

# Off Campus Housing

## Parents Guide



### Away from home for the first time

College can be a stressful time. For many students, this will be the first time they have been on their own. While this can be a difficult time for the student it can be equally, or more stressful for the parents. Before you send your child off to a new city you make sure they have food, clothes, parking pass, etc.... but how much do you really look at their living situation?

Where you live is one of the most important decisions that someone will make in their lives. Everyone thinks about location and amenities but how often do you look at smoke detectors and sprinkler heads? These are the things that you don't think about until you really need them. Taking a few extra minutes to look around before you sign a lease can really pay off in other ways.

#### Things to look for

- Are any of the roommates smokers? Even if someone smokes outside there is an increased risk for fire.
- Is there a fire extinguisher readily available? Apartments are required to have at least one in every unit or in a in a common space within 75' travel distance. If you are looking at a house, is the landlord providing one? If not they can be picked up at almost any hardware store.
- Where is the extinguisher located? It should be in the path of egress. They are intended to extinguish fires in the insipient phase, not to fight them!

## Tour the apartment or home

Before you sign the lease, take a tour of the actual apartment/house you are looking into. While the “model” units look nice and inviting, they do not show what you are walking into your first day at a new place.



## Pre-Sign Checklist

Do the doors lock and unlock easily?

- In an emergency you do not want to waste time with a difficult door.

Do the windows lock and unlock easily?

- Just like the doors, you do not want to waste valuable time trying to open a stubborn window.

Are the smoke detectors operational?

- All living units should have smoke detectors but how do you know they work? Go around and test them. After ten years the entire unit should be replaced.

Any gas supplied appliances? (furnace/water heater) If the answer is yes, does the unit have functioning CO Detectors?

- Carbon Monoxide is colorless, odorless and deadly. A functioning CO detector will alert you of a CO emergency before you notice something is wrong.

What is the condition of the furnace?

- A poorly operating heating system will encourage residents to use other means to heat the structure. Sometimes this leads to space heaters too close to combustibles or using the oven as a heating source. Both of these can be disastrous.

Is the living unit on an upper floor?

- Sometimes a second way out might not be as easy on the 2nd or 3rd floor. What do the stairs look like? Are they outside or inside?

What is the parking situation?

- An overcrowded parking lot or driveway is not only annoying, but can also cause delays for emergency responders. Fire and EMS personnel bring a lot of equipment with them. If they can't get in, they can't help you.