

# 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](#)"

#### **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.

#### **REVIEW YOUR LEASE WITH STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES (SLS)**

[Student Legal Services \(SLS\)](#) attorneys are available to review leases with students **prior** to signing, free of charge.

### 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 Off-Campus 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 Off-Campus 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](#).

## 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](http://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](http://lawhelpmn.org/issues/housing)