What are your study habits? Do you need a totally quiet environment when you study or is background noise/activity fine with you?

What are each of your habits and feelings toward smoking, drug and alcohol use, music and pets?

What are your sleeping habits? Do you like to go to bed early or stay up late? Do you desire a quiet apartment when you are sleeping?

This topic is particularly important if you are sharing a bedroom.

After the Move, Settling In

Now that you’ve made your decision to live together, fill out and sign a formal Roommate Agreement Form. This will clarify the responsibilities of each member of the household and set some ground rules for your new home. A sample Roommate Agreement Form can be found in the forms section of this publication.

When you first set up your household, allow a period of time in which you and your roommate concentrate on just being yourselves and living in a way that makes you comfortable. After a week or two of doing what comes naturally, set aside time to talk about the ways your living styles conflict with or complement each other. Frankly discuss things that bother you as well as things you really enjoy. Where there are differences, work together to explore creative solutions that allow both of you to get what you want out of your living situation.

Communication & Mediation

The Community Housing Office provides a mediation service if you need help discussing and resolving difficult issues with roommates. Mediation is a process in which people who have a dispute can communicate with the help of a neutral third party. More information on the Mediation Program can be found on page 29.

The most important thing is to keep the lines of communication open. If something new bothers you, or your arrangements are not working, talk to your roommate(s). The idea is to keep life running smoothly. Successfully living with someone else means working hard to have a place you can all feel good about coming home to after a long day on campus or at work.

COMMUNITY HOUSING OFFICE PERSPECTIVE

Finding a good roommate isn’t easy without a little work— one with whom you get along well and have fun; have similar lifestyles; can split rent, chores, and utilities fairly; and respect each other’s privacy. But, trust me, your work pays off in the long run! I meet with students daily who have very different lifestyles, study habits, cleanliness needs, and money management skills. Tension builds, fights ensue, friendships suffer, grades drop, and sometimes leases are broken due to their differences and lack of communication. Spend time getting to know your potential roommates by asking the important questions found in this guide. Remember... friends are not always the best roommates. Communication is key at the start of living together so fill out a Roommate Agreement form from the CHO to save heartache later on! And please, if life with your roommate is getting rocky and you need some advice, come in so that we can help with conflict resolution, mediation, or just an ear to listen.

Maya Salmon
Program Coordinator, CHO

JOINT & SEVERAL CLAUSE

If two or more people sign a Joint & Several lease, they are collectively responsible for the full payment of rent throughout the period of the lease. If one roommate moves out before the end of the contract term, the property provider is legally entitled to collect the full rental amount from the remaining roommate(s). The property provider may pursue the vacated resident, or s/he may simply leave the responsibility with the roommate(s) who stayed. This is the property provider’s decision to make, not the tenants’. The tenants can choose to pursue the roommate who left for some of the rent money, to find a suitable replacement, or pay the full rental amount themselves. The possibility of such complications illustrates the importance of a formal roommate agreement in which roommates make specific and explicit commitments to each other and to the successful functioning of the household.

(For additional information, please refer to the sample Roommate Agreement in the Forms section of this publication.)