to move out so that they are dry enough to walk on. If carpets are wet at your move out inspection time, some property providers will reschedule your move-out appointment and you may be charged additional rent for each day until they come back.

In all cases, carpets must be well vacuumed. Before vacuuming, carefully sweep around the edges of the carpet, in corners and adjacent to the wall, on stairs, and around the edges of furniture that can’t be easily moved to clear the dirt so the vacuum can reach it.

**Cleaning Companies**

It is strongly recommended that you hire professional cleaning companies to clean your apartment and carpets after you have moved out. This is the best way to avoid conflicts over your security deposit. Be forewarned that you should clean your apartment as thoroughly as possible beforehand, because cleaning companies charge based on the amount of cleaning that they have to do. If you choose to do the cleaning yourselves, it’s best to have a cleaning company perform a “spot clean” to ensure that everything is immaculate.

Get recommendations from your property provider on which cleaning and carpet cleaning companies to use. Obtain estimates from these companies and set up cleaning appointments in advance. Make sure that the companies you use are licensed and bonded and guarantee their work (ask for a copy of their license), meaning that they will come back and finish the job if your property provider is not satisfied. After the cleaning, inform your property provider of the companies that you chose, in the event that follow-up is necessary, and give him/her copies of your receipts.

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**Initial Move-Out Inspection**

According to California Civil Code Section 1950.5(f)(1): Within a reasonable time after notification of either party’s intention to terminate the tenancy, or before the end of the lease term, the property provider shall notify the tenant in writing of his or her option to request an initial inspection and of his or her right to be present at the inspection. If the tenant does not request an initial inspection after receiving notice, the landlord is not required to perform the inspection.

The goal of the initial inspection is for the property provider to identify defects or conditions that justify deductions from the tenant’s deposit. This gives the tenant the opportunity to do the identified cleaning or repairs in order to avoid deductions from the security deposit. The inspection cannot take place more than two weeks before the end of the tenancy. The inspection should be scheduled to give tenant ample time to perform repairs or cleaning identified.

When the tenant requests an initial inspection, the property provider and the tenant must try to agree on a mutually convenient date and time for the inspection. Unless the tenant no longer wants the inspection or waives their right to the notice requirement, a landlord is required to give the tenant at least 48 hours’ advance written notice of the date and time of the inspection whether or not the parties have agreed to a date and time. The property provider may perform the inspection if the tenant is not present, unless the tenant has previously withdrawn the request for inspection.

Based on the inspection, the property provider must prepare an itemized statement of repairs or cleaning that they believe the tenant should perform in order to avoid deductions from the security deposit. The property provider must leave the itemized statement with the tenant or inside the unit if the tenant is not present. The property provider must also provide a copy of the sections of California’s security deposit statute that list lawful uses of a tenants’ security deposits.

The property provider may perform a final inspection after the tenant has moved out of the rental and can deduct from the tenant’s security deposit to repair a defect or correct a condition: 1) that was identified in the inspection statement and not repaired or corrected by tenant; 2) that occurred after the initial inspection; 3) that was not identified during the initial inspection due to the presence of the tenant’s possessions.