

LIVING OFF-CAMPUS IN THE CITY OF SCRANTON

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO OFF-CAMPUS LIVING, LOCAL LAWS AND ORDINANCES



Living off-campus is an exciting opportunity that is accompanied by numerous responsibilities. It is important for students who choose to live off-campus to familiarize themselves with local laws, ordinances, and applicable University of Scranton policies. This document provides information regarding key responsibilities and students are encouraged to review the off-campus living website (www.scranton.edu/offcampus), University policies, and local ordinances (City of Scranton Code, <http://ecode360.com/?custId=SC1588>). If you have questions or concerns related to off-campus living, you are encouraged to seek assistance through the Dean of Students Office.

Student Behavior in the Neighboring Community

The University of Scranton is an integral part of the historic Hill neighborhood and the City of Scranton, and students are members of both the University community and the local community. Respect and concern for the dignity, well-being and property of members of the local community is essential. All University students are obligated to exhibit exemplary citizenship at all times. Excessive or unreasonable noise, the illegal use and/or sale or distribution of alcohol or drugs, excessively large parties, and/or disrespect for neighbor and community are incongruent with students' obligations. Therefore, **the University reserves the right to refer students involved in these types of behaviors, as well as other disruptive behaviors, to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action.** If found responsible, students will be subject to University sanctions and provisions up to and including suspension and expulsion from the University.

Living Off-Campus: Safety & Security Precautions

- Call Scranton Police Department (911) or Public Safety (570-941-777) if there is an emergency. Keep other important numbers at a central and reachable location as well as having them programmed in your cell phone.
- Know the location of smoke alarms and fire extinguishers and how to maintain them. Do not rent an apartment that is not equipped with smoke detectors or has proper exits and entrances.
- Lock doors and windows (even when leaving for a short period of time) and leave an outside light on.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Do not travel alone, especially at night.
- Never use a basement or attic as a bedroom without a proper fire exit/escape.
- Do not open your door to strangers, including door-to-door sales persons, security officers, or salespersons.

Tips for Being a Good Neighbor

- Respect your neighbors and recognize that students are not the only persons living near you.
- Get to know your neighbors. Introduce yourself and create a sound relationship.
- Maintain a respectable appearance of your property, including lawn and shrub overgrowth, shoveling of sidewalks, garbage disposal, unsightly porch furniture, etc. Make sure you understand what your landlord will maintain and what you are responsible for maintaining. Even if you do not have a yard and a porch to maintain, do your part to keep the entryway and foyer of your building neat and uncluttered.
- Be considerate of your parking habits as this is a significant concern of your neighbors. Don't take up two spaces with one car; be careful not to block sidewalks; never block driveways and always consider safety implications.

Legal Assistance Program

If you find yourself in need of additional assistance as you face issues including but not limited to reviewing leases, requesting security deposit monies, and dealing with landlord-tenant issues, contact the Office of Student Affairs at (570)941-7680 to learn more about the Legal Assistance Program. In most circumstances, this program enables students to schedule one on-campus consultative appointment with an attorney at no direct cost to the student.

Select Pennsylvania State Laws & City Ordinances

Selling or Furnishing Alcohol to Minors (18 Pa.C.S. 6310; Misdemeanor of the 3rd Degree)

- Involves arrest, fingerprinting, mug shots and the creation of a permanent criminal record
- Not less than \$1,000 fine for first offense, \$2,500 for subsequent offenses, and possible jail time

Public Drunkenness (18 Pa.C.S. 5505; Summary Offense)

- Involves arrest, fine, and possible jail time
- “Appears in a public place manifestly under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance”

Disorderly Conduct (18 Pa.C.S. 5503; Summary Offense or Misdemeanor of the 3rd Degree)

- Involves arrest, fine, and possible jail time
- “Engages in fighting or threatening, or in violent or tumultuous behavior; makes unreasonable noise; uses obscene language or making an obscene gesture; or creates a hazardous or physically offensive condition by any act which serves no legitimate purpose”

Open Container (City Ordinance)

- “No person shall drink or consume, have, possess, carry or transport liquor, wine, beer or other alcoholic beverages in or upon any public sidewalk, street, lane, parking lot . . . or other public property within the City of Scranton or in any vehicle upon such area within the City of Scranton”

Rental Property Ordinance (Chapter 373, City of Scranton Code)

Duties of Occupants of Rental Units

- Maintain unit and premises in good sanitary condition (including proper garbage disposal)
- Report necessary repairs
- Avoid *disruptive conduct* that may damage the premises, be a breach of peace, or disturb the community*
- Recycle materials in accordance with the City of Scranton’s Recycling Ordinance
- Avoid intentionally causing or permitting others to damage the unit or premises
- Avoid allowing more than the maximum number of people permitted by the City of Scranton’s Zoning Ordinance to sleep in or occupy overnight the unit

***Disruptive conduct** is defined as any form of conduct, action, incident or behavior caused or permitted by any occupant or visitor of a rental unit that is loud, offensive or riotous or that otherwise disturbs other persons of ordinary sensitivity in their peaceful enjoyment of their premises such that a report is made to the Police Department complaining of such conduct, action, incident or behavior. It is not necessary that a criminal offense occur. The owner of the property is notified of disruptive conduct.

Duties of Owners of Rental Units

- Arrange for inspection of unit
- Arrange for or perform maintenance, cleaning, repair, pest control, snow and ice removal, and garbage removal
- Ensure compliance of premises with applicable codes
- Maintain premises in good repair, clean and sanitary conditions, and compliant with applicable codes

Closure of Rental Units May Occur When . . .

- Three or more disruptive conduct reports or police reports are generated from activity on a premises within a six (6) month period
**** Note:** If a rental unit is closed due to three disruptive reports, it is the responsibility of the occupants to find housing at their own expense
- Owner or occupant has knowledge of drug activity on premises
- Unit, common areas or the premises is condemned by appropriate authorities as unsafe for human occupancy or structurally unsafe
**** Note:** If a rental unit is condemned or otherwise closed due to the act or omission of the owner, it is the responsibility of the owner to find housing for the occupants at the owner’s expense.

Please contact the Dean of Students with questions or concerns relative to off-campus living.

201 The DeNaples Center, (570)941-7680

www.scranton.edu/offcampus

Visit www.scranton.edu/sg to contact your Off-Campus Senators