



PEACE OUTside CAMPUS – The Lindsey M. Bonistall Foundation

*Off-Campus Housing Safety: **Safety in your Apartment***

Whether you are looking for a new residence or have lived in off-campus housing for years, the following are additional resources to help you better secure peaceful living environments.

- Know your roommates' security habits. You are only as safe as your roommates allow you to be.
- Be sure to forge good relationships with landlords and neighbors because they may be your biggest allies.
- Choose a neighbor to assist you in case of emergency and give them a copy of your emergency contacts.
- ALWAYS lock your door(s) to your residence when you are home, accompanied and alone, sleeping or going out, EVEN if only for a few minutes.
- Use a peephole to determine who is knocking before you open the door. If you are still unsure as to who is there, question the stranger through the door.
- Don't prop doors for friends or delivery people.
- Never leave your keys outside your residence, such as under a doormat or in a place accessible to a stranger.
- If you lose your keys, work with the landlord to replace your locks. Always insist your landlord repair any broken locks, windows, and doors immediately.
- Keep ground level windows closed or use a safety lock.
- Keep garbage cans and boxes away from windows so they cannot be used as stepladders.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers near the phone or refrigerator, such as the local police and fire departments.
- Know where your emergency exits are located and plan alternative evacuation routes in case of an emergency.
- Check smoke detectors every month. If there is no smoke detector, ask your landlord to install one.

- Possess basic fire safety awareness and familiarize yourself with the specific fire safety issues of your off-campus home.
- Laundry rooms, lounges and common areas should not be used when you're alone.
- Purchase renter's insurance. It is not that expensive, and may save you money if there is an accident or a burglary.
(http://www.offcampusnetwork.com/articles/renters_insurance.asp)

Your off-campus residence is especially vulnerable to burglary during periods of time when students are known to be away, such as school breaks. When you are planning to leave your residence for a short or extended period of time keep the following in mind.

- Take all valuables with you.
- Ask a trusted neighbor to watch your residence. Ask them to keep an eye out for any unusual activity. Provide a contact number while you will be gone.
- Ask the local police to check your home while away.
- Make sure your residence has the appearance of being lived in and not empty.
 - Leave curtains and blinds in a normal position.
 - Stop all mail and paper deliveries to avoid the appearance of backed-up mail.
 - Use timers to turn appliances, like lights, radios or TVs, on and off.
 - Turn your phone ringer off or down.
 - Don't announce your absence on your answering machine.
 - Try to leave at least one vehicle in the driveway while gone.