Off-Campus Living Guide

Northeast Community College

Wayne State College
Dear College Student:

As an incoming college student, you are at an important milestone in your life with more independence, choices, challenges, and peer pressures. Off-campus living is a right of passage for most students. Once you’ve chosen your roommate(s) and identified an apartment or house, there can be a great sense of excitement. Often that excitement overshadows the seriousness related to signing a lease.

This resource, developed by the Northeast Community College Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Workgroup and the WSC TRUST Coalition, can assist you as a new renter. Read this guide before signing a lease. As a resource, it also provides basic information regarding your responsibilities as a tenant, a neighbor, a citizen, and a college student. We encourage you to study this information about leases, tenant and landlord responsibilities, safety, and utilities.

This booklet also provides information about community standards and consequences regarding alcohol-related citations in Norfolk and Wayne. Beyond that, it provides suggestions for hosting parties, discusses signs of alcohol poisoning, and provides emergency phone numbers.

It is our hope that this publication will provide information that will assist you in being a good tenant, a good neighbor, a contributing member of Northeast Nebraska.

Thank you for looking through this resource for a successful off-campus living experience. Feel free to call if there is any way we can help you.

Regards,

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Dr. Karen Severson, Northeast Vice President of Student Services
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The Lease:

When you rent an apartment or house, you will be expected to sign a lease that includes your obligations and rights as a tenant and your landlord’s rights and obligations as the owner. A lease is a legal contract to which you will be legally bound. Make sure that you read the lease, ask questions, and get a copy.

The lease may include the period of time the apartment/house/trailer will be rented to you, the cost of the rent for the apartment/house/trailer, and the cost of the security deposit. A security deposit may not exceed the amount of one month’s rent unless pets are allowed and you have one. Then it may be the amount of 1¼ month’s rent. The landlord may keep this money to cover any damage or cleaning costs that occur after you leave the premises. Normal wear and tear is not to be covered by the security deposits. The lease may also list the utilities covered by the owner and those for which the tenant is responsible.

The lease may also indicate what items are in the apartment/house, vanity changes that can be made to the apartment/house, and who is in charge of keeping up with the facilities. It may also include by whom and when snow removal and lawn care will be completed…important things to know when it has snowed six inches and you need to be at class at 8 a.m.!

THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN THE LEASE:

- Length of time the lease is effective.
- Penalties for breaking the lease early.
- Number of people permitted to live in the unit.
- Pet policies.
- Amount of rent.
- Smoking policies.
- When rent is late and what late fees may apply.
- Utilities and repairs/Who is responsible for them.
- Another important component of your lease, though not so obvious is to ask about absences…that you must notify your landlord if you are going to be away from your unit (the number of days varies by lease/landlord). Make sure you tell your landlord before you leave how long you will be away. If you do not tell him/her, he/she may think you have abandoned the unit and he/she can move your things out and rent the unit to someone else while you are gone. This may result in you owing storage fees too. Ouch!! Also remember to never turn the heat off or below 40 degrees in the winter months as the pipes might freeze.

The City of Norfolk Housing Division also recommends that any renter obtain a free copy of the Landlord-Tenant Law brochure from an attorney. The director also reminds renters that landlords can place their names on a bad tenant list nationwide so other landlords will not rent to them. If a tenant leaves damages, unpaid rent, etc., many
Landlords will send a bill to a collection agency and this can damage a tenant’s credit score when he/she wants a loan or to purchase a home.

**THINGS YOU MAY WANT TO ASK:**
- Where are the garbage facilities?
- Who picks up the garbage?
- When is it removed and is this a cost to me or is it included in the rent?
- Where are the laundry facilities?

**Safety Considerations:**
- Look for the following safety features…
- Well-lit entry ways and hallways.
- Well-lit off-street or on-street parking.
- Well-lit and well-trafficked pedestrian areas and sidewalks.
- A locked outer security door on multi-unit apartments.
- Locked access to common areas such as laundry rooms and storage facilities.
- Deadbolt lock on the apartment doors.
- Peepholes or chain locks on doors.
- Locks on all first-floor or ground-level windows.
- A sufficient number of electrical outlets in every room (two and three prong) – no extensions cords or adaptors.
- Working appliances plugged directly into appropriate outlets.
- Locked mailboxes.
- A fire escape for upper floor apartments.
- Locks on any window accessible from a fire escape.
- Working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

**Landlord Duties:**
- Making repairs on your home (they must obey city/local codes).
- Units may not be rented until they contain safe heating equipment, which heats the whole unit.
- All foundations, floors, walls, ceilings, and roofs must be reasonably weather proof, watertight, and rodent proof.
- Units must be clean and fit for human occupancy.
- All stairways, approaches, and entryways shall be safe to use and capable of supporting people.
- The landlord must keep all provided and law-required appliances, air conditioners and other facilities in good working order.
• If your unit was built prior to 1978, your landlord must inform you of any lead-based paint hazards. Landlords should also provide you with materials educating you about the hazards of lead-based paint.

**Tenant Responsibilities:**

- Pay rent and utility bills on time.
- Give written notice to the landlord when you are ending the lease or repairing the unit. Notices should be sent certified mail with a return receipt requested. Be certain to check your lease to determine how much notice is required; typically it is 30 days, but it can be up to 60 days. If rent is due on the 1st of the month, state law requires written notice be given on or before the 1st of the month.
- Keep the unit clean and safe in compliance with the local city housing codes.
- Use facilities in a reasonable manner.
- Dispose of all garbage in a clean and safe manner.
- Be responsible for any damages done to the unit by you, the tenant, or your guests.
- Respect your neighbors property.
- Give the landlord written notice of any needed repairs or problems with the unit.
- Abide by all apartment complex or community neighborhood association agreements, expectations, and guidelines.
- Request in writing that your deposit be returned within 14 days after you vacate. (The landlord must comply with either return of the deposit or list expenses and reason for not returning all or part of the deposit.)

**Housing and Fire Codes**

**MINIMUM HOUSING CODES:**

The City of Norfolk zoning regulations and the Landlord-Tenant Act require landlords and tenants to comply with the community’s minimum housing codes concerning health and safety. For example, the Norfolk zoning regulations allow for five, unrelated people to live as a single family unit. In Wayne, zoning regulations allow for four unrelated people to live in a single family unit. In addition to the number of occupants, the layout of the property should be considered to assure that all sleeping rooms have required emergency egress.

If you have concerns that your landlord has not followed through on his/ her obligations regarding health and safety issues, and you have made and documented a good faith effort to work with your landlord regarding repairs, etc., contact the Health
Official at the Norfolk Fire Division Prevention Bureau at (402)844-2060, or in Wayne, call the Building Inspector at (402)375-1733 and explain the problem. In Wayne, you will also be given a copy of the Landlord Tenant Act upon request at City Hall on 306 North Pearl Street.

FIRE CODES:

NORFOLK: Another code with regulations that sometimes catch new apartment dwellers off guard is the International Fire Code. This is Norfolk’s locally-adopted Fire Code and among other things, it prohibits the use of charcoal burners and other open-flame cooking devices within 10 feet of combustible construction. This means that in most situations, it is illegal to have a grill on your deck.

Fire code information may be found at: www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/citycode/Tableofcontents.htm Questions may be directed to: (402)844-2050.


WAYNE: Building Inspector, (402)375-1733  
City Hall is location at 306 Pearl street  

Renter’s Insurance:

When you move into a rental facility, the owner of the property carries insurance for the physical structure only and not for your personal property. You may want to look into purchasing renter’s insurance. Many times auto insurance carriers provide a discounted rate if you already have insurance with them. The average cost of renter’s insurance is around $100-$200 per year or about $16 a month. Most policies cover repair or replacement of your personal property if damaged, destroyed, or stolen as a result of various types of peril—fire, lightning, windstorm or hail, explosions, smoke, vandalism, theft, damage by glass, electrical surge damage, and water-related damage. When you fill out your application for renter’s insurance, it will ask you to itemize your belongings and approximate value. It is important to be honest here since it will determine the amount of coverage you need. It’s a good idea to photograph/ videotape your belongings.

Unit Entry:

Your landlord will legally be able to access your apartment/house to inspect it, to make repairs, to show it to future tenants or prospective buyers, or in the case of an emergency. The landlord, except in the case of an emergency, must give 24-hour notice of the intent to enter your unit.
Getting Connected:

Chances are you will be responsible for some or all of your utilities. Here is a list of the utility companies that serve Norfolk and Wayne:

**Electricity:**
- **Norfolk:** Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), (877) 275-6773, www.nppd.com/Contact_Us/d

**Natural Gas:** Norfolk and Wayne: Black Hills Energy, (800) 694-8989, www.blackhillsenergy.com

**Water:**
- **Norfolk:** City of Norfolk Water Division, (402) 844-2210, www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/water/

**Garbage:**
- **Private collectors:**
  - John’s Disposal, (402) 371-6136
  - Gill Hauling, (402) 632-9273
  - Prime Sanitation, (402) 371-9193
  - Quality Sanitation, (402) 379-0638

**Telephone:**
- **Qwest:** (888) 483-6035, www.qwest.com
- **Wayne:** American Broadband, (402) 375-1120, www.abbnebraska.com
- **CableOne:** (402) 379-2330, www.cableone.net
- **Verizon:** (800) 922-0204, www.verizonwireless.com
- **Z Wireless (Verizon Wireless):** (402) 833-5438
- **Viaro:** (402) 851-0600, (402) 851-1955, (402) 851-1234
- **Telebeep:** (402) 371-2337, www.telebeep.com
- **US Cellular:** (402) 833-5065, www.uscellular.com
- **Norfolk:** US Cellular, (402) 371-8771, www.uscellular.com

Cable: Norfolk: CableOne, Washington Post Co., (402) 379-2330  
www.cableone.net
Wayne: American Broadband, (402) 375-1120  
www.abbnebraska.com

Recycling:

Norfolk Recycling: A number of private recycling services and refuse haulers are located in Norfolk. Also, paper and 20-ounce soft drink plastic bottles are being recycled by the Green Hawks on campus. Look for the Green Fiber green containers at select locations around campus near trash bins for paper recycling and for the covered, blue trash bins in select buildings for plastic pop bottle recycling.

Private recyclers* in Norfolk include:

- Alter Metal Recycling, 500 Washington Avenue, (402) 371-2200
- Keep Norfolk Beautiful, 125 South 4th Street, (402) 379-3260
- Norfolk Transmission & Muffler, 1001 South 13th Street, (402) 371-1283

* Call ahead for recyclables they will accept.

Wayne Recycling: Private companies provide these services. Gill Hauling operates a solid waste transfer station and recycling center where items can be dropped off by businesses or residents wishing to haul their own garbage and recycling. Solid waste is hauled from the facility to the landfill in Jackson, Nebraska. Recycling materials are baled and then shipped to various markets. The Public Works Department also operates a wood recycling center where tree limbs and debris can be disposed. For locations and hours, see www.cityofwayne.org/index.aspx?NID=153. WSC also recycles paper, aluminum and plastic.

Curb side recycling in Wayne includes:

- Gill Hauling, (402) 632-9273
- Waste Connections, (402) 644-8300

Moving:

When you move into your new rental property, make sure that you carefully fill out the form that states the condition of the property. This information will be essential to you when you move out and the rental company wants to charge you for a scratch on the floor that you know was there when you moved in. Protect yourself by going over your new home and writing down every mark, scrape, or dent. Take a digital camera with you to snap photos of things you might find in dispute when you vacate the premises. Make sure that both you and your landlord sign your Inventory and Condition Report. Then give a copy of this information to the rental company and keep a copy for yourself in a safe place.
When you move out, be sure that you know what is expected by the landlord. Ask if there is a cleaning list you should follow. Know where and when to turn in the keys and when you must be completely vacated from the property. It is important to do a final walkthrough with your landlord to make sure things are as expected. You will want to know when you will get your deposit refunded as well, since that money will come in handy when you move to your new place. Nebraska Statute states you should receive your deposit within 14 days along with an itemized list of any charges taken out of the deposit.

If you have problems with your landlord, call your lawyer ASAP — the sooner the better. If you do not have a lawyer or cannot afford one, call Legal Aid of Nebraska to apply for service at (877) 250-2016.

Landlord and Tenant Law Handbook: www.legalaidofnebraska.com/node/27

Register to Vote: Wayne: In addition to national and state elections that occur every two years, you must register to vote at the Wayne County Clerk’s office in order to participate in elections for the City of Wayne and Wayne County. www.cityofwayne.org/index.aspx?nid=132

Community Standards and Consequences:

In order to ensure a high quality of life for all its residents, the Norfolk and Wayne Police Departments actively enforce the municipal codes. Those hosting social events in neighborhoods are expected to control the behavior of their guests or face stiff penalties.

Because you are a college student renting off-campus housing, many people assume that most students are drinking alcohol. In a recent surveys conducted by Northeast Community College and WSC, it was found that over 27 percent of students at both colleges had not consumed alcohol in the past 30 days. That means that you can find peers in college who do not drink alcohol.

As a college student, your behavior directly affects how the community views all college students, Northeast Community College and Wayne State College. The colleges have a strong working relationship with the Police Departments. As a result, the police may notify college officials when they issue citations regarding loud, disorderly parties in Norfolk and Wayne neighborhoods. These citations often include, but are not limited to, citations for the following violations:

**Procuring Alcohol for a Minor**

1st offense: $300 - $500 fine
Maximum one year in Jail and $1,000 fine
Selling Alcohol Without a License
1st offense: $200 - $500 fine
Maximum three months in jail and $500 fine

Minor in Possession/Consumption
1st offense: $175 fine
2nd offense: $250 fine
3rd offense: probation/alcohol evaluation or seven days in jail

Open Container
$50 fine
Other violations frequently cited at parties include: disorderly conduct, failure to disperse, public urination and fleeing an officer.

Driving Under the Influence (DUI)
First Drunk Driving Conviction
• Jail – Minimum of 7 Days up to 60 Days
• Fine – Up to $500
• License Suspension – Up to 6 Months
• License Suspension – 1 Year (If Blood Alcohol Level .15 or Above)
• Alcohol Assessment / Alcohol Treatment - Possible

Second Drunk Driving Conviction
• Jail – Minimum of 30 Days up to 90 Days
• Jail – Minimum of 90 Days up to 1 Year (If Blood Alcohol Level .15 or above)
• Fine – Up to $500
• Fine – Up to $1,000 (If Blood Alcohol Level .15 or above)
• License Suspension – 1 Year
• License Suspension – From 1 to 15 Years (If Blood Alcohol Level .15 or above)
• Vehicle Immobilization – From 5 Days to 8 Months
• Vehicle Impoundment - Possible
• Ignition Interlock Device - Possible
• Alcohol Assessment / Alcohol Treatment - Possible

Third Drunk Driving Conviction
• Jail – Minimum of 90 Days up to 1 Year
• Jail – Minimum of 180 Days up to 5 Years (If Blood Alcohol Level .15 or above)
• Fine – Up to $600
• Fine – Up to $10,000 (If Blood Alcohol Level .15 or above)
• License Suspension – From 2 to 15 Years
• License Suspension – From 5 to 15 Years (If Blood Alcohol Level .15 or above)
• Vehicle Immobilization – From 5 Days to 8 Months
• Ignition Interlock Device - Possible
• Alcohol Assessment / Alcohol Treatment – Possible

Reminder the legal drinking age is 21 years of age. It is against the law to consume alcohol before you reach the age of 21.

Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act

WSC: See the policy at www.wsc.edu/catalogs_publications/campus_offcampus_courses/summer_11_class_schedule.pdf

**TRUST Coalition:** The Toward Responsible Use of Substances Today (TRUST) Coalition will provide leadership to fulfill the commitment of WSC to create and sustain a campus and community that promotes responsible decisions and eliminates obstacles to students’ academic goals. It is the mission of the TRUST Coalition to reduce problems related to alcohol and drug abuse through leadership and policy development, information dissemination, and program innovation (www.wsc.edu/counseling_center/related_services/trust_coalition/).

In addition, the Nebraska Unicameral has passed a Social Host Liability Provision. This provision states that people who are killed, injured or have sustained property damage as a result of the actions of an intoxicated minor, can sue the person who provided the alcohol or the social host who allowed the minor to consume the alcohol in his/her home.

**WE AGREE**

Northeast Community College and Wayne State College are dedicated to educating students about the use and misuse of alcohol. Accordingly, representatives of the Northeast Student Government Association and the Wayne State College Student Senate, along with student leaders from the other institutions of higher education, signed endorse the following pledge:

We, the college students at Northeast Community College and Wayne State College, agree with Norfolk and Wayne officials and residents that wild parties are hurt city neighborhoods. We want to do our part in making things better for all of us. And we need your help.
If You Are Hosting A House Party:

BEFORE THE PARTY

• Tell your neighbors you are having a party.
• Ask them to call you with concerns before calling the police.
• Tell people coming what time the party ends.
• Seal off unnecessary rooms and lock up valuables.
• “Drunk proof” the house (switches, fuse box, thermostat).

DURING THE PARTY

• Have a designated sober person watch doors, monitor guests and noise and keep alcohol inside.
• Walk around the house to check the parking, the noise level, and to pick up litter.
• Use fans and vents to keep the inside cool.
• Have food and non-alcoholic drinks available.
• Keep the bathroom line moving so people don’t go outside.
• Cut off people who are drinking too fast or are getting out of control.
• Watch for signs of fights starting and possible sexual assaults.
• Don’t let strangers in.
• Without a liquor license, you can’t charge for alcohol. Things like selling cups, passing the hat, asking for contributions to the utility bill, and selling shots are all illegal.

AFTER THE PARTY

• Don’t let intoxicated people wander off, drive, or walk home alone.
• Collect cans, cups and bottles at the door so nobody leaves with open container.
• Clean up the outside of your property.

THE MOST COMMON REASONS POLICE COME TO A PARTY

• Too noisy.
• Too crowded inside, so party moves outside.
• Fighting
• People urinate or vomit outside.
• Cars are parked on lawns, in neighbors’ driveways, or there are just too many cars.
• A party has been busted there before.
• Property is vandalized or stolen.
• The party gets too big.

Sometimes the police show up at parties because neighbors called and complained. Sometimes they look for parties by patrolling in party neighborhoods looking for too many cars, too many people, or too much noise.
WHAT TO DO IF THE POLICE SHOW UP AT YOUR PARTY

• DO NOT run away or lock the doors. This will make thing worse.
• DO stop the music and ask everyone to set down drinks and leave quietly.
• DO have your designated sober person talk to the officers. Rude, intoxicated hosts will just aggravate the officers.
• If you get a citation, DO go to your court date.

(Information adapted from the UNL ASUN House Parties: A Guide by Students for Students and the Nebraska Wesleyan Off-Campus Living Guide)

21ST BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

When you turn 21 years old, you probably want to have fun. But always remember that memories are only fun if you have them. If you choose to drink, remember that drinking enough to pass out, means being left out. Please make healthy choices. Don’t “waste” it! See www.brad21.org/.

ALCOHOL POISONING

Signs & Symptoms

1. You know the person consumed a lot of alcohol.
2. The person is unconscious/cannot be awakened.
3. The person has cold, clammy, unusually pale or bluish skin.
4. The person is breathing slowly or irregularly (less than eight times a minute or 10 or more seconds between breaths).
5. The person vomits while passed out and does not wake up during or after.

If any signs/symptoms of alcohol poisoning exist – call 911 immediately!

DO NOT LEAVE THE PERSON ALONE

ACTIONS TO TAKE

1. Try to wake the person up (shout name, slap face, pinch skin) – determine the person’s consciousness.
2. Check the person’s breathing to evaluate for slow or irregular breaths and skin color and temperature.
3. Turn the person on his/her side to prevent choking on his/her vomit. Do not leave the person alone.

A person with alcohol poisoning cannot sleep it off! If he/she is extremely drunk or barely conscious, it is important to continue to monitor breathing, responsiveness and skin color and call for help. Check-out www.samspadyfoundation.org/ to find out what can happen when a person is left to “sleep it off.”
Important Numbers

Police .......................................................................................................................................................911
Alcohol Emergency ..................................................................................................................................911
Nebraska Treatment Referral Line .........................................................................(800) 648-4444
Suicide Prevention Hotline ....................................................................................... (800)273-8255
Report Underage Drinking .............................................www.reportunderagedrinking.com ............................................................(866) 687-8221

Norfolk Crime Stoppers .........................................................................(402) 371-7300
Behavioral Health Specialists 24/7 Crisis Careline .............................................(888) 370-7003
Wayne State College Counseling Center .............................................................(402) 375-7321
Norfolk Police Department (Non-emergency) .............................................(402) 644-8700
Wayne Police Department (Non-emergency) ...................................................(402) 375-2626

Bright Horizons for Survivors of Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault .................
........................................................................................................................................(402) 379-3798

Bright Horizons Hotline .....................................................................................(800) 876-6328
Haven House .................................................................................................................(402) 375-4633
Northeast Counselor ...............................................................................................(402) 844-7277
Poison Control Hotline .....................................................................................(800) 222-1222
Providence Medical Center-Wayne ........................................................................(402) 375-3800
Project Extra Mile..................................................................................www.projectextramile.org/ ............................................................(402) 963-9047

Northeast Campus Security ...............................................................................(402) 841-5163
WSC Campus Security ......................................................................................(402) 375-7216

The Off-campus Living Guide is provided solely as an informational service to students. We have made every effort to ensure that the information included is current and correct. We make no guarantee with regard to the accuracy or timeliness of any material contained in this Guide. Neither Northeast Community College or Wayne State College shall be liable to anyone using or relying on the content of this Guide for any loss or damages arising there from.
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