

# *Tricks of the Trade*

## Section 1 - Description

### APPLIANCES

1. Dishwashers – on circulation pumps but mostly drain pumps that seize up, you can sometimes bang on them to get them to start working again (AL)
2. Dryer vents can be cleared out with an electric leaf blower (AL)
3. PPE and tie-downs (BK)
4. Surge protector (BK)
5. Ask for help if too heavy (BK)
6. Install them until everything else is finished. (F2)
7. Electric appliance dolly (HP)
8. Use air sled when removing or installing (HP)
9. Always clean refrigerator coils (KW)
10. Dishwashers must always be level (KW)
11. Use barkeepers friend to remove surface rust from stainless steel apps (OV)
12. Ge dishwasher not draining replace drain solenoid as well as timer motor (OV)
13. Shoulder dollies for moving appliances (PF)
14. Put together a flyer to be sent out to the residents quarterly and put it in the move in packet on what can go in the disposal, care for appliances, and so forth. Every community may have different items that the residents may need to know. You can always expand on it if you think of more items. (SM)
15. Garbage disposal – have the resident push the reset button first to see if it solves the problem (WH)
16. Use appliance paint to touch up minor scratches (WH)
17. If too warm in the refrigerator, check settings to see if they need adjustments (WH)
18. Dirty Dishwasher - Use citrus kool-aid powder in an empty cycle to remove dishwasher grease and scale. (WX)
19. Oven Temperature Accuracy – Put a small pile of sugar on foil and set the oven to 375 degrees. If it melts, the oven is hot. If it's solid past 400 degrees, it's running cool. (WX)
20. Resurfacing stainless steel appliances is cheaper than replacing the stainless surface. Does not remove dents though. (BH)
21. Vinegar helps remove foul odors from sideload washers better than bleach. Bleach is better at removing visible *mildew*. (BH)
22. Stainless steel sinks that have rust spots or rings you can make a paste out of comet and little water and use a soft sponge and gently rub in circles and it will usually remove it (TF)
23. Using a straight razor blade scrapper will remove the cooked on water/liquids of a glass top stove (TF)

## **CABINETS/COUNTER TOPS**

1. For removing stains from granite, use a baking soda and vinegar paste. place a good amount on the stain then cover it with saran wrap and tape it down. Leave it for 48 hours. It should help pull the stain out. (CR)
2. Paint in the morning so you can do a second coat in the afternoon (F2)
3. Use the original screws (F2)
4. Lightly sand cabinets before painting (HP)
5. Wall cabinets first – level, cabinet screws, shims (KW)
6. Instead of shims - screw cabinet to wall, place clamp loosen screw, and screw together then tighten screw (OV)
7. Write your map out on the wall before hanging cabinets (OV)
8. Dropping in a glass cutting board on a bad part of the top instead of replacing the entire top (PF)
9. Put cabinets together on the floor, then hang together to ensure they'll be even (PF)
10. Replace only the portion that is damaged (WH)
11. Light scratches, rub the cabinet with a walnut or almond (WX)
12. Small chip in granite or quartz: Mix super glue with baking soda. Then lightly sand with high grit sandpaper. (WX)

## **ELECTRICAL**

1. Washers locked and won't open – resetting breaker for a couple of minutes usually fixes this (resets control board) (AL)
2. Same thing for dryers on multiple issues that can occur (AL)
3. Take pictures before moving or disconnecting anything to know how it was hooked up before (BK)
4. Detailed troubleshooting guides for common electrical problems (BK)
5. Have the right tools (BK)
6. Be brave. Se valiente! (F2)
7. Ceiling fan mount, toggle bolts (HP)
8. Trust your meter (OV)
9. Turn off breakers before services (PF)
10. Using remotes for fans instead of running wire (PF)
11. Whenever running wires underground on the exterior, always put it in a sizeable conduit. This way if the wire ever needed to be replaced for some reason, you can connect the new wire to one end and pull it through easily. They make a lube for this as well for long runs (SM)
12. If issues, check to tighten wires in outlet/light switch (WH)

## **GROUNDS**

1. Place dog stations strategically around the community to help ensure minimum waste left behind. Use questionnaire responses to see if there are comments around certain locations that can use one. (AL)

2. Add single dog waste bag dispensers at each breezeway entrance to minimize pet waste in common areas. (CR)
3. Aerate/overseed in fall. (AL)
4. When driving into the community, look at curb appeal as if you were a resident or prospect. Where else can we improve/clean up? (AL)
5. Checklists for opening and closing pools. (BK)
6. Be checking all the time, submit work orders as needed, and never walk by a piece of trash (F2, TF)
7. Find a good and efficient routine (F2)
8. Keep a consistent schedule with a map highlighted of who should be addressing each area daily (WH)
9. Carry gloves, trash bags, bucket, and grabber on your cart (F2, HP)
10. Take pictures of resident items that need to get addressed (HP)
11. Have your groundskeeper check all pop-ups weekly (OV)
12. Keep all storm drains clear (PF)
13. Open dumpster lids after they are dumped (PF)
14. Bald spots in grass. Instead of reseeding, use a mix of compost and sand over the spot. Let nearby grass spread naturally – works faster than seed alone. (WX)
15. Rotate staff members walking the community to get different sets of eyes on it (TF)

## **HVAC**

1. Advise residents to check their heating/cooling prior to peak season to ensure it's working appropriately. (AL)
2. Advise residents if they're going out of town to not turn off HVAC system but to leave it at a consistent temperature to avoid equipment over-working when turned back on. It's also more energy efficient. (AL)
3. Checking energy efficiency for both techs and residents (BK)
4. Use a fine wire brush to remove dents from coil fins. (CR)
5. When removing a blower motor from the fan, use sand paper to sand down the top of the shaft to make removal way easier. No banging it out with a hammer! (CR)
6. Change check valve for new one (F2)
7. Bring batteries for thermostat (F2)
8. Check filters and change them as needed outside of PM (F2, KW)
9. Preventative maintenance (HP)
10. Tabs in drain of air handler (HP)
11. Clean coils regularly (KW)
12. Use leak stops on problem units (PF)
13. Use sand paper on flame sensors instead of replacing (PF)
14. To boost coolness in the home, keep blinds closed and keep doors open to circulate air (WH)
15. Check power switch and settings with resident before sending maintenance (WH)
16. Pump down a condenser when doing repairs on a unit to save and reuse the refrigerant. Connect the low side hose from the gauges to the low side port on the condenser. Close

off the high side valve. Start the unit wait for gauge to pump down to 0 then close off the low side valve then turn unit off. (W1)

17. Checking the T-Stat, use a jumper wire from red to other colors to check each function. (W1)
18. Cleaning the A/C drain line on fur downs in the bathroom ceiling, take off the overflow plate on the tub and suck the condensation drain with a shop vac to clean the line. (W1)
19. Always use a multimeter to test electrical parts to see if they are bad. (W1)
20. Using condensation pan tabs after removing a clog from a condensation hose drastically cuts down on repeat calls. (BH)

## **PLUMBING**

1. Advise residents to run water and grind ice through the garbage disposal at least once a week to help them from seizing up. (AL)
2. Use a vinegar, Dawn dish soap and baking soda mixture to clean out disposals and drains. Dump it in and let it sit for 10 minutes before rinsing it out. (CR)
3. Check water heater expansion tanks during preventative maintenance for leaks, corrosion, etc. to prevent it from blowing out and causing excessive damage. (AL)
4. Have a snake camera available (BK)
5. Have a quarterly flyer distribution about what not to put down the drains (BK)
6. Replace all the old water faucets (F2)
7. Feel pipe for leaks.(F2)
8. Carry shark bite tools and bring multi tool with you (F2)
9. Water heater – drain from the top with shop vac, use strap to remove, elbow shark bite at top (HP)
10. ¼” fall per foot on drain lines (KW)
11. Don’t bite your fingernails (PF)
12. Use plastic lock washers on toilet seat bolts to cut down on calls (PF)
13. Have a map of all shut offs and sewer drops (PF)
14. If active leak, walk the resident through turning off the water immediately (WH)

## **TILE/BACKSPLASH**

1. Using a grinder with a cutting wheel to make tile cutting fast and easy. (CR)
2. Make sure you’re not making mistakes in the cuts as it takes a lot of time (F2)
3. When doing grout, clean most of it but after it dries, the small spots can be wiped away. (F2)
4. Use tile spacers (F2)
  - a. HP says don’t use tile spacers?
5. Know what your layout is and precut tile (F2)
6. Skimcoat wall to make even (HP)
7. Clean grout as you go
8. Use fingers for grooves and to get into cracks (HP)
9. Start with a level first row (KW)
10. Gapping properly helps (KW)

11. Set rows of tiles, then put spacers in to get more area covered faster (PF)
12. Instead of replacing, you can have tiles painted (WH)

## **TOOLS**

1. 11 in 1 Klein screwdriver is a great option for an all-in-on tool for most things (AL, F2, KW)
2. Make sure you have the dolphin pool robotic vacuum (AL)
3. Have the right ones and all you need (BK, F2, PF)
4. Tool organizers (BK)
5. Impact, mud bucket and knives, multi tool (F2)
6. Air sled, electric dolly, mail gun, oscillating saw (HP)
7. 6" channel lock pliers, razor (?), magic eraser (KW)
8. Have all the tools prepared daily to be successful and deficient with day-to-day operations (WH)
9. Use a wire nut to cap silicone to keep it from hardening inside the tube (OV)

## **REHABS**

1. Maintain a clean working space (BK)
2. Collect all the materials first. Make sure all tools and there's a game plan so there's not back and forth. (F2, KW)
3. Stay on top of your schedule (HP)
4. Doors – mark each door individually (HP)
5. Toggle belt – fans (HP)
6. Labeling all wires in a junction (PF)
7. Use ledge boards for hanging cabinets (PF)
8. Measure cabinets/countertops 30 days before move-out (WH)
9. Pre-order all materials for your next rehabs and group per apartment (WH)
10. Give your rehab techs a "punch-out bucket" the clean up after themselves when finishing a make ready (OV)

## **ORDERING/INVENTORY/WALKS**

1. Give checklists to cleaners, maintenance, and other vendors to help with quality control. (AL)
2. Check order history to know amount of supplies ordered and if you are over/under ordering in any category. (AL)
3. Do a weekly inventory check to ensure commonly used items are in stock. (AL, BK)
4. Have an "order" sheet available that techs can write down items when they notice them getting low to re-stock before running out.
5. Keep notes as you go (BK, HP)
6. Use quarterly inspection (HP)
7. Order ahead of time for upcoming turns, projects, inventory, or other items (HP, KW)
8. Labeling all boxes of parts (PF)
9. Keep walk sheets and make spreadsheet on computer for budget purposes (PF)

10. Make a standard form for pre-walks to make the process go much faster by just checking boxes instead of writing everything down each time. (SM)
11. Order all needed supplies w/ rep weekly (WH)
12. Complete Michelson inventory report 2x per year, and add/remove items to it as you go instead of waiting for the due dates to complete (WH)
13. Walk all vacants weekly along with scheduling pre-walks for maintenance (WH)
14. Purchase in bulk to save money. (WX)
15. When doing unit inspections, walk along the walls, rather than walking into the middle of the room. It will allow for a more detailed inspection. (WX)
16. If a unit has been sitting for over a month, run water through all the sinks/tubs/washer drain to avoid odor issues. (BH)

### **MISC/OTHER**

1. Rough or stubborn keys in deadbolts? Rub a pencil on the key for lubrication.
2. Icy patches? Use a mixture of water, alcohol and Dawn dish soap to melt it.
3. Always keeps your hands busy (F2)
4. Eazy drains (HP)
5. Maintain an organized shop (HP)
6. Use pumice stone on toilet scratches (OV)
7. If an interior door closes on it own, just pull a couple hinge pins, bend them slightly, and re-install and should stay open. (SM)
8. If you have a door rubbing the jamb on the striker plate side and all of the hinges and hinge screws are tight, you can either remove the hinge pins from 2 hinges and put a shim to make the correct gap with the door shut and then bend then hinge to line up and put the pins back in. Or take a pry bar between the jamb and the door at the point it is rubbing, then pry the door back which bends the hinge also and it should not rub anymore. (SM)
9. Simple Green degreaser makes removing paint from plank flooring a breeze. Spot spray, wait 5 mins and then wipe with a wet microfiber cloth.  
<https://hdsupplysolutions.com/p/simple-green-20-oz-foaming-crystal-cleaner-degreaser-aerosol-p274857> (BH)