

SIMPLY CLEAN SEATTLE · FREE GUIDE

Move-In Cleaning Guide

Time, Products and Checklist

Planning to clean your new home yourself before the first box arrives? This guide gives a realistic picture of what is involved: the time it takes, the products that work, and a room-by-room checklist to keep you on track.

Section 1	How long it really takes, by home size and area
Section 2	Recommended cleaning products with prices
Section 3	Supplies you will need
Section 4	Room-by-room task list
Section 5	Rather have a professional handle it?

SECTION 1

How long does a move-in clean really take?

This is the part most people underestimate. A home that looks clean still takes the same amount of time to clean properly. Every surface still needs to be touched and wiped, without the visible satisfaction of dramatic before-and-after results. Budget more time than you expect.

Time by area

Area	Estimated time
Kitchen surfaces, cabinets, countertops	1.5 to 2 hours
Range hood and stovetop	45 min to 1 hour
Bathrooms, per bathroom	1 to 1.5 hours
Hard surface floors	1 hour
Carpeted areas	45 min to 1 hour
Inside windows	1 hour
Dusting, baseboards, high-touch surfaces	1 hour

Closets, per closet

15 to 30 min

Total time by home size

Home size	Square footage	Solo estimate	With add-ons
1 bedroom / 1 bath	Up to 800 sq ft	3 to 5 hours	5 to 7 hours
2-3 bed / 2 bath	800 to 1,800 sq ft	5 to 7 hours	7 to 10 hours
3-4 bed / 3-4 bath	1,800 to 3,000 sq ft	7 to 10 hours	10 to 14 hours

Add-ons that significantly increase time

Inside oven cleaning adds 45 min to 1 hour. Inside refrigerator adds 30 to 45 min. Inside cabinets adds 1 to 1.5 hours across a full kitchen. Blinds add 30 to 45 min per room. Factor these in before you start.

The best time to clean a home thoroughly is before anything goes in

An empty home is a rare opportunity. Every cupboard, drawer, and closet is accessible: no belongings to move, no corners blocked. Getting into the edges and backs of cabinets is significantly easier now than it will ever be again once the home is lived in. Take advantage of it.

It is also the ideal time to install drawer and cabinet liners, particularly in areas where cooking oils, spices, soaps, and cleaning supplies will be stored, especially under the kitchen and bathroom sinks where moisture and spills are most common. Liners protect the wood surface from damage and staining. When moving out, a lined cabinet takes a fraction of the time to clean, and reduces the risk of damage deductions from a deposit.

The clean home paradox

Move-in homes are often already relatively clean, but that does not mean they clean faster. Every surface still requires the same wiping, scrubbing, and attention. There is no visible grime to remove, so the work feels invisible. It still takes the same time.

SECTION 2

Recommended cleaning products

Top picks based on 15+ years of professional cleaning experience in Seattle homes. A move-in home is typically cleaner than a move-out home, but residue from previous occupants is often invisible. Choose products that sanitize properly, not just products that make surfaces look clean. Always choose unscented where available.

EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

Product	Best for	Price	Pro tip
Bon Ami Powder Cleanser	Sinks, tubs, ceramic, stainless steel	~\$9	Non-scratch. Great all-rounder for bathrooms and kitchen sink. Safe around kids and pets.
Method All-Purpose Cleaner	Countertops, cabinets, walls, appliance exteriors	~\$6	Eco-friendly, endorsed brand. Safe for most surfaces. Test on stone before use.
Seventh Generation Toilet Bowl Cleaner	Toilet bowls	~\$6	Plant-based, EPA Safer Choice rated. Let it dwell 5 min before scrubbing. Do this in every bathroom regardless of appearance.
Bar Keepers Friend (powder)	Grout, tile, tub surrounds, mineral deposits	~\$9	Best for hard water buildup on shower glass and taps. Use with a damp sponge. Wear gloves.

SPECIALIZED

Product	Best for	Price	Pro tip
Zep Heavy Duty Degreaser	Range hood, stovetop, backsplash	~\$12	Range hoods accumulate years of grease even in clean-looking kitchens. Spray, wait 2 min, wipe. Open windows.
Seventh Generation Glass Cleaner	Windows, mirrors, glass shower doors	~\$7	Or mix 50% rubbing alcohol and 50% water. Use lint-free microfiber only for streak-free results.
Weiman Stainless Steel Cleaner	Fridge exterior, dishwasher, oven exterior	~\$10	Leaves a fingerprint-resistant finish. Buff with microfiber for streak-free results.
Bona Hardwood Floor Cleaner	Sealed hardwood and wood-look floors	~\$14	Most Seattle homes have hardwood. Do not over-wet. Excess moisture damages boards over time.

FOR STUBBORN RESIDUE

Product	Best for	Price	Pro tip
Seventh Generation Tub and Tile	Shower tiles, grout, soap scum, glass doors	~\$7	Spray generously, let dwell 5 min, scrub with a grout brush. Soap scum from previous occupants is often invisible until it catches the light.

The Pink Stuff (paste)

Stuck-on grime, cooktop
spills, oven door glass

~\$8

Excellent for baked-on cooktop residue that standard
cleaners will not shift. A little goes a long way.

Always use unscented products where available

Scented cleaners can cause irritation for people with allergies or sensitivities. Unscented versions of most products above are available at Target, Fred Meyer, and Amazon.

SECTION 3

Supplies you will need

Gather these before starting. Running out mid-clean, especially of microfiber cloths or gloves, breaks momentum significantly. Check each item off as you pack your cleaning kit.

■ Vacuum cleaner (HEPA preferred)	■ Mop and bucket	■ Broom and dustpan
■ Duster (extendable for high corners)	■ Microfiber cloths, 2 colors minimum	■ Scrub sponges (non-scratch)
■ Grout brush or old toothbrush	■ Paper towels	■ Rubber gloves
■ Garbage bags	■ Step ladder	■ Spray bottle (for DIY glass cleaner)

Color-code your microfiber cloths

Use one color for bathrooms only: toilets, sinks, tubs. Use a different color for everything else. This prevents cross-contamination between bathroom and kitchen surfaces. It sounds like a small thing. It is not.

SECTION 4

Room-by-room task list

Work top to bottom in every room: dust and cobwebs first, floors last. ★ marks areas where residue from previous occupants is most likely to be present even when the home looks clean.

★ High-residue areas: attend to these even if they look clean

✓ Standard item

+ Optional add-on

Kitchen

- ★ **Degrease range hood interior, exterior, and filters**
- ★ **Scrub stovetop: burners, grates, and surrounding surface**
- ★ **Wipe cabinet fronts, handles, and drawer faces. Fingerprint buildup accumulates over years.**
- ★ **Clean window sills and window tracks**
- ✓ Clean inside and outside microwave
- ✓ Scrub countertops and backsplash including grout lines
- ✓ Scrub sink and polish fixtures
- ✓ Wipe light switches, outlets, and door handles
- ✓ Sweep or vacuum floors including edges and under appliances
- ✓ Mop floors
- + Optional: clean inside oven including racks. Adds 45 min to 1 hour.
- + Optional: clean inside refrigerator. Adds 30 to 45 min.
- + Optional: clean inside all cabinets. Adds 1 to 1.5 hours.

Bathrooms (repeat for each bathroom)

- ★ **Scrub glass shower door. Remove soap scum and hard water buildup from previous occupants.**
- ★ **Scrub tile grout and treat any mildew**
- ★ **Clean window sills and tracks**
- ✓ Remove cobwebs from ceiling corners
- ✓ Scrub toilet inside and out including base and behind
- ✓ Scrub bathtub or shower stall: walls, floor, fixtures, and drain cover
- ✓ Clean sink, countertop, and fixtures
- ✓ Polish mirrors and glass surfaces streak-free
- ✓ Wipe vanity cabinet fronts and handles
- ✓ Clean exhaust fan cover: wipe and dust grille
- ✓ Disinfect light switches, door handles, towel bars, and flush handle
- ✓ Sweep or vacuum floors
- ✓ Mop and sanitize floors including behind toilet and under vanity

Living Areas and Bedrooms (repeat for each room)

- ★ **Remove cobwebs from ceiling corners and ceiling fans**
- ★ **Clean window tracks and window sills. Grime collects here over years of use.**
- ✓ Dust ceiling fans and light fixtures: blades, housing, and globe covers
- ✓ Wipe built-in shelving and ledges
- ✓ Clean doors, frames, and light switches
- ✓ Spot-clean walls: scuffs, handprints, and marks on wall surfaces
- ✓ Clean inside closets: shelves, rods, walls, and floor including walk-ins
- ✓ Wipe closet doors and tracks
- ✓ Vacuum all carpeted areas including edges, corners, and along baseboards
- ✓ Sweep, vacuum, and mop hard floors including inside closets

Final walk-through

- ✓ Check every room from the doorway at eye level for missed areas
- ✓ Check all window tracks. These are commonly missed.
- ✓ Check cabinet fronts in good light. Fingerprints show differently at angles.
- ✓ Check shower glass from multiple angles. Soap scum is often only visible at certain light angles.
- ✓ Check floor edges and corners in each room
- ✓ Check inside all closets are clean and free of previous occupants residue

SECTION 5

Rather have a professional handle it?

Some people book move-in cleaning not because the home is dirty, but because they want to know it was done properly: by someone who does this every day, with the right tools and products, before the first box arrives. A thorough move-in clean for a 2 to 3 bedroom home takes a solo person 5 to 7 hours. Professional cleaners typically complete it in 3 to 4 hours and back every job with a 24-hour re-clean guarantee.

Pricing depends on home size, bathrooms, condition, and add-ons

Get an exact flat-rate price in 60 seconds at quote.seattlesimplyclean.com. No phone call needed. Every job is backed by a 24-hour re-clean guarantee.

BOOK ONLINE

quote.seattlesimplyclean.com

or call 206-973-2515

Simply Clean serves anyone moving into a new home: apartments, condos, houses, and every type of home across Seattle, Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah, and the Eastside.

ENDORSED GREEN CLEANING BRANDS

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