edge tightly enough to prevent paint from flowing onto the edge of the housing.
10. Vacuum the floor, windowsills, countertops and any other surfaces that offer a ledge upon which particles of dust can settle. Do not forget to do the cove base molding and baseboard. Vacuum the carpet, even if you plan to replace it.
11. With a bucket of water and a good cleaning solution, use a good size sponge and wipe down all items to be painted. Use cleaning solutions that do not require rinsing. "Soilax" is such a product. It usually can be purchased where paint is available.

12. If the unit has a louvered or ventilated door to allow airflow, use an old toothbrush to wash the area where the louvers meet the door's main outer frame. This will remove old dust and caked-on grime.
13. Once cleaned, in order to prevent paint over-run, use masking tape to protect those items that are not easily removed. This includes cabinets, cabinet trim bath fixtures, bathroom tile, cove base, window and aluminum doorframes and sills, etc.
14. Begin your painting from top down, making sure drop cloths cover the area of the room where paint may splatter or drop.
15. While ceiling and/or walls are drying, paint the doors and any wood trim you have already primed in preparation for painting prior to put down. Don't forget the wood closet shelving.
16. Schedule painting of the entry door at the beginning of the workday. This permits it to dry while you are working in the unit. Do not try to paint with doorknobs and deadbolt locks still in place. The door should be clean and free of any adhesives such as Scotch Tape, stickers, etc.
17. Clean the entry door identifier (unit number).

#### CLOSETS/STORAGE AREAS

Do not shirk your duties by skimping here. Closets and storage areas are to be cleaned, painted and repaired. This includes any light switches, as well as the cove base or baseboard. Even though seldom seen, attention to detail in these areas will tell the story of how particular you were in getting the unit ready for the next resident.

#### UTILITY/FURNACE ROOM

This is the second dirtiest area in any unit. More dirt and dust than grime and grease. There should be a thorough cleaning of everything inside.

1. Remove the old filter and vacuum the coil area, being careful not to damage the heat exchange fins. The coil should be vacuumed "dry". Use a small brush similar to a fingernail brush to loosen dust particles, hair, etc. Again, be careful with fins. Also clean the drip pan. You can use a small screwdriver to loosen any dirt or gunk.
2. Change and date the new filter that will be put in.
3. Do not skip the painting of this area. If managed properly, this area will be accessed at least once a month by the resident, so it is important that it, too, be detailed. No dripped, splattered, or overrun paint on the heat/AC unit or water heater.
4. Most units have flex-conduit electrical connections into the water heater. Thoroughly clean the accordion-like surface and remove any rust.

#### WINDOWS

1. Clean all window and door glass, inside and out.
2. Clean all window and sliding glass mechanisms.
3. Repair/replace window screens. If doing so will delay releasing the unit to the new resident, take the screens out and explain to the resident that you will have them back in a couple of days. Do not forget!
4. Re-caulk around frames and sills. Double check to make sure all windows open, remain in raised position and close/lock properly.
5. Clean tracks of sliding patio door. Once cleaned, a light coating of furniture polish will make opening the door much easier. This will also prevent grime build-up, which is typical when oil or silicone is used. Rubbing a candle over the track rail will also improve the glide of the door. Tighten the sliding patio door handles or replace them if they are missing or broken.
6. Check weather-stripping and replace if needed. Once again, do not let this hold up turnover if you do not have the needed material. Just explain to the new resident what is still to be done.

7. Install cleaned, repaired or new blinds. Make sure that all blinds are installed properly. There should be no extra slats at the bottom and all cords should be cut to a proper length.

## BATHROOM

1. Clean toilet bowl, lid and tank.
2. Clean tub and shower surfaces.
3. Check toilet flapper, water control and tank supply line for leaks and proper working order.
4. If not replacing the toilet seat, tighten it. More often than not it will be loose.
5. Check the sink faucet, stopper and drain for proper working condition. Repair or replace as necessary. If the faucet handle screw covers are deteriorated, replacements can be purchased. They are very inexpensive and make for that new look.
6. Check the tub faucet and drain for proper working condition. Repair or replace as necessary. A good scouring powder will do a great job of cleaning the chrome finishes in the tub unit.
7. Clean the toilet tissue holder and remount if it has worked loose. Leaving an UNOPENED roll of toilet paper on the back of the toilet is a welcoming gesture.
8. Clean the vanity and medicine cabinet inside and out, as well as the mirror. If there are glass shelves, remove them, clean thoroughly and put back. Most of the time they can be replaced by purchasing flat plastic panels and cutting to size. If the cabinet is lighted, vacuum the bulbs, install the proper number and wattage of bulbs. An excellent bulb to use in place of the traditional four-bulb type is the mini-fluorescent or CFL.
9. Scrubbing cleanser powder does a great job of cleaning and shining the chrome drain ring, faucet and other shiny bath items.



10. If towel bars are of the ceramic mount type, and the bar is gone, replacement bars can be ordered. Order the type with a spring-loaded end that you can cut to size. This eliminates having to remove the ceramic end units and repairing the resulting hole.
11. Use stainless steel cleaner to clean grab bars around the tub and toilet area. Also check for tightness.

### KITCHEN

1. Clean, clean, clean everything in the kitchen that is not the wall, ceiling or floor. Every cabinet shelf, door edge, hinge, knob should be cleaned. Every surface of every appliance should be cleaned, both inside and out. No shortcuts! This is typically the dirtiest room in the unit.
2. Clean the sink to countertop edge using a dull edge tool of some kind to scrape out the grime and gunk.
3. Clean the faucet and chrome drain lips with a Comet type scouring powder. Clean down inside the drain where the strainer/stopper goes.
4. Check the sink sprayer for proper working order. These are famous for deteriorated hoses or kinks or O-ring leaks around the nozzle.
5. If the strainer baskets are missing or deteriorated, replace them. They are usually too expensive to purchase at local hardware stores. Bags of 5-10 are available from mail order stores at much lower prices.
6. Scrub the countertop area and back-splash. Always re-caulk the area between the splash and the wall.

### BALCONIES AND PATIOS

1. Check for any movement, if found: secure.
2. See if any boards are warped or deteriorating, if so: replace.
3. Make sure no nail or screw heads are a trip hazard.
4. Metal may be rusted and need some sanding and/or painting.

5. Finally it may be time for pressure washing and staining.

#### WALKWAY TO APARTMENT

Walk from the office to the vacant unit and check the following:

1. Is it neat, clean and free of trash?
2. Are there any safety/liability issues such as offsets in the sidewalk or raised stair lips?

If any concerns are found, address them immediately. Please do not skip this important but quick and easy step. You do not want to lose an applicant before they arrive at your beautifully prepared unit.

#### PUT BACK

Now is the time to put back all those items that have been removed for cleaning or replacement, i.e. knobs, lamp covers, trim, handles, safety devices, smoke alarms, fire extinguisher, etc. Put back all the door hardware.

If the unit has them, test the emergency pulls or switches. Check that the outside emergency bulb is working.

#### CARPET AND VINYL

These should be your last items of business. Finishing the floor area, putting down the baseboard, cove base and quarter round should be at the end of the project.

1. Clean flooring behind the stove, refrigerator and other pulled out appliances.

Finish the floor area with a NO WAX finish.

2. Clean the floor in the utility room and furnace closet with a NO WAX finish.
3. After all other details of the unit have been finished, all hardware has been put back on doors, etc. and there is nothing left to do, scrub the kitchen area vinyl flooring with a good cleaner, rinse well and finish out with a NO WAX shine. If the floor is very damaged or excessively worn, replacement may be necessary.
4. Put down quarter round or shoe molding around all the vinyl floor edges unless cove base is already down. Shoe molding gives a sharper appearance.
5. Remove all tools, cleaners, supplies and equipment from the unit EXCEPT for the vacuum cleaner, a roll of paper towels and a bottle of Windex.
6. Spot clean the carpets in heavily soiled areas and then steam clean. If this is done by an outside cleaning service, you should give them 2-3 days notice. When they arrive, direct them to rake the carpet after cleaning. Again, if the carpet is excessively worn or damaged, replacement may be the only option. The carpet will take 24 hours to dry.

#### WRAP UP

1. Do final wiping of glass, shiny surface, fingerprints, etc.
2. Turn blinds to partial open. The unit shows better this way.
3. During warm weather, turn the thermostat OFF. If the weather is cold, set the heat to a minimum setting.

4. Take the vacuum cleaner to the farthest corner from the entry door and begin vacuuming the floors, including the vinyl ones. Turn off any lights as you head toward the entry door.
5. One last look and then lock it down.

YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED YOUR VACANCY PREPARATION AND SHOULD BE  
VERY PROUD OF WHAT YOU HAVE DELIVERED!