



# WHEN LOOKING FOR OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

## TAKE YOUR TIME

- Don't rush into signing a lease. There are numerous apartment complexes in the VT area. Bring information to your family and friends to discuss all of the options.
- Compare different complexes.
- Keep notes of each complex you are considering.
- Talk to landlords and property managers, as well as people who live there or rented there before.

## CONSIDER LIVING EXPENSES

- Ask how much the average utility bill costs
- What is included in the rent? Water/Sewage? Trash pick-up? Parking? Internet?
- Think about the money you will have left over for groceries, other living expenses, and spending money.
- Is heat and/or air conditioning included in the rent?
- Get renter's insurance to cover loss, theft, or fire, which in many cases will not be covered by your landlord.

## LOCATION

- Is it within walking distance of the campus?
- Is it on the Blacksburg Transit Bus-line?
- Do you feel safe in the neighborhood?
- Is the neighborhood conducive to your living style? Ask other residents about noise volume and cleanliness.
- Where are the laundry facilities located?

## INSPECT

- Is the area kept clean and healthy?
- Are the dumpsters emptied on a frequent, regular basis?
- Who handles the yard work?
- How is parking handled? Are there enough spaces for each tenant? What are the towing policies?

**RENEWALS TAKE PLACE BETWEEN OCTOBER AND JANUARY, SO MOST APARTMENT COMPLEXES START ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS BEGINNING IN JANUARY.**

## LIVING WITH A ROOMMATE

Living with roommates will lower your rent and save money, but there's more to it than making sure they pay their share. Other things to consider:

*Are their lifestyles compatible with yours? Consider living and study habits, attitudes towards parties and overnight guests, etc. Whose name will appear on the utility bill? How will chores be divided? Will you buy food separately or together?*

Sign a roommate agreement so important factors like these are set in place from the start. You can pick up a copy from Legal Services - Room 143 or the Off-Campus Housing Office - Room 312 in Squires Student Center.

## SIGNING A LEASE

Read the ENTIRE lease before signing! A lease is a legal document that you are formally bound to upon signing. Do not hesitate to ask the landlord about clauses and terms you may not understand.

Agree to any changes or additions with your landlord and make sure these are stated in the lease before signing. Maintain all documents of correspondence in writing and include all parties, and ask for a copy of the written lease for personal records.

Take extensive pictures prior to moving in and moving out. Fill out an exhaustive damage report checklist to avoid being billed for damages caused prior to your move in. Do this, again, when you move out.

If you have any questions about your lease, meet with Student Legal Services for free:

143 Squires Student Center  
(540) 231-4720  
[www.legal.sga.vt.edu](http://www.legal.sga.vt.edu)  
[studentlegalservices@vt.edu](mailto:studentlegalservices@vt.edu)

### ADDITIONAL TIP!

Know your credit during this process, and have an individual agree to be your guarantor, if one is required.