

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

TIPS FOR FINDING OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

If you are exempt from the on-campus residency requirement and looking for an apartment, a roommate or both, here are some tips that might help.

- Check with Student Involvement and Leadership in UC 222 for information on off-campus apartments for rent and students looking for roommates. You can also add your own information to this database.
- Search the Bulletin Boards— Carefully examine the bulletin boards around campus (and especially in the University Center) for apartment and roommate advertisements. Remember that sometimes old ads are left on boards for a long time, so don't stop looking with the first one you find. Make your own flyer to post on bulletin boards.
- Check the newspapers—The Times-Picayune, Gambit and Driftwood newspapers all have classified ad sections where you can look for apartment ads. You can also check websites such as www.nola.com to find information about apartments in New Orleans.
- Explore the neighborhoods — Many of the apartments for rent in nearby neighborhoods are only advertised with a "FOR RENT" sign posted to the front of the house. Take a walk through the streets south of campus (between Leon C. Simon and Filmore). Don't forget to check the streets east of Elysian Fields Avenue.
- Check the phone book yellow pages—If you will be driving a car, you can look for apartments outside of the University area. Look under "Apartments" in the yellow pages and you'll find locator services as well as apartment complexes.
- Attend the New Student Orientation Activities — At the orientation you will meet other new international students, and talking to other students is one of the best ways to solve the problem of living arrangements. When you work together you can find an apartment much faster.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RENTING AN APARTMENT...

You may have to fill out a **rental application**. This is merely a page of information about yourself (including your financial status) which the landlord uses to decide whether or not he or she should rent the unit to you. A rental application is not a lease, but you should read carefully any document you are asked to sign—and don't hesitate to ask questions.

The **lease** is the legal agreement which establishes the relationship between the landlord and the tenant (the person who is renting the apartment). A **written lease** usually contains the following parts:

1. Naming the parties (you and the landlord).
2. A description of the property.
3. A statement of rent and the dollar amount of the security deposit.
4. The term of time for which you have agreed to rent; it can be a specific term (6 or 9 months or 1 year) or an indefinite

term (usually month-to-month). Most leases say how many days ahead written notice must be given to move out.

5. A set of rules and/or conditions.

6. Signatures of the parties.

Read your lease carefully before you sign it. We suggest you take a copy of the lease, read it and think about it for 24 hours before you sign it. Make sure you understand every part of the lease before you sign it. Do not let the landlord pressure you into signing the lease before you are sure you are ready.

An **oral lease** is a contract made by talking about terms instead of writing them down. Oral leases are usually a bad idea. Often the tenant or the landlord forgets the terms agreed upon. To protect yourself, ask for a written lease. When there is no written lease, the law states that there is a month-to-month lease. If you or your landlord want to change any agreements, you have to do so 10 days prior to the end of the rental periods.

A **security or damage deposit** is required by the landlord in case you damage the apartment in any way. When you move out, the apartment should be left in its original condition. If it is, you should get your deposit back. If it is not, the landlord can keep your deposit. You will probably have to pay the deposit along with the first month's rent before you move into the apartment.

Other types of fees that can be charged include: a non-refundable cleaning fee, a pet deposit, pest (bug spraying) fees and more. You should ask the landlord about these types of fees, because they could increase the cost of your monthly rent.

SETTING UP UTILITIES

Depending on your landlord, you may or may not have to pay utilities directly to the company. Some landlords include the cost of all utilities with the rental price. Others may include water, but not gas/electricity. Telephone service will always be your responsibility. Water service, energy (gas and electric), and telephone service must all be handled separately by calling the following numbers:

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans

504.529.2837

If you have a social security number, you can do this by phone. You will have to pay a deposit of at least \$75.

Entergy (Electricity and/or gas)

1.800.368.3749

If you do not have a social security number, you must take your passport and lease to the local customer service center. In New Orleans, it is located at 3400 Canal St., on the corner of Canal and Jeff Davis Blvd. A deposit of \$75.00 for electric or gas service or a deposit of \$150.00 for both electric and gas service will be charged to your first month's bill. It will take 1-2 business days to get these utilities turned on.

Cox Communications (Cable television, internet, telephone)

504.358.6972

Cox provides cable TV, internet, local and long distance telephone service. Additional information is available at www.cox.com .

AT&T (Telephone)

1.800.331.0500

You can call Monday through Saturday from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. If you do not have a social security number you must pay a deposit of \$100 at an AT&T collection location. If you do have a social security number you can make all arrangements by phone. During busy times it can take up to a week to receive telephone service.

AFTER YOU MOVE IN

Don't forget to let OISS and the University know your new mailing address. Come to OISS or use Webstar or PeopleSoft to update your **Mailing** and **SEVIS Physical** address.