

Choosing a place to live

The following information is intended to serve as general guidelines in the search for housing. It should be noted that there is wide variation in cost and quality of housing.

Most of our international students live very close to the college. There are several apartment complexes within a half-mile of the campus. It is usually easy for students to find a roommate or roommates. Some students live with host families. Please read the options available for you before you decide what you want.

Renting

Renting generally means a paying for a living space on a month-to-month basis. Apartments, motels, self-contained suites in other people's homes, or sharing a house with others are the common forms. Renting sometimes can include a twelve-month legal contract or lease. A lease means once it is signed you must finish renting the space for the time you agreed on in your contract. If you like, ask Teter Kapan International Programs to review the contract before you sign it.

An initial down payment of the first and last month's rent is frequently required of both leasing and month-to-month agreements. Deposits are also common. If you have never rented before, you may need to give a larger deposit or provide the name of a guarantor. This is someone who can guarantee that they will pay your rent if you cannot. But first ask this person for their permission to give their name and phone number to the managers of the rentals you are applying for.

Call to make an appointment to see the apartment or house you are looking for. Be on time for your appointment. If you do not know the telephone number, go to the address given in the ad. Be sure to see the apartment or house before you rent it.

Be sure to allow yourself enough time to shop around and compare the quality and cost of what is available before making a final decision, as these can vary tremendously.

Questions to ask when searching for a rental:

When you are looking at an apartment or space to rent remember to ask all of these questions.

How much is the rent? _____

How much is the deposit? _____

Is the first and last month's rent required? _____

What other expenses will be necessary? _____

What utilities are included in the rent and what utilities do I pay? _____

Please be precise. _____

(Utilities are charges for electricity, garbage, water, telephone)

Is cable TV included? _____ If not, how much is the charge? _____

Is the electricity already turned on? _____ Telephone? _____ Gas? _____

Is the apartment furnished or unfurnished? _____

(A furnished apartment has the basic furniture you will need. An unfurnished apartment usually has no furniture included, but it may have appliances; stove, refrigerator, etc.)

Is a lease or rental agreement required? _____

How soon can I move? _____

How much of the deposit is refundable? _____

Who is responsible for cleaning the apartment, for damage? _____

Are the locks re-keyed? _____

Other things for you to look for:

Is the location convenient for shopping, bus stops, and campus? _____

Is it quiet or on a busy street? _____

Does the apartment accept children or pets? ___ If so, where can they play? _____

Where do you park? How many parking spaces do you have? _____

Is there a laundry facility in the building or nearby? _____

Is it a smoking or non-smoking rental? _____ Can I have pets? _____

Are there house limitations? For examples, are parties allowed? _____

Note:

Look at how clean the apartment is and make a list of any dirty, broken or missing items. (Take another person with you if you can). You should do this before you move in and then give a copy of this list signed and dated to your landlord or manager and keep a copy for yourself. This protects you from being charged for these things when you move out. (Are the drapes torn? Does the carpet have spots or holes? Are the walls dirty? etc.).

Signing a lease or rental agreement:

For your own protection you should sign a written agreement with your landlord.

There are two kinds of written agreements, rental and lease. When you sign a rental or lease agreement you are agreeing to pay your rent on time and follow the rules of the building.

With a rental agreement the landlord can ask you to move out of the apartment at any time by giving you 30 days' notice. He can also raise the rent. Likewise, you are free to move out any time after giving the landlord 30 days' notice in writing.

A lease agreement is usually for a period of time more than one month, normally one year.

A Landlord May Require:

- Past landlord references
- A certain income level
- Credit references
- Advanced rent, fees or deposit

Setting up Housekeeping

Utilities

Some rentals will require that you start all your utilities and others will take care of some of them like water and sewer. Check with your landlord or apartment manager for instructions.

Local standard phone services:

Quest 1-800-244-1111 www.qwest.com

If you move in the same city but want to keep the same phone number call and request that and tell them your new address.

Long distance companies :

AT&T— www.att.com

MCI www.mci.com

Sprint www.spring.com

Prices vary, so please choose the company that is the best for your situation. You should tell them your phone number and ask about the best services for long distance to the country you call the most.

Cell Phones

This may be your best choice for communicating while living in Salem. You can take a cell phone with you if you move, when you go on trips and keep it handy in case of emergency. With most phones, you can take advantage of calling cards with cheap rates to call home. There are two options when selecting a cell phone plan. Both require you to have a phone.

- 1- **Month-to-month** contract: This option requires a credit check in order to get the phone. If you do not have credit in the U.S. you may be required to pay a deposit on the account. With this option, you enter into a contract with the service provider for a year or more. You sign up for a monthly package of minutes, megabytes and/or texts. There are penalty fees if you cancel your plan before the end of the contract. Usually, a free phone is included in the contract. This is a good option if you plan on staying in the country for a few years.
- 2- **Pre-Paid:** With this option you do not need credit so there are no deposits. Also, there is no contract to worry about breaking. You will have to buy your phone, which can be expensive, but some companies have a package plan. Once you have your phone, you buy a bloc of minutes which you use until they run out, and then you buy more. This is a good option if you don't talk much or are only planning to stay in the country for a few months. The drawback is that, with most plans, you have to buy your phone, which can be expensive.

There are many carriers you can choose from which offer different services to their customers. Many are very similar and it's easy to find a plan that suits your needs. Check in at the office if you need help deciding on a carrier or service plan.

Water, garbage, and recycling services :

Contact the City of Salem, for instructions on hooking up these services in your neighborhood.

Water 503-588-6099

Garbage 503-390-4000

Electricity:

PGE (Portland General Electric) 1-800-542-8818

Salem Electric 503-362-3601 www.pge.com

You need to give them your address, name, phone number, and starting date for the service.

Deciding to move

Most housing is rented from month to month. In this case, rent is paid monthly, usually on the first day, and a **written notice (letter) must be given at least one rental month before the date you intend to leave.**

A landlord cannot ask a tenant to leave, unless he has a valid reason such as:

- A tenant fails to pay rent owing within five days after receipt of a notice of demand from the landlord.
- A tenant or his guest(s) disturb other tenants in the building.
- A tenant damages the premises beyond reasonable wear and tear.
- The landlord requires the premises for his own use, for the use of his wife, or his wife's children or parents.
- The premises are going to be demolished.
- The premises are to be converted to condominium or cooperative housing, or if the landlord intends to enter into a lease arrangement of more than three years.

- The tenant fails to give a security deposit required under the tenancy agreement within 30 days of entering the tenancy agreement.
- The tenant knowingly misrepresents the premises to a prospective tenant or purchaser.
- The tenancy agreement is for residential premises in a hotel, motel, etc. and the agreement clearly specifies a seasonal arrangement and termination date.
- The premises not being occupied initially by any person under 19, become occupied by a larger number of persons under 19 than was agreed upon in the tenancy agreement.
- The tenant or his guest(s) endanger the safety of the landlord or other tenants.
- The tenant is an employee whose residential premises were provided by the employment.
- An unreasonable number of persons are occupying the premises.
- A tenant has breached a reasonable condition or material agreement of the tenancy agreement.

Your Housing Rights

Federal and state laws prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental handicap, and marital or familial status. In addition, state laws make provisions for disabled people to have aid animals, e.g. seeing eye dogs, etc.

A landlord cannot ask you to leave, unless she or he has a valid reason. Details can be obtained by contacting the Salem Housing Authority at 503-588-6368

Housing assistance at Chemeketa

Chemeketa does not have on campus housing. Most of our students live in apartments very close to the college. There are several apartment complexes within a half-mile of the campus. Most of the students walk, ride bikes, or take the bus from the apartments to the main campus. Some students purchase a car that can make transportation more convenient but it is not a necessity and can be very expensive (gas, insurance, repairs).

Apartments, rooms for rent, and roommates:

Many students wish to have a roommate for social or economic reasons. Finding a roommate is fairly easy once you are here. We do not find or match roommates for you but, if you wish to get started searching for one before you arrive we may be able to help you advertise.

This is how our Student life Housing advertisement works:

- There is a **Housing bulletin board in Building 2** where students and community members put up cards advertising for roommates, housing needed or rentals available. Some students have apartments and need a roommate to share expenses; others are looking for an apartment and a roommate.
- We have enclosed a copy of our **housing information cards** to advertise your housing needs with the Student Life Office. If you fill out a housing card and send it back to us we can hang it on our bulletin board. People interested in your card would call you directly. Or you can wait until you arrive to advertise what you need on the housing board.
- There is also a one-page **Housing Guide** in International Programs. This has a list of the apartments within walking distance to Chemeketa. It is not a full list of apartments in the area but it can give you an idea of how to get started. If you need more choices we recommend that you also look at the telephone directory yellow pages when you arrive in Salem. Note that all prices were current in June of this year and may change over the year.