

# NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING OFFICE

## FAQs Regarding Off-Campus Housing And Campus Changes Due To COVID-19

### **Can I move out of my off-campus residence because classes are going online?**

Yes, but you will still need to pay your rent. Your lease is a legally binding contract that cannot be broken or changed unless you and your landlord mutually agree to end or change the terms of the lease. If you are concerned about finding someone to fill your place on your lease while you are gone, subleasing is an option, if your lease allows it. Make sure to get any changes to the terms of your lease and all agreements between you and your landlord in writing. The University Legal Clinic can help to answer all legal questions regarding your lease. Other resources include the Landlord/Tenant Guide published by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Tenant Resource Center.

### **If my roommate leaves town and no longer makes rent payments, am I responsible for paying all of the rent?**

Most likely, yes. Most leases have a "joint and several liability" clause. Under Joint and Several Liability, all tenants and each tenant on a lease are responsible for paying the rent in full and paying for any damage to the unit. Landlords can hold tenants accountable for the entire rent and can send the security deposit to just one tenant. If one of your roommates vacates a lease early, you are all still legally liable for the full rent.

### **What if I need assistance from the Neighborhood Housing Office but can't get there?**

You can set up a virtual meeting. From the home page of the Neighborhood Housing website, you can fill out a form to create a virtual appointment with a trained staff member. NHO staff will reach out to you to schedule the appointment. We plan to use Microsoft Teams, which all UWM students have access to, as a platform to call and video chat.

### **Do I still need to give my landlord 60-day notice to terminate my lease?**

Yes. You should give 60-day notice. Make sure you

have a copy of your 60-day notice in writing. You can use the University Legal Clinic's Termination of Tenancy Form.

### **Can I stop paying my utility (water, heat, gas, internet, TV, etc.) bills?**

You should continue to pay your utility bills or cancel accounts as needed. Communicate with your roommates about their expectations for payment.

### **I live off campus. What should I do if I plan on traveling or going home for an extended period of time?**

You should let your neighbors know how long you will be gone and provide them your contact phone number. They can keep an eye on your house for you and keep you updated if anything occurs. You may also want to let your landlord know if you plan to be gone for an extended period. Take all essential items with you (medications, schoolbooks, laptop, etc.).

### **What should I do if I choose to stay at a residence besides my rental property during the extended spring break or online class period?**

Continue to pay your bills as you would if you were gone for a weekend. Talk with your roommates and landlords to coordinate payment.

### **My roommate(s) have moved out. How can I find a sublesser?**

You can use the Neighborhood Housing Office's online listing service. Log in to find potential roommates or sublessees.

### **What should I do if anyone in my rental property becomes ill or is experiencing symptoms?**

Contact Norris Health Center or a local health care provider.

*Updated March 19, 2020*