



## Help Them Get Ready for Off-Campus Living

Millions of college students soon will be making one of the most important decisions in their college career – where to live next year. As University Police, we know that on-campus living is much safer from the effects of fire than off campus. The fact remains though, that the majority of students will leave on-campus housing and move into residences in the surrounding community. While we may not be able to inspect off-campus housing, we can certainly arm our students with a list of questions to help them make safer choices before they sign their leases. Students who live or are considering living off campus should ask six principle questions before signing a lease.

### **1. Are fire sprinklers present in the building?**

For a student moving off-campus, one of the best places to live is in a sprinklered building. The statistics speak for themselves. Contact the Morrisville Codes Enforcement Department at 315-684-7007 and ask them to provide local statistics on how much safer and less likely someone is to die in a building that has fire sprinklers.

### **2. Are smoke detectors in all bedrooms and all floors?**

Students should look for working smoke detectors in the apartment or house they are considering. Ask the landlord to show testing records or ask to test the detector while you are touring the residence.

### **3. Do basement bedrooms have egress windows?**

Most building and fire codes require egress windows to be at least 24 inches high, 20 inches wide, and not more than 44 inches off the floor. Many converted residences off-campus will have basement bedrooms and students should check with the Morrisville codes or fire department to ensure the windows meet code.

### **4. Students should obtain renters insurance.**

Many students wrongly assume their parents insurance will cover them. This is not true in most cases. Students should contact local insurance agents. Students are financially responsible for other dwellings should they cause a fire that impacts others

### **5. When was the property last inspected for fire safety?**

Have students ask for a copy of the last property inspection. In some cases, they may not be able to obtain one since they are not the owner, but the landlord should be able to produce a copy of the inspection report. Students need to know they have a right to safe housing. They would certainly return a car or electronic device if all the features were not working, the same holds true for their housing. They have a right to return it to the landlord, or not rent it at all, if the safety features are not working right or in place.

### **QUESTIONS??**

If you have any questions regarding Off Campus Living contact Morrisville State College Residence Life at 315-684-6043, NYS University Police at 315-684-6410, or the Village of Morrisville Codes Enforcement Department at 315-684-7007.