

Roommate Agreement:

Topics for Living Together Well



So you have a roommate! Maybe you just met, or you're already good friends*. Either way, you'll find that sharing a space brings surprises--good surprises and weird surprises. You'll need to deal with things you never thought would come up. This is especially true if you're sharing a bedroom, but everything matters: kitchens, bathrooms, living rooms, all common spaces.

The conversations you have early on will lay the groundwork for a smooth and happy year. Even if things seem perfect so far, it's normal to have disagreements or different expectations when you live with other human beings! You are mature young adults and living together requires mature skills: agreeing on expectations, starting conversations, taking responsibility for your actions, and confronting those who infringe on your needs. Actually sitting down to do this will probably feel cheesy, or awkward—trust us, it's much better to talk through these things now and not worry about them later!!

Don't put things off: little disagreements grow over time, but can be resolved more easily if caught early—or better yet when anticipated, discussed, and prevented altogether.

**Yes—roommate agreements are extra important if you are already friends, as your bond may cause you to overlook issues and avoid conflict longer than usual, and/or feel more hurt if things go wrong.*

We (Pres House Apartments staff) cannot require this, but we do highly recommend it. Our job is to be resources for you and support your well-being. Part of your "job" is to be proactive in making your own living environment healthy. You're encouraged to complete the self-evaluation and agreement below. You are welcome to provide a copy to the Director of Community Initiatives if you feel comfortable doing so, but this is really a tool for you and your roommates. This will help you hold yourselves and each other accountable to your agreements.

Self-Evaluation: What Do You Need?

Write down your honest answers to these questions:

1. I usually go to bed at this time: _____ and wake up at: _____.
(Are there any exceptions to this? Exam periods, partying, etc.? How will you handle these?)
2. Where do you usually study, and when? *Bedroom, living room sofa, out of the apartment...?*
3. Do you play music / TV / videos without headphones while you study, and/or at other times?
4. How much quiet do you need in the apartment? When you're studying / sleeping / relaxing...?

5. How dark do you need the room to sleep?
6. What temperature do you like to keep your room during the day? While you sleep?
7. When do you keep your door open / closed? *(I.e., closed means "don't bother me," I leave it open/closed when I'm out for the day...)*
8. How do you feel about roommates or others using your possessions? *Think about things you're extra protective of, as well as things that could be seen as shared: shampoo and conditioner, kitchen & utility appliances, food, dishes, clothing...*
9. How often do you expect to invite people over to hang out in the apartment? Do you expect to host overnight guests in your apartment? How do you think hosting guests should be handled?
10. How clean do you need the apartment to be? What is "clean" to you? *How do you feel about clothing on the floor, dirty toilets or sinks, food on the counter, dirty dishes...? Any pet peeves, or things you don't really care about?*
Try to think honestly based on your current habits, not necessarily how you *want* to be.
11. Something I really want out of my roommate relationships / living space this year is:
12. The best way to communicate with me is: *(knock on my door, text me, group chat, etc.)*
13. The best way to talk to me / approach me when concerns arise is:

Name of resident: _____

Date: _____

Group Expectations:

As a group, talk through what each of you wrote on your self-evaluation. If there are notable differences in needs, come up with compromises for how you will work around those differences. Write down your decisions, including as they come up in the questions below.

Discuss your expectations as a group on the following topics, and describe them in writing.

1. **Sleeping Arrangements (doubles):** Do we have a “lights out” time? Device agreements (music/TV/computers?)
2. **Studying Arrangements:** Do we have reserved study times or spaces? Do we have agreements around noise and distractions while people are studying?
3. **Noise Levels:** What noise levels are we OK with in general, from computers / music / TVs / phone calls / conversations etc.?
4. **Cleaning:** Who cleans shared areas (bathrooms, kitchen, living room)? How often? What does “clean” mean? Should we set up a chore chart / cleaning schedule? *(Please note that PH Apts. will bill you for professional cleaning services if the apartment gets too dirty.)*
5. **Sharing Stuff:** What are our policies on sharing belongings? Any specifics? *(Printer, vacuum, wifi router, toaster oven, TV... OK to use/ask first/never use...)* What happens if something is damaged?
6. **Kitchen:** What is our agreement about doing dishes? What system will work? How will fridge spaces be used/shared? What are our agreements about sharing cookware and dishes? What happens if something is broken or damaged?
7. **How do we feel about sharing food?** Do we want to have any joint food items we share and buy together? (milk, eggs, flour, etc)
8. **Purchases:** Who is responsible for shared expenses (toilet paper, cleaning supplies)? Who buys shared items? Do we coordinate/rotate shopping?

9. **Guests:** Are guests OK? How much advance warning do we need, if any? Does gender matter? Can guests stay overnight? If so, where? For how long?

10. **Significant Others:** If we bring partners over, what are the policies for how long or how often they can stay? Are there noise limits? Can we request alone time—if so, how and when?

11. **Parties:** How much do we expect to host groups and parties? How much advance notice do we need to give each other? What are the rules for cleaning up, time limits, etc.?

12. **Alcohol and Substance Use:** Do we keep alcohol or drugs around? If so, how will we manage the associated risks? *(*Note that smoking--tobacco or marijuana--is not permitted in any apartment and violates your lease agreement. If you smoke on balconies, please use a butt can for disposal.)*

13. **Safety:** When should the door be locked?

14. **What is the best way for us all to communicate?** *Group chat, weekly meetings, etc...*

We agree to respect each other’s privacy and autonomy.

We agree to communicate openly and promptly with each other about needs, concerns, or disagreements or frustrations.

We agree to hold our own and each other’s best interests at heart and work to maintain a positive, healthy living space.

Signed by the residents of Apartment # _____: Date: _____

This agreement is for your use. If you think it will be helpful, you can share a copy of this with Ginger (ginger@preshouse.org) and/or Becca (rebecca@preshouse.org). We are available to help you communicate if you need outside mediation for conflicts. We hope you have a happy, stress-free, nourishing residential life this year at Pres House Apartments.