

off campus guide



living

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER OFF CAMPUS LIVING GUIDE



welcome

Living off campus allows students flexibility in choosing the location and type of housing they desire. Many students look forward to being part of a neighborhood where they can immerse themselves in all of Rochester's cultural and social opportunities. The University of Rochester's Off Campus Living Program works with students living in privately owned properties to help them live safely and successfully off campus. Through resources, support services, and programs, we provide opportunities for off-campus students to become integrated into the local community. We also promote good relationships with neighbors by increasing students' awareness of their responsibilities as members of a residential community. We serve as a liaison between the University and our neighbors, encouraging dialogue about issues of mutual concern.

Office for Off Campus Living

- helps University of Rochester students, faculty, staff, and visitors locate rental housing in the area
- operates Off Campus Connection (www.rochester.edu/reslife/offcampus), our rental property listing service
- reviews leases and rental applications with students
- educates students about how to be good neighbors and tenants
- assists with student/landlord dispute resolution and communication
- provides occasional tours of Rochester neighborhoods
- connects the University of Rochester community to off-campus resources
- works with neighborhood associations and service centers to maintain open communication and promote strong community ties

Contact Us

The Office for Off Campus Living is located on the River Campus in 020 Gates, Susan B. Anthony Halls (basement). The entrance is off to the side nearest Fauver Stadium. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feel free to stop by, call us at (585) 275-1081, or email us at offcampus@reslife.rochester.edu.

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living in your home

LIVING IN YOUR HOME

Living off campus comes with many new and exciting responsibilities. As a tenant, you are responsible for understanding the terms of your lease and keeping up with local laws, codes, and ordinances.

Tenant's Rights and Responsibilities

Know Your Rights as a Tenant . . . before you sign, read your lease

No matter where you live, reading your lease and familiarizing yourself with your responsibilities before you sign is one of the most important things you can do in protecting your rights as a tenant. Failure on your part to be aware of your obligations as spelled out in the written lease does not release you from those obligations. Once you sign, get a copy of it and keep it somewhere safe.

Be sure that any changes or additions to the lease are agreed to by you and your landlord and are included in the lease before it is signed. If an addendum to the lease is agreed to and added later, this should also be signed by you and your landlord.

Know Your Responsibilities as a Tenant . . . abide by the terms of the lease, including timely payment of rent

When you move into your house or apartment, document any and all damages or maintenance issues that already exist. You and your landlord should complete a thorough walk-through that includes completion of an inspection checklist with any issues noted. Take photos or video and keep records of things that need repair as well as when the repairs get made.

Know whose responsibility it is to maintain the property around your home. This includes knowing whose job it is to mow the grass and clear snow and ice from walkways and sidewalks.

Certificate of Occupancy (from www.cityofrochester.gov)

A community's health, vitality, and quality of life can be measured by the condition of its properties. The city's renewable Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) program is designed to help stabilize and enhance our city neighborhoods by conducting regularly scheduled and ongoing property maintenance inspections.

C of Os are required to be renewed for any structure that has residential rental dwelling units. One- and two-family structures are renewed every six years; multiple dwellings and mixed-use occupancies that have at least one dwelling unit are renewed every three years. Property owners who occupy a one- or two-family dwelling are exempt from the C of O requirement.

The C of O inspection is a visual property maintenance inspection. It includes the interior and exterior of the structure and its premises. The primary focus of the inspection is on health, safety, and blight. The inspector will look for such items as paint and trim; fire protection requirements; stairs and handrails; roofs; gutters; accessory buildings; interior mechanical systems such as heat, electric, and plumbing; interior and exterior structural soundness; and space requirements.

Fire Safety and Carbon Monoxide

Nationally, 80 percent of fire-related student deaths occur in off-campus housing. New York State law requires smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in all types of housing. It is the responsibility of the property owner, including landlords, to ensure these devices are in place.

- Change the batteries in your smoke detector every six months—remember, “Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries!”
- Install smoke detectors in every room in your house except the kitchen.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors on every level of a home that has a sleeping area and the level that contains a carbon monoxide/heating source.
- Take all carbon monoxide alarms and alerts very seriously. Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas. Call 911 immediately!
- Know your escape plan before a fire happens and practice the plan at least twice a year.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Never smoke in bed. If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Do not leave a stove unattended when cooking.
- Avoid using lighted candles.
- Do not use grills on porches or balconies or within 10 feet of the house or garage.

Home Safety Tips

- Lock all doors in your house at all times. Landlords are required to provide effective locks for residences, so contact your landlord if you have concerns about any security devices in your house.
- Lock your windows at all times. Don't give burglars an opportunity to gain easy access to your home and possessions.
- Leave an outside/porch light on at night.
- Keep your valuables out of sight at all times.

Sharing Costs and Chores with Roommates

When you have a roommate or housemates, it is wise to make agreements about splitting rent, choosing bedrooms, sharing chores, and paying for other costs like utilities.

- Determine everyone's share of the monthly rent, if you all are on the same lease. Choose who will write the rent check (or money order) to the landlord.
- Set up a schedule of household chores and clearly state who is responsible for cleaning what rooms/ areas and how frequently they must do so.
- Decide if overnight guests are allowed and, if so, how often.
- Determine how much notice must be given in the event a roommate will not be around for the duration of the lease (study abroad or return home for other reasons), and who will be responsible for





finding a replacement roommate after checking your lease or talking to your landlord about subletting.

Renter's Insurance

The Off Campus Living Program strongly recommends that all student renters purchase some form of renter's insurance.

- Your landlord's home owner's policy does not cover any of your belongings. Purchase renter's insurance to cover losses of your possessions (laptop, clothing, furniture, cell phone) due to theft or destruction.
- Basic renter's insurance often includes protection for you in case someone is hurt in your house. Be sure to check this coverage with the insurance company, as policies differ.
- Students are typically covered under their parents' policy when living in campus housing but not covered when renting off campus in privately owned property. Check with your parents to find out whether you can be covered under their insurance policy or whether a rider plan can be added.
- Renter's insurance is relatively inexpensive. Most insurance providers offer free quotes online. Two such companies are National Student Services, Inc. (www.nssi.com) and Haylor, Freyer & Coon, Inc. (www.haylor-college.com/pp).

Move-out Tips

- Know when your lease ends and/or the date you must renew it.
- Know how much notice you need to give your landlord before moving out.
- Complete the move-out portion of the inspection form filled out when you moved in. Request a walk-through with your landlord.
- Prepare to remove ALL personal belongings from the house or apartment.
- Clean thoroughly.
- Take pictures or video.
- Return your keys in person or, if unable, send them by certified mail, return receipt requested, and insured. You can continue to be charged until the landlord has keys in his or her possession, or you can be charged for a lock change.
- Ask your landlord for a specific date or time frame for when you can expect your security deposit. Your landlord must return your security deposit less any deductions for damage in a reasonable amount of time.

living in the community

LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

One of the most important aspects of living off campus is realizing that you are now part of a residential community. There are increased expectations and responsibilities that come with living in Rochester city neighborhoods as well as the surrounding suburban neighborhoods. It is important to familiarize yourself with your responsibilities as a citizen and neighbor, with the University's expectations of you as an off-campus student and with various local laws and resources that will assist you in living off campus. Good neighbors make life more positive. A good neighbor shows respect for his or her property, for the neighborhood, and for those living nearby. Working together as neighbors will improve the quality of life for all.

Be a Good Neighbor

- Noise is a common complaint. Noise should not be audible beyond your property/rental line between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m. (City's Noise Ordinance).
- Talk to your neighbors in a civilized manner about disputes before calling the police.
- Clean up around the property you live in. Know your trash pick-up days and remember that garbage bins should not be out earlier than the evening before trash pick-up day and must be returned within 24 hours after pick-up.
- Know the names and phone numbers of the residents immediately adjacent to your property.

- Get involved in at least one neighborhood activity. Don't be afraid to socialize with your neighbors and invite them to your events.
- Learn from differences and value diversity. Every member of a community is valuable and can contribute to the well-being of the neighborhood.
- Do not tolerate or participate in drug sales, sales of stolen merchandise, or any criminal activity.
- Park on the street or driveway—not on the lawn. In addition, when parking along a curb, remember to allow space for residents to enter their driveway; there must be a five-foot minimum space.
- Keep your noisy pets quiet. Be responsible pet owners and dispose of your animals' feces from sidewalks, yards, parks, and lawns.
- Treat each other with respect, as you would like to be treated.
- Use doorbells instead of car horns.
- Watch out for your neighbors and neighborhood children.

Party Smart

Throw a great party and keep your neighbors happy . . . don't have the police show up!

- Notify your neighbors of your party plans and give them a phone number to reach you in case they have problems with your party. However, just because you have





informed your neighbors that you are having a party, this does not mean that they have to put up with loud noise or disturbances.

- Keep the party to a reasonable size (100 people or more in a single-family house is NOT reasonable).
- Know your guests and only allow people you know and trust in your house.
- Avoid parties during the week (Thursday and Sunday are week nights!). They can be bothersome to neighbors with small children or who have to get up early.
- Know local ordinances like the Noise Ordinance, which states that noise should not be audible beyond your property line between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m. (when the great majority of parties are just getting started—we know!). Be aware that there are fines associated with violations that can even lead to your eviction.
- Keep the party indoors with the windows and doors closed. Remember that voices and music travel.
- Don't serve underage guests. Their mistakes can become your problem, and you are ultimately responsible (legally, financially, etc.) for your guests and their behavior.
- Make sure you provide nonalcoholic drinks and snacks so those who can't or don't want to drink can enjoy themselves.
- Discourage drinking games, as they can get loud and dangerous.
- Don't let your guests leave with a drink in hand. Open

containers of alcohol on public property (sidewalks and streets) are illegal.

- Ensure that your guests do not drink and drive! Have designated drivers in place as well as friends who are willing to watch out as guests board shuttles or walk to campus. You can be found responsible if something bad happens.
- Be respectful and cooperate if the police investigate—they won't ask twice!

Crime Prevention and Personal Safety

Unfortunately, there are isolated incidents in every neighborhood—urban and suburban alike. The important thing is to take responsibility for your personal safety by being smart and aware.

- Stay alert. Always be aware of your surroundings and people inside your personal space. Don't allow yourself to become distracted—this means not talking or texting while walking, blasting music in earphones, etc.
- Act calm and confident in all situations. Stand tall, keep your head up, and walk with a purpose. Criminals tend to prey on those who appear weak, distracted, or unable to fight back. Make quick eye contact with people to let them know that you have seen them and may be able to identify them to the police in case something happens.
- Trust your instincts. If a situation feels wrong, it probably is. People who appear out of place or are engaged in activity that is uncommon in your neighborhood should set off warning bells that should not be ignored. Get



away from suspicious activity immediately and then call 911 to report it.

- Walk with a friend or group of friends whenever possible. Criminals are less likely to approach groups.
- Walk on lighted paths and sidewalks. Don't take the shortcut if it's not well lit.
- Carry your purse with the strap across your chest and in front of you. Carry your wallet in your front pocket instead of your back pocket. This shows potential thieves that you are in control of your property, and it will not be easy to take.
- Keep your car doors and windows locked when driving. Be suspicious of anyone who walks up to

your vehicle. Leave yourself enough room in traffic to drive away from a dangerous situation. Be cautious of people or vehicles following you—if you feel like you are being followed, do not go home. Drive to a place where there are a lot of people and call 911 once you feel you are safe.

- Lock items in the trunk of your car or place them somewhere out of sight. Never leave valuables in plain sight in your vehicle.
- Use a steering wheel lock or other anti-theft device to reduce the risk of vehicle theft.
- Leave your porch light on.

- Call your Neighborhood Service Center to schedule a residential security survey. Rochester's Crime Prevention Officers can conduct a residential security survey of your property or rental.

Neighborhoods

The University of Rochester is fortunate to be situated among many culturally rich and historic neighborhoods. For information about Rochester and its neighborhoods, visit www.rochestercityliving.com. The most popular neighborhoods for the University of Rochester community include Strong Memorial Hospital, 19th Ward, Plymouth-Exchange (PLEX), Park/East/Monroe, and South Wedge/Highland areas.



Transportation

University shuttles are free with University of Rochester IDs. Shuttles operate within the University area and throughout select areas of Rochester where many Rochester students choose to live. For shuttle routes and schedules, visit www.rochester.edu/parking/options/shuttle.html.

Regional Transit Service (RTS) is one of the best transit systems in the nation and very reliable. Visit www.rgrta.org for public bus schedules, routes, and fares. RTS bus passes can be purchased at the Medical Center and River Campus Parking Offices.

The University has established a partnership with Marketplace Taxi to provide discount taxi service. They offer safe and convenient transportation to popular locations around Rochester to University faculty, staff, and students. Marketplace Taxi can be reached at (585) 274-2222 (4ACAB). Visit the Parking Services website (www.rochester.edu/parking) for additional information.

Zipcar is a car sharing service available at the River Campus, the Medical Center, and the Eastman School of Music. You can sign up to borrow a car when you need it and avoid higher rental and parking fees (www.rochester.edu/parking/options/zipcars.html).

See the University's Parking and Transportation Services website (www.rochester.edu/parking) for information on these services and many more!

Consequences for Common Violations

It is common knowledge that parties and gatherings can get out of hand no matter where you live. We want to emphasize that the host of the party is ultimately responsible for the conduct and behavior of those at or leaving the party. This is something to consider when deciding if you want to be the “party house.” It is smart to be aware of the potential legal implications of misconduct. Remember, when you live off campus, you will be visited by the Rochester Police Department (RPD)—not University Public Safety!

- Public urination usually fits into “exposure of a person.” Besides being disgusting and disrespectful, this is a violation that can be punishable several ways—the most serious being up to 15 days in jail, usually for multiple offenses.
- Public intoxication is usually covered under “disorderly conduct.” In some instances, the person is arrested under the Mental Hygiene Law, if needed, so that a hospital can evaluate him or her.
- Disorderly conduct is a violation punishable similarly to public urination.
- Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) is a misdemeanor in New York for the first offense. The second offense is a felony. Both can be punishable by jail or prison time, loss of license, probation, and/or fines. If injuries are involved, the punishment becomes more severe.

- Serving alcohol to someone over age 16 but under age 21 (yes, this is still the legal drinking age in New York) is a misdemeanor, and the person who served it will be charged. A misdemeanor carries a maximum sentence of one year in jail.
- Possession of marijuana starts out as a violation depending on how much. Remember, violations can be punishable in several ways—the most serious being up to 15 days in jail.
- Penalties for a violation of the Noise Ordinance start with a \$200 fine and double for each instance thereafter.



frequently asked questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there somewhere I can search for off-campus housing?

Yes. The University manages an off-campus housing search site, Off Campus Connection (www.rochester.edu/reslife/offcampus), where you can search for housing in the area. Please note that the University does not inspect, visit, or supervise properties listed with this service, nor do we endorse any particular properties.

Does Rochester law limit the number of roommates I may have?

Yes, there is currently a law on the books that permits a maximum of four unrelated individuals to live in a single-family dwelling.

Does the University's Standards of Student Conduct apply to me, even though I live off campus in a privately owned property?

All students must adhere to the Standards of Student Conduct, regardless of where they may live. Specifically, "Students may be subject to the University conduct system for allegations of unlawful conduct that occurs on University property, or that occurs off campus if such off-campus conduct is associated with a University activity or raises considerable concerns that the individual or group poses a threat to the safety or welfare of the University community."

That being said, most situations that occur off campus between students and neighbors are not covered by the University's Standards of Student Conduct and are best addressed either through the Office for Off Campus Living or the Rochester Police Department.

Can the Off Campus Living Program help me with problems with my landlord?

Although we cannot give legal advice, the Off Campus Living Program staff is available to meet with students to discuss problems they are having with their landlord. We can suggest helpful resources on landlord-tenant issues and provide contact information for these resources.

I believe that the house I am renting has considerable code violations. Who can I contact to report this?

Contact the Neighborhood Service Center (NSC) for your area. See contact numbers for all of the area NSCs in the Outside Resources section below.

What happens if a neighbor reports noise at my house?

Chances are neighbors will call the Rochester Police Department for Noise Ordinance violations. RPD may also collaborate with University Public Safety and/or the Office for Off Campus Living.

Outside Resources

Neighborhood Service Centers (NSC)

Contact for assistance with problems such as property code complaints and public safety concerns.

Northwest Service Center, 1099 Jay Street, Suite 200: (585) 428-7620

Southwest Service Center, 923 Genesee Street: (585) 428-7630

Northeast Service Center, 500 Norton Street: (585) 428-7660

Southeast Service Center, 846 South Clinton Avenue: (585) 428-7640

Housing Council

Contact for information about tenant rights and responsibilities, landlord-tenant disputes, fair housing information, and much more.

Phone: (585) 546-3700

www.thehousingcouncil.org

Rochester Police Department

Emergency: 911

Non-emergency: 311





