

## **Suggested Procedure for Private Rental Arrangements**

The listing service provided by the Northland Community & Technical College is available only to students of the Northland Community & Technical College. The following guidelines are designed to assist you in making your rental agreement. Please read this carefully and take this with you when looking at housing.

1. Select the listings which interest you from those in the Complex Listing, or the Grand Forks Herald classified section.
2. To save yourself time and expense, and as a courtesy to householders, telephone before you go to inspect the listing. Very often accommodations are rented within a short time after the listing appears.
3. Take your time in inspecting accommodations. **DON'T SIGN RENTAL AGREEMENTS IN HASTE.** Grand Forks has many rentals thus you will have a better chance of finding suitable accommodations if you allow yourself time to look around.
4. When you select your housing, negotiate the rental agreement with the awareness of your responsibilities to the landlord and the knowledge of what the landlord will expect of you. Here are some of the points to cover (use this as a check list):

### **RENT**

- Amount of rent (in shared rent, who is responsible?)
- What is included in rent (utilities? meals? kitchen privileges?)
- Right of entry?
- When is rent due?
- Deposit - amount? refundable?
- Number of tenants allowed?
- Guest privileges?
- Pets?

### **TERMS**

- Length of lease?
- Holidays and recesses included?
- Inspections? By whom?
- Maintenance and cleaning arrangements?
- Can you sublet?
- Amount of notice to terminate?
- Telephone privileges?

5. Make rental agreements in **WRITING** to avoid misunderstanding of terms and conditions. Many landlords will have lease or rental forms, read them with care. Your signature, and if you are under 21, that of a parent or legal guardian may be required. Verbal agreements are binding and legally enforceable; however, it is safer to have a written agreement. If you are not prepared to abide by the terms outlined, don't make the agreement. Rental agreements or leases made by persons under 21 can be and generally are binding.
6. Please ask for assistance if you have any questions, and report any problems you encounter to the Office of Student Services. We will try to assist you in any way possible, however, the selection of housing is a student and/or parent responsibility.
7. The receptionist at the Northwest Technical College maintains a card system of students who are either looking for housing or roommates to share their present housing with. Call or write to have your name added on this list.

### **Tips for Renters**

Before moving in, look at the apartment that you will rent and live in, not the model unit. Inspect the new apartment carefully.

- Note defects.
- Have the landlord sign a list of the noted defects (dated, signed, keep a copy).
- Ask when the defects will be repaired.

Optional: Take pictures of the apartment, especially if unit is exceptionally disarrayed.

#### **Before and at end of tenancy:**

- Give full rental period notice, which is approximately 30 days. If the rent is paid the fifth day of every month, rental period is from fifth to fifth. Give notice before the fifth of the month prior to moving in. Notice should be dated and signed. Keep a copy.
- Keep apartment at least as clean (preferably better) as when you moved in.

Optional: Take pictures of the apartment. This is especially helpful if the unit was in disarray when you moved in to show the difference.

- Hand the landlord a forwarding address for deposit return during the final walk-through inspection of apartment (dated, signed, Keep a copy).
- If retrieving the security deposit appears to be a problem, mention to the landlord the Minnesota security deposit law requires refunds and/or an itemized list within 21 days.

#### **After vacating:**

- Expect to receive full security deposit or partial security deposit with itemized list within 21 days of vacating apartment and providing landlord with forwarding address.

- If your landlord keeps the security deposit over 21 days and does not send an itemized list explaining the reason for holding the deposit. In Minnesota, the tenant can sue the Landlord for not only the deposit plus interest, but also for an amount equal to that deposit plus interest, and an additional punitive fine due to "bad faith" retention.

### **More tips for tenants:**

- Be aware of the beginning and ending dates of your lease.
- Is there a damage checklist which will be signed by both tenant and landlord?
- Are there any charges in addition to your rent and deposit?
- How many people are allowed per unit and are there rent adjustments made for more or fewer people?
- Are individual leases available for roommate situations or must all roommates sign one lease?
- Is lawn care and snow removal provided?
- Is there off street parking and what are the parking policies?
- What are the policies for hanging pictures and plants?
- Which furnishings stay and which go?
- Who is responsible for repairs and maintenance and who do you call?
- What utilities does the tenant pay?
- What are the policies regarding pets?
- Check to see how well appliances and plumbing work.
- How is the water pressure?
- Is there enough hot water?
- Is there a problem with bugs?
- Is garbage removal adequate?
- Is there a charge for garbage removal?
- Is the building noisy?
- Is there an adequate number of electrical outlets?
- How quickly are repairs made and is the landlord cooperative?
- Will anything change in the building/apartment before you move in?
- What is the pattern of rent increase?
- Check the locks and ask about security?
- Are there optional furnishings available? At what charge?

### **Things to consider in roommate situations:**

- Consider both you and your roommate's need for space and privacy.
- Decide, in advance, whose name bills (rent, phone, cable and utilities) will be in and how they will be paid.
- Decide, in advance, all household rules regarding cleaning, groceries, buying household supplies, overnight guests, etc."Tips for Renters"

Source: Kris Cannon, Director of Student Legal Services and Adult Learner Services, at the Student Service Center, Bemidji State University.

### **Decisions for Roommates to Consider**

As single people consider the housing options available to them, one that often seems attractive is to share an apartment or a house with another person or two. This arrangement has the advantage of dividing the housing costs between the roommates and making the dwelling more affordable. However, sharing a place with others has pluses and minuses. Roommates provide companionship and add another source of funds for paying expenses. On the other hand, you may lose some privacy and feel the need to compromise more often.

Making some important decisions before moving in together can make the sharing more fun. Confront potential problems before they get out of hand. Be definite about what is expected of one another to avoid problems. You probably will want to talk about some of the following:

- Food:** Will you buy groceries, prepare meals, and eat together or will each of you have your own shelf in the refrigerator and the cupboard?
- Cleaning:** Who cleans the bathroom and how often? Should dirty dishes be washed immediately, once a day, or when the sink is full? By whom? How often should the living room be picked up? Vacuumed? Dusted?
- Visitors:** How often and when are visitors welcome? How much notice will you give each other? Can they stay overnight?
- Smoking:** Is smoking allowed?
- Alcohol:** Will it be allowed? If so, under what conditions?
- Noise:** How loud will you play the stereo? Television? What hours are sleeping hours? What hours should friends call on the phone?
- Money:** Who pays for what? How do you split the rent? Utilities? Phone bills? Cost of groceries and cleaning supplies?
- Borrowing:** What items are off limits? When should borrowed items be returned?

Disbanding will go more smoothly if you plan for it when you first move in. Decide what to do if one or more of you want to move before the lease has expired. How will the deposit be handled? What will you do if one roommate always runs short of funds and can't pay his or her share? Roommates can be friends, but it may take some planning. It is always easier to discuss situations before problems occur.