

# Roommate Etiquette

**Establish some basic rules:** The first thing you should do with your new roommate(s) is to sit down and establish a short list of house rules. This is a give-and-take conversation, so first list the most important things that each of you expects. Include policies regarding quiet times, personal space vs. common space, guests, cleaning schedule and anything else that is important to you.

**Follow the Golden Rule:** Before you take any questionable action regarding your roommate, stop and think about how you would feel if the tables were turned. Following the Golden Rule can help you avoid larger issues.

**Don't take anything that isn't yours without asking:** Ask permission first and always honor their wishes. If they give you permission to borrow something, and you break it, pay to have it professionally fixed. If that doesn't work, replace the item. Keep your hands off the other roommates' food and drinks. They might be saving it for a special occasion, or they may have purchased it with the last of what was left in their food budget. If it helps, write your initials on your food in order to not get it confused with other roommates' food.

**Respect everyone's need for quiet time:** If you see your roommate reading a book, don't constantly interrupt them with conversation. If you know that they have to be at work early the next morning, keep the noise level low. One way for roommates to let each other know when they're sleeping is to have a small "sleeping" sign made that can hang from their bedroom doorknob.

**Respect personal space and common areas:** Everyone has a need for personal space, regardless of how outgoing they may be, so avoid intruding on the other person's space. Remember that you are sharing an apartment with three other individuals and that the common areas should be shared equally. Keep your personal belongings in your room, not in the common areas shared by other roommates. This includes the kitchen, living room and bathrooms.

**Be respectful when inviting guests:** Whether you are having someone over for a dinner party or an overnight stay, you should always discuss this with your roommate(s). Also, make sure you understand and follow the terms of your lease regarding guests.

**Clean up your own messes:** If you make a mess, clean it up. Don't expect your roommate to help clean up after you. You also shouldn't leave the mess for the next day because the other person shouldn't have to face dirty dishes and crumbs when they get up in the morning. When you share a bathroom, keep your personal belongings neat and in order.

**Deal with problems quickly:** As soon as you notice a problem, let your roommate know that it's time to have a talk. Discuss your point of view in a matter-of-fact way; avoid being accusatory or constantly trying to correct them. Never deal with situations with the silent treatment, passive-aggressive behavior, yelling, or physical violence.

**The boiling point:** Most problems can be worked through with a genuine effort from all parties involved. The first step is to have a candid conversation with roommates to find a solution to the problem at hand. If it's something you can't agree on then the second step is come to the HR & Safety office to discuss it with one of our staff. Finally, if the problem(s) continue you will need to speak with a professional counselor through the Employee Assistance Program.