



*Never stand still*

All incoming first-year students are required to live in College residence halls for their first two years, unless residing at home with their legal parent or guardian who lives within a 30-mile radius. All transfer students are required to have lived on campus for four semesters. This means incoming second-year transfers are required to reside on campus unless residing at home, within a 30-mile radius with their legal parent or guardian.

Once a student fulfills the two-year residency requirement, they are free to make a decision about whether or not they would like to live on campus for the next year. If students are looking into off-campus housing but want to keep their options open, **we encourage them to go through the housing process.** Those students who want to move off campus have until June 1 to submit their Housing Release Form and receive a refund of their housing deposit. As of June 2, the residence hall agreement is binding for the entire academic year.

Prior to moving off campus, all students must submit a Housing Release Application, receive a refund of their housing deposit, and complete an Exit Interview Form.

All questions regarding on- and off-campus housing should be directed to the Office of Student Living and College Engagement at (315) 792-3285. All students are required to keep an updated college address on file with the Registrar's Office.

### **Disclaimer**

The Office of Student Living and College Engagement and Utica College assume no responsibility for determining whether these listings comply with local building codes or ordinances. They have not been inspected by the College. Students are cautioned to inspect the condition of the property, looking especially for fire safety measures (smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguisher, fire exits, etc.). If the property you are considering is in the City of Utica, you should ask the landlord to provide written proof of current rental registration with the City of Utica, which does inspect rental properties for fire safety compliance; the other neighboring jurisdictions do not yet have such a requirement for rental properties.

Students are also advised to review the landlord's lease very carefully before signing, as leases vary significantly in terms and conditions (whether certain utilities are included, etc.). The Office of Student Living and College Engagement and Utica College assume no responsibility for the condition of these properties, and cannot intervene in disputes that may arise between student tenants and landlords of off-campus properties.

## FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE

Starting the housing search process may seem overwhelming at first. We have provided the following information to help you take the first steps toward finding your off-campus residence.

### Determine Your Needs

The first step in finding a place to live off campus is to identify your needs/expectations and examine your finances. The following questions can help.

- How much can you spend on rent each month?
- Are there fees if the rent is paid late?
- Do you want to live alone or with roommates?
- Do you want to have your own room, or are you willing to share a room?
- Will you need to purchase a meal plan or will you be cooking for yourself?
- What is your transportation needs? Will you need to take a bus?
- If you own a car, is there parking?
- Are you close to the supermarkets?
- Is there laundry on-site?
- What services would you like included (e.g. snow removal, internet, and lawn care)?

One of the biggest challenges off-campus students face is managing a monthly budget. It's important to be aware of all your expenses (telephone, monthly rent, water, internet, laundry, food) and to plan in advance. You can find budget worksheets online.

### Where to Look

- Talk to your friends and classmates who are already living off campus.
- Check with The Office of Student Living and College Engagement. The staff keeps an updated list of area off-campus apartments.
- Check the SLCE bulletin boards in Strebel and White Hall. Landlords and property owners will post available properties that may be of interest to students.
- Check the local newspaper, *Utica Observer Dispatch* ([www.uticaod.com](http://www.uticaod.com)).
- Explore the neighborhoods you like. Look for "For Rent" or "Student Housing" signs.

### Making a Selection

- Call (don't text or email unless specified) the landlord to set up an appointment to see the apartment/house you're interested in. Ask specific questions regarding the property.

- First impressions are important. Dress appropriately and treat the landlord with respect.
- Arrive on time for your appointment. If you're unable to keep your appointment, call as soon as possible and set up a new meeting.
- Bring a checklist and/or a list of questions to ask. Take notes to help keep track of viewings. You may even find it helpful to snap a couple photos to review later or to show potential roommates. Search for housing checklist online.
- Do not be bullied or intimidated into making a decision you are not ready to make.
- Confirm next steps in the process. When will the landlord contact you to set-up an appointment to sign the lease? What will you need to bring to the appointment?
- If you decide not to rent the apartment/house, be respectful and inform the landlord.

### Legal Information on Leases

- <https://www.american-apartment-owners-association.org/landlord-tenant-laws/new-york/>

### Safety and Your New Home

- Does your new apartment have working smoke detectors on every floor? Near every bedroom? In every bedroom?
- Did you know it is YOUR responsibility to make sure the smoke detectors are operational at all times? When batteries are beginning to fade they will "chirp". **Replace the batteries**, don't just remove them.
- If smoke detectors are not present, the landlord is required to install them by current NYS Fire Code.
- **NEW SMOKE ALARM LAW:** NYS law requires that all new or replacement smoke detectors sold in NYS be either powered by a 10-year, sealed, non-removable battery, or hardwired to the home (effective April 1st 2019). Residences that currently have smoke detectors with batteries that have to be changed every year or so will still be able to use them, but when they need to be replaced, those kinds of detectors will no longer be available for sale after April 1.
- Does your unit have a carbon monoxide detector? If your new apartment is an older one, the landlord might not be required to provide one. However, ask him/her anyway. If they will not, consider installing one yourself. Carbon monoxide is a silent killer and can come from a malfunctioning furnace.
- Are your windows painted shut? Especially if you live above the first floor, make sure you have easy access to fire escapes.
- Is there a working fire extinguisher placed in an appropriate location? If not, will the landlord provide one?

## FAIR HOUSING AND TENANTS' RIGHTS

### The Federal Fair Housing Act

The Federal Fair Housing Act states that it is a policy of the United States to provide Fair Housing for its citizenry, within constitutional limitations. Discrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of dwellings on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin is specifically prohibited under this law. Similarly, New York State's Human Rights and Real Property Laws prohibit discrimination based on disability, marital status, family composition (presence of children), sexual orientation, military status, creed, and age, as well as the above. There is no law forbidding discrimination against students due to their status, but all other elements do apply. For more information, visit: [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/fair\\_housing\\_act\\_overview](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/fair_housing_act_overview).

### Sexual Harassment

New York State Human Rights Law protects all individuals from sexual harassment by a landlord.

### Tenants' Rights

New York State law provides a Warranty of Habitability which states that in every rental agreement there is an implied guarantee that the house or apartment is safe and livable.

For more information, please visit the New York State Tenants' Rights Guide on-line at [https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/tenants\\_rights.pdf](https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/tenants_rights.pdf).

The City of Utica has a Code Enforcement Office, which works to ensure safe and decent living conditions for tenants. If you have a question or concern over the habitability of your unit, please call (315) 792-0163 or visit <http://www.cityofutica.com/departments/codes/index>.

## RENTER'S INSURANCE

- If you are not currently covered by your parent's homeowner's policy, it is recommended that you look into purchasing your own renter's insurance policy.
- Renter's insurance is a way to protect yourself and your stuff in case of theft or damage. You never know when a pipe may burst, causing water damage to your belongings.
- There are a variety of policies available. We highly recommend looking into purchasing a policy.

## SELECTING A ROOMMATE

Now that you're moving off campus, who are you going to live with? It's important to take time in deciding who you want to live with. Here are some pointers to help you find compatible roommates.

### General Things to Consider

- How many roommates do you want to have?
- Do you share similar interests and values?

- Do you each have a similar budget you're working with?
- Do you care if they smoke? Do drugs? Use alcohol?
- Is the individual's age and/or gender important to you?
- Will the person be bringing a pet?

### Topics to Discuss

- Rent and/or utility payments. Whose name will they be in? Who will be making the payments? How will the money be collected from other roommates?
- General housekeeping. How will you divide cleaning responsibilities?
- Food and other household items (e.g. trash bags). Will you shop for yourself or for all residents? Do you share food? Who is responsible for purchasing general household items?
- Do you have a guest policy? Should there be an agreement on frequency and length of visits?
- Personal possessions – Do you have a common use policy?
- Conflicts and disagreements – How do you handle when they arise?
- Furnishings – What will each roommate be contributing?
- Subletting for a semester or the summer?

## TENANT/LANDLORD RELATIONS

You've found a place to live and you're ready to move in. It will be important to maintain a good relationship with your landlord. Here are some pointers to help you out.

### Moving In

- Make sure that you, your roommates, and the landlord have all agreed on when you will be moving in and how you will get the keys.
- Pay all expected fees and deposit in full prior to moving in.
- Ensure you have updated contact information for your landlord (address, email, phone etc.).
- Contact the appropriate utility companies to have services transferred to your name or turn on as soon as you move in.
- Clarify when garbage and recycling pick up is. Make sure there is a garbage can available for your use.
- Clarify any designated parking areas for your residence.
- Be respectful when moving in by not blocking neighbor's driveways or parking on anyone's lawn. Also be mindful of your noise level.

### Maintenance and Everyday Living

- Prior to painting a room or altering any of the living spaces, make sure you reach out first to the landlord to get written permission. Do not assume the landlord will pay for all or any supplies, get clarification before you

proceed. If the landlord turns you down, respect the decision.

- If you want to hang things on the wall (shelves, posters, pictures, etc.) get permission from the landlord first. The landlord may have a specific guideline for you to follow and it's important to be aware of what those guidelines are.
- Keep the residence and surrounding property clean and free of trash.
- Use all appliances, fixtures, and furniture properly and keep them clean.
- If there's a problem with the residence, notify the landlord as soon as possible so that action can be taken in a timely fashion.
- Notify the landlord if you anticipate the rent payment is going to be late. Be mindful to not make a habit of paying your rent late; additional fees may apply.
- Notify the landlord of any roommate changes or subletting (if allowed).
- If you are responsible for snow removal, make sure you do so within 24 hours after snowfall.

## Moving Out

- Make sure that you, your roommates, and the landlord have all agreed on when you will be moving out and how you will return the keys.
- Remove all garbage and/or recyclables. Dispose of them properly.
- Ensure that all of your personal belongings have been removed.
- Clean the residence. You should plan on leaving the space in the same shape or better than when you first moved in.
- Leave contact information for the landlord so they can return any deposit due.
- Terminate service with all utility companies.
- Leave a forwarding address with the local post office.

## LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES

Your landlord has certain responsibilities to you as a tenant. The following is a list of some of those obligations.

- Keeping floors, stairways, and railings in good repair.
- Providing sanitary buildings and grounds free from debris, pests, and garbage.
- Maintain heating, plumbing, gas, and electrical systems in good working order.
- Provide adequate garbage receptacles.
- Water supply – clean, running hot and cold water.
- Upkeep and repairs to the property.
- Provide reasonable notice (usually 24 hours) if they need to enter the residence (except for emergencies).

- If your landlord neglects or refuses to make the repair within a reasonable time, you have a legal right to get the repair done and deduct the cost from the cost of your rent.

## WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

When you make the decision to live off campus and to be a part of a residential community, there is the expectation that you demonstrate respect and responsibility toward your neighbors. Here are some helpful tips for fostering positive relationships with your new community members.

- Get to know your neighbors. Introduce yourself and your roommates prior to or shortly after moving in.
- Lend a hand – if you see your neighbor needs help (e.g. lawn care, shoveling, and carrying bags), take a moment and offer assistance.
- Clean up your property. The condition of your residence is a reflection on you and the neighborhood you're a part of.
- Do not engage in, or allow, illegal activity.
- Be mindful of your noise levels at all times. Your neighbors may have small children or work late hours.
- Notify your neighbors if you are planning to host a party or event. Avoid gatherings that may cause conflict with neighbors or the community.
- Observe trash and recycling pickup schedules and policies. <https://www.ohswa.org/garbage>.
- Obey local parking restrictions and only park in designated areas.
- Make sure you're aware of guidelines that exist for pets (including guidelines that exist in your tenant lease agreement). <http://www.cityofutica.com/how-do-i/animal-control/laws-and-ordinances/index>.
- Be a responsible citizen and neighbor. If you notice something or someone suspicious in your neighborhood, reach out to the local authorities.

## CRIME PREVENTION AND SAFETY

Crime and accidents can happen to anyone anytime. The following are safety tips and common sense precautions that can help keep you and your belongings safe.

### At Home

- Keep your doors locked, even when at home.
- Lock your windows when not at home or on break.
- Know who is on the other side of the door before you open it. Always insist on proper identification!
- Be sure you have blinds, curtains, or shades on your windows and use after dark.
- Don't leave valuables unattended and in view through a window or common area rooms.
- Ensure all outside lighting fixtures are working properly.

Ask landlord to make immediate repairs if needed.

- If you spot a problem upon arriving at home (broken window, door open, etc.) do not enter the building. Call the local authorities from a safe location.
- Purchase renters insurance if you are not covered under your parent's homeowner's policy. Your personal items are not covered by a landlord's insurance.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, seek a safe location.

## Around Town

- Avoid walking alone; find a friend or classmate, or call for a ride.
- Be aware of your surroundings and avoid unnecessary distractions such as using your cell phone.
- Let someone know where you're going and when you plan on returning. Leave a note, a text/voice message, or make a call.
- Carry closed purses, handbags, backpacks, etc. close to and in front of your body. Only carry necessary credit cards and/or cash.
- If you think someone is following you, head towards a public place and/or police station – do not go home.

## HAVING AN OFF-CAMPUS PARTY

You're all moved in and you want to have friends over to celebrate. Here are some tips to help you do so in an appropriate manner that doesn't result in judicial and/or student conduct violations.

### Before the Party

- Plan ahead. It's important you talk with your roommates, as well as your neighbors, to let them know you are planning on having friends over.
- Make sure your lease does not prohibit you from having a party and/or identify what limits there may be in terms of how many people you can have in your residence. There also may be fire codes limiting the residence capacity.
- Do not rearrange your furniture so that it blocks any exits.
- Be aware of any structural properties of your residence (e.g. balcony, porch) that could potentially be unsafe for large groups.

### Responsibility During the Party

- If you are going to have alcohol at the party, do not invite anyone under the age of 21.
- Do not charge a cover fee or a fee for drinks – you do not have a liquor license.
- Keep your guests inside the residence and avoid having them spill out into the streets and/or your neighbor's property.

- Keep your music and the noise level down – noise complaints are one of the top reasons the police get called to a party.
- If a neighbor stops by or calls with a concern during the party, be respectful and courteous. Discuss and find an appropriate solution. If you don't, their next step may be to call the police.
- If the police show up, stay calm and relaxed. Do not run away or refuse to answer the door. Turn off the music and follow the appropriate course of action as requested.

## After the Party

- Clean up all trash and recyclables – inside the residence and outside around the property.
- Properly bag and dispose of all trash and recyclables - do not leave lying around.
- Notify the landlord if there was any damage to the residence. You may be financially responsible for any damage that occurred.
- Check in with your neighbors to address any outstanding issues or to simply see how things went from their perspective. Maintaining a positive and cooperative relationship with your neighbors and landlord will help if you plan on holding another party.

## Utica College Alcohol Policy

The following behaviors are a violation of the Code of Student Conduct:

- Underage possession/underage consumption of alcohol.
- Underage persons in the presence of alcohol being consumed.
- Providing alcoholic beverages to underage persons.
- Hosting or participating in any activity that promotes mass or excessive consumption of alcohol.
- Public intoxication.
- Possession or being in the presence of alcohol paraphernalia including, but not limited to, empty containers.
- Suspicion of possession/use of alcohol.

## LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND OFF-CAMPUS BEHAVIOR

When you make the decision to live off campus, it is your responsibility to obey all New York State, Federal, and local laws as well as the Utica College Code of Student Conduct (<https://www.utica.edu/student/conduct/cosc.cfm>). Many students are not aware that the College has jurisdiction off campus, but it does.

In brief, you are expected to:

- Abide by College policies, rules, and regulations.
- Act responsibly and respectfully in your relationships and interactions with others.

- Act with integrity in your academic work and as you participate in other activities.
- Obey all local, state, and federal laws.

What happens if you allegedly violate the law?

- You may face criminal charges (off-campus) as well as student conduct charges (on campus).
- For lease violations, you could lose your security deposit, face fines, and/or be evicted.
- You could face charges in civil court.
- **REMEMBER: Your actions and behaviors may affect future endeavors (e.g. DWI charge will stay with you forever).** The Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards receives a large number of reference and background checks from graduate programs, certification agencies, and employers. Certain violations will show up on the reference and background checks.
- A letter to your parents notifying them of violations in certain situations.

### **Common Violations and Misdemeanors (*can carry fine and/or jail time*)**

- Noise ordinance – audible at least 25 feet from its source.
- Littering – liable for punishment by a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500.
- Garbage – store garbage in receptacle and dispose of properly on a regular basis.
- Consumption of alcohol in public and possession of alcohol in public (Open Container).
- Unlawful possession of alcohol for persons under 21.
- Fraudulent use of ID to obtain alcohol.
- Unlawful possession of marijuana and/or burning marijuana in public.
- Disorderly conduct – fighting (or threatening to), obscene language and gestures, unlawful assembly, noise, failure to disperse, obstruction of vehicular traffic, and public urination.

- Criminal mischief and vandalism – damage to another’s property.
- Illegal parking
- Trespassing
- DWI and DUI

### **Student Conduct Process**

As an off-campus UC student, you are expected to know and uphold the Code of Student Conduct, as well as abide by local, state, and federal law. When the Code is not upheld, students (including those living off campus) will face action through the conduct process.

For more information on the student conduct process, visit <https://www.utica.edu/student/conduct/disciplinary.cfm>.