Deposit Return Checklist for Move-Out Day

Landlords can keep only what your state's law allows, usually documented damage beyond normal wear. Rules and deadlines vary. Work through these 14 steps and you leave them less to point at.

1. **Re-read the lease move-out terms** ☐
   Notice, cleaning and key return rules.
2. **Give written notice on time** ☐
   Keep a copy and note the date you sent it.
3. **Clean every room** ☐
   Dust, wipe surfaces and vacuum or mop floors.
4. **Clean the kitchen** ☐
   Oven, fridge, cabinets and counters, inside and out.
5. **Clean the bathroom** ☐
   Tub, sink, toilet and mirror, and remove mildew.
6. **Remove everything you own** ☐
   Including anything in closets, balconies and storage.
7. **Fix small things if the lease allows** ☐
   Check before patching nail holes or repainting.
8. **Compare to your move-in photos** ☐
   Note what was already damaged on day one.
9. **Take dated photos of every room** ☐
   Walls, floors, appliances and the bathroom.
10. **Do a walkthrough with the landlord** ☐
    Ask for the results of the inspection in writing.
11. **Return all keys, fobs and remotes** ☐
    Get a written receipt if you can.
12. **Take final meter readings** ☐
    Photograph them, then close or transfer accounts.

13 **Give your forwarding address in writing** ☐

The landlord needs it to send the deposit.

14 **Know your deposit deadline** ☐

The return deadline depends on your state.

General information, not legal advice. Rules differ by state and city, so check your local tenant rules.