

Begin by Asking Yourself These Questions:

How much can I afford to spend on rent?

Where would I like to live?

What kind of housing is available?



The information in this brochure is of a general nature only and is provided as a public service of Western Michigan University. It is not intended to take the place of legal advice. Should the reader wish to clarify his or her legal rights with respect to tenancies, he or she is advised to consult with an attorney.



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Preventing Problems in Renting



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Before You Rent:

- **Check all listings available.**
- **Be sure you can handle the cost.** Energy and utilities are going up. Garbage and snow removal are hidden costs. Pets often cause damage.
- **Think about location.** Consider transportation, parking, safety and shopping.
- **Read your rental agreement completely.** If you have any questions, discuss them with roommates and landlord.
- **Get changes in writing!** Verbal promises sound good, but written documents provide proof of the promises.
- **Use an Inventory Inspection Form.** Landlord **must** give you one, and you **must** fill it out and return it.
- **Choose roommates carefully!** Talk about expectations openly before you move in.
- **Use a roommate contract.** Spell out individual costs of rent, percentages of utilities, cleaning tasks, noise and visitor agreements. This is especially important when the lease doesn't cover it.

While You are Renting:

- **Pay your rent by check - on time too!** Keep all of your receipts.
- **Show respect for your neighbors -** Keep noise level down.
- **Treat landlord's property with ownership care.**
- **Do not abuse your parking privileges.**
- **Make all maintenance requests in writing.** Be specific about when to fix things and how to enter your unit.
- **Report any damages to your landlord immediately.**
- **A lease is a legally binding contract.** If you want to leave early, talk to your landlord to find out the procedure and consequences.
- **Before subletting** read the brochure on subletting to learn about all of your rights and responsibilities.
- **Do not wait to deal with problems.** At the first sign of conflict with your roommates or landlord, **GET HELP!**

Before You Move Out:

- **Give your landlord 30 days written Notice of Intent to Vacate.** Keep a copy for your records.
- **Familiarize yourself** with the termination provisions of your agreement, then follow them!
- **Read security deposit rules** (Michigan Public Act 348) outlined in *Security Deposit* brochure.
- **Arrange a mutual clean-up time.** Clean well, leave nothing behind - ask landlord his/her expectations.
- **Insist upon landlord inspection** showing ending condition on written form.
- **Return Keys.** Until you do, you still have possession, and you may be charged for rent.
- **Leave a written forwarding address** within four days of moving out - keep a copy for your records.
- **Wait 30 days for security deposit.** Landlord has that much time to return the full deposit or to send a Notice of Damages.