



Off Campus Housing Referrals

University of Massachusetts Amherst | 235 Whitmore Administration Building | 413-577-2187 | www.housing.umass.edu

Off Campus Housing Search Checklist

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR HOUSING SEARCH

- What utilities are included in the rent?
 - Heat
 - Electricity
 - Hot water
 - Cable
 - Internet
 - Trash or snow removal
- When will the apartment be available?
Lease goes from _____ to _____?
- What are the parking arrangements?
- What are the arrangements for trash disposal or pick-up?
- Does the landlord allow subletting?
- What is the lawn/yard maintenance policy?
- What is the snow removal policy?

THINGS TO INSPECT AS YOU WALK AROUND

- Turn on all the faucets in the house or apartment.
- Flush the toilet.
- Is there a refrigerator?
- Turn on the stove and oven.
- Flip the light switches.
- There are at least two electrical outlets or one outlet and one light fixture in each room.
- Do you see exposed wires?
- Windows should be weather-tight with working locks; they should open and close and have screens.
- Inspect the walls, ceilings, and floors. Are they in good condition, without cracks, holes, or signs of leaking? Are the carpets clean?
- Check the doors for working locks; check that they aren't blocked in anyway.
- Is there a mailbox?
- Are there working smoke detectors?
- If the apartment is above the first floor? Look for fire escapes.
- Can you control the heat? Is it working?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained?
- Are the entryways, sidewalks, and parking areas well lit?
- Are entryways visible from the street?
- Are the residents' names printed on the mailboxes?
- Is the mailbox lockable and in good condition?
- Is parking usually available close to your door?
- Is the area well lit at night?
- Are there designated visitor parking spaces?
- Does the apartment complex provide security services?
- Does it "feel" safe?
- Are shrubs cut below window level?
- Is the unit number visible from the street?
- Does the landlord have a published policy about issuing and replacing keys?
- Do the front and back doors have peepholes?
- Do sliding doors have blocking cleats to prevent opening from the outside?
- Do doors have deadbolt locks?
- Can windows that are left open for ventilation be secured?
- Are door locks located so they can't be reached through a window?
- Are there fire extinguishers?
- Do curtains, blinds, and draperies fully cover windows?
- Are the exterior doors made of core wood or metal?
- Have you or your family considered renters' insurance?

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AFTER YOU MOVE IN

- If your landlord takes a security deposit, make sure you receive the following:
 - A dated receipt.
 - Statement of Condition.
 - Notice of the bank account in which the deposit is being held. You need to receive this within 30 days.
- The Statement of Condition describes any faults in the unit (i.e. stain on the living room carpet), so that you cannot be blamed or charged for causing the damage when you move out.
- If your landlord fails to give you a Statement of Condition, you can complete one on your own.
- Examine each room and write down any problems that you see.
- Print a copy of the Housing Code Checklist available on this website to determine if anything is wrong in each room.
- Make a copy of your Statement of Condition for your records before you send it to your landlord.
- If the conditions are serious, notify your landlord as soon as possible.