

Under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. § 44-7-34), landlords are allowed to deduct the cost of repairs for excessive damage from a tenant's security deposit. However, they cannot withhold funds for normal wear and tear. Landlords are required to provide an itemized list of damages and estimated costs of repairs to the tenant within three business days of the tenant moving out if they intend to make any deductions from the security deposit.

In Georgia, as in many other states, the distinction between "normal wear and tear" and "excessive damage" is important for landlords and tenants, particularly when it comes to the return of security deposits. Here are the definitions and key differences:

Normal Wear and Tear

"Normal wear and tear" refers to the expected deterioration that occurs from the regular use of a property over time. This type of wear is inevitable and does not result from neglect, misuse, or abuse by the tenant. Examples of normal wear and tear include:

- Minor scratches or marks on walls, Minor scuffs from moving furniture, small pinholes
- Worn or slightly stained carpets from regular use
- Loose door handles or hinges
- Minor scuffs on hardwood floors
- Lightly scratched or worn countertops
- Slow draining of sinks due to normal usage over time
- **Paint:** Fading or minor scuff marks on walls from furniture
- **Carpet:** Worn areas in high-traffic zones, minor fading
- **Flooring:** Light scratches on hardwood floors, minor scuffs
- **Doors:** Slightly worn hinges, minor scratches
- **Blinds and Curtains:** Slight fading or fraying from sun exposure
- **Appliances:** Slightly worn burners on a stove, minor scratches on the surface
- **Plumbing:** Mineral deposits or minor water stains in sinks or tubs from regular use
- **Windows:** Loose windows or minor scratches on glass
- **Cabinets and Countertops:** Light scratches or worn areas from regular use
- **Paint:** Nail holes from hanging pictures, small chips
- **Carpet:** Slight fraying along edges, flattening of fibers in high-traffic areas
- **Flooring:** Light wear marks, small scuffs from normal foot traffic
- **Doors:** Slight misalignment from settling, minor nicks
- **Blinds and Curtains:** Minor wear on drawstrings, slight discoloration
- **Appliances:** Slight discoloration or staining on stovetops, minor wear on oven racks
- **Plumbing:** Minor leaks at faucet bases, slight rust stains
- **Windows:** Slight fogging of double-paned windows
- **Cabinets and Countertops:** Minor stains or wear, small dings
- **Lighting:** Burned-out light bulbs, minor wear on light switches
- **Heating/Cooling Systems:** Normal dust accumulation in vents
- **Fixtures:** Loose towel racks, slightly tarnished faucets

- **Walls:**
 - **Paint:** Faded or slightly dirty paint from normal use.
 - **Minor dents:** Small dents from door handles or furniture bumping into the walls.
- **Carpet:**
 - **Indentations:** Indentations from furniture.
 - **Seams:** Slight fraying along carpet seams.
- **Flooring:**
 - **Tile:** Minor grout discoloration from use.
 - **Hardwood:** Slightly worn finish in high-traffic areas.
- **Doors:**
 - **Handles:** Handles that have become loose from regular use.
 - **Surface:** Minor surface scratches or scuffs.
- **Blinds and Curtains:**
 - **Fading:** Fading due to sunlight.
 - **Slight wear:** Slight wear on the edges.
- **Appliances:**
 - **Refrigerator:** Minor scratches on the exterior, slight wear on shelves.
 - **Oven:** Minor discoloration or wear inside the oven.
- **Plumbing:**
 - **Sinks:** Minor water stains.
 - **Showers:** Minor wear on showerheads.
- **Windows:**
 - **Frames:** Slight wear or minor scratches on window frames.
 - **Screens:** Slight wear or small holes.
- **Cabinets and Countertops:**
 - **Cabinet hinges:** Slightly loose hinges.
 - **Countertops:** Minor scratches or stains.
- **Lighting:**
 - **Switches:** Slight wear on light switches.
 - **Fixtures:** Minor wear on light fixtures.
- **Heating/Cooling Systems:**
 - **Vents:** Normal dust accumulation.
 - **Filters:** Regular filter wear from use.

Excessive Damage

"Excessive damage" (sometimes referred to as "abnormal damage") is damage that exceeds what is typically expected from normal use of the property. This type of damage is usually the result of neglect, misuse, or abuse by the tenant and may require substantial repairs. Examples of excessive damage include:

- Large holes or significant dents in walls
- Broken windows or doors
- Stained or burned carpets beyond regular wear
- Deep scratches or gouges in hardwood floors
- Broken or missing fixtures (e.g., light fixtures, blinds)
- Water damage from improper use or neglect
- Broken appliances due to misuse
- Mold or mildew buildup due to poor ventilation practices by the tenant
- **Paint:** Large holes, extensive scribbling, or unapproved color changes requiring repainting
- **Carpet:** Large stains, burns, tears, or water damage
- **Flooring:** Deep gouges, significant water damage, or cracked tiles
- **Doors:** Broken doors, holes, or significantly damaged frames
- **Blinds and Curtains:** Missing slats, broken mechanisms, or severely torn curtains
- **Appliances:** Broken components, non-functional appliances due to misuse
- **Plumbing:** Clogged drains due to improper items flushed or poured down, significant water damage from neglect
- **Windows:** Broken glass, damaged screens, or frames
- **Cabinets and Countertops:** Broken doors, deep cuts, burns, or significant damage requiring replacement
- **Paint:** Graffiti or large unauthorized murals, large gouges requiring drywall repair
- **Carpet:** Pet urine stains, large patches of carpet torn out or missing
- **Flooring:** Water damage causing warping or buckling, large cracks or missing tiles
- **Doors:** Doors off hinges, broken locks or handles, large holes
- **Blinds and Curtains:** Completely broken or missing blinds, curtains shredded or missing
- **Appliances:** Non-functional due to tenant misuse, significant dents or missing parts
- **Plumbing:** Severe water damage due to negligence, broken fixtures
- **Windows:** Completely shattered or missing panes, broken window locks
- **Cabinets and Countertops:** Cabinet doors ripped off, extensive burn marks, or deep gouges
- **Lighting:** Broken fixtures, missing light covers or shades
- **Heating/Cooling Systems:** Damage due to improper use, missing or broken thermostat
- **Walls:** Large holes, significant crayon or marker marks
- **Fixtures:** Missing fixtures, broken mirrors or glass
- **Walls:**
 - **Paint:** Large areas of unauthorized paint or wallpaper.
 - **Holes:** Large holes or deep gouges requiring drywall repair.

- **Carpet:**
 - **Burns:** Burns or large stains that cannot be cleaned.
 - **Tears:** Large tears or sections of carpet missing.
- **Flooring:**
 - **Tile:** Broken or missing tiles.
 - **Hardwood:** Deep gouges, significant water damage causing warping.
- **Doors:**
 - **Broken:** Doors that are broken or have holes.
 - **Frames:** Damaged door frames or broken locks.
- **Blinds and Curtains:**
 - **Missing:** Completely missing blinds or curtains.
 - **Broken:** Blinds that are broken or cannot be opened/closed.
- **Appliances:**
 - **Refrigerator:** Broken shelves or missing parts.
 - **Oven:** Non-functional due to misuse.
- **Plumbing:**
 - **Sinks:** Clogged sinks due to improper use.
 - **Showers:** Broken showerheads or severe water damage.
- **Windows:**
 - **Frames:** Broken or severely damaged window frames.
 - **Glass:** Broken or cracked window glass.
- **Cabinets and Countertops:**
 - **Cabinet doors:** Broken or missing cabinet doors.
 - **Countertops:** Large burns, deep cuts, or significant damage.
- **Lighting:**
 - **Fixtures:** Broken light fixtures.
 - **Switches:** Missing or damaged light switches.
- **Heating/Cooling Systems:**
 - **Vents:** Vents that are damaged or missing.
 - **Thermostats:** Broken or non-functional thermostats.