

BEFORE YOU SIGN A LEASE

OFF-CAMPUS LIVING CHECKLIST

THE LEASE

- What are the lease lengths? Are shorter or longer leases offered?
- Is the lease an installment agreement, where I agree to pay the full amount of the contract upfront? Or is it a monthly rent agreement?
- Is it an individual/bedroom lease or a joint/conventional lease?
- 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?
- Will I need a co-signer/guarantor?
- Do I get to choose the unit/bedroom and tour the unit I will be living in before I sign? If not, when will I be notified of the assigned unit?

COST OF LIVING

- How much is the application fee?
- Are there any additional move-in or monthly fees? (i.e. parking, etc.)
- How much is rent? Do you have pro-rated rent if I only live in housing for part of the month? (i.e. mid-August move-in)
- 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. credit card vs. check)
- Are my utilities being charged based on my actual usage, or will I be allocated a portion of the community's total utility bill?
- What utilities are included? If not included, what is the average rate for each?
- If my roommates do not pay for their utilities, do I have to pay for them?
- Are there monthly caps on the included utilities?
- If my roommates do not pay for their fees, fines, and damages, do I have to pay?
- Will I pay a security deposit?
- Under what circumstances would my security deposit NOT be refunded?
- How can I use financial aid to pay rent?

AMENITIES & POLICIES

- Are my roommate requests or preferences contractually binding, or is it possible I may be matched with random roommates? What if I don't get along with my roommate?
- Under the contract, is management allowed to assign another person (including non-students) to live with me in my private bedroom?
- Can I get a written agreement that the landlord will not assign another person to share my bedroom?
- Is management allowed to move me to another room or unit after I am assigned housing and/or after I move in?
- Is the housing pet friendly, and what is the pet deposit/monthly cost?
- If furnished, what are the furnishings?
- Are there washers and dryers inside the space? Are they full-size appliances?
- What are the rules for modifying the space? Can I paint, install curtain rods, photos on the wall, etc.?
- Is it a quiet or an active community?
- What is the guest policy?
- Is there ample parking for tenants and guests? Is there an additional charge for guest parking?
- Does the rent rate include a monitored security system?
- 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 housing 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? (i.e. email, text, mail, social media, etc.)
- What is your preferred method of contact? Where can I contact the corporate office if I need to escalate an issue?

CALCULATE YOUR BUDGET

Take charge of your financial future. Utilize Bobcat Gold resources in the Financial Aid Department. Speak with a free Financial Advisor and learn more about financial assistance at finaid.txst.edu/bobcatgold.

Tuition & Fees _____

School Supplies _____

Rent & Renter's Insurance _____

Utilities _____
(i.e. internet, water, electricity, gas, trash, security, etc.)

Cellphone _____

Food / Meal Plan _____

Transportation _____

Clothing _____

Hygiene Products _____

Pet Care _____

Child Care _____

Entertainment _____

Savings _____

Misc. Expenses _____

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

SAFETY

- Check to see if the property has fire sprinklers throughout the unit.
- Check to see if the space has smoke detectors and a fire extinguisher.
- Check to see if you will be able to create a fire escape plan from your housing.
- Look at crime statistics in the neighborhood where your housing is located.
- Check apartment reviews on neutral sites like Yelp, Google, etc. Talk to current residents to get an idea of what the apartment community is like.

BEFORE SIGNING

- Make an appointment with the Attorney for Students to have them review the lease with you.
- Read, review, and think before signing a lease. There is no rush to sign right away.

REMEMBER

- Keep written copies of everything, including:
 - Promotions and special offers
 - Lease
 - Move-in inventory report
 - Repair requests
 - Notice to vacate letter
 - Move-out Inventory and Conditions Forms
- Take thorough pictures of your apartment before moving in your belongings and also when you move out.
- Roommate Matching Request Forms are non-binding. Students might not live with the people they requested and could be matched with non-students.
- Be aware of the upkeep of the property. Noise, parking, and trash are the most common neighborhood complaints.
- Written complaints about off-campus housing can be reported to offcampusliving@txstate.edu.
- Consider signing a Roommate Contract and Agreement to outline the rights, duties, and obligations of each roommate.
- If you are planning to live in a house, 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. Visit bit.ly/occupancySM for more info on these restrictions.

INDIVIDUAL LEASE

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

VS

JOINT/CONVENTIONAL LEASE

Roommates split the rent amongst themselves. If a roommate leaves, the remaining roommates may still be responsible for the timely payment of monthly rent. You choose your roommates, and all roommates share equal use of and responsibility for the entire unit. These leases are often prorated.

RESOURCES

ATTORNEY FOR STUDENTS

attorney.dos.txst.edu
512.245.2370

Attorney for Students serves students by providing them with critical legal counsel, limited scope representation, and practical education concerning their legal rights and responsibilities.

Current Texas State students can make an appointment with the Attorney for Students for free; this service is supported by current student service fees.



AUSTIN TENANTS COUNCIL

housing-rights.org
Appointments 512.474.7006
Counseling 512.474.1961
legalhelp@txstate.edu

Operating under the philosophy that everyone has a right to safe, decent, and fair housing, the Austin Tenants Council fulfills thousands of requests each year for help with housing problems. Austin Tenants Council programs focus on housing discrimination; tenant-landlord education and information; and housing repair and rehabilitation. Our mission is to ensure housing stability by rectifying Fair Housing Act violations and empowering tenants to exercise their rights through mediation, advocacy, and education.

City of San Marcos residents and Texas State students can make an appointment for free; this service is supported by Texas State University and City of San Marcos.

CITY OF SAN MARCOS CODE COMPLIANCE

sanmarcostx.gov/703/Code-Compliance
512.393.8479
codecompliance@sanmarcostx.gov

Code Compliance provides education and enforcement. It develops resources in response to a wide range of issues that affect the environment, health, safety, property values, and the general well-being of our community.

Code Compliance Officers monitor over 30 square miles, verifying that residents and business owners follow City Code. Their duty is to ensure that corridors, neighborhoods, and commercial properties are neat, clean, and safe.

All City of San Marcos residents can call for an appointment for free.

reslife.txst.edu/off-campus

512.245.5595 | offcampusliving@txstate.edu

This information is available in alternate format upon request from the Office of Disability Services.