

RED FLAGS

“Red Flags” are warning signs that a rental property may be unsafe or that someone may be attempting to scam you.

Overcapacity.

No more than three unrelated persons should occupy one unit.

Being asked to pay several months in advance.

It's illegal to ask for more than first month's rent plus a security deposit equal to 1 month's rent. Broker fees are different, and not all rentals have broker fees.

Security cameras inside space.

It is illegal and unacceptable even in common areas (ex: living room).

Payment required before documentation signed by both parties.

Never provide funds prior to viewing a space and signing a lease. The landlord should sign the lease as well.

False advertising/bait and switch.

Example: Photos that are not representative of the actual property.

Blocked exits or windows and/or generators inside.

These are fire hazards and pose unsafe living conditions.

Lack of smoke detectors.

The landlord or rental complex is required to provide these, especially within 10 feet of rooms used for sleeping.

Exposed electrical wiring.

This is a safety hazard and could indicate electrical issues or poor electrical wiring. There should be no wires hanging out of walls, ceilings, etc.

Non-permitted bedrooms.

Bedrooms that are not original to the space such as an attic, basement, garage, or a room divided to create two rooms.

Unwillingness to formalize agreement in writing.

Do not rent from a landlord that refuses to provide a written lease. Never engage in verbal agreements.

“Hijacked” ads.

When a scammer takes a legitimate rental ad and changes the contact information to their own to scam you out of a “deposit” or “application fee”. Always view rentals in person or via **live** video tour. If a landlord refuses to show the property, it's likely a scam.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING INFORMATION



**Resources, tips, and useful information to
help you navigate living off-campus.**



Stony Brook University

WHAT TO KNOW

Visit the Commuter Student Services & Off Campus Living website for more resources, tips, and useful information at <https://www.stonybrook.edu/offcampusliving>

Budget Considerations.

If you're thinking about renting off-campus, it's recommended to examine your budget to see what you can afford. Rent prices can vary depending on several factors including location, square footage, amenities, whether you have roommates to split costs with, and more.

Transportation.

Off-campus housing is **rarely** within walking distance of the University. It's strongly recommended to purchase a personal vehicle if possible. Transportation **will not** be provided by the University directly to and from your personal residence. If a personal vehicle is not possible, familiarize yourself with public transportation. Different options may or may not be available to you depending on where you live. The most common forms of public transportation are the Suffolk Transit bus and the Long Island Railroad. Visit their websites for detailed information about transport to and from your area.

Lease Agreements.

A lease is a binding, legal contract that both you and the landlord must sign. A landlord does **not** have the legal right to control when/if you have guests (even overnight guests). Also, your lease should **not** place all responsibility on the tenant for general repairs (this is the landlord's responsibility). Your lease should include the rent price, any additional utilities not included in the rent price, the duration of the lease, and when your lease will terminate or renew.

"Landlords, Leases & You" Virtual Workshops.

Virtual workshops called "Landlords, Leases & You" provide valuable information about your legal tenant rights, how to spot scams and "red flags", lease content, and more. An up-to-date list of upcoming workshops can be found on SB Engaged:

stonybrook.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/commuters

Renter's Checklist.

Printable checklists are available for you to use when evaluating a potential housing accommodation. This is meant to help in establishing criteria to support your final decision when weighing your options and as a tool to measure one property against another.

Inspection Checklist.

Printable checklists are available for you to use to take "inventory" of a housing accommodation. Use this to document the condition of the dwelling when you arrive and when you move out. This helps protect you against losing part/all of your security deposit and alleviates any discrepancies between you and the landlord upon your move out.

Red Flags.

"Red Flags" are warning signs that a rental property may be unsafe or that someone may be attempting to scam you. A list of "Red Flags" can be found on the back on this pamphlet.

Have a question?

Visit the FAQ page on our website for frequently asked questions related to off-campus housing/living.

Or call **(631) 632-7353** or email commuter_services@stonybrook.edu

! ATTENTION INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS !

Beware of any forums/pages claiming to be affiliated with the University. The Commuter Student Services & Off-Campus Living website is the **only** site that is **officially recognized** and operated by the University for off-campus housing. **Do not** provide any money or sign a lease before seeing a potential housing accommodation in-person/via video conferencing (Zoom, etc.). Never provide money for a tour (a common scam). Never provide personal banking information, and never rent an apartment without a written lease agreement.