

Roommate Survival Guide: Steps for how to get along

Living with roommates is an important part of your college experience. It takes commitment, involvement, and work to create a good, solid relationship with your roommates.

You and your roommates should consider and discuss the following issues:

- 1. How to pay the rent.** Should each roommate write a check for his/her share? Should one roommate collect the money and write one check? What if someone's rent is late?
- 2. Telephone and Utilities.** In whose name should they be listed? Who should pay the deposit? Who will be responsible for collecting the money and making sure these bills get paid?
- 3. Food.** Will you have household meals or eat separately? How will you divide shopping, cooking, clean-up duties? How much money do you, as a household, want to budget for food? Is this equitable and affordable for everyone? If food is bought and owned separately, are there separate storage places in the refrigerator and cabinets for each roommate's

food? May one roommate use another's food? If so, how soon must it be replaced or paid for?

- 4. Household duties.** What is each roommate's idea of a clean/messy room or house? How clean should the place be? Who is responsible for cleaning the areas that you share? How often? How should you divide up the work? Who takes out the garbage? Who waters the plants? Who is going to water and mow the yard?
- 5. Smoking, drinking and drugs.** Are the activities OK in general, OK if confined to the roommate's room, not OK at all? What about friends who smoke, drink or do drugs when they visit?
- 6. Guests.** How do you feel about each other's friends? How about overnight guests? Where can they sleep, how often can they come, and how long may they stay? How about parties? How often? Do you want any house rules? Who will provide food/drink and who will clean up?
- 7. Boyfriends/girlfriends.** Are boyfriends/girlfriends allowed to spend the night and how often?

Should a dollar amount be set for extra hot water & electricity costs for 2 nights spent? At what point do they stop being "overnight guests" and become additional roommates? Do they first need the approval of the other roommates?

- 8. Privacy.** What are each roommate's needs for privacy?
- 9. Noise.** At what hour would loud noise end so roommates can study or sleep?
- 10. Sharing and borrowing.** May things like stereos, TV's, kitchen equipment be shared or are they off limits? Are there any rules about their use? May roommates borrow each other's clothes, books, CDs, etc.? Must they get permission each time?
- 11. Pets.** Are pets allowed? Are there any limits? Who will feed and care for pets? Do pets have full run of the place or are they confined to the roommate's area?
- 12. Security.** Should doors be locked at night? When no one is home? Where will you keep an extra key? Should anyone besides the roommates have a key or know about the extra key?

13. Telephone messages. How should you answer the phone? Where should messages be written and kept? How should you handle roommate's parents when they call?

14. Study habits. How important are grades? When and where do you like to study? Do you need absolute quiet to study?

15. Moving out. Should roommates pay a deposit to cover damages and costs of early move-out? When will the deposit be returned? For what reasons would all or part of it be withheld? If a roommate leaves, will he/she have to find a replacement? Will he/she have to pay rent until the replacement moves in? What notice must the roommate give of his/her intent to leave?

16. Interests. What do you each like to do? Are there common interests or activities that you can share (biking, movies, hiking) that will enhance your relationship as roommates?

Source: Roommate Survival Guide, provided by the Rental Information Office, Suite 5, EMU Ground Floor

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