

An International Student's Guide For Living Off Campus and How to Get Along With a Roommate

Good to Know Information

International students attending SD Mines 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 on the SD Mines Residence Life website under the Off Campus Living tab and online at www.google.com (includes satellite maps) or www.yahoo.com.

A publication entitled "Landlord - Tenant - Rights and Responsibilities" published by the South Dakota Division of Consumer Protection can be found online at www.consumer.sd.gov or you can request a copy by emailing them at consumerhelp@state.sd.us or stop by the Ivanhoe International Center.

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 SD Mines 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.