

DIY

Do-It-Yourself : Off-Campus Housing Problems

A lease is a legally binding contract. If you move out before the lease ends, you may have to pay rent for the entire leasing period.

PREVENTING PROBLEMS

MAKE SURE YOU ARE COMPATIBLE WITH YOUR ROOMMATES

Refer to SCRC's resource, "Getting Along with Roommates"

- www.sos.umn.edu/assets/pdf/DIY/DIY%20Roommates.pdf

FIND HOUSING THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

Use the Housing & Residential Life (HRL) Off-Campus Listing Service to search for housing options. Visit properties in person, ask questions and talk with current tenants.

- Visit: listings.umn.edu to browse available properties. Properties with a history of problems are removed from the list.

REVIEW YOUR LEASE WITH STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES (SLS)

- SLS attorneys are available to review leases with students **prior** to signing, free of charge. Visit: usls.umn.edu to meet with a SLS attorney regarding your lease.

ADDRESSING PROBLEMS

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Send important correspondence via US mail. Keep copies (or pictures) of your letters; these records are useful if there is a dispute. If you have not received a response in 5 business days (of the postmarked date), the following language may help to elicit a response:

- HRL Listed Properties
"On [DATE], I sent the enclosed letter and have not yet received a reply. Please respond to me in 5 business days or I will forward this information to SLS. As I understand, landlords are allowed 3 unresolved complaints before the property is delisted at the Office of Housing and Residential Life (University of MN)."
- Non-HRL Listed Properties
For certain lease violations, rent can be withheld and deposited with a court until the violation is resolved. The subject of the letter should be, "14-day letter."
"[EXPLANATION OF THE ISSUE] is a violation of our lease agreement. If the violation is not corrected within 14 days, the rent due will be deposited with a court administrator along with an affidavit specifying the violation." For more info go to section 504B.385 at:
revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=504b&view=chapter

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

If your housing conflict involves University of Minnesota community members, SLS has a conflict of interest and cannot assist with the matter. However, other low-cost resources are available to assist you. These include:

HOMELINE

HomeLine provides free or low-cost legal and advocacy services so that tenants can solve their own rental housing problems. Homeline works to improve public and private policies relating to rental housing by involving affected tenants in the process.

- homelinemn.org
- 612-728-5767

LAWHELP MINNESOTA

LawHelp Minnesota helps create and distribute key self-help information to the public through fact sheets, booklets, and manuals. The site provides information on a variety of housing-relating topics to help inform you about your options. This site is available in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

- lawhelpmn.org/issues/housing