Preferred Renter Online Course Script

Section 1: Introduction

Be A Good Beaver, Be A Good Neighbor.

Hello, and welcome to the Preferred Renters online workshop.

Living off-campus comes with increased responsibilities and expectations. This workshop is designed to help students like you navigate the off-campus rental process and better understand both your rights and responsibilities as tenants and members of our Corvallis community.

This workshop is brought to you by Oregon State’s Corvallis Community Relations, in partnership with community and university stakeholders such as the Corvallis Police Department, Corvallis fire department, Corvallis Rental Property Management Group and OSU Student Health Services.

While these groups play an important role in improving the health, safety and livability of our community, it is you - the student, tenant and Corvallis community member) who has the power to make the biggest difference.

The following workshop is comprised of five modules, each highlighting various aspects of off-campus living. These include Party Smart, Safety, Renting 101 and Signing a Lease, Renter’s Rights, Responsibilities, and Resources, and Financial Literacy.

Each workshop module will be followed by a short quiz. Pass the quiz with an aggregate score of 80% or higher, and you instantly become a Preferred Renter. It’s like magic just like that you’re on your way to receiving a $50 credit on your security deposit with participating properties.

Section 2: Party Smart

Party Smart: Laws and City Ordinances

Oregon State University’s Student Conduct Code applies to all students, whether living on or off-campus. Students are always expected to behave as outstanding members of the Corvallis and university community, no matter where you are. Whether you’re socializing on campus, eating at a restaurant in Corvallis, visiting friends in Portland, or playing a game of Frisbee in outer space), you are an ambassador of Oregon State University. Breaking the law or violating a city ordinance is a violation of the Code, and students that do so are held accountable for their behavior by the university.

Living off-campus comes with increased independence. This freedom can be liberating, but can lead to higher risks of behavior that adversely impacts the health and safety of you, your roommates and your neighbors. We get it, this is college, a once in a lifetime opportunity, and we want to have fun!
In this module, we will touch on alcohol safety, party safety, sexual assault, and laws and city ordinances that you should know. Not knowing the law isn’t a very good defense. Judge Judy isn’t hearing that. The Party Smart module will teach you how to party in a way that is fun, safe, and respectful of your community. Remember to pay close attention, as you will take a short quiz immediately following this module.

ALCOHOL
If you consume alcohol, you should be aware of the potential consequences.

Remember that:
• Alcohol is a drug that slows down and inhibits bodily processes. It is a depressant, not a stimulant. It’s a poison. Even small quantities – a few beer or shots – can be unsafe.
• Drinking leads to dehydration, so avoid hot tubs and heavy exercise as this enhances the effect of alcohol, causing you feel it twice as hard and twice as fast.
• Reaction time, judgment, ability to focus, memory, and coordination are all greatly affected by alcohol use.

For example, if you get very drunk, you might make a choice that you regret the next day. Individuals have been known to mistakenly break into someone else’s house, so intoxicated they thought they were just kicking in the door of their home, landing them multiple felony charges and an endless list of consequences.

If you decide to drink, it’s always important to know how much you are drinking. It’s important to talk about the percentage of alcohol in a standard drink

One drink is:

Beer: 12 oz – 4-5%
Hard Alcohol: 1.5 oz – 40%
Wine: 5 oz – 12%

Remember that Binge drinking is “the consumption of five drinks for men or four drinks for women in a two hour period,” and can be deadly.

A microbrew beer, for example, can have an alcohol percentage upwards of 10%. That means 2 standard drinks in one 12 oz cup. And, if we’re talking about Hard Alcohol especially Everclear, which is 95% alcohol, that’s 2.5 standard drinks in just one shot glass

A quick neighborly tip before we move on to the party itself: Always remember that people are trying to sleep inside their homes. Would you want your family members
to be awakened in the middle of the night? Try your best to keep your voice down when party-hopping, and always respect your neighbors space!

In terms of partying, we have several tips you can use to help control your environment when partying:

• Pace yourself. Eating helps slow the absorption of alcohol into your system, helps prevent nausea and quickly peaking BAC.
• Alternate between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.
• Remember to HALT drinking if you feel Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired. Alcohol can affect your body differently depending on your mood.
• Look out for those around you. If you see someone exhibiting any of the following symptoms, call 911: Vomiting, seizures, slow breathing, irregular breathing, blue-tinged or pale skin, low body temperature, confusion, passing out (cannot be awakened).
• Meeting friends across town? Before drinking, make plans to use ASOSU SafeRide, a taxi service, or a designated driver.
• Lastly, Set a drink limit and stick to it.

Count your drinks and avoid drinking mysterious brews like jungle juice and other mixed punches. These drinks are often made with hard alcohols and sugary mixers like juice and soda that mask the strength of the alcohol. They can be very high in alcohol percentage and can spike your blood alcohol content (BAC) dangerously high, putting you at risk for alcohol poisoning. It’s best to make your own drink. If someone else concocted it, there is no way for you to know what and how much alcohol you have in that cup.

Research shows there can be anywhere from 0 to 22 standard drinks in a single solo cup of jungle juice. It’s best to steer clear.

HOSTING A PARTY
If you decide to host a party, that’s okay. Just make sure to do it in a safe way while being respectful of your neighbors. We have a few tips you can employ to keep your party safe.

• Control who you let in. Have a guest list. Let your friends in, and those you know. Politely refuse any one you don’t know, that includes your girlfriend’s, brother’s friend’s friend. Don’t let “randoms” enter your home. You’re responsible for your guests and their behavior. If you don’t know someone, how do you know that they may not steal from you? Are you willing to take on the risk of being liable for someone who does something stupid at your party? Say, you provide someone a few drinks at your kick back; they leave and get in their car. They get in an accident and hurt someone? You might share in the blame. You might be liable. Do you really want to be on the hook for this guy? This girl could be just as dangerous or likely to steal from you as this guy.
• Have “sober monitors” who can be on the lookout for overly intoxicated individuals and who can speak to the police in the case they come knocking
on your door. You don’t want this guy [someone slurring their words] “speaking” on your behalf, do you?

• Do not have open sources of alcohol. Remember, these can be very dangerous!
• Provide food and water to your guests. Food and water should always be present when alcohol is being consumed.
• Be a responsible server and do not over serve individuals!
• Don’t let your guest’s drink and drive. Help them find a sober way home; think taxi or ASOSU SafeRide.
• Don’t provide alcohol to minors. This could cost you. Literally, thousands of dollars. More on that to come.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

You should be mindful of your neighbors when you throw a party. It’s important to maintain a good relationship with your neighbors. You can do this through a number of different ways:

• If you have a party, notify your neighbors beforehand and give them your number. Your neighbors have no obligation to call you before they call the cops, but it could help prevent a visit from these guys [police]. Trust us, they’re really nice and friendly, but you probably don’t want them at your party, right?

You know what, before you even begin thinking about a party – when you first move in for example – introduce yourself to your neighbors. Build a relationship.. Get to know them and let them get to know you. Bake them some cookies! Be old fashioned or knock on their door and ask if you can borrow a cup of sugar for the lemonade or Kool-Aid you’re making. Even if you don’t need it! And then bring them a glass. You might be surprised; they might just return the favor.

• Keep the party inside. Have guests stay inside your house, or ask them to leave. Keeping the party inside, keeps the noise inside. When the noise goes outside it disturbs the neighbors. When you disturb other people, you have other problems. When you party responsible, you might have 99 problems, but a ticket won’t be one.
• Do a sound test. Can you hear music from outside? If so, turn down the music, close the doors, close the windows and again, keep the party and your guests inside.
• Be respectful and mindful of others. It’s that simple.
• Orange is the New Green: Keep Corvallis Clean. You may have had a party, but it shouldn’t look like it the next morning. Be A Good Neighbor, and clean up after yourself and your party. While we’re on the subject of keeping our community clean. Broken glass, cigarette butts and other litter is a tremendous blight on our community. Question: How much litter could a litter picker pick, if a litter picker would pick litter? Answer: As much litter as a litter picker could pick, if a
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litter picker would pick litter. Enough with the tongue twisters, Corvallis streets are not an ashtray. Take pride in our community, do your part to keep it clean.

SEXUAL ASSAULT
Did you know that according U.S Department of Justice, 1 in 5 college women and 1 in 16 college men are assaulted in college? This statistic is too high!

We want you to remember that alcohol strongly affects your decision-making and has been found to be strongly associated with sexual assault cases. In fact, the U.S Department of Justice found that 50-70% of sexual assaults are facilitated by alcohol use.

Also, remember that a person who is incapacitated by alcohol or other drugs cannot give consent, no matter what they verbalize.

According to OSU Policy 576-015-0010(6), consent is knowing, voluntary, and clear permission by word or action, to engage in mutually agreed upon sexual activity. To be effective, consent must be informed and reciprocal, freely and actively given, and mutually understandable.

In general, sexual contact while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs poses a risk to all parties. Alcohol and drugs impair a person's decision-making capacity, awareness of the consequences, and ability to make informed judgments. It is especially important, therefore, that anyone engaging in sexual activity be aware of the other person’s level of intoxication. If there is any doubt as to the level or extent of the other individual’s capacity to freely give consent, the prudent course of action is to forgo or cease any sexual contact or activity.

Sexual assault on college campuses is a serious health and safety problem. Each of us has a role in creating a caring community — based on civility and respect — that contributes to student success and is free of sexual assault.

It's on Us. Take the pledge to show your commitment to ending sexual assault in our community. For more information on our efforts please visit the survivor support page at: leadership.oregonstate.edu/survivor-support

You might want to check out these resources as well:
- Survivor Advocacy and Resource Center - http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/survivor-support
- Student Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) – http://counseling.oregonstate.edu
- And the Alcohol, Drug and Violence Prevention Center - http://studenthealth.oregonstate.edu/prevention-center/alcohol-and-other-drugs

We will also be providing a list of resources that we have mentioned so far at the end of this presentation. You can also find the resources presented in this presentation at studentlife.oregonstate.edu/ccr/workshopresources. We encourage you to visit them!

**MEDICAL AMNESTY**

Oregon’s Medical Amnesty Law protects those under the age of 21 from getting a Minor in Possession (MIP) charge when calling 911 for someone they think has alcohol poisoning. The person making the call and the person in need of medical attention are both protected under this law.

If you see someone that is in need of medical attention, call 911. After you call, stay with the person until help arrives.

The health and safety of you and those around you is of the upmost importance. Ensure your safety without compromising your celebration and fun by knowing laws such as these.

**LAWS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Best night ever takes a turn. Minors are drinking at your party. Go Directly to Jail. Well, this isn’t Monopoly, this is real life, so you’ve earned yourself a citation, a court appearance a $500 fine and an investigation by the OSU Student Conduct and Community Standards Office.

Abide by the law. Don’t break the law or disturb the peace of your neighbors and you might actually have the best night ever. Getting cited or arrested can definitely be a buzz kill. In this case, abstinence – abstaining from breaking the law – is the best way to stay out of trouble.

You are responsible for abiding by all state and federal laws and local ordinances. Claiming that you didn’t know urinating in public was against the law generally isn’t a very effective defense. Here are a handful of laws often associated with parties and alcohol.

A Special Response Notice (SRN) is a written warning issued by the CPD for violations like littering, noise or peeing in public. If you receive an SRN, you will not be charged THE FIRST TIME. Consider it a warning. However, if you receive another SRN within 30 days of receiving the first SRN, you’ll be billed for what it
cost the city to respond to both incidents, and that could be hundreds or thousands of dollars.

If the police arrive, don’t turn off the lights and refuse to open the door. It you refuse to cooperate and pretend that you’re not at home, the police will likely request a search warrant. This takes time; a cost that will likely be passed onto you. Things can go from bad to worst real quick.

Unlawful Amplified sound is a class A infraction and comes with a fine of $306. If you are hosting a party, be careful about how loud your music is.

Hosting a Party/Furnishing Alcohol or Marijuana to Minors is not taken lightly here in Corvallis. In fact, you can be charged up to $2,500 and spend time in jail if you commit this more than once. Hosting a party or furnishing to minors is basically either buying alcohol or marijuana for minors, or hosting a party in your home where minors are illegally consuming alcohol or marijuana.

It’s against the law to consume alcohol or marijuana if you’re under the age of 21. Receive a Minor in Possession Charge (MIP), and you receive a $250 fine and a one-year suspension of your driver’s license. Be smart, know the law! After this, you’ll get a call from the university office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. It is also possible that this breaks agreements within your rental property’s lease agreement, leading to a possible eviction from your home. The gift that keeps on giving. Keep your record clean.

For more information on partying smart, click the arrow on the bottom right hand corner of your screen. We will also provide a link following the end of this course.

Before we move on, Benny wants you to always remember that:

• Alcohol influences your ability to make decisions. You may not have made that choice if you were sober. Be safe and be responsible. You’re responsible for your behavior and you may be held accountable for your behavior by entities including, but not limited to: The University (Student Conduct and Community Standards), the City (Law Enforcement) and Property Managers.

• Off campus behavior falls under the university’s student conduct code – you’ll be held accountable by the city and police, the university and your landlord could even evict you.

• Be A Good Beaver, Be A Good Neighbor.

Section 3: Safety

Live Safe: Security and Safety

Safety doesn’t happen by accident. Safety first is Safety Always. This presentation will touch on things you should know to protect yourself, your home, and your property.
We will touch on three different topics. Home safety, fire safety, and bicycle safety. Remember to pay close attention to the topics discussed, as you will take a short quiz immediately following this module.

HOME SAFETY
Corvallis, Oregon is a really safe place to live. Crime is relatively low. With that said, we do have unusually high theft rates though. Homes and cars are broken into quite frequently, so it is important to learn how you can help keep your stuff safe.

Some of this is common sense. Unfortunately common sense isn’t so common, and isn’t always common.

Here are a few things to remember:
• Keep all doors and windows locked. Leaving a light on inside, as well as a porch light, are great ways to deter burglars.
• Prevent window shopping: close curtains or blinds to protect your personal belongings.
• Don’t leave expensive items in your car.
• Light up your living room: connect an auto-timer plug to an interior lamp.
• Lock it up: plan with your roommates about locking doors, windows, and garage before leaving town.
• Prevent a mountain of mail on your doorstep as thieves often target these homes. Use the free hold mail service: holdmail.usps.com/holdmail/
• Don’t trust the garden gnome: burglars know all the hiding spots, keep your key to yourself.

Meeting your neighbors, or better yet, knowing your neighbors, can greatly reduce chances of a break-in. Your neighbors might even help pickup your mail and feed your pet goldfish while you’re out of town. You wouldn’t want Nemo to go hungry now would you?

Disclaimer: No, goldfish were harmed in the development of this presentation. But know you’re neighbor, or this little guy could be next.

An overabundance of mail in your mailbox lets burglars know that no one’s home. Remember, baking cookies for your neighbors when you move in is not old fashioned, people love it!

You’re going home for the break? Yeah, burglars know too.

With fewer students remaining on campus, crimes typically increase over the Winter and Spring breaks. Hide your valuables, or take them with you, if you are planning on leaving for a long period of time. A surprising majority of burglaries are often reported as unforced entry burglaries. That means doors and windows were
left unlocked. How ever can we solve this? When you’re away from your home. Lock em!

Do not leave valuables in your car either. Car break-ins occur throughout the year. In fact, during the first 8 days of April 2015, over 25 cars were broken into in and around the university campus. Protect yourself and keep your stuff safe!

FIRE SAFETY
Every year college folks across the country watch their personal belongings and priceless memories go up in flames. It is essential that you know how to reduce your chances of a fire.

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 1,298,000 fires in 2014. These fires resulted in 3,275 civilian fire fatalities, 15,775 civilian fire injuries and an estimated $11.6 billion in direct property loss. There was a civilian fire death every 2 hours and 41 minutes and a civilian fire injury every 33 minutes in 2014. Home fires caused 2,745, or 84%, of the civilian fire deaths.

It is important that you have smoke alarms, a fire extinguisher, and baking soda present in the kitchen. While a fire extinguisher will be used to put out most fires, baking soda is very effective for grease fires.

Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries. The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.

When cooking, always be present. Do not leave your stove unattended. Many fires start because something comes into contact with a cooking source. Before you know it, your kitchen could be up in flames!

And when you’re there, make sure you’re all there. If you’re not paying attention, because you’re too busy sending adorable kitten videos to your friends.

It’s important to be alert to prevent cooking fires. Always cook with a lid beside your pan. If you have a fire, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner. Do not remove the cover because the fire could start again. Let the pan cool for a long time. Never throw water or use a fire extinguisher on the fire.

Smoke alarms are required outside of every sleeping area, on every level of the residence, and must have a hush feature and a long battery life in order to meet Oregon law. Do not tamper with these smoke alarms, as you can be fined $250! You should test your smoke alarms once every month and change the batteries if needed. If there’s no smoke alarm, notify your property manager. It’s your right, and it’s their responsibility to make sure you have operational fire alarms in accordance with Oregon State building codes.

Before we move on, take note of these last few crucial tips:
• A common cause of fires is candles. Just like cooking, never leave a candle unattended.
• Electrical circuits also present an issue, as college students may overload them. This can cause a spark, which can start a fire in a matter of minutes. (consider adding a video of this).
• Lastly, keep things away from your heater sources! Heaters can light curtains or clothes on fire very easily.

**BICYCLE SAFETY**

Many individuals bike in the city of Corvallis. In fact, Corvallis is one of the most biker-friendly cities in America! However, this does not mean you’re protected from the risk of injury when biking here.

When riding a bike in Corvallis, it is essential that you be seen. Be bright, be seen. According to Oregon law, individuals must have a rear reflector and a front headlight that is visible from 500 feet away when riding at night. It is also smart to use reflectors on other parts of your bike as well. The brighter you are, the safer you are!

As a biker in Oregon, you are required to follow all vehicle laws. This includes stopping at stop-signs and using turn signals with your hands. If you do not follow these laws, you can and will receive a ticket.

And wear a helmet. Keep your head and everything inside it safe. Enough said.

Lastly, always remember to lock your bike. Bike theft is extremely common in Corvallis. The best way to prevent bike theft is by purchasing a “U” lock. These are the strongest locks available, and they make it more difficult for thieves to steal your bike. Be advised that bike thieves often “shop” for the most expensive bikes. If your bike costs a lot or even looks like it costs a lot, your bike may be targeted. In the case that your bike is stolen, knowing your bike’s serial number and registering your bike with OSU Public Safety make increase the likelihood that it’s retrieved and returned.

**Before we move on, Benny wants you to always remember that:**
• Don’t disable fire alarm for ANY reason. They are there to save YOUR life!!
• When riding your bike, no helmet, no lights, and not abiding by traffic laws = danger. Safety first, safety always.
• Lastly, Corvallis is a safe town for the most part, but there are criminals. Know how to avoid bike theft, and prepare yourself for spring and winter breaks. Be safe, be prepared, be secure.
Section 4: Renting 101 and Signing a Lease

From finding housing to signing a lease, we’ll survey the entire rental process and everything in between.

The rental process can be extremely difficult and tiresome to navigate for both first time renter and the more seasoned, veteran renters amongst us. In this presentation we will outline the rental process, examine different aspects of a lease, and offer a few tips for becoming a more successful renter.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RENTAL PROCESS
Here are seven basic steps you should take before you rent off-campus!

1. Secure roommates and determine your collective wants and needs
2. Locate housing
3. Apply for housing
4. Walkthrough the house with the landlord
5. Thoroughly evaluate the lease agreement
6. Sign the lease agreement
7. Pay the security deposit and rent

This module will focus on various aspects of these processes. Remember to pay close attention to the topics discussed, as you will take a short quiz immediately following this module.

THINGS TO CONSIDER
Before you find housing, you should sit down with your prospective roommates and consider everything that you need in your future home. If you don’t have roommates, just sit down and think about this yourself. How many bedrooms will you need? How about bathrooms? Does the location matter to you? If you have a car, does it have a parking spot? If you don’t, do you need to take the bus, how close is the nearest bus stop? If you have a pet; do they allow pets? Also, make sure it is a place you feel comfortable in. You will be spending quite a bit of time there, so make sure it is somewhere you like!

HOW TO FIND HOUSING
Finding housing can certainly be difficult at times. But thanks to the Internet, the process has become much easier.

Craigslist is perhaps the best way to find housing in Corvallis. Property managers are aware of craigslist, and many, if not all, utilize it. You can use the “map” function on craigslist to search in specific neighborhoods. This is especially relevant if you want to live in a certain area of Corvallis.
If you have a hard time finding housing on Craigslist, you can always try Barometer ads, property manager websites, bulletin boards around campus, and the Corvallis Housing Fair that takes place near the beginning of the winter term at Oregon State. Check out our website to learn more about the Corvallis Housing Fair - it's a great resource for students and you can walk away with tons of cool stuff!

Living on campus is an option, too. Check out University Housing and Dining Services for any discounts or special rates they may be providing for returning residents.

**HOUSING INSPECTION**
After you locate housing and find a place that you would like to live, you will typically do a housing inspection with your landlord before you sign the lease. This is an extremely important stage, as you can be held accountable for things that are broken in the apartment if you don’t point them out. A walkthrough is when you and your landlord walk through the house, document the condition of the home and identify things that are broken or damaged. We have a checklist on our website that you can download and print to help keep track of things that you might be charged for. If you didn't cause the damage, it's important that you notify your property manager. Oftentimes, you’ll have 24-48 hours after moving in to notify your property manager of any damage you noticed.

You should keep your eyes open for things like this when inspecting your home
- Mold
- Insects
- Bathroom Fan
- Heating
- Holes in walls
- Broken appliances

If you see any of these things, you should mark them down and take a picture! If you don't document this ahead of moving in, your landlord might not return your full security deposit when you move out, assuming you caused the damage. The proof is in the pudding.

The most important thing before you move in is to document everything! Document, Document, Document! Remember that the issues provided above are only some of the issues you might face, so keep a keen eye out for problems!

**QUESTIONS TO ASK**
It is crucial that you know what your landlord expects from you as a tenant, and what you're allowed and not allowed to do. Questions help clarify, so take this time to really ask questions! After reading the lease, you might prepare a list of questions for your landlord. For example, a few questions you might ask are:
• Can I paint the walls or make changes to the property?
• When is rent due? Usually the 1st of the month.
• Is the last months rent due at signing?
• If something breaks, who is responsible?
• Will you provide appliances?
• Who pays utilities?

These are only some of the many questions you might ask your landlord. You can find a list of many more on our website at studentlife.oregonstate.edu/ccr/rentersguide. We highly suggest you download and print this list, and take it with you when you are going to meet with your landlord.

**SIGNING A LEASE**
Signing a lease can sometimes be a bit stressful, especially when the wording often sounds very legal and rigid. A lease is “A contract by which one party conveys land, property, services, etc., to another for a specified time, usually in return for a periodic payment.”

It’s a legal process! And, because it’s legal process, it’s imperative that you take measures to protect yourself. Know what you’re signing. *Not knowing what you’re signing, and then violating the agreement isn’t a very good defense. You honestly think that’ll work with Judy?*

The lease details the expectations your landlord has of you – the tenant. It also details what you should expect of them; your landlord. Read the lease very carefully, and make sure that everything the landlord promised you is in writing on the lease. If an ad you saw indicated that Internet would be provided at no additional expense, but you sign a lease that doesn’t state this, the landlord may have no legal obligation to provide you with Internet at no additional expense.

It’s important that you take your time when reading the lease. You can request a copy of the lease agreement ahead of time, before signing, and take it to ASOSU student legal services here at OSU. They will look over the lease with you in order to protect your rights... For Free. In fact, they encourage you do this!

Remember to ask for, or make a copy of the lease agreement for your records.

**MONTH-TO-MONTH VS. LONG TERM LEASE**
Some leases come in the format of a month-to-month lease, meaning that you are not locked into a lease for a defined period of time. Typically, leases are offered for 9 to 12 months, meaning that you are expected to pay rent each month over for that period of time. If you wish to cancel the lease before the date the lease agreement expires, you usually pay a fine.
On a month-to-month lease, your lease essentially ends every month (although you don’t need to resign the lease every month). You may be evicted with no reason with 30 days of notice from the property manager. You can also move out whenever you want with no penalty, as long as you give a 30 days notice. This might be ideal for a temporary living situation, but might otherwise involve a higher level of risk.

Before we move on, Benny wants you to always remember that:

- You should always search landlords online. Google “slum lord,” for an example of a bad landlord.
- Know what you’re signing, read, review, and understand your lease.
- Take pictures of your rental unit before you move in and after.

Section 5: Renter’s Rights, Responsibilities, and Resources

Your Rights, Responsibilities and Resources
Tenants have rights. Your neighbors have rights, too. It’s your responsibility to respect your neighbors’ rights. We have the resources to help you with both.

Did you know that there are many Oregon laws in place to protect renters? This presentation will help educate you on some of the rights, responsibilities, and resources you have as a renter. It will also cover some of the things that you can expect from your landlord, and things they might expect from you as well.

Remember to pay close attention to the topics discussed, as you will take a short quiz immediately following this module.

LANDLORD OBLIGATIONS

Did you know that your landlord is required to abide by a number of different laws that are in place to protect you?

Several obligations are:

- Landlords must comply with all applicable building, housing, health, and safety codes.
- Keep the property in a fit, safe and habitable condition
- Maintain all appliances, services and equipment set forth in agreement.
- Provide 24-hours’ notice prior to entering the unit (unless there is an emergency)
- Provide smoke alarms

If your landlord does not meet these obligations, then they are in the wrong. You may contact them directly, or seek legal counsel. We will discuss this in a few minutes so stick around!

TENANT OBLIGATIONS
Let’s start with other people’s rights. It is important to know that landlords and neighbors have rights too. There are several things that are expected of you as a tenant and member of the Corvallis community, and you should be aware of them in order to protect yourself. Some of these obligations include:

- Keep the property safe, sanitary, and free from damage
- Dispose of all garbage in a clean, safe and sanitary manner
  - NOTE: There is a $250 Fine for Theft of Service for using someone else’s dumpster! Don’t do this!
- Comply with housing, health and safety codes that apply to tenants
- Allow the landlord to enter the premises if the request is reasonable, and a proper 24-hour notice is given. You have the right to proper notification – 24 hours notice unless there’s an emergency.
- Abide by the rules and regulations in your contract
- Replace light bulbs and furnace filters when needed
- Keep heat on during winter to protect pipes

One thing we cannot place enough emphasis on is keeping your unit clean. It’s essential that you properly dispose of garbage in trash receptacles. Trash bags that accumulate on the side of your property attract flies that spread disease and little friends like Whiskers, Ninja and Lucile (your new, adopted pet rats).

- Orange is the New Green; Keep Corvallis Clean.
- Keep your neighborhood clean — pick up all trash and recyclables from your property.
- Know your trash and recycling pickup days. Remove receptacles from the curb within 24 hours.
- Visit tiny.cc/reusedirectory to find out where to take unwanted items — school supplies, appliances, electronics, etc. — in clean, good-working condition.

Also know that Corvallis Furniture will pick up unwanted furniture in good condition for FREE. Call 541-286-4658 to schedule a pickup.

Perhaps one of the most important obligations you have as a renter is to be a good neighbor. It is imperative that you do not disturb your neighbor’s peaceful enjoyment. On top of the properly disposing of your trash, this also takes us back to the Party Smart presentation we discussed earlier on in this workshop. As a tenant, and an individual living in the Corvallis community, you should treat your neighbors and their properties with respect. Be a good neighbor and respect the hood!

COMMON TENANT PROBLEMS
Corvallis Community Relations has developed a strong partnership with local property managers, and we have listened to many of their stories. We have compiled a list of common problems that tenants encounter while renting in
Corvallis. Some of these problems negatively affect the tenant, and some of them negatively affect the landlord. Either way, you should be very aware of all of them! Common tenant problems include:

- Water damage and bidets. While bidets may be more sanitary than paper (wiping is so 1990), improper installation can be a big, costly problem. Water damage to the floor and walls can cost you. Avoid this by contacting the property manager and requesting professional installation. It may cost a little up front, but could save you thousands of dollars in the long run.
- Lack of ventilation. All units must have proper bathroom and kitchen ventilation. If they don’t, you should contact your landlord. This is imperative, as poor bathroom ventilation leads to mold, and poor kitchen ventilation can lead to smoke inhalation!
- Accumulated trash (wash dishes, property dispose of garbage). Make sure you take out your trash, and do not over-stuff the bin! You may be charged an additional $25 if the lid does not close all the way.
- Leaving trash cans out after trash day. This is one of the biggest complaints we receive in our offices every week. After trash day, it is important that you take your trash cans back to your house or apartment. This makes the neighborhood look much cleaner. A clean neighborhood makes for a happy neighbor.
- Couches and other furniture in front yard. Couches are not meant to be outside, especially in the front yard. Once a porch couch, always a porch couch. If you would like to sit outside, use beach chairs and bring them inside when you are done.
- How to handle grease fires ➔ baking soda, not water. Baking soda will put out a grease fire, water will not! Keep baking soda near your stove at all times in order to protect yourself and your unit.
- No hot plates on the countertops. Unless you have granite countertops, you can expect them to melt if you place a hot plate or hot pot on the countertop.
- Loud Noise. Keep it down. You may be cited for any noise heard beyond 150 ft. Excessive noise wakes children from their sleep and disturbs the neighborhoods right to peace and quiet. Do it (or rather don’t do it) for the children.
- Putting trash items down the sink or other plumbing. It is pretty easy to clog your sink, especially if you have a garbage disposal. Be aware of what you flush down the toilet as well!
- Failure to call in work orders. If something in your house breaks, you must contact your landlord as soon as possible in order to get it fixed. Many students neglect to do this, and this can be troublesome for both you and your landlord. Contact them right away in writing and over the phone!

**OVERCOMING PROBLEMS**

As a tenant, you might encounter problems with your landlord. This can happen for a number of different reasons. Whatever reason that might be, it is important you know how to overcome it.
The first step to overcoming these issues is to simply speak with your landlord. Give them a call and express your concern. Often times the problem can be simply resolved there and then! If you do not feel comfortable doing this for any reason, or if speaking to them does not resolve the problem, we encourage you to seek help.

ASOSU Student Legal Services at Oregon State and Corvallis Rental Housing Program are two resources that are in place to protect you as student renters. The Corvallis Rental Housing Program is a great resource for Corvallis tenants. It was designed in order to assist Corvallis renters solve any issues they encounter during the rental process, as well as to educate the community and tenants on some of the common issues that accompany renting in Corvallis. If you have any questions about the rental process, or an encounter a problem of any kind, contacting the Corvallis Rental Housing Program might be your best bet.

LEGAL SERVICES
Student Legal Services is one of the services offered by the Associated Students of Oregon State University. Legal Services provides legal advice and representation to OSU students when they have a dispute that does not pertain to the University. There are several reasons why you might contact legal services.

These include:
- Not coming to an agreement after speaking to landlord
- Discrimination or harassment by your landlord
- Unlawful Entry or Eviction
- Failure to return Security Deposit
- Housing code violations
- Lack of essential repairs or failure to address major repairs

One of the primary reasons why students contact legal services is related to security deposits. Know that you may not be eligible for a full refund of your security deposit and may even owe the property manager/owner money based on the condition of the home when moving out. Almost all landlords keep some of the security deposit in order to cover carpet-cleaning costs. However, besides this, of you feel that you kept the property in a good condition and did not receive a fair amount back, contact your landlord and request an itemized receipt that outlines all of the things they charged you for. If your landlord fails to provide you with reasonable explanation or an itemized receipt, you should then contact legal services. Once again, remember to take pictures when moving in and when moving out for documentation of previous damage so you will not be held responsible. Make sure the photos are date and time stamped.

REPAIRS
If something breaks in your unit, it is important that you get it repaired! Especially if it is an essential household appliance like a refrigerator or toilet.
Remember that “According to Oregon Law, a landlord shall at all times during the tenancy maintain the dwelling unit in a habitable condition.”

If your repair is an emergency, contact your landlord ASAP! Some things in your home are required to be fixed by your landlord within 24 hours. Other things in the home, like holes in walls, have more relaxed timelines. Either way, if something breaks, contact them right away!

There are some common housing issues you should be aware of:

• Clogged pipes or any plumbing issues
• Mold
• Heating systems
• Broken/cracked windows
• Locks
• Electrical wiring
• Drippy faucet/running toilets

Before we move on, Benny wants you to always remember that:

• You have rights – Don’t forget about ASOSU Legal Services and the Corvallis Rental Housing Program. If you have a problem, don’t just go along to get along. Proper heat sources, maintaining the property in a fit, safe and habitable condition, notice of entry, and proper repairs are all required by your landlord.
• Be considerate of others around you. You’re a part of a community.
• Communicate! With landlords, roommates, and police. Know what is in your renter’s agreement.

Section 6: Financial Literacy Be Money Smart

Moving off campus can sometimes be confusing from a money standpoint. This presentation will cover everything you need to know about keeping a budget and staying on top of your finances while living off-campus. You’re literate, but are you financially literate? Create a budget, manage your expenses and become Money Smart.

Remember to pay close attention to the topics discussed, as you will take a short quiz immediately following this module.

BUDGET

Keeping a budget is one of the best things you can do while living off-campus. It’s a great way to stay on top of your expenses, and allows you to keep track of what you are spending your money on every month. There are many smart phone apps that you can download (such as Mint), but you can always balance your checkbook and keep an old-school journal, too. Whichever you might fancy.
There are several things you should be aware of when keeping your budget. Your monthly expenses will usually fall into one of five categories:

1. Rent
2. Utilities
3. Food and Groceries
4. Transportation
5. Other expenses

INITIAL MOVE IN COSTS
It’s important to know what you might expect to pay when first moving into your new house. Usually, you are required to pay the first months rent, the last months rent, and the security deposit. So, if you sign a lease that states you will pay $1 million dollars for rent you might expect to pay $3 million dollars for that first month because of the additional $1 million for the security deposit, and $1 million for the last months rent.

The security deposit will be refunded to you when you move out. Of course, that’s if you leave the property in the same condition as when you moved in beyond normal wear and tear. The point of this deposit is to cover anything you might break or any damage you might cause.

RENT
Rent will usually be your biggest expense every month, and generally ranges anywhere from $400-$1200 per person here in Corvallis. There are many ways to reduce the cost of your rent. These include:

- Having more roommates
- Location
- And the type of house you are living in. For example, apartments are typically cheaper than houses, and you will pay more if you live in a place just recently built with new appliances. So keep that in mind!

UTILITIES
Utility prices can range dramatically, and can sometimes be zero! Not all landlords require you to pay utilities, and this can save you a lot of money. However, you will almost always pay for electricity, so keep that in mind!

Utilities you can expect to pay are:

- Electric ($60-$100 per month)
- Water ($30-$100 per month)
- Garbage ($25 per month)
- Natural Gas ($30-$60 per month)
- Wifi/Internet ($20-$100 per month)
- Cable ($50-$200 per month)
As you can see, the prices can greatly vary! If you decide to blast your electric heater 24 hours a day during the winter, you can expect to pay a much larger electricity bill. The same goes for water, too, so keep those shower times down! Television can add up, so if you don’t watch too much TV, you might consider not purchasing cable.

**FOOD**

Food will typically cost you anywhere from $100-$400 every month. Shopping at cheaper grocery stores may save you money. But also remember your health, and purchase and prepare your food accordingly. Also, eating out can present a very high expense, so remember this if you are trying to save money!

There are many different options available to you if you are struggling to afford food. These include the OSU Food Pantry SNAP, Orange Rewards, and the Student Survival Guide.

Perhaps the first two are the most important to remember. For SNAP, you only need to work one hour per month on work-study. If you don’t qualify for work-study, you must work at least 20 hours a week. This is all it takes to be qualified! You can find out more information by googling “Oregon Food Stamps” or contacting the Human Services Resource Center.

The OSU Emergency Food Pantry at the HSRC or the Human Services Resource Center is also a great resource. They’re located on campus, and they will provide you with food on an anonymous basis, no questions asked. The HSRC coordinates services for students primarily focused on alleviating the effects of hunger and poverty, and providing services that meet human needs. This way students don’t have to choose between buying books and eating dinner.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Did you know that public transportation in Corvallis is completely free for all students? Well there’s no such thing as a free lunch. Complimentary public transit is financed through property taxes, but you get the point. You pay nothing! All you need to do is show your student ID. If you live further off-campus, you can save money by avoiding the cost of gas and a parking permit, and taking the bus instead.

Biking and walking are also great options, and they keep you healthy, too.

**BUDGETING TIPS**

There are many different tips we have for budgeting, and they can really help you stay on top of your expenses!

Here are some basic tips to remember:

- Keep a budget notebook, app, or document!
- Be realistic with your expenses and don’t overspend
Differentiate between what you want, and what you really need. Don’t make a purchase if you don’t need it!

When keeping a budget, guess low for income and high for expenses. You will have a little extra money at the end of the month!

Keep all of your bills and receipts organized

Open a savings account and add to it monthly. 10% of your paycheck every month can really add up!

**SPENDING TIPS**

Here are a few tips to remember in terms of spending. Following these can really help you save money!

- Buy or rent used textbooks. Try half.com or ask your friends!
- Limit how much you eat out. Restaurants can be very expensive and their expenses add up.
- Avoid impulse purchases. Sleep on it, and if you still want it tomorrow, you can consider buying it.
- Don’t grocery shop when you are hungry!
- Cook dinner with friends, it’s fun and saves you money!
- Lastly, make your own coffee!

**Before we finish up, Benny has three more things he wants you to remember before you go!**

- Be mindful of utilities. How much it will cost to heat up the home (bigger, older homes need more heat, more heat costs more money)
- Budget, budget, budget (mint.com)
- Food – grocery shopping vs. eating out. OSU Food Pantry (food insecurity).

We hope this guide has provided you with useful information that better prepares you for off-campus living. If you would like to learn more, check out our website. You can also find a list of all the resources we discussed in this presentation at studentlife.oregonstate.edu/ccr/workshopresources. After you click the next button, you will take your final quiz to become a preferred renter. For those of you who are new to living off campus, Welcome to Corvallis! For those of you who are returning, Welcome Back. We’re happy you’re a part of our community.

Because of students and residents like you, Corvallis ranks among the nation’s top college towns and best places to live. Help us keep it that way – live smart, party smarter. Be a good Beaver, and be an even better neighbor.