

Off-Campus Housing

Volume 7, Issue 1

August 2008–August 2009

APARTMENT LEASING

Leasing an apartment in the United States can be more challenging than other countries. Here are a few things to consider during your search:

- Most apartment or vacancies are filled when a lease is signed. A lease is a written contract between a tenant (student) and a landlord (property owner). A lease can be negotiated between the two parties involved, so do not sign a lease unless you can fulfill the obligations. Most leases are written for a one-year period. As long as a tenant does not violate the lease agreement they cannot be evicted before the end of the lease date.
- If the tenant and landlord agree not to have a lease, then the tenant is considered a tenant-at-will. This means a month-to-month agreement is established with the landlord. A tenant-at-will does not provide as much protection as a tenant with a lease.
- Most landlords will require a security deposit. A security deposit is money the tenant gives to the landlord to hold as collateral against unpaid rent or damage caused by the tenant. The landlord may only retain a security deposit to cover unpaid rent or damages beyond normal wear and tear, damages due to carelessness, accident or abuse by the tenant or their guests. In the state of NJ, deposits should not be above 1 1/2 times the monthly rent.
- Always keep copies of your lease, receipts and all other contracts or agreed upon arrangements with the landlord.
- Realtor and broker services are available to assist in the apartment search. They require a fee separate from the security deposit.



TELEPHONE QUESTIONS FOR LANDLORDS

- ♦ Do you have vacant apartments?
- ♦ When is the apartment available for rent?
- ♦ How many rooms are there?
- ♦ What is the rent?
- ♦ Are the utilities included in the rent? Utilities include: heat, hot water, gas, electric, etc. (If not, what type of heating is it: oil, gas, electric?) Be sure to check pricing for each. You will need to estimate an amount for your budget.
- ♦ How much is the security deposit? Note, the landlord must place all the security deposit in an interest bearing account and notify you of the location and interest amount.
- ♦ Is there a lease? If so, how long is the lease? Is there a penalty for leaving early?

(Continued on page 2)

CONTACT US:
offcampus.housing@njit.edu

(Continued from page 1)

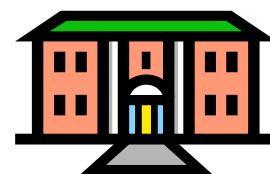
- ◆ What floor is the apartment or vacancy on?
- ◆ Are pets allowed? If you have a pet and the landlord is reluctant to allow pets, you can volunteer to pay a more substantial security deposit as an indication of your good faith.
- ◆ If the apartment or vacancy sounds suitable, make an appointment to see the location before deciding.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN YOU VISIT THE APARTMENT

It is common practice to look at the apartment before signing a lease. Visit the neighborhood where the apartment is located. Try to make a point to visit the location in the day and possibly again in the evening. When on your site visit, make a point to do the following:

- * Check the exterior condition of the building for visible signs of repairs needed and holes. If any, are the steps sturdy and secure?
- * Check hallway and stairway lighting.
- * Make sure there are no roof leaks or cracked walls.
- * Check to see if there are storm windows and doors and that they function properly. (Very important if you pay for your own heat.)
- * Who controls the thermostat in the apartment?
- * Ask about the previous heating bills. You can also contact the energy supplier to get an estimated amount.
- * Check to make sure all heaters are functioning properly and at least one unit is in each room.
- * Check for sufficient electrical outlets and that they are working.

- * Make sure there is ample closet and storage space for your belongings.
- * Look for signs of vermin (mice, roaches, etc.) Ask, if they have a schedule for pest control or extermination.
- * Flush the toilets and turn on the water in the shower, tub and sinks for pressure.
- * If the apartment is furnished, check the condition of the furniture.
- * Ask about the schedule for trash and garbage removal. Who pays for it? Where do you store/place it?
- * If you will require parking, ask if parking is available, where and if there is an additional charge?
- * Who is responsible for repairs and grounds?
- * Ask, who are the neighbors?
- * What day is rent due? Is there a late charge?
- * Does the landlord have to approve apartment mates?
- * Are there fire escapes or sprinkler system? Smoke detectors are mandatory, just make sure they are functioning properly.
- * Are there any rules, such as quiet hours, etc.?
- * If possible, ask a current tenant about the apartment, neighborhood and landlord.



SAFETY TIPS

No matter where you are in the world, safety is always an issue. Please review the following tips and keep them in mind when searching for a place to live.

- ◆ Generally, second floor apartments are safer than first floor apartments.
- ◆ Check all door and window locks to make sure they are secure. Ask the landlord when the door locks were last changed and if they can be changed again. Make sure back doors and windows that are accessible from porches and fire escapes have good locks as well.
- ◆ Revisit the apartment during night hours to see how well the area is lit.
- ◆ Consider how far the apartment is located from mass transit. This is very important if you will be walking home after riding mass transportation or parking.
- ◆ Find out what the neighborhood is like.
- ◆ Make sure entrances are well lit.
- ◆ Check for lighting or switches close to the entrance of the apartment.



AVERAGE COST-PER MONTH:

HOUSING:

- ◆ Monthly Apt. Rents: \$600 - \$1400
- ◆ Room Rents: \$350 - \$800
- ◆ Utilities: Average \$100 - \$200 for heat, hot water, electric, etc.
- ◆ Deposit: Typically, one month to one month and a half rent.

TRANSPORTATION:

- ◆ Bus: Average cost for a one-zone pass is \$50. Additional zones cost more.
- ◆ Train: Prices vary. The Newark City subway averages \$0.50 - \$1.

FOOD: Depending on your appetite, it can range from \$50 - \$100.

PHONE: (optional) Basic charges are approximately \$20.

CABLE: (optional) Basic charges are approximately \$30. Premium channels (such as HBO) are an additional charge per month.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Residence Life will provide apartment listings weekly. The office is located on the first floor of Cypress Hall. We cannot guarantee the availability of the apartments or vacancies listed. However, we will do our best to have an ample amount of places to contact.

We also have a graduate student who can “assist” you in finding a place to live. The role of our graduate student is to provide additional listings and help you find a potential roommate, if desired. It is not their responsibility to find you a place to live.

During transition periods (August), prior to the fall semester, Residence Life will provide temporary accommodations in one of our residence halls or make arrangements at a nearby hotel. Costs will vary, depending on the location of your accommodations.

DIRECTIONS :

TO CAMPUS:

- From Newark Airport: Follow the airport exits to Routes 1&9 North. After crossing the bridge make a left turn at light, then a quick right onto Broad Street. There are very visible signs. Take Broad Street about one mile, bear right onto Park Place. Make a left turn and follow the signs for Central Avenue. Continue on Central Avenue, just past the third light make a left turn onto Summit Street. On the right is a booth with a security officer for NJIT.
- The NJIT campus' main address is 323 Martin Luther King Blvd, Newark, NJ. Located off of Central Avenue. Use your campus map for more detailed directions to the University.

RESIDENCE LIFE OFFICE (CYPRESS HALL):

- 180 Bleeker Street. Take Central Avenue to Summit Street (one way). On the right you will see a guard booth. That is Bleeker Street. Cypress Hall is the second building on the left.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

- 154 Summit Street. Take Martin Luther King Blvd. to Warren Street. Turn onto Warren going up the hill. Take Warren Street to Colden Street (one-way), follow the one way street until you reach the parking deck. Public Safety is located on the first floor of the deck.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE:

- B10 Eberhardt Hall, 323 Martin Luther King Blvd.



HELPFUL CONTACTS:

The United States country code is: 001

Dean of Students Services	(973) 596-3470
Email: doss@njit.edu	
Graduate Student Association	(973) 596-2993
Email: gsa@njit.edu	
Campus Center	(973) 596-3605
Email: wrightd@njit.edu	
International Students Office	(973) 596-2451
Email: grundy@adm.njit.edu	
Public Safety Department	(973) 596-3120
Email: None	
Residence Life Office	(973) 596-3039
Email: reslife@njit.edu or offcampus.housing@njit.edu	

Find links to NJIT clubs and organizations at:

<http://www.njit.edu/Overview/About/Students/clubs.html>

Visit the following websites to assist in your search for an apartment:

www.rent.net
www.aptguid.com
www.apartments.com
www.metrointl.org/housingbooklet/index.htm
www.gardenstateapartmentments.com

GENERAL: UPON ARRIVING TO NEWARK

Average costs from Newark Airport: \$30. There may be an additional fee for luggage.

Weather: Visit the following websites for more specific weather forecasting:

www.gonewark.com
www.accuweather.com
www.usatoday.com/weather/wfront.htm
www.weatherlabs.com
www.cnn.com/WEATHER/

Renter's Insurance:

Renter's insurance is not mandatory for tenants to purchase. However, it is a good thing to have if you would like to protect your personal items. Renter's insurance can cover a number of personal belongings. Each policy is drafted towards the needs of the client. You can contact a number of companies about the policies they offer and the cost for each.

Typically, landlords are not responsible for a tenants personal items when they are lost in a fire, have smoke damage, natural disasters, theft, riots, vandalism, etc.

If you plan to purchase renter's insurance be sure to cover the following topics with the agent, in addition to your own questions.

- How much or is there a deductible for my policy? (The deductible is the portion of a covered loss that is your responsibility. The amount should be clearly outlined in the policy.)
- If there is a deductible, do you have to pay that amount before you can receive payment from the insurance company or is the difference deducted from the total payment amount?
- In the event of a loss, how do I collect for my lost items?
- Are there any loss settlement provisions for personal property? (This provides payment based on replacement or repair costs at the time of loss. In addition, depreciation of an item can also be taken into account.)
- What or are there special limits for specific items? (Examples, loss of cash, bank notes, collectables, etc.)

Below are a few companies that you can contact about their policies and local agents. You may also find other insurance agents in your neighborhood or via the telephone book.

Prudential Financial www.prudential.com/productsandservices
1-800-778-4357

State Farm www.statefarm.com/insurance/renters
1-877-734-2265

Allstate www.allstate.com