READING A LEASE
Renter's Advisory Council
Off-Campus Student Association
045 Student Union
Stillwater, OK 74078-0675

Too often tenants will sign a lease not fully understanding the terms of it or the possible effects it may have on them. The signing of the lease is more than just a formality in the renting process. It may contain sections that could severely limit your rights as a tenant. Most terms, if agreed upon by both parties, are fully enforceable regardless of whether or not you read you lease before you signed it. Although it is difficult for a tenant to negotiate changes in the lease offered, changes are possible.

To remove an undesirable clause from a lease, the relevant words must be crossed out and you and the landlord (or the landlord's authorized agent) must put your initials next to the corrections. This must be done on both the landlord's copy and your copy for the changes to be fully enforceable.

Remember that it is crucial for you to read the entire lease to look for these areas where problems can arise.

1. Does the lease include in writing all the promises you landlord has made?
2. Does the lease ask you to agree that the landlord is not liable for repairs?
3. Who pays the landlord's attorney fees if you go to court?
4. Does the lease ask you to waive the right to a jury trial?
5. Does the lease ask you to agree to obey rules that the landlord may not have even made yet?
6. Does the lease ask you to agree to pay possible extra rent, assessments, property taxes, etc. that may be assessed upon your landlord?
7. Does the lease give the landlord free reign to enter the apartment at any time?
8. Who is liable if you or your personal property is injured or damaged?
9. Does the lease ask you to agree that no else will live in the rented property unless they are named in the lease?
10. Do improvements you build belong to the landlord?
11. Does the lease require you to accept the premises as they are?

If there are any parts of the lease of which you are uncertain, call or come by the Off-Campus Student Association office, 045 Student Union or 744-7283, to speak with someone from the Renter's Advisory Council. We will be glad to answer any questions and provide you with a copy of the Oklahoma Residential/Non-Residential Landlord and Tenant Acts.