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SMITH COLLEGE

Resident Handbook
Updated 2022

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STATEMENT ON SMITH COLLEGE RENTAL HOUSING

Smith College maintains a certain number of rental housing units (apartments and houses) in the vicinity of campus. These are offered to faculty members and senior administrators on an as-available basis. Normally, the Office of the Provost prioritizes requests for housing as follows: first-year faculty hired with tenure, special visiting or other faculty members whose appointments include housing, other faculty members, administrators. In some cases, the president or the provost can grant priority.

New eligible appointees to the College should reach out to the Rental Housing Department to inquire on available units and request an application link. The provost's office conveys priorities and approvals for housing offers to the rental office, which then coordinates with individuals on viewings, rent information, availability dates, and other logistical details. If an individual declines housing that is offered, an effort will be made to offer another appropriate spot, although that cannot be guaranteed. Generally, priorities and assignments are resolved each May and June for the following academic year. Normally, leases start July 1, although that may vary depending on specific employment start dates. Rental payments start upon occupancy via bi-weekly payroll deductions. Rents are set by Smith College in collaboration with the Rental Housing Department at or near market rate in order to meet the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service.

Tenants of Smith College rental housing who are about to retire may remain in their housing unit until May 30th of the year following full retirement. Faculty members on an early retirement option may remain in college housing for one year after they have completed their teaching commitments.

In the case of the death of married tenants, the widow or widower may remain in college housing until May 30th following the first anniversary of their spouse's death.

ASSIGNMENTS

Applications received by the Rental Housing Department by May 15 will be submitted to the Office of the Provost for ranking in accordance with the priority order established by the College (available here http://www.smith.edu/hr/handbook_407.php#Rental). Once the application ranking is complete, the Rental Housing Department will begin the assignment process, and will coordinate with applicants on viewings, rent information, availability dates and other logistical details. All unit assignments will be made in the order of the ranking. Applications received after May 15 will be processed based on a first-come, first-served basis.

Due to strong demand for rental housing, and the tight assignment schedule, applicants are given 3 days to make a unit selection; if they do not choose a unit during that period, the next person on the list will be invited to make a selection. While applicants who do not comply with the 3-day limit do not lose their option to choose a unit at a later date, they may have a smaller selection of available units.

GENERAL OCCUPANCY INFORMATION

RENT AND UTILITY PAYMENTS

Monthly rental payments for college housing are made through payroll deductions for the current month on a bi-weekly basis. In the event that rent payments cannot be made through payroll deductions, tenants are responsible for submitting the rent payments directly to the Rental Housing Department by the first day of every month.

The responsibility for payment of utility costs are incorporated and outlined in the leasing agreement. The Rental Housing Department will not process or pay for utility bills that are the responsibility of the tenant.

TAXABILITY

Tenants are responsible for paying tax on the difference, if any, between the annual rent and the fair rental value or 5% of the appraised value of the residence. The logic is that if a tenant is receiving a financial benefit by paying rent below a certain threshold, this benefit should therefore be considered as taxable income.

SUBLETTING

A tenant wishing to sublet his or her apartment or house must first obtain written permission from the Rental Housing Department. The tenant may charge the subtenant a modest amount of additional rent (not more than 10%) for the use of furnishings and appliances. The College considers the signer of the lease (the tenant) to be the person responsible for the rent and all other terms of the lease. Additionally, subletters are expected to comply with the rules and regulations outlined in the Tenant Handbook. As such, tenants are responsible for providing their subletters names and contact information to the Rental Housing Department and for providing a current copy of the Tenant Handbook to their subletters.

Occupants wishing to sublet must give consideration first to other members of the faculty and then to other members of the college community. Once someone has agreed to sublet the apartment, both the tenant and the subletter will sign a sublease agreement before the subtenant takes occupancy. These forms are available from the rental property department.

College housing is intended for use by Smith College faculty and administrative personnel and may not be sublet to students. The sublet of individual rooms or sections of apartments or houses is restricted by town regulations and the college. Occupants are not permitted to sublet to anyone who is not affiliated with the college.

TRANSFERS

Tenants wishing to transfer to another unit should submit a new housing application. Priority will be given to tenants whose current apartment is either too small or too large for the size of their family, or due to a health or physical condition that would necessitate an alternative residential situation. Transfers based on a desire to relocate will be accommodated, if possible.

INSURANCE

Tenants of Smith College housing are responsible for any damage or loss that they may cause to the property. Smith College has property insurance for college housing that protects only the college's interest in the property. It does not protect the tenants' personal property or cover any part of tenants' liability. For example, if a tenant accidentally caused a fire that heavily damaged or destroyed a college-owned building along with the personal property of other tenants, the college's property insurance would reimburse the college for any loss. However, the college's insurance company has the legal right to pursue the tenant for any claim that was paid, as do other tenants of the building who may have suffered a monetary loss.

In order to avoid placing our tenants in such a position, Smith College requires every tenant to carry renter's insurance with a minimum of \$100,000 personal liability coverage. Renter's insurance also

protects the tenant if someone claims that he or she accidentally damaged someone else's property or caused bodily injury.

Each Smith College tenant is required to provide a certificate of insurance from his/her insurance company demonstrating current coverage in the amount noted above as a condition of continued occupancy, within ten days of the execution of their lease with the college and annually upon any renewal or extension of lease.

UTILITIES

Tenants must apply to utility companies on their own for electrical, gas, fuel oil (if tenant pays for his/her oil heat), telephone and cable services, if desired. It generally takes several days from the time of application before service starts. Utility companies may require a deposit prior to servicing the premises.

To apply for service:

- Electric – National Grid: (800) 322-3223
- Telephone – Verizon: (800) 870-9999; Comcast: (800) 934-6489
- Cable/Internet – Comcast: (800) 934-6489
- Gas – Eversource: (800) 688-6160

The tenant will be responsible for turning gas and electric services into their name at the start of their tenancy and back into our name upon moving out.

In those cases where the tenant is responsible for the costs of heating oil, the tenant can contact the company of his/her choice. Tenants may contact the rental property department to obtain the name of the college's current vendor. Tenants are responsible for leaving the oil tank full upon their departure.

Smith College will pay for water and sewer services, which are provided by the City of Northampton.

KEYS

Arrangements for keys should be made with the Rental Housing Department. Key replacements and/or duplicates cannot be made at local vendors. In case of a lost key(s), the lock(s) will be replaced by the Smith College Lock Shop and the tenant will be charged for the cost. If the lost key(s) is for a multi-family common area door lock, the tenant will be charged for the cost of replacing all the locks operated by the lost key. This is also the policy for any keys that are not returned to the rental property department at the end of the tenancy.

TRASH

The college provides services for the removal of rubbish and recyclable items for multi-family units. Tenants in single-family homes are required to remove their trash at their own expense. Each tenant of college housing is required to separate recyclable materials and to participate in the college's efforts to reduce waste. The college provides recycling bins to multi-family units only. Rubbish containers should be left curbside before 6:00 AM on the designated date of pickup. Please note, trash services will only remove trash and recycling and will not remove any items not in the trash bins, including large items, such as furniture. It is the tenants responsibility to dispose of these items separately.

PARKING

To park your vehicle on campus property you will need a parking decal, which you can obtain from the Facilities Parking Office. If the unit you are renting requires you to park in the common rental parking areas, you will need a rental parking decal. The rental parking decal is available from the Facilities Parking Office for \$10.00. Off-street parking is also available at most locations. Please note that the City of Northampton does not permit overnight parking on the streets during winter snow emergencies. Any car parking in the Rental Property lot must hold a valid state vehicle registration and must be properly insured.

STORAGE

Storage areas are provided in the basements of most apartment buildings, the exact locations of which can be worked out with the other tenants. All items in storage must be clearly marked with the tenant's name and apartment number. Unmarked items located in basements will be considered abandoned property and will be removed by maintenance personnel to prevent accumulation and creating a fire hazard. Personal property left outside the designated storage areas or in hallways will be removed and disposed of without notice if it presents a danger to other tenants or a fire hazard. Public or common areas within the building should never be used for personal items.

Smith College assumes no responsibility for the personal property of tenants. When storing items in the basement, the rental property department recommends that all residents do the following:

- Refrain from storing any valuable items in the basement.
- Store any items in the basement approximately 6 inches off the floor.
- Purchase renters insurance to cover any personal property loss due to flooding.

Any property left behind after a tenant vacates will be immediately disposed of at the tenant's expense.

BASEMENTS AND LAUNDRY ROOMS

It is important that both the rental property department and Smith College Facilities Management maintenance personnel have access to all basement areas at all times in order to properly service the mechanical systems in each building. Only locks installed by the rental property department or Smith College Facilities Management are allowed on basement doors. Basement doors must not be bolted from the inside or obstructed in any way to prevent entrance by authorized staff.

Most of the multi-family buildings have mobile-app laundry facilities in the basements. All single-family units have hook-ups for laundry machines.

PET POLICY

Pets are allowed at all rental properties, except:

- 115 Elm Street
- 196 Elm Street
- 58 Paradise Road

The Rental Housing Pet Policy was established to accommodate tenants who want pets, as well as, for tenants who do not want pets. It is very important to express your personal preference on your application form when submitting your housing request. It is also very important to remember that pet owners are responsible for the actions of their pets and any pet-related damages that occur while the owner resides in Smith College rental property.

EXTERMINATION

Extermination includes the elimination of harborage places of insects and rodents, by removing or making inaccessible materials that may serve as their food or breeding ground, by poisoning, spraying, fumigating, trapping or by any other recognized and legal pest elimination method.

Residents of single family homes are responsible for pest control, including rodents, skunks, cockroaches and insect infestation. The rental property department is responsible for maintaining screens, fences or other structural elements necessary to keep rodents and skunks from entering the home.

The rental property department is responsible for pest control of multi-unit homes. However, residents are expected to make a reasonable effort to eliminate the source of the infestation.

BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE INFORMATION

The rental property department inspects all units as they are vacated. Required repairs are done and the unit is cleaned and made presentable for all new tenants prior to their occupancy in accordance with Smith College Housing Standards and Residential Code Requirements. We do realize that not all appliances and equipment in the units are new and, from time to time, something may break down. It is your responsibility as a Smith College tenant to report maintenance needs within the unit entrusted to you. When repairs or damages occur and are due to normal wear and tear, the college will cover all expenses. However, should damages attributable to accident or the malice or carelessness of a tenant or a member or guest of a tenant's household occur, that tenant may be held accountable and charged.

ROUTINE REPAIRS AND SERVICE

The rental property department is responsible for normal maintenance of college properties. The tenant is responsible for reimbursing the College for the expense of repair and replacement to college property resulting from damage or loss caused by negligence of the tenant or by anyone for whom the tenant is responsible. Requests for all repairs should be made by calling the rental property department.

EMERGENCY SERVICE AND LOCKOUTS

A maintenance emergency is defined as a situation that effectively reduces the tenant's ability to be housed in their apartment or home. These may include the interruption of heat, water (or hot water), and electricity, broken water lines and blocked toilets (for units with only one toilet). For regular and after-hours emergencies, including lockouts, call the rental property department at (413) 542-8506. After-hours emergency calls will be dispatched to our on-call technician, who will respond and take appropriate action. For fire and CO alarms or other police emergencies call 911 immediately. If either alarm (CO or smoke) is "beeping", please notify the rental property department.

If a tenant locks themselves out after posted business hours, there will be a lock out charge of \$200.00 for a person to respond, plus the appropriate key replacement charges, if your keys are not found for any reason. Please bear in mind that there is most likely going to be a wait for someone to respond to any lockout call during or after business hours.

ACCESS

In case of emergency, the college reserves the right to enter the premises and make necessary repairs without prior notice. Tenants will be informed either in writing or by phone that such action was taken, when and why.

MAJOR REPAIRS AND RENOVATION

Major building repairs or renovations are addressed by the rental property department through a capital improvement plan and are based on building needs in relationship to the entire rental housing stock at the college. Tenants are encouraged to inform the rental office concerning such repairs or improvements so items can be assessed and prioritized.

PAINTING, REDECORATING AND MODIFICATIONS

The rental property department cleans the rental units and prepares them for new tenants. The rental property department will not redecorate rooms that are in good condition for new tenants. Tenants are not permitted to paint or wallpaper college property. When painting or wallpapering is necessary, the rental property department will select the colors and materials. The rental property department does the maintenance of floors between occupants. Due to the extreme difficulty of doing this work while the unit is occupied, floor refinishing, extensive interior painting or remodeling and wallpapering will not be done while the apartment is occupied.

Residents are not permitted to install or build any exterior structure without the approval from the Rental Housing Department. Such structures include but are not limited to tree houses, children's swing sets and/or playhouses, gardens, storage areas and chicken coops. In addition, Residents are not permitted to modify any porch areas with screens, etc. All modification(s) and addition(s) must be approved by the Rental Housing Department prior to installation and the Resident is responsible for the removal of such structure(s) upon move out.

APPLIANCES

All college rental units are provided with a stove and refrigerator. Most multiple family housing units have a mobile-app based washer/dryer facilities available while single-family homes are equipped with washer/dryer connections.

GROUNDS

The rental property department provides landscaping services. However, tenants may do routine cleanup of the grounds, including sweeping and raking.

The rental property department provides snow removal from driveways at all rental housing units. The rental property department will also provide snow removal from sidewalks, stairs, fire escapes, trash collection areas, etc. for multi-family properties. Tenants are responsible for snow removal from sidewalks, public walks, stairs, porches, basement hatchways, utility meters, etc. at single family properties. The rental property department will supply and re-fill sand buckets at all multi-family buildings throughout the snow season. Any tenant of a single unit with special needs (for example, a documented handicap or condition that would make shoveling impossible or dangerous) should contact the rental property department (413) 542 8506 and they will be accommodated.

Residents are not permitted to make any alterations to the vegetation around the rental unit and/or property without the prior approval of the Rental Housing Department.

SPECIAL WINTER INFORMATION

In order to both conserve energy and minimize the possibility of frozen pipes and the resulting damage to college and personal property, you are required to take the following steps if you plan to be away for more than two days during the winter months (particularly during the holiday recess and January term):

- Close storm windows completely (outside window all the way up and inside window all the way down).
- Close all outside doors tightly.
- Keep doors between rooms open, particularly between bathrooms, kitchen and adjacent rooms.
- Open all radiator valves all the way (fully counter-clockwise).
- Shut off outside water faucets and disconnect hoses.
- Set thermostat back (but not below 60°F).
- Check level of oil in oil tank. Be sure there is plenty of oil in tank and set account to be on automatic fill.
- Do not shut off oil burner switch.
- If you have a washer and dryer and live in a single family home, turn the water valves off that allow the water to run into your washing machine.
- Notify the rental property department when you leave and give the date you are expected to return. Depending on the circumstances, the rental property department may decide to install a low-temperature alarm during your absence. Failure to properly notify the rental property department may result in freeze-up damages for which the tenant will be responsible.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

UPKEEP AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR RENTAL HOUSING UNITS

The rental property department is aware that new tenants may be unfamiliar with many aspects of residential building maintenance. When new tenants arrive, we would be willing to provide a brief housing orientation to get tenants familiar with their units and building components within. Please let us know if this is something you would like us to do.

TENANT RESPONSIBILITY

- Window cleaning is the responsibility of the tenant as is the general care and cleaning of the rental unit itself.
- Lamps and light bulbs are the responsibility of the tenant except for fluorescent tubes. The rental property department will assist with the replacement of hard to reach light bulbs.
- No large holes should be put into walls or ceilings of the rental units.
- The installation of additional phone or cable TV lines is the responsibility of the tenant. Additionally, tenants are allowed to install a satellite dish, provided the dish is located on a balcony, railing, terrace, yard, patio or garden that is totally within the exclusive use and control of the resident. Residents are prohibited from placing a dish on outside or exterior walls, roofs, window sills or common-use balconies or stairwells. No part of the dish or antenna can extend beyond the balcony railing line of the person's apartment. Additionally, resident cannot drill holes in outside or inside walls, floors, roofs, windows or balcony railings to install the dish or run wiring and is responsible for any damages resulting from the installation of the dish and/or wiring. Residents must obtain prior authorization from the rental property department before proceeding with the installation.
- Please notify the rental property department prior to the installation of an air conditioner, as branch circuits in many older units are inadequate to handle the electrical load of a large air conditioner. The rental property department does not install air conditioners for tenants.
- If the tenant has a working fireplace and/or wood stove, the tenant is responsible for the chimney inspection and cleaning each year by a qualified contractor. The Rental property department is responsible for chimney maintenance repairs (excluding annual inspection and

cleaning). The rental property department reserves the right to discontinue the use of working fire places and woodstoves, if a chimney requires substantial repairs.

- The potential for flooding is high in many rental property locations. We recommend that all personal items stored in basements be placed on pallets several inches off the basement floors. Never store valuable items in basement areas.

SMITH COLLEGE RESPONSIBILITY

- The rental property department will check and clean, as necessary, all chimneys that service the primary heating equipment for the building.
- The rental property department will inspect, service, tune and clean all boilers and furnaces on rental property and will replace the furnace air filters.
- The rental property department will inspect and clean all roof gutters and associated down spouts on rental property as required.
- The rental property department will annually check all CO and smoke detectors and replace batteries.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- For disturbance or other related security issues, please call Smith College Campus Police at 585-2490. For fires, CO alarms or other police emergencies call 911 immediately.
- Tenants should purchase fire extinguishers and place in an easily accessible location.
- Tenants should become familiar with the primary escape routes from the building and establish a meeting place outside the home.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers adjacent to the telephone.
- Check all window and door locks and assure they operate properly.
- Any hazardous chemical such as paint thinner, gasoline, oil, etc. cannot be stored in or on any rental properties premises.
- Tenants should take reasonable care to prevent pests or rodents from gaining access to buildings (do not leave food on counters, trash should be in closed containers).

HEATING AND PLUMBING

- Know where the emergency switch is to your boiler or furnace.
- Check basement sump pump for proper operation.
- Know where the main water shut-off is located for your building.
- Know how to shut-off the water supply to toilets and sinks.
- Remember, in freezing temperatures, to shut-off outside faucets and remove and properly store hoses.

ELECTRICAL

- Know where the main electrical panel is located and how to shut-off.
- Familiarize yourself with re-setting circuit breakers.
- Keep batteries and flashlight available should power failures occur.

Please contact the rental property department if you have any questions about the recommendations outlined under heating and plumbing or electrical, or if you would like to schedule a time for one of our technicians to stop by and show you in person.

VACATING COLLEGE RESIDENCE

All leases terminate on June 30. Tenants whose appointments at Smith College terminate at the end of an academic year must vacate the premises no later than June 30 of that year. There will be no proration of rent if the tenant vacates college housing prior to the termination of the lease.

MOVING DATE

The departing tenant must notify the rental property department of their date of departure at least thirty (30) days in advance.

UTILITIES

It is the responsibility of the vacating tenant to disconnect their telephone and cable TV services. Tenants should transfer gas and electrical services into the rental property department's name.

CLEANING - FINAL CHECK LIST

A move out form will be provided by the rental property department approximately 30 days before move out.

- All appliances should be left in as good a condition, as they were in upon arrival.
- Stove burners and ovens should be left clean for the next tenant.
- All materials should be cleared from closets, cupboards and storage areas.
- All trash should be removed from the attic, basement, storage areas and living areas. All areas of the apartment or house should be left broom clean. Furniture movers are not responsible for cleaning out trash.
- The lavatory and bathroom fixtures should be left clean for the next tenant.
- All windows and doors should be closed and locked.
- Keys must be returned to the lock box located at the property. The Rental Housing Department will provide the code to access the lock box prior to move out.
- Forwarding address cards should be filed with the post office.

INSPECTION

It is customary for a representative of the rental property department to inspect the premises upon the departure of the tenant. If the inspection reveals damage or excessive trash or if substantial cleaning is involved, in accordance with the lease agreement, the college will bill the tenant the amount necessary to cover the costs of repair and/or cleaning.