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IFAS EXTENSION

Making Simple Repairs: Door and Lock Problems¹

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Getting stuck outside of your apartment or in a room can be frustrating. Prevent this from happening by following some simple rules and doing some minor repairs.

Prevention

- Give your keys a “home.” Always put them in the same place and check for them before you lock your door! Landlords may charge you if you lose your keys. Many landlords do not consider it an emergency if you get locked out. NEVER PICK A LOCK!
- Close doors gently. Slamming them loosens hardware and molding. Slamming a door against a wall can damage the wall. The doorknob can knock a hole in the wall or the doorstop can damage the door. If such damage occurs, it will affect your security deposit.

Problems You Can Fix

- A. Squeaky Doors
- B. Loose Screws

C. Sticking Or Dragging Door.

D. Squeaky Door Locks/Tight Locks

E. Loose Or Rattling Doorknobs

A. Squeaky Door

Supplies Needed:

- Oil
- Hammer
- Nail

How To Fix:

1. You can usually stop a door squeak by putting a few drops of oil at the top of each hinge. Move the door back and forth to work the oil into the hinge. If the squeaking does not stop, raise the pin and add more oil.

2. To raise the pin, place a nail against the bottom of the pin. Hammer the nail to push the pin up.

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3. Another way to remove the pin is to place a screwdriver under the head of the pin and tap the screwdriver with a hammer.

B. Loose Screws

Supplies Needed:

- Screwdriver
- Screws

How To Fix:

Tighten screws in the hinges. If screws are not holding, replace them, one at a time, with a longer screw. Or insert a wooden matchstick in the hole and put the old screw back in place.

C. Sticking or Dragging Door

Supplies Needed:

- Sandpaper

How To Fix:

Look for a shiny spot on the door where it sticks. Open and close the door slowly to find the spot. Sand down the shiny spot. Do not sand too much, or the door will not fit as tight as it should.

If the door or frame is badly out of shape, contact your landlord.

D. Squeaky Door Locks or Tight Locks

Supplies Needed:

- Graphite pencil (from the hardware store)

How To Fix:

Noisy or squeaky locks should be lubricated with graphite. If the lock is tight or will not turn, you may also lubricate it with graphite.

E. Loose or Rattling Doorknobs

Supplies Needed:

- Screwdriver

- Putty

How To Fix:

- Check to see if the setscrew is loose. If so, tighten the screw with a screwdriver. If it is not loose then loosen the setscrew on the doorknob.
- Remove the knob. Put a small piece of putty or modeling clay in the knob.
- Put the knob back on. Push it on as far as possible. Tighten the screw.