INTRODUCTION

WELCOME BACK! YOUR OFF-CAMPUS LIVING EXPERIENCE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!

The Office of Student Engagement and the Office of Dean of Students is pleased to offer the following Off-Campus Living Guide to Fairfield University graduate students living off-campus. We know that finding housing on your own can be a tough and stressful process. Therefore, this guide provides a list of available resources, an overview of leasing processes, and university assistance and expectations that you can refer to for your housing search.
START YOUR SEARCH!
Graduate students are responsible for securing their housing. Please use our off-campus housing hub webpage: fairfield.edu/graduestudianthousing.

International Students:
We recommend that you arrive two weeks early to search and secure housing. We recommend you working with a realtor. If you find housing while abroad, never send unsecured funds to a landlord before you arrive unless you have fully identified who they are and their legitimacy.

HOUSING SEARCH STRATEGIES

Here are some suggestions for starting your search:
1. Contact a realtor, which you can find on: fairfield.edu/graduestudianthousing
2. Have a cell phone and laptop computer to inquire about vacancies that become available. You will find that many apartment-leasing offices don’t answer calls and have voice mail or emails only. It is best to have a plan for what to say to a potential landlord. Be sure to mention you are a Fairfield University student.
3. Think about transportation when looking at properties. Use a map to determine proximity to public transportation or determine how to access a personal vehicle. The GBT bus, StagBus, and MetroNorth Railroad can be combined to get students to and from certain areas.
4. Become familiar with housing language. See our International Student Guide, pages 16-17, for reference fairfield.edu/admittedinternational
5. Prepare a Tenant Resume (optional, but recommended). This can be found on the Housing Hub! fairfield.edu/graduestudianthousing
6. International Students: Get a recommendation letter from the Office of Student Engagement – International Student Life – to verify your finances and certify that you are a student. We may provide a letter or can speak with any landlord or property manager. Many property managers and landlords expect renters to have a credit score, which is based on a US finance history. Because you don’t have this score, we will do what we can to verify your finances and support your application. E-mail international@fairfield.edu if you need this letter or information.
7. Drive/walk around neighborhoods you like and look for “For Rent/For Lease” signs posted in the windows of houses and apartments.
8. Drive/walk by to see the places you are interested in to find out what the exterior and the neighborhood look like before making an appointment for viewing. When you find something you like, do not hesitate to let the landlord know immediately that you are interested. Have a check or money order ready to pay the deposit.
9. Prepare a list of questions to ask your potential landlord such as, “What utilities are included in the rent (water, gas, electricity)? What is the cost of gas and electricity per month? When will the apartment be available? How much is the security deposit? What is the parking availability? Are there laundry facilities located on site?”
10. Meet potential roommates in person before making a commitment. International Students, do not make arrangements to have a roommate from abroad. You would not want to move in with someone that might not be suitable for you.
11. Get all agreements in writing. Whenever you speak to your landlord, use written communication. This will give you support is there is a dispute about your arrangement.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A RENTER
Please visit jud.ct.gov/publications/hm031.pdf to learn more.
REALTY AND STORAGE
Below is a listing of realtors in the Fairfield County area that may have periodic apartment availability. Note that these sources come recommended by previous students and are not the only sources available to you. Fairfield University does not endorse any of the resources listed in this guide.

William Raveis
2525 Post Road
Southport, CT 06890
203-255-6841
raveis.com

203-254-7100
coldwellbankermoves.com

Century 21
2465 Black Rock Turnpike
Fairfield, CT 06825
203-255-3353
century21.com

William Raveis
28 Reef Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
203-256-3264
raveis.com

SWCT Realty, LLC
P.O. Box 784
Fairfield, CT 06824
203-372-8185
swctrealty.com

Coldwell Banker
1700 Post Road #16
Fairfield, CT 06824
203-452-2211
coldwellbankermoves.com

Rental Websites
Below is a listing of rental websites in the Fairfield County area that may have periodic apartment availability.

apartmentlist.com/ct/fairfield-county
forrent.com
craigslist.com
offcampusnetwork.com

ctpost.coment.com
apartments.com

Newspaper Listings
Below are newspaper websites that contain a variety of listings for housing availability in the Fairfield County area.

ctpost.com
fairfieldcitizenonline.com
minutemannewscenter.com/fairfield

Off-Campus Postings
You can find up-to-date listings and roommate notices approved by University staff on the bulletin board located in the Barone Campus Center 2nd floor, across from the ATM machine.

Self-Storage Options
selfstoragefinders.com

See additional resources on the Graduate Housing Hub Page at fairfield.edu/gradhousingshub.
GENERAL GUIDELINES REGARDING LEASE AGREEMENTS

Important Note: The information that follows pertaining to the responsibilities of landlords and tenants are meant solely as guidelines and should not be viewed as replacing the language contained in the lease agreement between students and a landlord. Students should familiarize themselves with the terms of their lease agreement before signing. Students should not hesitate to address any questions or concerns with their landlords prior to signing a lease. Fairfield University is not a party to the lease agreements between students and landlords. Students and landlords are entering into a private contractual relationship. Students should consider having legal counsel review lease terms before signing.

Information is available from the State of CT pertaining to tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities. Students are encouraged to review this information at: jud.ct.gov/faq/landlord.html

The town of Fairfield zones residential houses for a maximum occupancy of non-related individuals. For almost all houses in the Fairfield beach area there is a maximum occupancy of four non-related individuals. Before signing your lease, please consult with the landlord to find out what the maximum occupancy is to ensure you are in compliance with all zoning laws. Houses that are over occupancy are at risk for eviction or other sanctions by the Fairfield Health Department. Students who are overcrowding face the very real risk of being evicted during their senior year. Please take steps to ensure you are in compliance before signing your lease.

LEASES FOR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

Most, but not all, written leases typically contain the following provisions:

• A description of the property the tenant is renting
• The length of time the tenant will be allowed to live in the unit
• The names of the landlord and the tenant
• The amount of rent, the due date and any late charges for late payments of rent
• The landlord’s rules and regulations
• The tenant’s rights and responsibilities
• Responsibilities for maintenance of the unit
• Provisions for utility services (whether or not payment of utilities is included in the rent charge)
• The amount of the security deposit, if any

A written lease may also contain one or more of the following provisions:

• Sublease arrangements (terms under which the tenant may rent the apartment to someone else)
• Laundry and recreational facilities (whether any are included)
• Which appliances, if any, are provided by the landlord

Among the responsibilities a tenant will have in a typical lease are the following:

• Pay the rent on time and what recourse the landlord has if rent is not timely paid
• Keep the apartment and the surrounding areas clean and in good condition
  (For example, garbage should not be piled up or left around, but should be disposed of promptly)
• Keep noise to a level that will not disturb neighbors
• Repair any damage occurring to the leased premises through the fault of the tenant, family members or guests.
  If there is major damage, the tenant should notify the landlord at once
• Notify the landlord immediately if the apartment needs repairs through no fault of the tenant
• Give the landlord permission, on advance notice, to enter the apartment at reasonable times to inspect the
  place or to make any necessary repairs
• Notify the landlord of any extended absence from the leased premises so they can keep an eye on things
• When moving out, give the landlord proper advance notice, be sure that the leased premises is in the same
  condition as when the tenant moved in and return the key to the landlord promptly
Typical responsibilities of the landlord contained in many leases include the following:

- Provide a clean apartment when the tenant moves in
- Provide common areas (hallways, stairs, yards, entryways)
- Well-lit hallways and entryways
- Provide and maintain properly working plumbing and heating (both hot and cold running water).

**Checking the Premises**

It is very important for the tenant to check any rented premises they may be considering renting for unsafe and unhealthy living conditions. These conditions should be brought to the immediate attention of the landlord, preferably before signing the lease. Some conditions to look out for include, but are not limited to the following:

- Kitchen appliances that don’t work properly
- Plumbing problems (leaking faucets, broken toilets and bathtubs)
- Inadequate heat or hot water
- Doors without locks
- Building problems (leaking roof, broken windows, peeling paint, falling plaster)
- Broken or unsafe steps
- Unlit hallways
- Pest problems (rats, roaches or rodents)
- Overcrowding (many tenants located in the same location)
- Hazardous electrical wiring or equipment
- Bad odors (the smell of garbage)
- Other conditions in the premises that appear unsafe or unhealthy.

In addition, both the landlord and the tenant will benefit from inspecting the premises together and agreeing upon the conditions when the tenant moves in.

Landlords are legally obligated to provide functioning smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on all levels of the dwelling. Tenants have a responsibility to not disable or remove the devices and promptly report any issues with detectors to the landlord. Keep exits and paths to reach them clear.

Renters with safety questions or concerns should contact the their local fire department at any hour of the day or night. FFD will provide and install smoke alarms free of charge to anyone in need. The Fairfield Fire Department will provide and install smoke alarms free of charge to anyone in need renting in the Fairfield Beach area. They can be contacted at 203-254-4700.

**Discrimination**

Discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, marital status, ancestry or physical or mental disability in renting an apartment or house is prohibited by federal and state law. Anyone who feels that they have been discriminated against may file a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) immediately after the problem has occurred. While it is not necessary to hire a lawyer to file a complaint, it may be helpful to discuss the problem with an attorney. Contact the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities for further information on discrimination.

**CHRO Offices**

Southwest Region Office
1057 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604
203-579-6246

**Security Deposits**

Most landlords require a security deposit when a new tenant moves in. In general, a security deposit is an advance payment that is used to protect the landlord from damages to the apartment or unpaid rent. It is not applied to the rent bill but is completely separate and is returned to the tenant at the end of the lease agreement, assuming certain conditions have been met.
A landlord or tenant who has questions about security deposits may contact:

**Security Deposit Investigator**  
State Banking Department  
260 Constitution Plaza  
Hartford, CT 06103  
860-240-8299

**Evictions**

Helpful information regarding the eviction process is contained in “A Tenant’s Guide to Summary Process.” This publication is available in courts handling housing matters and is also available online at [jud.ct.gov/Publications/hm015.pdf](http://jud.ct.gov/Publications/hm015.pdf)

**Utilities, Water, Gas**

In some cases, these three items can be billed separately, or accounted for in the same monthly payment within the rent. Check your lease agreement to see how these costs are accounted for.

If these costs are not included in the rent, note that the bills come from different companies, and vary depending on your location. Always check with your landlord about what company supplies your utilities, water, and gas (if applicable). In general, landlords are required to keep all heating, plumbing, electrical systems and appliances in good working order. Unless the rental agreement states that the tenant is responsible, the landlord must supply running water and reasonable amounts of heat and hot water.

If it is the landlord’s responsibility to provide and pay for heat, the law requires the temperature of the apartment to be at least 65 degrees at all times of the year.

Where the tenant is responsible for supplying the utility, they should:

- Contact the utility, water, and gas companies to arrange delivery of service
- Set-up bill delivery or automatic payment
- Make all payments on time.

**Cable, Internet, and Phone Service**

In addition to regular utilities it is the tenants’ responsibility to set-up cable, internet, and phone services. Most service companies offer a bundled package deal for use of all three services from the same service provider.

**Fairfield’s Local Providers:**

- **Cablevision (Optimum)**  
  203-336-2225

- **Comcast**  
  866-928-9135

**Search online for your local provider if you are living outside of Fairfield.**

For questions regarding discontinuation of utility services, tenants can contact:

- **Consumer Assistance Division, (DPUC)**  
  10 Franklin Square  
  New Britain, CT 06051  
  Toll-free: 1-800-382-4586.

**Legal Aid Offices**

For all initial screening of requests for legal assistance from legal aid programs in Connecticut:

- **Statewide Legal Services, Inc**  
  1-800-453-3320

- **Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.**  
  Regional Offices:  
  Bridgeport  
  203-336-3851
SETTLING IN

PARKING

On-Campus Parking
All graduate students who commute via personal vehicle are required to register their vehicles and obtain the appropriate Fairfield University parking decal to park on-campus. Students are required to park in designated lots. Tickets will be issued when parking regulations are violated. All unresolved tickets will result in placement of a hold on your account which will affect your ability to participate in events including, but not limited to, graduation and receiving your diploma.

As a reminder, students should plan their trips to campus accordingly. Parking on-campus is limited and students should make sure to leave enough time to find parking in their designated area in order to arrive at class and appointments on-time.

Parking decals can be obtained from the Department of Public Safety, which is located on the ground level of Loyola Hall. More information on parking can be found at fairfield.edu/publicsafety.

Off-Campus Parking
Off-campus, off-street parking areas are generally provided by landlords to their tenants. Not all dwellings come with off-street parking. In many cases, off-street parking can only accommodate a limited number of vehicles. An agreement should be made between roommates about off-street parking. If your dwelling has limited or no off-street parking, please recognize there is limited street parking available. All street parking is on a first-come, first-serve basis. All street parking is monitored by local Police and any violation of parking laws can result in a parking ticket, or towing of the vehicle at the owner’s expense.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Your safety is incredibly important. Be aware of your surroundings, exercise good judgment, abide by all laws, and always be considerate.

Your House - If you choose to invite guests to your home, you are responsible for the resulting effects on the neighborhood. If you do not wish to have an individual or groups of people in your home, you should deny entrance. Do not hesitate to call Fairfield Police for assistance. We strongly recommend purchasing renters’ insurance.

Renter’s Insurance - There are many options for renter’s insurance, which covers the interior of the rented property only, including personal property. Contact insurance companies to learn about their individual packages available. Check with your landlord as they may require you to purchase renter’s insurance. Learn more by visiting: naic.org/documents/consumer_alert_renters.pdf

Neighbors and Neighborhood - It is very important to know your neighbors and your neighborhood. Knowing your neighborhood allows you to know what to expect when having a social gathering or any get-together at your house.

How to Be a Good Neighbor
1. Introduce Yourself: Say hello! Give your neighbors your phone number if you would like to be reached in case of emergencies when you are away.
2. Consider your neighbors’ lifestyles and recognize they will be different than yours. For example, if they have young children, quiet evenings will be very important to them.
3. Be conscious of the proximity between your house and your neighbor’s house. Can they hear your conversation through your window?
4. Be considerate when parking. Do not block your neighbor’s driveway or take their spot. Keep your guests’ cars only in your driveway or in designated guest locations surrounding the property.
5. Alert your neighbor to parties. If you’re planning a party, be sure to give your neighbors plenty of warning, letting them know when it’s going to start and how long you expect it to last. Tell them to call you first if they are concerned with noise or your guests.
6. Keep your yard clean. Pick up after yourself, guests, and pets.
7. Communicate with your neighbor. Touch base with your neighbors regularly and keep them in the loop while being mindful not to over-share personal information.
8. Be nice! A friendly and courteous disposition goes a long way.
Social Gatherings - It is extremely important to know who is in and around your house. When hosting a gathering only you and your invited guest should be in attendance. You should only be allowing those you know and trust into your house. If at any point there are people who you do not want there, call local Police and ask for assistance in removing these people from your house.

If you are attending a social gathering do not go alone. Only go to houses where you know the occupants and are invited. Make sure that you leave with the people you arrived with so you know that all of your friends are safe and accounted for.

CITY SERVICES

Bridgeport Hospital
267 Grant Street
Bridgeport, CT, 06610
Main number: 203-384-3000

St. Vincent Medical Center
2800 Main Street
Bridgeport, CT 06606
Main number: 203-576-6000

Fairfield Police Department
100 Reef Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
Main number: 203-254-4800

Center for Family Justice
753 Fairfield Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06604
Main number: 203-334 6154

Town of Fairfield Health Department
725 Old Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
Main number: 203-256 3020

Town of Fairfield Town Hall
725 Old Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
Main number: 203-256-3000

Department of Motor Vehicle
95 Sylvan Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06606
Main number: 203-579-6015

Fairfield Animal Shelter
211 One Rod Hwy
Fairfield, CT 06824
Main number: 203-254-4857

US Post Office
357 Commerce Drive
Fairfield, CT 06825
Main number: 203-332-4547

If you are living outside of the Fairfield/Bridgeport area, gather a list of local emergency contact numbers in the area.

LOCAL EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Department of Public Safety
Fairfield Police Department (Emergency) 203-254-4000, ext. 4090
Fairfield Police Department (Non-Emergency) 911
Fairfield Fire Department (Emergency) 203-254-4800
Fairfield Fire Department (Non-Emergency) 911
Fairfield Storm or Incident-Related Info Updates 203-254-4700
Town of Fairfield Website: 203-254-4899
fairfieldct.org

UNIVERSITY SERVICES AND EXPECTATIONS

Off-Campus Patrols with Fairfield Police
For those living at the beach or near the campus, be mindful that a Residence Life staff member participates in a duty rotation, in partnership with Fairfield Police, in the Beach area on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights during the academic year. During this time at the beach, the staff member serves as an advocate for the students, making sure that student rights are not being violated. In addition, the staff member will report to the Office of the Dean of Students all tickets issued and arrests.

Department of Public Safety
Loyola Hall, 203-254-4000, ext. 4090

Campus Ministry
Egan Chapel of St. Ignatius Loyola, Pedro Arrupe, S.J.
Campus Ministry Center, 203-254-4000, ext. 3405

Health Center
John C. Dolan Hall, 203-254-4000, ext. 2241

Counseling and Psychological Services
John C. Dolan Hall, 203-254-4000, ext. 2146

Office of The Dean of Students
203-254-4000, ext. 4211
A Note from The Office of the Dean of Students:

When you live off-campus, you remain a member of the Fairfield University community and become a member of the community you are now living in. We expect students to be considerate of their neighbors and the community at large.

Whether or not this is your first time living off-campus and on your own, please remember to keep in mind the following:

1. Get to know your surroundings. Be friendly and courteous to your neighbors.
2. Feel free to introduce yourself, but use your discretion when sharing personal information.
3. Please monitor the noise levels within and projecting from your homes, including noise created by guests.
4. Please arrange for and encourage quiet and appropriate arrival and departure of your guests.
5. Abide by speed limit.

The Student Code of Conduct applies to all Fairfield University students both on and off campus. As a graduate student, your behavior off-campus can, and will, be documented by the local Police Department, University officials, and other students and neighbors, and reported to the Office of the Dean of Students for a disciplinary hearing. When the Office of the Dean of Students receives a report, you will be contacted by the office soon thereafter. Your prompt attention to the matter is encouraged. Many times complaints and other issues can be resolved swiftly. Open communication is key to arriving at an amicable resolution.

When standards of conduct are violated the following minimum guidelines may be imposed. An individual student’s conduct history will impact the range of sanctions imposed.

Standard Sanctions for Off-campus Misconduct:
- First Offense: $200 fine, educational sanction, formal warning
- Second Offense: $400 fine, disciplinary probation and loss of off-campus status
- Third Offense: dismissal from the University.

Regular communication with your landlord will demonstrate you have a vested interest in their property and are equally vested in having both sides of the lease agreement abide by its terms. It will also help keep the lines of communication open. This is good practice and can be especially helpful should a problem arise.

Zero Tolerance Policy

If you are a graduate student living at the beach, note that the Town of Fairfield maintains a Zero Tolerance policy for the Beach area for all individuals. The Beach area is defined as Reef Road, Fairfield Beach Road, including all intersecting streets, south of Edward Street. Zero Tolerance means if a nuisance or disturbance occurs and it meets the legal elements for an arrest, an arrest will be made. No prior warning will be given. Arrests can be made for the following, regardless of the time of day: loud parties or music, unreasonable noise, fights, assaults, vandalism, drunk driving, alcohol in public, dispensing of alcohol to minors, possession of alcohol by a minor, urination in public, and pedestrians recklessly using the roadway.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if I am an international student?
We encourage all International Students to utilize the International Resource Guide which contains everything you need to know about arriving to the States, finding a place to live, settling in and getting started here at Fairfield at fairfield.edu/internationalguidebook.

Where should I live?
There are many options available to graduate students looking to live in the greater Fairfield area. It all depends on your needs, budget, and personal interests. It is strongly recommended that you check out the neighborhood where you hope to live and drive around to make sure you feel safe and comfortable during the times when you will be out and about in your potential community.

The JumpOffCampus.com (fairfield.jumpoffcampus.com/learning-center), Learning Center (fairfield.jumpoffcampus.com/learning-center), and Trulia (trulia.com/guides/rentals) are a great resource for helping you through the housing search process. We have made the greatest effort to represent all reasonable rental options in the immediate area. Some resources that can help you determine your best options include: walkscore (redfin.com/how-walk-score-works) and neighborhoodscout.com (neighborhoodscout.com).

What do I do if a landlord is asking for my credit history and rental references, but I have little or no credit/rental history?
Many landlords renting to new renters ask for some type of income guarantee, this may be in the form of a co-signed lease from your parents or bank statement showing that you can afford paying rent on a monthly basis. Please, contact the Admissions Office (fairfield.edu/grad) or Financial Aid (fairfield.edu/finaid) if any documentation is required from the school.

I'm a student receiving financial aid. How do I pay my rent using loans?
The Fairfield University Office of Financial Aid (fairfield.edu/finaid) in the Kelley Center (203-254-4125) on campus is available to answer questions you might have about loan disbursements and how you get access to your loan money. Many student loan disbursements don't happen until after classes start, so it is important to plan and save funds leading up to searching for a rental. The Financial Aid Office can provide a letter of support to let landlords know about your financial status. They will not be able to guarantee anything, but can provide a letter noting your status.

How do I find roommates?
If you are new to the area and are looking for roommates, start by connecting with other graduate students by joining the Fairfield University Graduate Student Life Facebook group. There, you can communicate with potential roommates directly.

Also, students from nearby universities and colleges may be looking for roommates. Search through their school’s housing resources to connect with other graduate students in the area, such as Sacred Heart University, University of Bridgeport, Quinnipiac, Albertus Magnus College and UConn (Stamford).

And finally, some housing portals allow you to list yourself as a potential roommate.

What if I have more questions?
Contact us via email at gradstudentlife@fairfield.edu.