STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR
OFF-CAMPUS LIVING
**What to Consider When Moving Off Campus:**

When moving off campus, there are a variety of things to consider. Is the unit size appropriate for your needs? Will you have access to the amenities that you desire? Do you like the appearance of this living space? These are examples of questions that we immediately consider when looking at rental properties. But what about the other aspects of off campus life that we sometimes fail to think about? This guide will provide you with the necessary components for your decision-making process.

Below is a more detailed list of things that you should be thinking about as you make your move:

1. **Location:**
   - Is this rental property close to your needs? This not only includes your needs as a student (i.e. distance from your classrooms, the library, etc.), it can also mean locational relation to extracurricular activities (shopping, bike paths, grocery stores, etc.). It is important to consider what is most important to you. Do you want to be able to commute to class on foot? Or are you okay with traveling by bike or car?
   - Is the housing property that you are considering in a safe place? Has it been involved in unlawful or other nuisance activities in the past few years? Is the neighborhood safe? Make sure that you do your research on these topics, as they can highly influence your living experience later down the road.
   - Make an effort to see the living space in person before you agree to a rental agreement. Pictures do not always tell the entire story, and an in-person walk through can make or break your decision. You should also make sure to document any damages that are already present within the apartment or house prior to moving in, so that you can make sure not to get charged for the damages later on. Make sure to have the landlord present when doing this walkthrough.
2. **Maintenance and Property Upkeep:**
   - If it is important to you, make sure that you inspect the current condition of the house. You may want to ensure that maintenance is important to the landlord, in case future problems arise. Again, make sure that you document any damages that are already present. Ideally, this process would be done with photos and written explanations of the current state, and the landlord would sign the document in agreement.
   - Make sure you understand your responsibilities in property maintenance. Oftentimes landlords are not held responsible for minor repairs, unless it is specifically noted in the lease. This is often a point of conflict between tenants and their landlords, so make sure you know what can be expected if you have maintenance issues.
   - This can also include yard work. For example, if you are living in a house, are you responsible for shoveling snow from the walkways, raking the leaves, or maintaining the weeds?

3. **Finding a Landlord:**
   - Ideally, you should try to get landlord referrals from people who have lived in the space in the past. They will be your best source for information on the landlord’s trustworthiness and likeability. Though you will not necessarily be speaking or interacting with your landlord every day, it is important to have a good relationship with them. It is important that you pay close attention to any negative comments that you hear regarding that landlord. If you do not know anyone who has lived at this unit in the past, try looking up landlord-ratings websites such as ratemylandlord.com.
   - Upon meeting with a potential landlord, make sure that you are following your instincts. Does this individual seem trustworthy and reliable? Do they have experience in the rental process? If not, what makes them a good match?

4. **Looking Into Your Lease Agreement:**
   - You must ALWAYS read your lease carefully before signing it. This is a legally binding contract, and failure to recognize this can result in great conflict. Moreover, make sure that you are well informed on the cost of your rent, and when each payment will be due. Also make sure that the length of the lease is compatible with your needs, and that you know the rules on things such as pets, parties, and so on. Again, it is of upmost importance that you MAKE SURE TO UNDERSTAND YOUR LEASE!
Make sure that you have a copy of your lease that is signed by the landlord.

Some aspects of a lease can be negotiable. If necessary, talk with your landlord about changes or suggestions that you have. Make sure to always be reasonable and polite in this endeavor, and remember that they have the right to reject your suggestion if it is not suitable for them.

Make sure that the length of your lease is compatible with your plans for the future. If not, make sure to ask your landlord about subleasing, or changing the length of your leasing agreement. If this does not work out, you may have to look at another space.

Make sure that any agreements you make with your landlord, whether it be the lease itself or changes that were made to it, are IN WRITING and signed by all parties involved. Otherwise you are much more vulnerable to conflict down the road.

5. Safety Precautions

In general, a landlord will not be held responsible for injury to a tenant or losses to a tenant’s belongings. We therefore suggest that you consider purchasing renter’s insurance. This is usually reasonably priced, and can be extremely helpful in the event of emergencies or robberies. In fact, some landlords require this type of insurance.

Make sure all locks (on doors and windows) are properly functioning. If not, see that they are fixed.

Make sure to know the history of the neighborhood you will be living in. Is this a safe area? Have serious incidents happened here in the past? What additional safety precautions should you take? These are all important questions to begin asking.
How to Find Your Next Home:

There are a variety of ways to discover your next home. One of the best and simplest ways that you can do this is by word of mouth. Ask your off-campus friends what their experience was like, how they like their current living space, and what they recommend for you and your search process. Just from talking to the people around you, you may hear of current rental opportunities in your area, which is a great and easy way to start your search. However, if this is not the case for you, then there are several important things to consider when looking for your next home. Below is a list of recommendations for your rental search.

1. Make a checklist of what is important to you. In other words, decide what you will and won’t compromise on when it comes to housing. This should be done before you begin looking at properties. Keep this with you while you are in your searching process to remind you of what exactly you are looking for. Of course, remember to be reasonable with this!
2. Go online and do your research. Simply searching “Rental properties near me,” is a great place to begin. There are numerous search engines that will help you find viable options in your desired area. They often allow you to be as specific as you want. For example, what area of town do you want to be in? How many bedrooms are you looking for? Helpful sites include the Regis Classified Ads located on Insite.
3. Narrow down your search by honing in on certain neighborhoods that you are interested in. What kind of neighborhood atmosphere are you looking for? Drive around the neighborhoods that you are looking at, and see if there are any properties up for rent. If so, take down the contact information and contact the responsible party as soon as possible, as listings can disappear quickly.
4. Make a list of the housing options that you found and liked.
5. Contact the property manager or landlord, and schedule an appointment with them.
6. Visit the property. Make sure that both the site and landlord are trustworthy, and that this living environment is a good fit for you. Does this property fit the initial checklist that you made? Also make sure to consider the location and the transportation options available to you.

7. Read the lease carefully and make sure you know your rights. You never want to enter into a bad lease agreement. Ideally, you can have a lawyer review the paperwork prior to signing it. If this is not an option for you, consider having your parents, or another trustworthy individual (who is somewhat experienced in buying or renting properties) look over your lease agreement. Better safe than sorry!

8. Sign your lease and enjoy your new home!
Off Campus Housing Checklist:

Moving into an apartment or house for the first time can be both an exiting and stressful experience. Leaving behind the fully furnished and cared for amenities of an on-campus residence hall can leave you feeling like you are starting from scratch. But this does not have to be a bad thing! Below we have provided a list of some things you may want to consider buying when making your move.

Bedroom:
- Bed
- Bed Spread
- Sheets
- Night Stand
- Alarm Clock
- Bookcase/shelves
- Desk
- Desk Chair
- Desk Light
- Trash Can
- Shoe rack
- Full length Mirror
- Dresser
- Rug

Bathroom:
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Toilet brush
- Plunger
- Garbage can
- Shower cleaner
- Shower shelving
- Toilet paper
- Shower curtain
- Shower rod

Kitchen:
- Silverware
- Plates
- Bowls
- Cups
- Pots and Pans
- Dish soap
- Spatula
- Big Mixing Spoon
- Tupperware
- Pot holders
- Scissors
- Can opener
- Strainer
- Cutting board
- Mixing bowl
- Toaster
- Microwave
- Knives
- Dining table
- Chairs
- Trash can

Living Room:
- Couch/chairs
- TV
- TV stand
- Lamps
- Side tables

Miscellaneous:
- Hand soap
- Paper Towels
- Tissues
- Garbage bags
- Broom and dustpan
- Vacuum
- Disinfectant wipes
- Extension cords
- Light Bulbs
- Fan(s)
- Laundry detergent
- Laundry basket
- Clothes hangers
- First Aid Kit
- Tool Kit
- Fire extinguisher
- Carbon Monoxide detector
- Décor

Another option to consider is the possibility of pre-furnished apartments.
Finding A Roommate:

Finding the right roommate is extremely important, and in some ways can be as challenging as finding a place to live. When it comes to finding someone to live with, you are your best advocate. Make sure that you let friends and others know that you are looking for a roommate, and also be clear about what type of personality you are looking for. Once again, one of the best ways to do this is by word of mouth. Spread the word. This can also be done through social media! Use your outlets and your connections to get the ball rolling. Once you have found a roommate, it is of upmost importance that you are clear on all understanding of financial, legal, and personal matters that may come into play.

Tips:

• Make sure that you establish expectations and responsibilities upfront, specifically about sharing costs and chores. This is crucial to a positive experience with your roommate(s). Sometimes it is even nice to have these agreements in writing, so that you can return to them at any time.

• Ensure that there are known and set amounts that each roommate will be paying for their share of the rent, utilities, and other shared expenses. Also make sure you know how these checks will be delivered to the landlord on time! Who will be responsible for managing the bills and collecting payments from everyone?

• Once again, make sure to lay the ground rules. What are the cleanliness expectations? Is it agreed that the front door will always remained locked? Are overnight guests allowed? Etc.

• Decide who will occupy which bedroom in the fairest way possible. Flip a coin for example! Or perhaps one roommate will pay more each month if they want the bigger room. Figure out what works for you and your roommate(s) decision-making process.

• In the event that a roommate will have to leave the living arrangement, determine how much notice should be given before moving out, and who will be responsible for finding a replacement roommate.
ALWAYS BE RESPECTFUL AND KIND TO ONE ANOTHER. If a problem arises, do your best to be patient and work things out. It is easy to get hot headed in an argument; instead, try to stay calm, and discuss the matter in an efficient way.

Your Safety

It is always important to take your safety into account as you make the move off campus. Below is a list that will help guide you in making smart and safe decisions.

Rental Search Safety:
- Make sure that the neighborhoods and rental properties that you consider are compatible with your personal safety comfort level.
- Make sure to do your research on the neighborhood that you are looking into, as well as the landlord.
- Upon meeting potential landlords, trust your instincts. Do they seem trustworthy and reliable? Let people know when and where you're meeting. Bring a friend/roommate.

Home Safety:
- Always make sure that your doors and windows are locked. If you have a car, also make sure that you keep those doors locked as well. Your landlord is required to make sure that your residence has effective locks, so if any problems arise, make sure to contact your landlord right away.
- If at any time an unwelcome or unknown individual enters your home, call 911.
- Never allow strangers into your home. Make sure that your landlord makes you aware of any maintenance work that will be done on or inside the house prior to their arrival.
- Keep valuables out of sight and far from windows.

Personal Safety:
- Know the numbers that you will need in case of an emergency.
- Get to know your neighbors. They have the potential to be a great resource if you are ever in danger or feel scared.
- Avoid walking alone at night when possible. If necessary, make sure to be aware of your surroundings, and take the safest route available. Stick to well-lit streets.
- Trust your instincts. If something makes you feel uneasy avoid the individual or leave the area.
- Always drink responsibly.
Moving off campus, or away from home, is an important time in your life. Not only is it an opportunity for great personal growth, it is also a time when you can get to know Denver in an entirely new way. Regis University Residence Life and Housing is here to help you and support you in this time of transition in any way that we can. The University expects that you will be responsible citizens, good neighbors, and continue to live in accordance with Regis University policies. Please remember to always be respectful and mindful of your surroundings and the people around you. Ultimately, we want you to flourish in your new environment, and continue making more amazing memories in your college experience. We wish you the best of luck on your off campus move!

***Remember that the student code of conduct applies off campus.***
www.regis.edu/studenthandbook