

Which Type of Storage Tenant Are You?

BY JAY MACDONALD APRIL 7, 2015



Speed Racer is a master of the drop-off-and-go. The Hoardinator hauls more out than he hefts in. Space Case always leaves her unit unlocked. The OCDiva's got hers all mapped out. And Captain Chaos? Trust me, you don't wanna know!

Which type of storage tenant are you?

To help you decide, and perhaps overcome it, we've tapped the expertise of storage veteran [Beth Schroeder](#), owner of A Place for Space in Rockford, IL, and professional organizers [Cynthia Lindsey](#) of Nashville, TN, and [Amy Trager](#) of Chicago, IL.

Ready? Let's pop the roll-up door on these five storage stereotypes!

Speed Racer



Profile: Speed is of the essence. Boxes accumulate closest to the door. You'll recognize him by the sound of breaking glass and dinnerware. Oh, and that's his vehicle running outside

Tenant Traits: "They always leave trash because stuff falls out," Schroder said. "They don't pack properly, so they don't know to take out stuff like potpourri and food that attracts rodents."

Analysis: "There might be some emotional turmoil surrounding their stuff," Lindsey said. "Maybe it's their parents' stuff, and now what am I going to do with it? They might be sad or even angry. They just don't want to face it or make decisions about it."

Tips: "You want to be efficient without being hurried," Trager said. "It really starts at home. Take the time to properly pack things to protect them from being damaged when you store or retrieve them."

The Hoardinator



Profile: Can't bear to part with *anything*. Immediately returns half the move-in load to the truck. Can't resist rummaging through every open box. Seriously considers spending the night.

Tenant Traits: "I had one who had what I would guess was 3,000 copies of newspapers published the day Elvis died. Same paper—3,000 copies," Schroeder recalled. "They usually keep their unit for years and years, then one day just give up, stop paying, and we end up selling their stuff at auction."

Analysis: "They definitely have trust issues. People who hoard fear that someone is going to come in and throw everything away," Lindsey said. "They always think they're going to find a use for everything someday, but rarely do."

Tips: "Open boxes can be a big distraction. They always want to rummage through them. So make sure to close and seal everything, Trager said. "Also, use generic labels like 'kitchen' or 'books' rather than 'dishes from Mom, blue pattern, setting for 12,' because you're going to want to open that. General is always better than specific."

Space Case





Profile: Forgets to lock unit. Leaves lights or electronics on. Clueless about where anything is stored. The moving process rattles her world.

Tenant Traits: "We started a facility-wide garage sale for those type of people, because they're the ones who unpack their entire storage unit and have it scattered all over to find one thing they're looking for, and it's always in the back," Schroeder said.

Analysis: "They probably are very amiable, but they really have trouble making a decision," Lindsey said. "It's possible they're creative types. A lot of times, creative people don't handle routines very well; their minds are floating elsewhere, and they may be more sentimental toward their stuff."

Tips: "Ask somebody to go with you," Trager said. "They can almost act as a guide to make sure you get what you came for, left what you brought and turned off the lights and locked up."

The OCDiva



Profile: Color-coded labels. Contents clearly marked. Boxes grouped by room and function. Plastic tubs or Velcro tabs for easy access. *Of course*, she'll draw, post and carry a detailed map!

Tenant Traits: "They are usually the pains. They're the people for whom the units are never clean enough," Schroeder said. "On the plus side, they buy a lot of merchandise

never clean enough," Schroder said. "On the plus side, they buy a lot of merchandise because they store properly. They buy tarps to put down."

Analysis: "It could reflect that their stuff is way more important to them than the relationships in their lives," Lindsey said. "Organizing that space actually makes them feel calm. If it's in disarray, it creates a lot of stress for them. Nothing is ever good enough."

Tips: "I would caution against getting too detailed," Trager said. "Is it worth your time and energy to list that this box has four mugs, three blue plates and one black plate, or can it just say 'kitchen'? Also, group by function. If all of the boxes for holiday décor are together, then you don't have to shuffle things around to find where they are exactly."

Captain Chaos



Profile: What a mess! Teetering towers of weight-compressed boxes piled ceiling high! Half-eaten fast food everywhere you look! This isn't a storage unit—it's the start of a game show!

Tenant Traits: "It's their unit and they're allowed to keep it that way, but usually those people are the rodent attractors," Schroeder said. "If we spot one, we'll try to keep the units next to them vacant to kill the rodents, or put them on an end so we only have to forfeit one unit."

Analysis: "These guys are possibly a cross between disorganized hoarders and someone who is rebelling against a life event," Lindsey said. "What is it in there that you have to save, yet you're treating it like you don't care about it?"

Tips: "Get a friend to help you make sense of it at a reasonable pace," Trager said. "And bring supplies—garbage bags, boxes, tape, markers and labels—so you can reassess and repack. You're going to need them!"
