

# International Student Off-Campus Housing Workshop

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# Agenda

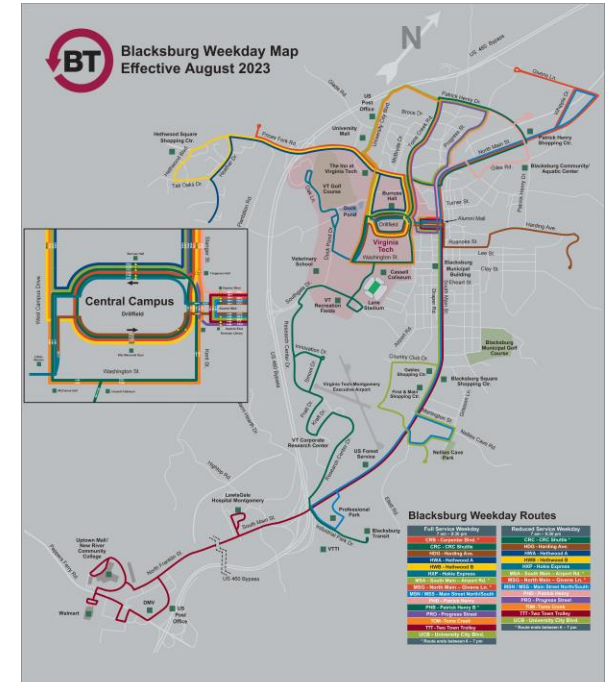
- Apartment Hunting 101
  - What is your budget
  - What are your needs
  - Where do you start your search
  - General Process
  - Cultural Practices Living With Roommates
- Understanding your leases
- Scams

\*This workshop will NOT be recorded; we will share the slides with attendees afterwards

# Apartment Hunting 101

## What is your budget

- Does the rent include utilities:
  - water
  - Electricity/gas/power
  - sewer
  - Trash
  - Internet
  - cable
- Will you need parking? Are there additional fees for parking?
- If it is on the bus/metro line, how much would you need to pay for transportation?
  - [Routes & Schedules \(ridebt.org\)](https://ridebt.org)
- Is the space furnished or will you need to purchase furniture?
- Is there a “pet” deposit?



# Apartment Hunting 101

## What are your needs

Some of the questions that will guide your off-campus housing search...

- Types of housing – apartment, house, townhouse
- Floor plan options?
- Do you want your own bathroom?
- How many roommates (if any) do you want/need?
- Location?
- Do you need a full kitchen?
- Washer and Dryer in the unit?
- Walking distance to campus?
- Parking/Public Transportation? (securing it & costs)
- Pet friendly?

# Apartment Hunting 101

## Timeline/amount of time required

- Blacksburg
  - Lease renewals take place between October and January, so most apartment complexes start accepting applications beginning in January
  - Leases vary in when they start – They can really be starting in any month – Many are June – June or September – September
- D.C. Area
  - Lease renewals and lease start date can vary
  - Dweck Properties and National Corporate Housing) in the area offer VT students (and faculty and staff) select properties, pricing, options, and experiences. Contact [DCHokieOneStop@vt.edu](mailto:DCHokieOneStop@vt.edu) with questions.

# Where do you start your search?

## VT Off-Campus Housing Website

Blacksburg <https://offcampus.vt.edu/>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Virginia Tech Off-Campus Housing website for Blacksburg. The header is maroon with the VT logo, navigation links (Housing, Roommates, Resources, Add a Listing), and a sign-in/sign-up link. The main banner features the text "Welcome to Virginia Tech" and "Off-Campus Housing in the Blacksburg & Surrounding Area" with a "View Rentals" button. Below the banner are four columns of content: "Students, Faculty & Staff" with a photo of students; "Find a Roommate" with a photo of three students; "Looking for Housing Near VT Campuses in the D.C. Area?" with a thumbnail of the website; and "Property Listers" with a photo of a street scene.

**Welcome to Virginia Tech**  
Off-Campus Housing in the Blacksburg & Surrounding Area  
[View Rentals](#)

**Students, Faculty & Staff**  
Register [here](#) to start your search.  
You'll be able to:  
- Search for housing  
- See what's nearby

**Find a Roommate**  
Need a roommate? Students can register [here](#) to create a profile and search for a roommate.

**Looking for Housing Near VT Campuses in the D.C. Area?**  
[Click here](#) to search for housing & roommates in the Greater Washington, D.C. Metro Area.

**Property Listers**  
Register [here](#) to get started today!  
You'll be able to:  
- Add/edit your listings  
- Track/review leads

D.C. Area <https://dc.offcampus.vt.edu/>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Virginia Tech Off-Campus Housing website for the D.C. Area. The header is maroon with the VT logo, navigation links (Housing, Roommates, Resources, Add a Listing), and a sign-in/sign-up link. The main banner features the text "Welcome to Virginia Tech" and "Off-Campus Housing in the Greater Washington, D.C. Metro Area" with a "View Rentals" button. Below the banner are four columns of content: "VT DC Students & Faculty/Staff" with a photo of students; "DC Area Property Listers" with a photo of a brick building; "Looking for Housing Near the VT Blacksburg Campus?" with a thumbnail of the website; and "Find a Roommate" with a photo of students studying.

**Welcome to Virginia Tech**  
Off-Campus Housing in the Greater Washington, D.C. Metro Area  
[View Rentals](#)

**VT DC Students & Faculty/Staff**  
Register [here](#) to start your search.  
You'll be able to:  
- Search for housing  
- See what's nearby

**DC Area Property Listers**  
Register [here](#) to get started today!  
You'll be able to:  
- Add/edit your listings  
- Track/review leads

**Looking for Housing Near the VT Blacksburg Campus?**  
[Click here](#) to visit the off-campus housing website for the VT Blacksburg campus.

**Find a Roommate**  
Need a roommate? Students can register [here](#) to create a profile and search for a roommate.



# Where do you start your search?

- Other online searches
  - Facebook groups
  - Zillow
  - Property websites
- Talk to your networks
- Consult online reviews (Google, Reddit) \*think critically about reviews!

# General process

- Searching for options online
- “Viewing” Apartments
  - Virtual tour
  - Online reviews
- Submit your application online
- Review lease/ask clarification questions to property manager/landlords
  - Rent: How much; when it is due; move in date? How will it be paid?
  - Needed documents: What documents do they need from an international student; do they need a Guarantor/Co-signer
  - Deposit: How much; how will it be used; how and when is it refunded?
  - Damages: Who pays for breakage or other damages over and above normal wear and tear – individuals or all occupants?
  - Subletting: Is it permitted; what is the procedure?
  - Roommates: Should all roommates sign the lease; are roommates responsible for only a portion of the rent; If someone moves out must the remaining roommates make up the difference?
  - Alterations: May the unit be altered, such as painted; can you hang pictures on the wall (and how)?
- Sign the lease





# Understand your lease

- Read the ENTIRE lease before signing! A lease is a legal document that you are formally bound to upon signing. Do not hesitate to ask the landlord about clauses and terms you may not understand.
- Agree to any changes or additions with your landlord and make sure these are stated in the lease before signing. Maintain all documents of correspondence in writing and include all parties and ask for a copy of the written lease for personal records.
- Check if the Virginia Residential Landlord Tenant Act applies to your lease

# ／ Tips:

- **Get renter's insurance**, to protect you from unexpected theft, fire, burst pipes
- Before you move in, inspect the property, **take lots of photos** (or video), and **fill out an exhaustive damage report** checklist
- After you move out, **take photos** (or video), again, and get the landlord to sign an existing condition report verifying the damages for which you will be billed
- Keep a record of all maintenance history
- Similarly, keep all the rent payment receipts

# ✓ Tips:

- Watch out for Scams! These are website resources sent over from VTPD that are helpful tools on how to spot and protect yourself from scams.
- [Avoid Scams and Fraud | Virginia Tech | Off-Campus Housing Search \(vt.edu\)](#)
- [Tech warns of off-campus housing scams | News | collegiatetimes.com](#)
- [Protect Yourself from Scams - International Programs and Services \(gmu.edu\)](#)
- [10 Easy Steps to Protect Yourself From Rental Scams in College | College Pads \(rentcollegepads.com\)](#)

# Living with roommate(s)

## Do's with Roommates

### Space

- Respect Your Roommate's Space
- Respect Shared Spaces
- Designate Mail/Package Space
- Determine Fridge and Kitchen Space for Food/Snacks
- Communicate how to Decorate the Common Space
- Talk About Parking Spaces

### Schedule

- Split the Household Chores, create and Follow a Cleaning Schedule
- Create Bathroom, Kitchen, and Laundry Schedules
- Take Turns with the Trash and Recycling
- Pay Bills on Time

# Living with roommate(s)

## Do's with Roommates

### Communication

- Inform Roommates When Scheduling Maintenance Appointments
- Determine Heat and AC Temperature
- Communicate About Locking Entrance Doors
- Inform Roommates If You are Going Out of Town
- Communicate ahead of time when you have guest(s) over, and how long they will stay

### Other

- Be Considerate when playing Movies, Music, and TV
- Remember that Pets Are the Owner's Responsibility
- Clean Up Your Own Mess
- Clean Up After Your Guests

# Living with roommate(s)

## Don'ts with Roommates

- Do not use roommate's things without asking
- Do not eat your roommate's foods
- Do not expect your roommate to hang out (or disappear) when you have guests
- Do not leave personal items in the common space for long periods of time
- Do not assume that your roommates will be your best friend
- Do not assume that your roommates can read your mind when there is a problem
- Do not let minor problems become major resentments

Consider signing a Room Agreement

# Other reminders for new students

- Complete New International Student Intake Form on [IntlHokies](#)
  - Required to receive your I-20
  - If bringing a dependent who will need an F-2 visa, complete New Dependent Request Form, also in IntlHokies
    - You will likely need to include additional funding to cover dependent costs
- Review our ["Preparing for Your Arrival"](#) page
- Complete the online Cranwell Pre-Arrival Orientation
- Attend International Graduate Student Orientation
  - Jan. 10th, 9am in The Multi-Purpose Room in The Graduate Life Center
  - (D.C. area students)

We are not able to answer questions related to specific eForms or cases due to time constraints.