

# Use caution when selecting a roommate

CHOOSING A ROOMMATE CAREFULLY WILL HELP AVOID HOUSING HORRORS

By Bryan Petersen  
Oregon Daily Emerald

**M**oving. There's no doubt about it — it can really, really suck. There's the stacks of boxes that inevitably get mislabeled, the truck you either need to own, rent or borrow, the actual physical moving of furniture in and out of narrow doorways and up and down stairs and the cleaning that must be done to get the deposit back.

All of these things and more can make moving one of the biggest headache-causing events of a student's life.

And if that's not enough, those who are unable to afford the luxury of living on their own have to find a roommate.

There is so much to consider when it comes to picking a roommate. Should it be someone you already know? That might work out, but you run the risk of having things go sour and blowing the friendship.

Somebody you don't know could work out, but it could just as easily turn into a nightmare. What if you and that person have different ideas on house-

keeping? Or on house guests? What if they turn out to be party animals, when at first they seemed quiet and conservative? What if they have a thing for barnyard animals running loose in the living room?

The point is, you hardly ever know what you're getting into.

This is a lesson that Lisa Rife learned. Rife, a Chicago native who came west to attend the University, answered an ad and found herself living in a nice house close to campus. But her roommates, whom she had never met, but who seemed compatible at first, didn't work out.

One major problem Rife experienced was that one of the roommates had a boyfriend who didn't pay rent but was in the house as much as those who did pay rent and used the utilities equally as much.

"When I confronted them about it, it was like they didn't respect me, they didn't want to compromise with me, and it just got really frustrating because they just thought they were right, and I thought they weren't."

She learned a valuable lesson that many students would be better off learning sooner than later:

"When you move in with people, even if they seem cool at first, you never really know what's going to happen. Then, when it doesn't work, you have to pay to move all over again."

While there is no cut-and-dried way of picking the perfect roommate, there are some steps that can be taken.

First and foremost, conduct a background check. Ask for rental references and character references. Find out basic important facts, such as the person's source of income and how many places they have lived in the past year. Find out if they have been kicked out of places, and why. These basic and often overlooked facts can be major indicators as to the compatibility of you and your potential roommate.

If you don't trust your own instincts, there is a service that can help. Roommate Resources is a business that is solely dedicated to matching people with compatible roommates.

Ann Story is the owner and manager of Roommate Resources, and she said nearly 80 percent of all customers end up happy with their new roommates.

Customers fill out a lifestyle form, either a "seeker" or "provider" form. The information is entered into a computer database and matched up with other compatible "seekers" and "providers."


There is a \$65 fee, which Story figures will discourage potentially flaky people from applying. In addition to the data-

Turn to ROOMMATES, Page 9C

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