

5 THINGS ALL ROOMMATES SHOULD TALK ABOUT

GUESTS

One of the greatest things about having your own space is being able to entertain your friends on a whim. However, this can quickly become another roommate's nuisance without proper consideration. Discuss how each of you feels about guests each semester.

- How many is too many?
- How long is too long?
- What if a certain guest makes you feel uncomfortable?

NOISE

A good volume on the TV or music for one person may be overwhelming for another. Discuss with your roommates whether certain times (late night? early morning? etc.) or occasions (mid-terms? finals?) require lower noise levels. Also, keep neighbors in mind when considering noise volumes.

CLEANLINESS

These are some of the biggest sources of roommate tension. Decide what the apartment policy regarding dishes, garbage and cleaning will be.

- Is each roommate responsible for doing his or her own dishes?
- Do they do them immediately after using them?

After you have come to an agreement, post your "Dishes Policy" near the kitchen sink and do your best to adhere to it.

In addition to a Dishes Policy, decide what your "Garbage Policy" will be.

Roommates should also share the responsibility of upkeep for their space. Decide on a "cleaning day". Create a weekly schedule rotating the responsibilities, post this in your apartment and stick to it.

SHARING

Discuss with your roommates how you feel about your personal belongings.

- Can anyone use them without asking?
- Are certain items off-limits?
- What about clothing?

Defining clear expectations upfront will go a long way towards prevent confusion and conflicts.

There are also items (toilet paper, paper towels, dish soap, etc.) where sharing will mutually benefit everyone in the apartment. But sharing them also means sharing their costs. Decide what items will be shared and work out an arrangement for splitting the costs. One effective strategy is to create a "House Funds Jar" where each roommate contributes a certain dollar amount each month. Then, when a toilet paper crisis arises, funds can be pulled from the house funds.

STUDY

Each of us has unique needs and preferences when it comes to studying. Some of us need complete silence while others prefer constant background noise. Discuss your style with your roommates and decide whether you'll designate a specific "studying time" each day.

COMMUNICATION & CONFLICT

Making your living situation work requires open, honest communication among all roommates. Although you and your roommates are likely to have a wonderful time living together, every apartment inevitably has conflicts. It's natural. However, experience has shown that the apartments who regularly discuss small problems and concerns prevent these issues from becoming unbearable.

Early on, agree that you will address grievances with each other as they arise. Agree that if something is bothering or upsetting you, you will discuss the issue directly with that person.

If you're having a hard time discussing problems with your roommates, talk to your RA or another member of the Residence Life staff. We'd be happy to help you make an action plan and, if necessary, provide mediation.

ROOMMATE BILL OF RIGHTS

As roommates, you are entitled to the following:

- * **The right to read and study free from undue interference in one's room.**
- * **The right to sleep without undue disturbance from noise, guests of a roommate, etc.**
- * **The right to expect that a roommate will respect one's personal belongings.**
- * **The right to a clean environment in which to live.**
- * **The right to free access to one's room and facilities without pressure from a roommate.**
- * **The right to personal privacy.**
- * **The right to host guests with the expectation that guests are to respect the rights of the host's roommate(s), other residents and the visitation policy.**
- * **The right to be free from fear of intimidation, physical harm, and harassment.**
- * **The right to address grievances at all times.**

If conflicts arise, speak with your roommate first. Communication is the key—before, during, and after things come up. Remember...Residence Life Staff is here to help and is experienced in dealing with these problems. Feel free to contact your RA or HD/AD if necessary.