

The Rental Properties
Of
Amherst College
212 Northampton Road
Amherst, MA 01002
(413) 542-8506
Fax: (413) 542-8507
rhd@amherst.edu

www.amherst.edu/~rhd



AMHERST COLLEGE

Resident Handbook
Updated 2022

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GENERAL OCCUPANCY INFORMATION

RENT AND UTILITY PAYMENTS

Monthly rental payments for College Housing are made through payroll deductions for the current month. Currently, payroll is distributed on the last day of the month at Amherst College. The deduction on the last day of the month will be for that month of occupancy. In the event that a Resident is not on the College payroll, the Amherst College Comptroller's Office will generate a bill for the monthly rental payment.

The responsibility for payment of utility costs are incorporated and outlined in the leasing agreement. The Rental Housing Department will not process or pay for utility bills that are the responsibility of the Resident.

RENTERS INSURANCE

Residents of College-owned housing are responsible for any loss or damage that they cause to the property. The College has property insurance on College-owned housing, but that coverage protects only the College's interest in the property (it protects neither the tenant nor the tenant's personal property, nor does it cover any of the tenant's liability). If, for example, a tenant accidentally caused a fire that heavily damaged a College-owned rental house, the College's property insurance would reimburse the College for the loss. However, the College's insurance company has the right to pursue the tenant for any claim that it paid.

In order to avoid placing its tenants in such a position, the College requires each tenant to carry Renter's Insurance with at least \$100,000 personal liability coverage. Renter's Insurance protects the tenant if someone claims that he or she accidentally damaged another's property or caused bodily injury.

Each tenant must provide a certificate of insurance from his or her insurance agent demonstrating current coverage in the amount shown above as a minimum, within 10 days of the execution of their lease with the College (and annually upon any renewal or extension of lease). It is strongly recommended, however, that each tenant purchase this insurance prior to his or her arrival to Amherst. A policy with these limits plus \$12,000.00 of personal property coverage (with a \$250.00 deductible) will cost approximately \$150.00 per year.

UTILITIES

Tenants are responsible for turning all utility services for which they are responsible into their name at the beginning of their tenancy, and back into the Rental Housing Department at the end of the tenancy. The utilities for which the tenant is responsible are outlined in the lease and the unit offer letter. It generally takes several days from the time of application before service starts. Utility companies may require a deposit prior to servicing the premises.

To apply for service:

- Electric: Eversource: (877) 659-6326
- Oil: Dead River Company: (413) 584-3500
- Phone: Verizon: (800) 870-9999
- Cable: Comcast: (888) 633-4266
- Gas: Berkshire Gas: (800) 297-7144

Amherst College will pay for water and sewer services, which are provided by the Town of Amherst.

KEYS

Arrangements for keys should be made with the Rental Housing Department. Key replacements and/or duplicates cannot be made at local vendors. In case of a lost key(s), the lock(s) will be replaced by the Rental Housing Department's contracted locksmith and the tenant will be charged for the cost of replacement. If the lost key(s) is for a multi-family common area door lock, the tenant will be charged for the cost of replacing all the locks operated by the lost key. This is also the policy for any keys that are not returned to the Rental Housing Department at the end of the tenancy.

TRASH

The college provides services for the removal of rubbish and recyclable items to all residents. Rubbish containers should be left curbside before 6:00 AM on the designated date of pickup. Your trash schedule should be provided to you prior to move in. Please contact the Rental Housing Department should you have any questions relating to trash services. Please note, trash services will only remove trash and recycling and will not remove any items not in the trash bins, including large items, such as furniture. It is the tenants responsibility to dispose of these items separately.

BASEMENTS / FLOODING

The potential is always present for a heavy rain or above average snowfall, which can cause flooding of basements. Most college houses have stone foundations, which are porous and damp. Even basements that have never had flooding in the past may experience flooding as a home ages, or ground water conditions change. Some houses have sump pumps in the basement. Installation of a sump pump is a last resort consideration and normally not done.

The Rental Housing Department recommends that all residents do the following:

- Refrain from storing any valuable items in the basement.
- Purchase renters insurance to cover any personal property loss due to flooding.
- Store any items in the basement a minimum of 6 inches off the floor.

Residents should notify the Rental Housing Department by submitting a request through the resident portal: www.amherst.edu/~rhd when flooding occurs. We will respond to assess the cause of the flooding and take action as appropriate.

BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE INFORMATION

When scheduling maintenance work, emergencies receive top priority, followed by routine maintenance. Discretionary work and special services are scheduled as time and funds are available. Rental Housing Department services are limited to college-owned property. The tenant is responsible for reimbursing the College for the expense of repair or replacement to College property resulting from damage or loss caused by the negligence of the tenant or by anyone for whom the tenant is responsible.

ROUTINE REPAIRS AND SERVICE

Residents should submit requests for maintenance, **including emergencies during office hours**, through the resident portal at: www.amherst.edu/~rhd. Our office hours are from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM Monday

through Friday. Work requests will be addressed on a priority basis. Please refrain from making requests directly to our repairmen unless it is an emergency.

EMERGENCY REPAIRS AND SERVICE (AFTER HOURS)

A maintenance emergency is defined by the Rental Housing Department as a situation that effectively reduces your ability to be housed in your apartment or home. These may include the following: no heat, no electricity, no hot water, no water, fire alarm/CO detector, and blocked toilet (if this is your only toilet).

For all maintenance emergencies occurring **after normal office hours**, please call the Rental Housing Department at (413) 542-8506 and follow the prompts. We have 24-hour phone coverage and our answering service will take the information regarding your call and will contact the appropriate personnel who will respond to your emergency. Please remain near the phone as the service personnel may require additional information to properly respond to your call, or may have to bring specific equipment or request assistance from others within the Rental Housing Department

LOCKOUTS

Should you be locked out of your unit during office hours, you may call the Rental Housing Department to let you in from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday.

If a tenant locks themselves out after the posted business hours, there will be a lock out charge of \$200.00 for a person to respond, plus the appropriate key replacement charges, if your keys are not found for any reason. Please bear in mind that there is most likely going to be a wait for someone to respond to any lockout call during or after business hours. Please note, the Rental Housing Department will not let your guests or friends into your apartment.

UNIT ACCESS

In case of emergency, the College reserves the right to enter the premises and make necessary repairs without prior notice. Residents will be informed either in writing or by phone that such action was taken, when and why.

PEST/INSECT PROBLEMS

Extermination includes the elimination of harborage places of insects and rodents, by removing or making inaccessible materials that may serve as their food or breeding ground, by poisoning, spraying, fumigating, trapping or by any other recognized and legal pest elimination method.

The Rental Housing Department is responsible for pest control. However, residents are expected to make a reasonable effort to eliminate the source of the infestation.

MAJOR REPAIRS AND RENOVATION

Major building repairs or renovations are addressed by the Rental Housing Department through a capital improvement plan and are based on building needs in relationship to the entire rental housing stock at the College. Residents are encouraged to inform the rental office concerning such repairs or improvements so items can be assessed and prioritized. The Rental Housing Department reserves the right to make periodic inspections of the interior and exterior of the rental homes in order to determine their condition. All inspections requiring access to the interior of the units will be coordinated with the tenants in advance.

PAINTING, REDECORATING AND MODIFICATIONS

All housing units that are in good, serviceable condition, as determined by the Rental Housing Department, will not be redecorated by the Rental Housing Department prior to new Residents' occupancy. All apartments are inspected when vacated, repairs are made, and units are cleaned per the Cleaning Standards prior to new Residents' arrival. Residents are not permitted to paint or wallpaper College-owned property.

Residents are not permitted to install or build any exterior structure without the approval from the Rental Housing Department. Such structures include but are not limited to tree houses, children's swing sets and/or playhouses, gardens, storage areas and chicken coops. In addition, Residents are not permitted to modify any porch areas with screens, etc. All modification(s) and addition(s) must be approved by the Rental Housing Department prior to installation and the Resident is responsible for the removal of such structure(s) upon move out.

APPLIANCES

The Rental Housing Department supplies all college houses and apartments with a range and refrigerator. The Rental Housing Department provides maintenance services for all appliances owned by Amherst College but does not provide such services for tenant owned equipment. Some (but not all) units are equipped with dishwashers.

Most multiple family housing units have coin-operated washer/dryer facilities available while single-family homes are equipped with washer/dryer connections for the tenant's own machines.

GROUNDS/SNOW

The Rental Housing Department provides grass-cutting services. However, tenants may do routine cleanup of the grounds, including sweeping and raking.

The Rental Housing Department provides snow removal from driveways at all rental housing units. The Rental Housing Department will also provide snow removal from sidewalks, stairs, fire escapes, trash collection areas, etc, for multi-family properties. Tenants are responsible for snow removal from sidewalks, public walks, stairs, porches, basement hatchways, utility meters, etc. at single family properties. The Rental Housing Department will supply and re-fill sand buckets at all multi-family buildings throughout the snow season. Any tenant of a single unit with special needs (for example, a documented handicap or condition that would make shoveling impossible or dangerous) should contact the Rental Housing Department (413) 542 8506 and they will be accommodated.

Residents are not permitted to make any alterations to the vegetation around the rental unit and/or property without the prior approval of the Rental Housing Department.

SPECIAL WINTER INFORMATION

In order to both conserve energy and minimize the possibility of frozen pipes and the resulting damage to College and personal property, you are requested to take the following steps if you plan to be away for more than two days during the winter months (particularly during the Holiday Recess and January Term):

- Close storm windows completely. (Outside window all the way up and inside window all the way down)
- Close all outside doors tightly
- Keep doors between rooms open, particularly between bathrooms, kitchen and adjacent rooms.

- Open all radiator valves all the way (fully counter-clockwise)
- Shut off outside water faucets and disconnect hoses
- Set thermostat back (but not below 60°F)
- Check the level of oil in the oil tank. Be sure there is plenty of oil in tank or set account to be on automatic fill
- Do not shut off oil burner switch
- If you have a washer & dryer and live in a single family home, turn the water valves off that allow the water to run into your washing machine
- Notify the Rental Housing Department when you leave and give the date you are expected to return. Depending on the circumstances, the Rental Housing Department may decide to install a low-temperature alarm during your absence. Failure to properly notify the Rental Housing Department may result in freeze-up damages for which the tenant could be liable. College policy states that residents are responsible for damages that result from frozen pipes if your furnace or boiler does not operate properly during an extended absence. However, if the Rental Housing Department is notified of your absence, Rental Housing personnel will check the house periodically.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

UPKEEP AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR RENTAL HOUSING UNITS

The Rental Housing Department is aware that many new tenants may not have a great deal of residential background in the care of property and may be unfamiliar with many aspects of the building or apartment they are now responsible for. When new tenants arrive we would be more than willing to provide a brief housing orientation to get tenants familiar with their units and building components within. Please let us know if this is something you would like us to do.

FURNACES AND BOILERS

Tenants should report any problems to the Rental Housing Department by submitting a request via the resident portal: www.amherst.edu/~rhd. If reporting an after-hours emergency, please call 413-542-8506 and follow the prompts to be connected to our answering service and the on-call maintenance person will be dispatched. **Please do not have your oil company do the service.**

The furnaces and boilers are cleaned periodically by a service contractor under contract with the Rental Housing Department.

HEATING AND PLUMBING

- Know where the emergency switch is to your boiler or furnace.
- Check basement sump pump for proper operation.
- Know where the main water shut-off is located for your building.
- Know how to shut-off the water supply to toilets and sinks.
- During the Fall season, remember to shut-off outside faucets and remove and properly store hoses.

ELECTRICAL

- Know where the main electrical panel is located and how to shut-off.
- Familiarize yourself with re-setting circuit breakers.
- Keep batteries and flashlights available should power failures occur.

Please contact the Rental Housing Department if you have any questions about the recommendations outlined under Heating and Plumbing or Electrical, or if you would like to schedule a time for one of our technicians to stop by and show you in person.

RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITY

- Window cleaning is the responsibility of the Resident as is the general care and cleaning of the rental unit itself.
- Lamps or bulbs are the responsibility of the Resident.
- No large holes should be put into walls or ceilings of the rental units.
- The installation of additional phone or cable TV lines is the responsibility of the Resident. Additionally, Residents are allowed to install a satellite dish, provided the dish is located on a balcony, railing, terrace, yard, patio or garden that is totally within the exclusive use and control of the resident. Residents are prohibited from placing a dish on outside or exterior walls, roofs, window sills or common-use balconies or stairwells. No part of the dish or antenna can extend beyond the balcony railing line of the person's apartment. Additionally, Resident cannot drill holes in outside or inside walls, floors, roofs, windows or balcony railings to install the dish or run wiring, and is responsible for any damages resulting from the installation of the dish and/or wiring. Residents must obtain prior authorization from the Rental Housing Department before proceeding with the installation.
- Please notify the Rental Housing Department prior to the installation of an air conditioner, as branch circuits in many older units are inadequate to handle the electrical load of a large air conditioner. In addition, please ensure that the air conditioning unit is tipped slightly outward to ensure proper drainage outside and not tipped inward which will cause water to drain down the wall. **The Rental Housing Department does not install air conditioners for Residents.**
- The Rental Housing Department will clean ductwork as necessary and will replace furnace air filters twice annually. Residents are responsible for cleaning dryer vents annually. The Rental Housing Department will coordinate the dryer vent cleaning and will bill the Residents for the service.

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- The Rental Housing Department will check and clean, if necessary, all chimneys that service the primary heating equipment for the building.
- The Rental Housing Department will inspect, service, tune and clean all boilers and furnaces on rental property. The Rental Housing Department will inspect and clean all roof gutters and associated downspouts on rental property as required.
- The Rental Housing Department will inspect the interior and exterior of all rental units annually and prepare work orders for needed repairs and/or improvements needed. All but emergency repairs will be scheduled as time and finances allow and will be accomplished in relationship to all other building needs within the Amherst College Rental Housing inventory.
- The Rental Housing Department will check CO and smoke detectors and replace batteries annually. If either alarm (CO or smoke) is "beeping", please notify the Rental Housing Department immediately.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- For disturbance or other related security issues please call Amherst College Campus Safety at (413) 542-2291. For fires, CO alarms or other police emergencies call 911 immediately.

- Check all window and door locks and assure they operate properly.
- Occasionally check gutters. The Rental Housing Department will clean the gutters when necessary.
- Residents should take reasonable care to prevent pests or rodents from gaining access to buildings.
- Be prepared for the first snowstorm. Residents should have shovels and sand or rock salt.
- Properly store any hazardous chemical such as paint thinner, gasoline, oil, etc.
- Door viewers can be requested.
- Residents should purchase fire extinguishers and place them in an easily accessible location.
- Residents should become familiar with the primary escape routes from the building and establish a meeting place outside the home.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers adjacent to the telephone.

SMOKING POLICY

On September 30, 2010, the Amherst Board of Health approved the Town of Amherst Regulation: Smoking Disclosure in Multi-Unit Rental Residences, which took effect on February 1, 2011. This regulation, promulgated under the authority of the Amherst Board of Health, requires “landlords owning buildings containing three or more units to document and disclose to their tenants, and prospective tenants, their smoking policy”. The regulation defines “smoking” or “smoke” as the lighting or possession of a lit cigar, cigarette, pipe or other tobacco product that is designed to be combusted and inhaled.

The Rental Housing Department’s smoking policy for all its multi-unit properties specifies that smoking is allowed inside the individual units, and only allowed within 25 feet of windows, doors and air intake units of the building. Smoking is prohibited in elevators, hallways, staircases and related common areas of multi-unit residences as established under MGL Ch 270 t22.

PET OWNERSHIP

The pet policy has been established to provide for the health and safety of the occupants and visitors of rental housing.

Residents agree to register and immunize their pets in accordance with local pet ordinances. Pets must display current identification and vaccination tags, including a current rabies tag, at all times. Pets shall not cause danger, damage, nuisance, noise or health hazards. Additionally, pets shall not soil the apartment, premises, grounds, common areas, walks, parking areas, landscaping or gardens. Lessee agrees to clean up promptly after their pets and to properly dispose of dog waste and cat litter.

Violations of these guidelines will generally be handled through a system of progressive corrective measures that will be administered by the Rental Housing Department as follows:

- First Offense – Rental Housing Department will provide the pet owner with a verbal notice of the specific violation and will remind them of the guidelines. The Rental Housing Department will also file a written record of the conversation in the pet owner’s file.
- Second Offense – Rental Housing Department will provide the pet owner with a written notice of the specific violation and will remind them again of the guidelines. A copy of the letter will be filed in the pet owner’s file.
- Third Offense – Rental Housing Department will request the immediate removal of the pet from the premises.

However, the Rental Housing Department may ask for the immediate removal of the pet from the premises depending on the severity of the violation.

If the pet owner is concerned that the determination of the Rental Housing Department is not fair, equitable and based on objective evidence, they may appeal the decision through the Housing Committee. The Housing Committee will review the evidence presented by the dog owner and the Rental Housing Department and will make a final determination. The Housing Committee may also seek input from the Chief of Campus Police.

VACATING RENTAL HOUSING

All leases terminate on June 30. Residents whose appointments at Amherst College terminate at the end of an academic year must vacate the premises by no later than their lease expiration date of June 30 of that year. There will be no proration of rent if the tenant vacates College housing prior to the termination of the lease.

Please note, all tenants are responsible for all terms of their lease through their lease end date of June 30th and will be held responsible through this date. Residents vacating on a different date than June 30, are required to notify the Rental Housing Department of their exact departure date from College housing at least thirty (30) days in advance. If a resident fails to vacate within 30 days of their notice of intent to move out (or June 30th if the move out is at the end of their lease term), the monthly rent for their unit would automatically be increased to market rent for a comparable unit in Amherst.

UTILITIES

It is the responsibility of the vacating Resident to disconnect their telephone service, cable, electricity and oil/gas if applicable.

FINAL CHECK LIST

- All appliances should be cleaned and left in the same condition as they were upon arrival of the Resident.
- Stove burners and ovens should be left clean for the next Resident.
- The refrigerator should be cleaned and defrosted. It should be shut off or unplugged and the door left open.
- All materials should be cleared from closets, cupboards, and storage areas.
- All trash should be removed from the attic, basement, storage areas, and living areas. All areas of the apartment or house should be left broom clean.
- Bathroom and fixtures should be left clean.
- All windows and doors should be closed and locked.
- Sweep all floors
- All keys should be left in the lock box located at the property. The Rental Housing Department will provide the code to access the lock box prior to your move out date. Please note, all keys in tenant's possession must be returned to the Rental Housing Department. Any keys not returned by the tenant(s) will incur the same fees noted in the "Key" section above.
- Advise the Rental Housing Department of forwarding address.

INSPECTION

It is customary for a representative of the Rental Housing Department to inspect the premises prior to the departure of the Resident. If the inspection reveals damage or excessive trash or if substantial

cleaning is involved, in accordance with the lease agreement, the College will bill the Resident the amount necessary to cover the costs of repair and/or cleaning.