

MAINTENANCE

Renters work with management to fix problems

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During maintenance of an apartment or house, any number of problems can arise. From clogged toilets to broken dishwashers, renters experience it all.

Tyson Miller, maintenance worker at The Reserve, 2511 W. 31st St., said some common problems residents called him to fix were backed-up toilets, clogged drains and a lack of hot water.

"I get called for a lot of little things," Miller said. "Mainly from girls whose showers get clogged with hair."

Miller said the main thing tenants sometimes didn't know about maintenance was how to use the heater and air conditioning.

"They complain about high power bills a lot because they don't know how to operate it," Miller said.

Erin Meyer, Lawrence Home Depot employee, often sees students who come into the store for supplies to fix problems with their apartments or houses.

"They come in after they break stuff a lot," Meyer said.

She said some major maintenance issues students dealt with were broken or cracked

blinds, plumbing problems, broken dome lights and broken door frames.

Jamie Pealer, Lawrence Home Depot manager, said students also often needed supplies to fix holes in their walls.

"We have a hole in the wall — well, a couple holes in the wall actually," Nerissa Praderio, Leawood junior, said. "We're going to have to fix those before we leave."

Meyer said she also often saw students renting carpet cleaners.

Colby Dixon, Leavenworth junior, said his biggest maintenance problem was when the water heater in his apartment broke and leaked on the floor.

"It got some clothes wet and stained the carpet," he said.

Whitney Mosier, Manhattan junior, said she had problems with her dishwasher.

"The water wasn't draining out of it after it had gone through a cycle," she said. "I just called maintenance to fix it."

To keep from having to call maintenance, students need to keep appliances clean and not abuse them, Pealer said.

"Most of the time they shouldn't have problems," he said. "Just follow the manufacturer's instructions."

do-it-yourself: how to fix a hole in the wall

1. Apply spackle with a putty knife.
"It depends on the size of the hole, but most of the time you use spackle," said Jamie Pealer, Lawrence Home Depot manager. "I like DryDex spackling because it goes on pink then dries white, so you can see when it's time to sand. You may need a couple of coats."
2. Once the area is dry, smooth it down with sandpaper.
3. Paint over the sanded area.
"If you bring in a paint chip, we can

match the color," Pealer said. "We prefer a chip about the size of a quarter."

Time and Cost Estimates:

- Spackle — \$4 to \$5
- Putty Knife — \$6 to \$7
- Sandpaper — \$4
- Paint (quart) — \$8 or \$9
- Paint Brush — \$2
- Total Cost — about \$27

Time estimate: two hours including time for the spackle and paint to dry.

— Home Depot

Praderio said she had dealt with maintenance problems including a clogged shower drain, broken railings, a broken heater and air conditioner switch, and a broken garbage disposal.

"I'm lucky because I can call maintenance 24 hours a day," she said.

Sarah Fry, Lyndon sophomore, has dealt with heating issues and water leaks in the house she rents. When problems come up, she either calls maintenance or has a friend fix them, she said.

"There's not much we should have to do," she said. "The people we rent the house from have to fix the problems."

Praderio said that when it came to maintaining an apartment it helped to just keep it clean.

"Our house right now is a pig sty; it's tough when you have so much to do," she said. "But it helps to do a weekly house clean."

— Edited by Brandy Entsminger

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