

THE OC LINK

OFF CAMPUS LIVING NEWS FOR FANSHAWE COLLEGE STUDENTS JANUARY 2020

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To Sign or Not to Sign, That Is the Question

Stop! Wait a minute. Slow down a little before you sign that lease!

Signing a new lease is exciting for most people; however, sometimes that excitement can cause you to overlook small details in the lease. Read over the lease thoroughly and know what basic information to consider before you sign. Remember, a lease is a legally binding document and should be taken seriously.

The most important thing to know before signing a lease is whether you will be covered under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA). If you will be covered under the RTA, then you will not be sharing a kitchen and/or bathroom with that landlord or a member of their immediate family. If there are clauses in your lease that contradict the RTA then the RTA overrules those clauses.

Signing a joint lease? Consider completing a [Roommate Agreement](#) with your roommates to figure out room assignments, house rules, cleaning schedules, and other lifestyle preferences. It's best to do this before you lock yourself into a lease which makes you liable for all roommates you signed your lease with.

Some quick things to spot in your lease are if there are any blanks; fill them in with N/A or a slash. If internet is included, make sure the lease states the type and speed. Also, get everything promised in writing! Whether it is changing the locks, painting, cleaning, doing repairs or outdoor maintenance you need to ensure you have it written in your lease with a deadline for completion. To be completely safe, have your lease reviewed by the Off-Campus Housing Service. They offer free lease reviews and you can make an appointment by calling or e-mailing the office: housing.mediation@fanshawec.ca or 519-452-4282 or drop by Room F2010 (Counselling and Accessibility Services) to make an appointment.

Tenant and Landlord Duties

Knowing your rights and responsibilities as well as your landlord's rights and responsibilities is an important aspect to off-campus living. If you are covered under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA), the following are some things you should know.

Tenant	Landlord
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you want to end a lease at the end of the lease term, a written notice must be given.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Monthly tenancy requires 60 days.○ Weekly tenancy requires 28 days.○ A tenancy for a fixed term (one year) requires 60 days.• Snow, ice and slush must be removed from walkways unless your lease outlines it is the responsibility of the landlord.• Test smoke detector batteries monthly. If they are broken or need replacing, you must notify your landlord immediately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can increase tenant rent every 12 months of tenancy according to the rent increase guidelines set by the Ontario government, but a minimum of 90 days' notice must be given.• Must give 24 hours written notice before entering your property unless you have given notice of lease termination (and then they only have to attempt to give you notice).• Ensure the house is able to meet the minimum heat requirements of 20°C from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. and 18°C from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. as stated by the heating by-law.

A Perfect Getaway

As the temperature drops and we long for warmth on a sunny beach, don't mistake a blazing fire for the same paradise! To ensure fire safety in your home, it is important to comply with provincial fire legislation.

- There must be a working smoke alarm on every floor of your house and outside all sleeping areas. If you are living in a rental unit, this is your landlord's responsibility to provide the detectors.
- Fire safety is not just limited to smoke alarms; common household items such as candles and those leftover Christmas lights can also pose as a fire hazard if left unattended. Make sure you unplug your lights before leaving your house and do not burn candles for too long (no matter how good they smell!).
- As it gets colder you may be wondering about space heaters and how to ensure they do not cause a fire. Space heaters must have at least a meter of space between them and other objects on each side, and be sure to keep them away from flammables.
- Don't risk smoking inside! After parties or gatherings, check furniture (like couch cushions) for cigarette butts.

New Year Neighbours

New Year, new me, right? It can be tough to commit to some of these resolutions, and many end up not lasting the entire year. Being a good neighbour is a resolution that is easy to keep! There are many London residents that live near students and this can be a source of tension in the community if students are not aware of, or do not respect, the by-laws.

If you plan on hosting parties or large gatherings, give your neighbours a heads up. Many residents appreciate this, and will avoid calling police when they are given advance notice. Remember, London has a 24/7 noise bylaw and you can be charged from \$200-\$5000 per tenant.

Furthermore, keep your property clean by not leaving empty bottles or garbage on your lawn and take in your garbage and recycling bins after they have been collected. It makes the neighborhood look cleaner and you will avoid being charged with a property upkeep fine of \$200.

It may seem harmless or funny to steal things like road signs or your neighbour's lawn ornaments, but this may result in a mischief or vandalism charge. Both are considered criminal offenses and can lead to fines as well as jail time, so think twice!

Overall, little actions can go a long way in making you a good neighbour. This may even enhance your off-campus living experience with new friends and a friendly community.

Housing Horror Story: Choose Your Roommates Wisely!

"My roommate brought home her new pet cat after the holidays. I am extremely allergic to it and she already knew this!"

When looking for roommates, get to know them well before living together to ensure your values and living standards are similar. A great way to figure out your roommate compatibility is through our Roommate Agreement found on our website: <https://www.fanshawec.ca/roommate-agreement>.

It is a good idea to sign this agreement once you have found your roommates in order to set boundaries and establish accountability on everyone's part.

If you ever experience any roommate conflict, we are always here to help! Living with new people can be a big adjustment, so it is important to be prepared. We offer mediation services at our office if you can't resolve your roommate issues on your own. More information can be found on our website: <https://www.fanshawec.ca/housing/mediation>.

Follow these steps to make sure you don't face your own housing horror story!

Happy Roommate Searching!

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