Trash, Trash, Trash and RATS!

You’ve just moved into your new apartment, and once or twice a week you take your household trash out back like everyone else. But your neighbors tell you that you are breaking the law. Why?

Many students don’t realize that there are laws in Baltimore about proper disposal of household garbage. Students often learn the hard way when the city enforces the rule by handing down hefty fines ranging from $25 to $500. The following is a quick guide to handling your trash:

• Please follow the procedures communicated by your landlord for trash disposal. Often apartment buildings will have trash chutes or rooms for you to dispose of your garbage. Please make sure that bags are securely tied. Smaller buildings may have trash cans provided by your landlord in the rear of your building. Be sure to use the lids provided to ensure that rats are unable to access your garbage. Help control the rat population, keep our community clean by always properly disposing of your trash.

• Always put your household garbage in garbage bags.

• Put your garbage cans in the proper place the night before your scheduled trash pick-up.

• Periodically inspect and clean the area where you put your garbage cans.

To find out when your trash and recycling collection days are and where you need to put your cans for pick-up, contact your landlord. To find out more about city ordinances and fines, check out: cityservices.baltimorecity.gov/charterandcodes

If you have something larger than everyday household trash you will need to contact the City to schedule a bulk trash pick up. They will take up to three items for free once a month. Contact 311 for more information to schedule a bulk trash pick up. In larger apartment communities check with your landlord as to their rules for bulk trash.

To learn more about the Department of Public Works, check out: ci.baltimore.md.us/government/dpw/index.html
WHILE YOU ARE STILL LOOKING AROUND

Ask around first. Talk to other students who live in the buildings you are interested in and get their opinions.

Try to find out the ratio of student residents to non-student residents. Remember, students often keep very different hours than non-students, and this can cause problems for everyone.

If you plan to live with roommates, be certain they are people who share your lifestyle and are people you can trust.

ONCE YOU HAVE NARROWED YOUR CHOICES

Ask to look at the lease ahead of time. Many buildings have strict rules that apply to all tenants, so make sure that these are rules that you can live by.

If possible, talk to the people who live near the actual apartment you are considering renting. Do they keep the same hours that you do? Will their activities disturb you? Will your activities disturb them? Remember, once you sign a lease, you are going to have to live next to them for a long time.

If you have a car, check around the area to see if it has adequate parking. Many of the streets in the area have very restricted parking zones. Some streets have lanes that are cleared every morning or evening for rush hour traffic. If you park on the street, make certain you read the signs so that you don’t get any tickets, or worse, get towed.

Always consider the safety of the neighborhood and the building! Check with both the police department and the Campus Police about the level of crime in the surrounding area. Make certain that the apartment can be completely secured and ask when the locks were last changed.

READY TO SIGN?

Read the lease! You need to be certain that you can abide by everything you are planning to agree to. A lease is a binding contract.

Be sure to ask which utilities you will be responsible for paying. Be prepared to pay a fee to turn certain utilities on or have them installed. If you are sharing an apartment with roommates, decide ahead of time how each person will contribute. Remember that the person whose name is on the bill is ultimately responsible to pay the bill no matter what agreement you have.

In addition, the Student Code of Conduct requires students to abide by local codes and laws. Repeated noise complaints can get you in trouble with your landlord, the police, and the university. Be sure to abide by any “quiet hours” that might be included in your lease. You should also be mindful of when and where to properly dispose of your trash. Check with your landlord about noise and trash regulations in your building.

MOVING IN

Introduce yourself to your neighbors – all of them. Meet the people who live above, below, and on both sides of your apartment. Consider giving them a way to contact you should they have any concerns. If you know there are going to be evenings when you plan to have friends over, consider notifying your neighbors ahead of time. Always be courteous. It is better to have a neighbor contact you when they are upset about something than contacting the police or the landlord.

If you plan on installing something in your apartment, be certain that it is ok with the landlord first. Structural changes, even small holes, can be very costly for you when your lease is up.

Stay safe! Always lock your apartment door. Do not invite strangers into the building or your apartment. Never prop the building doors open. If your building has an intercom system, never buzz someone in if you don’t know them. It is always best to meet your guests in person.

Keep in mind that the property owner or their representative has the right to enter your apartment even when you are not there.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

...ENJOY! You are now officially living on your own. Make the most of it!

If you have any questions or problems there are several places to go for assistance:

Jonathan Walter
Student/Community Liaison, JHU
443-240-4196 - liaison@jhu.edu
For assistance with city, neighbor and neighborhood concerns

Off-Campus Housing Office
Wolman Hall, Room 102 - 410-516-7961
For assistance with landlord issues and referrals to city agencies as well as general information about life off-campus. Listings for available rentals are online at jhu.edu/hds/offcampus.