

THE OC LINK

OFF CAMPUS LIVING NEWS FOR FANSHAWE COLLEGE STUDENTS FEBRUARY 2020

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The Hunt for the Right Home

Whether you've just started or you're in the midst of looking for a new home for next year, read some of these tips to ensure a smoother renting experience!

With it being the end of February, you probably feel the looming pressure to have already found a home and signed a lease. However, we're here to tell you that's not the case! It's important to know that many homes tend to become available after March 1st as this is when many students typically give their written termination notice (according to the Residential Tenancies Act, tenants have 60 days before the end of their lease to give notice to terminate). So, if you haven't found your ideal home, this isn't the time to panic yet!

Additionally, we recommend looking at five rentals to get a sense of what best suites you. Finally, check out Fanshawe's Off-Campus Housing Service! We provide a listing site that can be used to find rental properties available around London.

For a closer look, visit the site here at: <https://offcampushousing.fanshawec.ca/>

If you believe you have found the perfect home and all that's left is to sign-off on your lease, stop by Housing Mediation for a FREE lease review. With professional off-campus housing staff available to help you better understand what you could be potentially signing! Additionally, they can provide you with more information regarding your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

Book an appointment by calling: 519-452-4282 or stop by Rm. F2010 on Tuesdays.

Lease Termination Notice Deadline

Are you unsure if you are going to re-sign your lease? If you are covered under the Residential Tenancies Act (Ontario rental law, which applies to you if you do not share a bathroom and/or kitchen with your landlord or their immediate family), then follow the steps below when terminating your lease.

At the end of your fixed term lease you can decide to sign another fixed term tenancy or become a month-to-month tenant. If you plan to terminate your lease it is required to give 60 days' written notice of termination. Many leases end on April 30, 2020, so you must submit written termination notice before March 1, 2020. You will need to fill out a N9 Form as an official notice of termination.

You can download the N9 form here:

<http://www.sjto.gov.on.ca/documents/lrb/Notices%20of%20Termination%20&%20Instructions/N9.pdf>

Know Your Power: Programs to Help with Your Energy Bills

Did you know there are a number of special programs available in Ontario to help lower-income energy consumers? If you're struggling to pay your energy bill, check to see if you're eligible for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) or the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP). Both are available through the Ontario Energy Board, an independent and impartial public agency that regulates Ontario's energy sector.

LEAP provides a one-time grant of up to \$500 (\$600 for electrically heated homes) if you're behind on electricity or natural gas bills and may face having your service shut off. It is for emergency situations.

OESP offers ongoing help, providing a monthly on-bill credit to reduce your electricity bills. The amount of the credit varies, but for most customers it ranges from \$35 to \$75 per month—for at least two years before you would need to reapply. OESP is also available if you're living in homes that have sub-meters (apartments, condos, co-ops and trailers, for example) where each unit has an individual meter and your electricity bill comes from a company other than your utility.

Learn more about OEB and see if you meet the criteria to qualify for one of these programs at www.oeb.ca/billhelp.

Fire Safety Tips

As many of you are starting to come close to finding your dream rental it is important to note proper fire codes are being followed before and after signing. By doing this you are making your home as safe as possible! Here are some tips and codes to be aware of as a tenant.

Fire Safety Tips:

- Bedrooms should have a minimum of two exits from the room. This can be a window and a door.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms/detectors are required to be working on every floor in the house.
- It is the responsibility of the owner of the home or building to maintain the efficiency of these alarms.
- Test these detectors monthly and report any issues to the landlord.
- Rentals are required to undergo fire inspections in order to have a rental license (if applicable).
- If you are thinking of having a bonfire this summer or as the weather gets better, then think again! It is illegal to have an open burn that exceeds 46 cm wide by 46 cm long by 30 cm tall – Follow the Open-Air Burning Bylaw to avoid dangerous consequences and fines up to \$10 000.

Four Helpful Student Tips to Living Off-Campus

1. Make sure you know the garbage pickup schedule for your area. London operates on an eight-day garbage pickup cycle, so garbage day is different every single week. No one wants smelly garbage piling up!
2. Many grocery stores offer student discounts during the weekdays. Find out when the grocery stores closest to you offer discounts to save some money!
3. Download the LTC app on your phone. The app provides up-to-date times for when LTC buses will arrive so you can plan when to leave your house. It is great for the winter so you don't have to wait in the cold for very long!
4. Sign a roommate agreement! It is never fun when your house is a mess or people are fighting, so sign a roommate agreement so everyone can agree on house rules and responsibilities. This will help you avoid any conflicts you might have in the future!

Housing Horror Story: Practice Home Safety!

“Our rental was broken into and my roommates and I are left to cover over \$5,000 worth of stolen goods and electronics! How can I protect my home and prevent this from happening again?”

Some common tips include: always locking doors and windows (even if you are home), leaving lights on, emptying mailboxes, avoiding any indications that the home is a student rental, and placing a home security company’s sticker on your front door/windows. We also recommend purchasing tenant’s insurance if your parents’ home insurance does not extend to you as a renter. Practicing home safety is a group effort and discussing with your roommates to reinforce safety standards for your home is the first step to protecting your rental and belongings!

Fanshawe College Housing Mediation Service-Counselling and Accessibility Services

Tuesdays from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Office: Room F2010

Phone: 519-452-4282

Email: housing.mediation@fanshawec.ca

Website: www.fanshawec.ca/housing

OR

Monday to Friday: 519-661-3787