



Off-Campus Housing

Preventing Problems

Before signing the lease, make sure:

- the place meets your needs AND your roommate needs;
- you can afford the rent;
- you clearly understand who will pay for electricity, heat, water, and garbage pick-up; and
- you inspect the place and note in writing any problems.

Use the [Inventory and Condition Report](#) when you inspect the place. Ask your landlord to be there and have them sign your notes. Take pictures of any damage.

Save documents or copies of documents

- If you want to be able to prove that you paid rent on time, you should get a receipt to show complete and timely payment of rent.
- If you want to be able to prove that you requested repairs, you should ask for repairs in writing and keep copies of your letters.
- If you want to be able to prove that you sent something to your landlord on a certain date, you should get a certificate of mailing from the post office (different than certified mail).
- **Keeping a signed copy of your rental agreement will help you to prove in court what it is that you and your landlord agreed to.**

Know your rights

Landlords have a responsibility to ensure that the housing unit fits requirements of habitability. Find those here:

Addressing Problems

Communicate effectively

At all times be sure you communicate politely, concisely, and clearly. See **DIY: Challenges in Written Communication** for more tips.

Initial requests to your landlord can be communicated however is the norm for you both – whether that's emails, texts or phone calls. If they don't respond to you in a reasonable time, you should move to more formal communication, US mail. Keep copies (or pictures) of your letters, these records are useful if there is a dispute. [Oregon Law Help](#) has a list of helpful form letters you can use to address problems.

Resources

- [OregonLawHelp.com](#) has a lot of helpful information on Landlord-tenant dealings
- University of Oregon has an office of [Student Legal Services](#) and could take a look at a lease for you before you sign.
- Unsure how to talk to your landlord or roommate about a problem? **The Student Conflict Resolution Center** can help.

Student Conflict Resolution Center

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