

An International Student's Guide For Living Off Campus And How To Get Along With A Room Mate

Good to Know Information

International students attending SDSM&T usually live together off-campus so that housing costs can be shared. Apartments can range in size from efficiency (a one-room apartment) to four-bedroom apartments. An efficiency apartment usually costs around \$350-500 per month; a 4-bedroom house would cost approximately \$800-\$1200 for one month of rent. (These amounts do not reflect the additional costs for utilities.) When obtaining an apartment, usually one or two months of rent is required in advance for a deposit. Students should arrive in Rapid City a few days early to find appropriate housing.

Living Off-Campus

Living in another country can be a fun and challenging experience. You will find that there are important choices and decisions to make. Living on your own involves meeting financial obligations. These may include deposits, monthly bills for utilities, telephone, internet, and cable television service in addition to monthly rent. It is important to keep all legal contracts. A lease is a legally and financially binding document.

Information on off-campus housing may be obtained from fellow students, the Director of Residence Life, the Ivanhoe International Center, local newspapers, and real estate agents. There is a great deal of information available online on the following sites:

- SDSM&T Residential Life webpage: <http://reslife.sdsmt.edu/view.php?p=dorms>
- <http://www.rockersquare.com/> (new apartments next to campus)
- Off-Campus Housing link: <http://reslife.sdsmt.edu/view.php?p=offcampus>
- Apartment Search sites
 - http://www.myapartmentmap.com/colleges/sd/south_dakota_school_of_mines_and_technology/
 - <http://www.apartmentlist.com/>
 - <http://www.mycheapapartments.com/>
- South Dakota Housing Search as extensive listings for the Rapid City area
 - <http://www.sdhousingsearch.com>
- Rapid City Journal online – local newspaper; this includes ALL real estate for rent, including office spaces and storage, so please make sure you are viewing an advertisement for an apartment or house.
 - http://www.rapidcityjournal.com/admarket/real_estate_for_rent/
- <http://www.freerentersguide.com/>
- Information is also available on www.google.com (includes satellite maps) or www.yahoo.com

The Residence Life web site also offers a number of resources for students regarding off campus living, including questions to ask a potential landlord. They also offer a form to review when “inspecting” a potential place to live. You always want to go through your potential new residence very carefully and note the condition of the apartment or house. This form offers a standard way to document the condition of the dwelling before you move in. This form and other information is available at <http://reslife.sdsmt.edu/offcampus.html>.

A publication entitled “Landlord - Tenant - Rights and Responsibilities” published by the Black Hills Legal Services, Inc., telephone number 605-342-7171, is available and another useful reference for living off campus.

Lifestyles & Values

Agreements concerning living arrangements should meet the needs of all roommates. A Roommate Contract will help you develop guidelines and arrangements between you and your roommate(s). These guidelines should be flexible and modified as the needs of you and your roommate(s) change. The development of a roommate contract should be simple and in writing. Areas which you may want to discuss are:

Study Hours and Relaxation Hours. The primary reason for attending the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology is to acquire a quality education and marketable skills. Study hours and relaxation hours are important in reaching this goal. Your roommate(s) and you should immediately discuss and agree upon study hours, habits and preferences for relaxation hours.

Living with Another Person. Roommate relationships can be some of the best memories you will have during your time here at South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. These relationships can be particularly challenging when people with different backgrounds or cultural experiences are involved. Communicating your needs to your roommate and learning their culture and background are very important steps to creating a successful roommate relationship.

Cooking. Students have a variety of cooking and shopping arrangements, as well as dietary needs. You may choose to eat on campus while others choose to cook and eat at home. Be sure you have a clear understanding how groceries are paid for and shared. Additionally, be aware that spices and foods from different cultures and countries may have an aroma that many Americans are not familiar with and may find disagreeable. You may want to offer to share a couple of meals so you can try each other’s cooking. Make sure you clarify any dietary restrictions each of you may have.

Smoking & Alcohol. Many students are allergic to smoke or choose not to smoke. You must be 21 years old to legally consume, possess, or sell alcoholic beverages. Discuss your preferences about smoking and alcohol. The illegal use, possession or distribution of drugs is expressly forbidden by law and is covered in the Student Code of Conduct, available on the SDSM&T web site.

Music. Individual music preferences can be a cause of roommate conflicts. The noise level is an important factor to consider when thinking about study and sleep time.

Guests. Some students are more socially oriented than others. Be open in discussing how you feel about having guests in your home, especially overnight guests.

Choice of a Roommate. Living with someone from your own country and culture may be more comfortable for you. However, it may limit your opportunity to improve your English language skills and your knowledge of other cultures.

Motor Vehicles. If living off-campus, some thought should be given to transportation.

Safety. Students should always be aware of and follow good personal safety practices.

South Dakota Board of Regents housing policy (Housing 3:6, Section 1, A) as stated on the BOR web site at http://www.sdbor.edu/policy/3-Student_Affairs/documents/3-6.pdf:

During the first two years from the time they were or would have been graduated from high school, all unmarried students who enroll in courses delivered on a main campus for six credit hours or more are required to enter into a housing agreement with the institution unless special permission to room elsewhere is received from the institution. Permission ordinarily shall be granted to students with dependent children or to students who reside full time during the academic year with parents or legal guardians. Students who have enrolled for twelve or more credits for four (4) semesters may be exempted from this agreement at the discretion of the institution.