THINGS TO KNOW AND ASK BEFORE SIGNING A LEASE

Texas State University Off-Campus Living
Department of Housing and Residential Life
Cost of Living

- Will I need a co-signer/guarantor?
- How much is the application fee?
- How much is the security deposit?
- Is it an individual lease or traditional / conventional?

**Individual Lease:** Each individual in the apartment has their own lease. Each person is responsible for only his or her installment/rent, even if a roommate moves out. These are typically divided into monthly installments.

**Traditional/Conventional:** Roommates split the rent amongst themselves. If a roommate leaves, the remaining roommates are responsible for the rent.

- How much is rent? Is it reduced for partial months (such as move-in for August)?
- Will I have to pay the first and last month of rent at move in?
- How much money will be due at move in?
- When is rent due and how do I pay? Are there any additional fees if paid a specific way? (i.e., by using a credit card versus a check)
- What utilities are included? (If not included, what is an average rate for each?)
  - Electricity
  - Water
  - Internet
  - Cable
  - Garbage
  - Any other fees?
- If utilities are not included, can I use Simple Bills?
- Are there monthly caps on the included utilities?
- Under what circumstances would my security deposit NOT be refunded?
Calculate your Budget

- Tuition, Fees and Supplies
- Rent, Insurance, Utilities, Cellphone
- Food, Meal Plan
- Transportation
- Clothes/Shoes and Hygiene Products
- Child Care/Pet Care
- Entertainment
- Savings, Misc. Expenses
- How can I use my financial aid to pay rent?

The Lease

- What are the lease lengths? Are shorter or longer leases offered?
- What’s the move in/out date; is it negotiable?
- Can I get approval in writing if I need to extend my lease or move in early?
- How much written notice is required to notify management when moving out?
- What is the penalty if I break the lease or move out early?

Visit

- Is the property a member of ACT Ally, which promotes a healthy environment?
- Would you feel comfortable living there? Some properties can be quiet during the day and noisier in the evening.
Amenities and Policies

- Do you provide roommate matching? What if I don’t get along with my roommate?
- Is the apartment pet friendly, and what is the pet deposit/rent?
- If furnished, what are the furnishings?
- Are there washers and dryers inside the apartment? (Are they full size appliances?)
- What are the rules for modifying the apartment? (Can I paint, install curtain rods, photos on the wall?)
- Is it quiet or an active community?
- What is the guest policy?
- Is there ample parking for tenants and guests and is there an additional charge?
- Does the rent rate include a security system or do you have to pay extra for one, if applicable?
- Is there on-site management and maintenance?
- What are the emergency/on-call protocols?
- What is the lock out or lost key policy?
- Is the apartment complex within walking distance of campus or on the Texas State bus route?
- What is the proximity to the closest grocery store?
- How and where will mail/packages be delivered?
- How do you communicate with your residents (e-mail, text, mail, social media, etc.)? What is your preferred method of contact?
Signing

Upload the lease to the Attorney for Students to have them review it, for free, before you sign anything: attorney.dos.txstate.edu.

Read, think, review, and then sign a lease. There is no rush to sign right away.

Important Information

Keep written copies of everything, including:

- Promotions and special offers in writing
- Lease
- Move-in inventory report
- Repair requests
- Notice to vacate letter

Be aware of the upkeep of the property. Noise, parking and trash are the most common neighborhood complaints.

Be familiar with the City of San Marcos “single-family” zoning versus “multi-family” zoning districts. In a “single-family” zoning district, the number of unrelated people who occupy a home is limited.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Website: reslife.txstate.edu/offcampusliving
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This information is available in alternate format upon request from the Office of Disability Services.