

# Moving Off Campus

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As a student at Virginia Tech, sometimes living on campus gets old. Sure you love the proximity you have to the dining halls or being able to wake up 15 minutes before class and still be on time, but eventually the perks wear off. For whatever reason for you, it's time to move off campus. Luckily for you, Virginia Tech is surrounded by numerous off-campus neighborhoods. Some are as close to campus as a mile away, while others can take you almost 15-20 minutes to reach campus. Typically you will find that your neighbors are also Virginia Tech students -whether it be undergraduate, graduate, or alumni. You might even find yourself living next to some faculty, but either way, the Virginia Tech community is just as prominent off-campus as it is on-campus. However, the act of moving off-campus from on-campus is not as easy as confirming a dorm room assignment and paying a deposit. There are way more logistics to be figured out and here's how!

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## Glossary of Terms

**Budget-** An estimate of how much to spend for a certain period of time/event.

**Co-Signer-** A person, other than the tenant who agrees to be financially responsible for the tenant's rent, fees, and damages should the tenant neglect them.

**Guarantor-** Interchangeably used with *co-signer* (see above).

**Landlord-** The owner of the real estate property, which is leased or rented to another individual(s).

**Lease-** Legally binding contract between a landlord and their tenants, which explains the policies and rules to be followed between them.

**Roommate agreement-** An informal understanding between roommates concerning matters that affect the living situation.

**Tenant-** Person who occupies real estate from a landlord.

**Utilities-** Usually includes, but is not limited to water, gas or electricity.

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### **STEP 1. Decide how many people who are living with, if any.**

It is important to figure out if you are living alone or with roommates and if so, how many. Apartment availability is based on the amount of rooms you need so it's best to have that information first.

### **STEP 2. Decide a budget.**

Once you know how many people you are living with, it is important to now decide how much you are willing to spend on rent. For instance, if you have two other roommates and each of you only want to pay 400\$ or less, you can start looking for apartments that charge \$1200 for rent. Keep in mind that this may or may not include utilities so you may need to include the amount you have to pay for bills if your budget is strict.



### **STEP 3. Search the internet for places.**



Now that you have figured out two very critical components, you can now start browsing the internet for apartments online. You can search on your own or you can use <http://vt.offcampuspartners.com>, which Virginia Tech has created to help students transition from on-campus to off-campus living. If you choose to use the very handy website, you can put your maximum amount of rent you wish to pay and look at the available options. Keep in mind again that this website probably does not include everywhere you could possibly live like a general search engine would.

### **STEP 4. Make appointments to view them and go!**

Each apartment complex or rental property will have someone available for you to make appointments with to show you either the rental property or a model of the property for rent. After you have selected options based on your criteria, make appointments to view them. When you go, don't be afraid to be picky! This is somewhere you will be living for the next year at minimum so make sure to make a note of what you like and dislike about each property.



### **STEP 5. Narrow options by needs that are most important.**

Sometimes it's not going to be easy finding a place to live. Having more roommates will result in more needs and wants to be satisfied and sometimes it's hard to find one that is inclusive of *everything* you want. If you are lucky to find that place, by all means, skip this step and run to step number 6! And if you're not that fortunate, here's what you need to do. Write down or make a



mental note of all the things you liked and disliked about each property and decide which ones are most/least important. This is especially important when you have roommates. Decide which are needs versus wants and be prepared to make some sacrifices on the wants to satisfy all the needs. Once you find the property that can do that, you're ready to move on.

### STEP 6. Reserve your property.

Once you have picked your desired real estate, there will be a process depending on the agency or company that you will have to follow next. Majority of them start with filling out an application, which generally has a fee attached to it. Your guarantor will also have to pay and fill one of these out and some places offer it online if your guarantor doesn't live close. The next portion of the process depends solely on where you live. Some may require you to fill out a reservation form of the place you want to live, while some may require you to fill out a preference sheet of which type of place within that community you would like to live. Either way, reserve your spot!

An application form titled "Application form" with instructions: "PLEASE FILL IN ALL THE FIELDS BELOW IN BLOCK CAPITALS. VERIFY YOUR INFO WITH SOMEBODY ELSE TO MAKE SURE YOUR APPLICATION IS CORRECT. Remember to sign the Agreement, conditions booklet and rental agreement." The form includes fields for "Step 1 - Your personal details" such as Title, Surname, Mobile number, First name, Date of birth, Are you? (Male/Female), Nationality, Mother's maiden name, and Home phone.

### STEP 7. Everyone signs the lease!

Once guarantors and applications have been approved, it's time to sign the lease. This step does come with a hefty fee, typically to the tune of the first month's rent, which will be used as a security deposit. So make sure your parties don't get too wild because you can get that back once you move out! The lease is an important document that you should retain in your records should you need it at a later date. Make a note of your move in date on the lease, which is the starting date of your lease.



### STEP 8. Wait to move in.

And you're (almost) done! All you can do now is wait until you're move-in date. This is a good time to get with your roommates or yourself should you not have any and decide how you're going to get furniture for mutual spaces, such as the living room and who's going to bring the coffee pot or microwave. Some places offer furnished apartments that already come with furniture in every room. *(If you're living alone, this may be a need to include in STEP 5 since furniture can get pretty expensive).* Communication between roommates is key because you don't want two roommates bringing a microwave for one kitchen! Whether you are living with others or living alone, this step is all about preparation for your future in your new home!