

# 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 landlord to clean or replace when moving into a unit that has been smoked in?

According to Kennedy Restoration Co. (Portland, OR), 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 (& replace if needed):

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

### Seal (1 coat) & Paint (2 coats)

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

### Remove and Replace

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

### Other

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

## 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.