

# THE SMART RENTER'S Checklist

Choosing to live off campus is a decision that will have an impact on your college experience. The appeal of living on your own is enhanced by the opportunities it presents for more privacy and more personal space as well as a greater sense of freedom. However, it is important to identify and understand the responsibilities of living off campus and to be prepared to handle a range of added tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and budgeting. Some things you may want to think about before moving off campus and when looking for apartments are listed below.

## DETERMINE YOUR NEEDS

- ☐ How close to campus and other conveniences do you want to be?
- ☐ What type of housing are you looking for:  
apartment complex, house, studio or shared rental?
- ☐ How much can you afford for rent and utilities?
- ☐ Do you need parking? Off-street or on-street?
- ☐ How long of a lease do you need?
- ☐ How many roommates will you have?
- ☐ Will you have pets?
- ☐ Do you want a furnished or unfurnished apartment?

## CALL ABOUT POTENTIAL RENTALS

- ☐ Find two or more rentals that fit your needs.
- ☐ Set up a time to view each rental with the landlord.

## SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING WEBSITE

Go to <http://housing.offcampus.syr.edu>

Sign in using your Syracuse University netid and password. You will have free and unlimited access to the website and its features.

All properties listed have been determined to be in compliance with the City of Syracuse's Division of Code Enforcement standards at the time of each posting.

This resource is the only off-campus housing website affiliated with Syracuse University.

If you are searching for a roommate or need to sublet your apartment, utilize the roommate finder and message boards for free.

## Syracuse University

### Office of Student Living on South Campus

Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience  
Goldstein Student Center, Suite 206  
401 Skytop Road  
Syracuse, New York 13244  
t: 315.443.5489  
f: 315.443.2343

## VIEW RENTALS (Take notes and ask questions.)

- ☐ Document the condition of the apartment: interior and exterior.
- ☐ Check for safety concerns: working locks on doors and windows, ample exterior lighting, solid exterior doors, working smoke detectors, adequate emergency escape routes and well-maintained building and grounds.
- ☐ Note utilities that are included with rent.
- ☐ Note repairs that are needed.
- ☐ Note distance to nearest bus stop.
- ☐ Make sure there is ample space for all occupants and for studying.
- ☐ Ask who is responsible for yard work and snow removal.

## SEEK OUT FIRSTHAND INFORMATION ABOUT THE APARTMENT AND LANDLORD

- ☐ Speak with current tenants and neighbors.
- ☐ Ask for references.
- ☐ Utilize the Landlord Information Sharing Program, a resource available at the Office of Student Living on South Campus.  
\*Contact the Division of Code Enforcement for information about violations and updated inspections by calling 315.448.8695.

## REVIEW THE LEASE

- ☐ Contact Student Legal Services to arrange for an attorney to review your lease free of charge. The office is located at 720 University Avenue; or call 315.443.4532.
- ☐ Review the lease with your parents.
- ☐ Become familiar with common lease terms.

### Student Legal Services

720 University Avenue  
Syracuse NY 13244  
t: 315.443.4532  
[www.studentlegal.net](http://www.studentlegal.net)  
[email@studentlegal.net](mailto:email@studentlegal.net)

# THE LEASE SIGNING Checklist

Renting an apartment is a very important decision that involves a lot of money. Before you sign your lease, you should have a lawyer look over the lease to make sure that everything is all right. You have a free lawyer here at Syracuse University who will meet with you and look over your paperwork. The meeting will take approximately 30 minutes, and you will not be charged; this is a free service to you. The lawyers will answer any questions that you have and will give you some helpful information on protecting your security deposit.

## RENT

- ☐ Amount due
- ☐ Due date
- ☐ Penalty for late payment
- ☐ Reduction for advance payment
- ☐ Can rent be raised, under what conditions
- ☐ Who is responsible: Joint and Severable Clauses

## SECURITY/DAMAGE DEPOSIT

- ☐ Amount
- ☐ Apartment condition inventory at move-in
- ☐ Conditions for security deposit return
- ☐ Date for security deposit return

## TERMINATION

- ☐ Ability to sublet, under what conditions
- ☐ Conditions for terminating lease

## INSPECTIONS

- ☐ When and by whom
- ☐ How is notification given
- ☐ Pre/Post use of rental inventory

## DAMAGES

- ☐ Responsibility for damages
- ☐ Assessment of damages
- ☐ Who makes repairs
- ☐ Who notifies repair person

## LAUNDRY

- ☐ Location and cost of facilities
- ☐ Ability for tenant to install machines

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ☐ Planned improvements and completion date

## OWNER

- ☐ Name and address of property owner
- ☐ Name and address of property manager
- ☐ Emergency contact information
- ☐ Landlord's right to enter apartment

## RESTRICTIONS

- ☐ Smoking
- ☐ Noise
- ☐ Storage of property
- ☐ Pets
- ☐ Conduct, house rules, including parties
- ☐ Waterbeds
- ☐ Alterations, picture hanging, painting

## CLEANING

- ☐ Who is responsible
- ☐ How often
- ☐ Equipment provided

## PARKING

- ☐ Location: on- or off-street
- ☐ Limitations/Fees

## TIME OF OCCUPANCY

- ☐ Exact dates
- ☐ Moving notification and renewal requirements
- ☐ Number of occupants (min. and max.)

## CHANGES IN AGREEMENT

- ☐ Conditions for changes of agreement
- ☐ Process for changing agreement

## ADDITIONAL COSTS

- ☐ Who pays utilities: gas, electric, phone
- ☐ Charge/Deposit for pets
- ☐ Overnight or weekend guests
- ☐ Parking
- ☐ Furnishings: furnished or unfurnished
- ☐ Snow removal: sidewalks and driveway
- ☐ Lawn care: mowing and leaves
- ☐ Cleaning
- ☐ Other

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- ☐ Smoke detectors
- ☐ Window locks
- ☐ Deadbolts on exterior doors
- ☐ Carbon monoxide detectors