

Having Roommates?

Be selective when choosing a roommate(s). The people that you choose will have either a negative or a positive effect on your academic experience. Do not choose people just because it is convenient to you. COMMUNICATION IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT! You might want to consider creating and signing a written roommate agreement containing all the ground rules you agree upon. This could avoid many disagreements between roommates. Roommates may want to consider discussing the following issues and expectations:

Personal Needs and Habits:

- What type of housing would you be comfortable living in? Apartment? House? Shared Room or your own room?
- Do you need any privacy? How much privacy do you need?
- Are you or they more likely to have family, friends or significant others over?
- Are there certain hours where you usually relax, sleep, study, or socialize?
- Are you comfortable sharing your personal belongings? What is off limits?
- Do you want pets? How will the pet be cared for? (Remember to make sure your landlord accepts pets!)

Smoking and Drugs:

- Do you prefer a smoker or a nonsmoker as a roommate?
- Where do you stand regarding the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in your household?
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Rent / Utilities / Furnishings:

- How much rent can you each afford every month?
- Will you be sharing bills? How will they be split?
- Who will pay for utilities? What is the average cost per month?
- Will you share a phone line? How will you share phone messages with roommates?
- What furniture and household items will each roommate provide?
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Food:

- Will you and your roommates be sharing the cost of food?
- Will you and your roommates share the responsibility of cooking the food?
- What days will each of you be responsible for cooking?
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Cleaning:

- Who will clean what?
- How often?
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Mediation and Conflict Resolution:

Sometimes problems can occur. Open communication is the best strategy to solve a problem or misunderstanding between roommates. Find out how your roommate(s) want to be approached when concerns arise. Do they want to discuss it privately? Will "house meetings" with all roommates present be better? Not everyone wants to be approached in the same manner, so this is an important issue.

Here are some tips to help resolve a problem:

- Recognize the conflict as soon as possible. Recognizing the problem allows each person to address the issues.
- Give everybody equal time to speak and be aware of everyone's feelings.
- Stick to the issue. Be clear about your concerns.
- Use "I" statements instead of "You" statements to explain your point of view.
- Respect each other! Stay away from name calling, exaggeration, and blaming.
- If necessary, get someone who can remain objective to act as a mediator in the situation.
- Come up with resolutions together. Be willing to compromise.
- Consider putting your resolutions in writing and everyone signing to indicate their agreement.
- City of Ft. Collins has a free Mediation Service; <http://www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/neighborhoodservices/mediation.php>
- Talk to your landlord! They have seen a few disputes. Communication is important, start early prevent things from getting bigger