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# Resident Handbook

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Everything you need to know to fully enjoy your new housing.

# Welcome Home!

## Table of Contents

Contact Information .....	inside front cover	Use and Occupancy of Your Housing .....	page 8
How to Request Maintenance.....	page 1	Automobiles and Parking .....	page 9
Introduction .....	page 2	Shires Housing Rules .....	page 10
Code of Conduct .....	page 3	Energy-Saving .....	page 13
Maintenance .....	page 4	Additional Information .....	page 14
Your Lease .....	page 6	Move-Out Checklist.....	page 16

I/We have read and agree to The Shires Housing Code of Conduct on page 3 and the rules and regulations outlined throughout this Resident Handbook.

# THIS RESIDENT HANDBOOK IS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES:

## **Bennington:**

102 Pleasant Street  
119-121 Pleasant St  
128-130 West Main St  
136-142 North Street  
137-139 Benmont Ave  
209-211 Park St  
212 Safford Street  
211-215 Depot St  
233 School St  
810 Gage St  
Ben-South  
    120-126 Benmont Ave  
    501-507 South Street  
Carrigan Lane / Safford St  
    50-100 Carrigan Lane  
    316-318 Safford Street

Cora B. Whitney  
Downtown Crossing  
    343-349 School Street  
    302-304 South Street  
Roaring Branch  
    132-142 Benmont Ave  
    100-115 Roaring Branch Lane

## **Arlington:**

Arlington Village Center  
Battenkill - VT Rte 313W

## **Manchester:**

Manchester Commons  
Manchester Knoll

## **North Bennington/Shaftsbury:**

1930 and 1956 VT Route 67E  
14-16 Sage Street

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Shires Housing**

P.O. Box 1247  
Bennington, VT 05201

**Tel: 802-442-8139**

Fax: 802-442-5125

Pat Warner, Property Manager  
Priscilla Maxon, Assistant Property Mgr  
Joann Rogers, Operations Coordinator  
Rosemarie Rogers, Operations Support  
Amy Wilson, Finance Manager  
Stephanie Lane, Executive Director

Ext 2 ([pat@shireshousing.org](mailto:pat@shireshousing.org))  
Ext 6 ([priscilla@shireshousing.org](mailto:priscilla@shireshousing.org))  
Ext 1 ([joanne@shireshousing.org](mailto:joanne@shireshousing.org))  
Ext 0 ([rosemarie@shireshousing.org](mailto:rosemarie@shireshousing.org))  
Ext 3 ([amy@shireshousing.org](mailto:amy@shireshousing.org))  
Ext 5 ([stephanie@shireshousing.org](mailto:stephanie@shireshousing.org))

To request general maintenance  
To report maintenance emergency

See page 1  
See page 1

Green Mountain Power Company  
Comcast Cable  
Verizon

1-800-649-2877  
1-800-COMCAST  
1-800-837-4966

**EMERGENCIES**

**Dial 911**

# **HOW TO REPORT A MAINTENANCE EMERGENCY**

**or**

## **REQUEST GENERAL MAINTENANCE**

An emergency is a problem, which threatens life, health or property and requires immediate action. Shires Housing must be notified after the proper authority has been notified. In case of an emergency, Shires Housing reserves the right to enter an apartment without notice to make needed repairs.

### **Here are examples of maintenance emergencies:**

- you have had a fire in your apartment
- you have no heat
- your hot water is cold
- a fire alarm has sounded in your apartment or building
- there is a sewer back-up in your apartment
- a sink or tub drain is so clogged it will not drain water
- you have a water leak that you cannot put a bucket under to contain
- your toilet is plugged even though you used a plunger
- you are locked out of your apartment

For all maintenance issues, whether general or emergency, please call the Shires Maintenance Answering Service at

**1-844-256-4706.**

### **Problems with Appliances**

While annoying, problems with appliances are NOT considered an emergency. See page 5 for information on what to do, particularly if you have trouble with your refrigerator during non-business hours.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions as to the above after-hours, weekend or holiday emergency contact directions, please call the Shires Office Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM.

# INTRODUCTION

## **Shires Housing is pleased to welcome you as new residents!**

Shires Housing is a not-for-profit housing development agency committed to providing safe, decent and affordable housing to Bennington County residents. We depend on a mix of public and private money in order to fund and operate the housing units we own and manage. Several area representatives of the community serve on a Board of Directors that set policy for the organization and monitor the implementation of that policy. The Executive Director is charged with carrying out the board policies.

The Shires Housing office is located at 302A South Street and office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday - Friday, phone 442-8139.

## **Management & Rent Payments**

Shires Housing manages the property.

Rents are to be paid to Shires Housing on the 1st day of each month either in person or through the U.S. Postal Service. The Shires Housing mailing address is P.O. Box 1247, Bennington, Vermont 05201, phone 442-8139.

Questions or concerns about heat, plumbing or other household functions should be directed to Shires Housing during regular business hours, as practical.

**For emergency maintenance after hours, please call the Shires Answering System at 1-844-256-4706.**

All residents must sign a Shires Housing lease and must abide by the rules and considerations set forth in it. Each resident is bound by their signature, to the terms of the lease.

**The lease is a legally binding document. Be sure you understand the terms before signing!**

## **Resident Meetings & Communication**

Shires Housing intends to actively communicate with residents through a newsletter and resident meetings which are intended to keep residents informed and to allow for open discussion about problems, concerns, and ideas for making our communities a decent place for all families to live.

# **INFORMATION IN THIS HANDBOOK IS A PART OF YOUR LEASE AGREEMENT WITH US AND YOU ARE EXPECTED TO ABIDE BY THESE RULES.**

This handbook is part of your lease and is designed to help you understand our organization and to answer frequently asked questions about renting from us. Please take the time to read the information in the following pages and contact us if you have questions.

This handbook explains the responsibilities of both the resident and Shires Housing. The information contained in this handbook should answer questions concerning moving in, rent payments, common problems relating to tenancy and moving out. We welcome any suggestions that you may have about the handbook. We hope you will enjoy renting from Shires Housing!

## **SHIRES HOUSING CODE OF CONDUCT**

The goal of our Code of Conduct is simple; to ensure the quiet enjoyment of your housing! In general, you could sum this up by simply following the Golden Rule; “Do unto others, as you would have others do unto you.” This basic respect for both your rights, and the rights of your neighbors, will solve most problems and issues. Here are some specific guidelines in addition to the common-sense rules outlined throughout this Resident Handbook:

### **Radio and Television**

Please be considerate of your neighbors and keep radios, televisions, tape recorders, music players and other such equipment at low volume.

### **Parties and Gatherings**

In general, your housing should be the place you return to for peace and quiet AFTER an exciting night out. Living in close proximity to your neighbors makes your Shires Housing apartment not a good place to throw a big party. If you do choose to have some visitors and guests, make sure to do so such that it does not disturb your neighbors... just as you would not want to be disturbed by others.

### **Respectful Enjoyment of Your Housing**

We mention this in the paragraph above, but it is worth giving its own category. Treating your neighbors with respect, and all that entails in terms of not creating a nuisance is the most important rule of conduct. Everyone living in Shires Housing is required to treat one another with respect.

# MAINTENANCE

Shires Housing is operated in accordance with the Housing Codes of the towns where our buildings are located (Arlington, Bennington, Manchester, North Bennington and Shaftsbury). We are committed to keeping your housing in excellent condition! Please contact us right away with any maintenance issues that you see.

If you have an after-hours maintenance emergency, please refer to our instructions on page 1.

If you have a general maintenance request, please call 1-844-256-4706.

**Please promptly report a leaky faucet or “running” toilet. One leaky faucet can waste up to 6000 gallons of water in a year!**

## Rubbish Removal

All common household trash must be placed in plastic bags using a closure of some kind to prevent spillage. A dumpster or trash cans have been provided; please use them. Trash bags do not belong outside of the dumpster. You are responsible for disposal/removal of used/broken furniture, appliances, television sets, computers and other electronic devices, mattresses, etc. to the nearest Transfer Station. Do not leave these items in or at the dumpster. Do not dispose of hazardous waste in the dumpster or trash receptacle.

## Mold, Mildew and Condensation

Because your apartment has a vapor barrier in the walls, the moisture level will sometimes get high in your apartment. It is important that you use your bathroom fan every time you take a shower or bath, and your stove exhaust fan every time you cook, to allow excess moisture to escape.

If you don't use your fans, moisture will accumulate in the apartment and mold and mildew will begin to grow on the walls, ceilings and woodwork. This will cause damage to the sheetrock and wood. You will be held responsible for the cost of these repairs.

If you discover mold or mildew on your walls or in your closets, move your possessions away from the wall so that air can circulate and use a mold killing cleanser to remove it.

Please do your part to minimize the occurrence and growth of mold in the unit you occupy.

## Appliances

We are committed to providing fully functional appliances for your convenience. If you have any problems with any of your provided appliances, call the office and we will make all the necessary arrangements to repair or replace malfunctioning appliances in a timely fashion.

**While very annoying when an appliance breaks down, this is not considered a maintenance emergency.** Shires Housing **does not** provide after-hours, holiday or weekend appliance (stove or refrigerator/freezer) repair services.

### **What about a broken refrigerator/freezer at night or on the weekend?**

In the event that a resident's refrigerator/freezer malfunctions/ceases to operate after business hours, during the weekend or a holiday, it is the resident's responsibility to make arrangements to preserve their food by:

- asking relatives, friends, neighbors etc for space in their refrigerators/freezers, and/or
- placing their food in a cooler with ice.

The resident is also expected to notify Shires Housing following the General Maintenance request procedure and notify us that there is an appliance problem requiring resolution early on the next business day.

## Keys

You will receive 2 keys to your apartment when you move in. Lost or damaged keys can be replaced only by Shires Housing. They will cost \$8.00 each.

Locks are changed at the time of Move-In and residents must protect their security by not duplicating keys.

No bolt locks or any additional locking device may be added to doors or windows without permission of Shires Housing. Additional security devices are not allowed as this is a violation of fire codes and/or other local ordinances.

If you find yourself locked out, come in person to Shires Housing office and a member of the staff will let you in; the charge will be as set forth below. For emergencies after hours, please call the Shires Emergency Answering System at 1-844-256-4706.

## Lock Out Fee

During normal business hours, any resident who has locked themselves out of their apartment should come to the office, pick up a key, and return the key back to the office the same day. No fee will be charged for the resident borrowing a key from the office.

There will be a \$15 fee for having a Shires Housing staff member or On-Site Property Manager assist Arlington, Bennington or Manchester residents when they lock themselves out of their apartments during and after normal business hours.

# YOUR LEASE

## Lease Term

Your initial lease is for a one (1) year term commencing on the date specified in your original lease. After the initial one (1) year term, your lease will continue on a month-to-month basis unless terminated by either you or Shires Housing.

If you break your lease during the first year, your security deposit will be retained and applied to all reasonable costs incurred by Shires Housing to turn over the apartment (cleaning the unit and/or carpets, replacing window blinds, necessary repairs or replacements (other than normal wear and tear), changing the locks, advertising costs incurred by Shires Housing to re-let the apartment, etc), as well as any rent lost until such time as a new resident is found for the unit.

After expiration of the initial one (1) year lease term, you may terminate the Lease by giving thirty (30) days advance written notice to Shires Housing.

If, after the first year, you fail to give Shires Housing advance written 30 day notice, your security deposit will be applied, first, to rent and then as above specified.

Once you've given the appropriate notice, Shires Housing will acknowledge receipt and provide you with a move-out checklist to assist you in getting your apartment ready for your move-out inspection.

## Payments Due Under The Lease

Rent is due and payable on the first day of each month at the Shires Housing office. If you receive your checks later than the first, you may set up a different schedule of payments at the office and will be expected to pay your rent on the day specified. If you have not discussed your difficulties with the Executive Director or Property Manager, you will receive a letter from the Executive Director or Property Manager addressing the problem. **Continued nonpayment of rent may lead to eviction.**

A section in your lease states: "If all rent due is not paid by the 5th of the month or if there is a payment schedule that has been established and the payments are in arrears, a fifteen dollar (\$15.00) administrative charge shall be assigned to the resident's account for each occurrence."

The Rent Collection Policy reads in part... "On the 5th of the month, if full payment (or partial payment established by a previously approved schedule) has not been received, the lease will be terminated and notice of the beginning of eviction procedures will be given to the resident. Such eviction notice shall be in keeping with State and Federal laws, as well as the resident's lease."

**Excessive damage of any kind will subject you to eviction.** You are responsible for replacing broken glass except when it has been broken by a storm or other natural causes.

A schedule of charges to Residents for maintenance and repairs beyond normal wear and tear to apartments and to common areas is posted in the Management Office at 302A South Street, Bennington, VT.

Thermostats are designed to be turned up to a maximum of 70 degrees. There will be a labor and materials charge for any damage done to your thermostat. Please keep in mind that if you tamper with your thermostat and it breaks, this will cause the thermostat to stop working and there will be no heat in your apartment.



## **Security Deposit**

A security deposit, as determined by Shires Housing, is required prior to moving in. This is to insure Shires Housing against damage to apartments and other property. Deposits are refunded with interest as stated in your lease, when you move out, provided you: 1) do not owe rent; 2) leave your apartment in clean condition (SEE MOVE-OUT CHECKLIST ATTACHED); 3) that you have paid all damages owed; and 4) that you have given Shires Housing 30 days advance written notice that you intend to move out. If there are damages owed that exceed the amount of the security deposit, the resident is responsible for the balance owed.

## **Financial Re-examination, Changes in income, Family Size, and Recertifications**

Many of our units are subject to income and rent restrictions adjusted according to the size of your household. Therefore, the law requires that each year Shires Housing re-verify your income and anything else that might affect your status as a resident in order to determine that your unit is still occupied by an eligible household. Any information you give is confidential. Please keep records of all sources of income. All changes in income, family size and the student status of each household member must be reported to Shires Housing within 10 days. Your lease describes this issue in more detail.

## **Notification of Student Status**

It is very important that you notify Shires Housing of any changes in the full-time student status of any member of your household. Further, you agreed under your lease to annually complete (or at any other time requested by Shires Housing) a household Student Status verification form.

*A full-time student is someone who attends school for at least five months in a year, which do not need to be consecutive, and is enrolled, for the number of hours or courses considered by the school to be full-time. A full-time student can attend elementary school, junior or senior high school, college, graduate school, postgraduate school, or a vocational institution.*

## **Inspections to Insure Top Quality Housing**

We are proud to provide you with top quality housing. In accordance with the rules and regulations of our lenders (primarily VHFA, VHCB and Housing Vermont) our apartments must be inspected periodically. Don't worry, we are not there to judge you or your decorating choices!

The purpose of inspections is to ensure that all apartments continue to meet the standards established by a variety of programs, to identify repairs or preventive maintenance work which is needed and to ensure that your apartment is in good shape. Any items found during inspections which is a result of resident damage will be noted and you will be charged for their repair or replacement—including damaged window blinds. We do offer below-market rates for many common repairs—call the office for details! Follow-up inspections will be conducted as found necessary. Damage not reported or found during inspections does not preclude Shires Housing's right to charge for damages at the move out inspection when the apartment is free of all furnishings.

Inspections will be made at reasonable times arranged with the resident, either in writing or by telephone, by members of Shires Housing staff. In an emergency, Shires Housing reserves the right to enter your apartment as needed.

# USE AND OCCUPANCY OF YOUR HOUSING

You must live in your apartment and it must be your primary residence. The premises are to be used only as a private dwelling for you and the individuals listed on your lease. The number of residents occupying your unit is restricted to the 2+1 standard. **Under your lease, you agreed to permit other individuals to reside in your unit only after obtaining the prior written approval of Shires Housing.**

Any resident who moves a person into his/her apartment without the prior written permission of Shires Housing is in violation of their lease and will be subject to eviction.

An overnight guest is a non-paying individual who stays with you for a short period of time. Overnight guests are limited to a total of fourteen (14) nights in any twelve (12) month period.

## Visitors

No additional persons other than those on the lease (such as visitors and overnight guests), will be permitted to remain on the premises longer than **a maximum of 14 nights per year**. Family and friends are welcome to visit you in your home. However, you are responsible for the behavior of your guests at all times. No guest may stay overnight more than 14 times in a 12-month period. We may consider a person to be living at your apartment even in the case that he/she does not stay with you every night, or works nights and “visits” you during the day. Visitors or guests are not permitted to bring pets into the premises.

Shires Housing reserves the right to request a recorded declaration of domicile or proof of domicile if it is suspected that the guest is an unauthorized household occupant. Such suspicion may arise whenever an adult person(s) is making reoccurring visits or one continuous visit 14 days and/or nights without prior notification to the Landlord. Should the Resident or person in question not provide the requested information needed to confirm another domicile, or should the facts be sufficient to evidence domicile in the unit, then the Landlord may consider such person(s) an unauthorized occupant and terminate the lease for material non-compliance.

## Business Use

**Residents may not carry on a business** from the apartment. These apartments are your homes and are to be used only as private dwellings. (This includes but is not limited to baby-sitting).

## Storage

Presently there is no storage space available. State fire code laws prohibit use of the basement unless it is fire coded, which it currently is not.

## Pets

**Pet dogs are not allowed.** One (1) domesticated cat per apartment will be permitted providing: 1) cats are registered before moving in, the \$100 per deposit has been paid and you have signed a Pet Agreement; 2) all cats 6 months or older must be spayed or neutered (The Second Chance Animal Shelter can help with the programs that may assist with this cost); 3) apartments must be clean and free of pet odors, feces, urine and litter; 4) pets must be prevented from scratching, gnawing or otherwise defacing the interior of the apartment; and 5) pets will not be permitted to disturb the health, safety or peace and quiet of other residents.

Shires Housing reserves the right to insist that problem pets be removed at the expense of the owner in accordance with its Pet Policy.

# AUTOMOBILES AND PARKING

All cars must be operable and must have current registration and inspection stickers. Cars in violation will be towed at the owner's expense.

**Any vehicle parked in a fire lane will be towed without notice.**

A maximum of two cars and a maximum of two parking permits per apartment are allowed, provided that there is room in the parking lot and both vehicles are registered to the resident named on the lease.

There are no assigned parking spaces.

Residents may park one (1) vehicle per household in front of or near their respective building. Your 2nd vehicle must be parked elsewhere in the lot—provided there is room in the lot for at least one car per unit. Please park in the designated area, and an area closest to your apartment. Consideration for others, by not blocking other cars and areas that need to be accessed (dumpster), is expected.

Visitors' vehicles may be parked in resident parking lots, **as space permits.**

Overnight guest cars will not be towed if they are properly parked. If your guest is staying for several nights, please notify Shires Housing as to your name, how long the visitor will stay, a description of the motor vehicle and the license plate number.

There are **handicapped accessible parking** spaces reserved in the parking area. No other vehicles other than those designated handicapped may park there. Please respect the need to reserve the space.

**No car repairs may be made in the parking lot.** This includes, but is not limited to oil changes, tune-ups and lubrication.

Vehicles which have oil, gas or transmission leaks must be removed and/or repaired immediately. Loud mufflers, large trucks or other over-sized vehicles are not permitted on the property.

Parking/storage or use of recreation or motorized vehicles such as campers, boats, four wheelers, etc is not allowed on the property.

After a snowstorm, please move your car so the snowplow can clear the parking lot. The degree to which the parking area is cleared is dependent upon your cooperation.

Vehicles violating these parking regulations are subject to towing at your expense.

# SHIRES HOUSING RULES

For Your Safety:

**SHIRES HOUSING does NOT ALLOW the following:**

- Candles
- Dishwashers
- Washers and Dryers (except in apartments equipped with proper hook-ups)
- Holiday or seasonal outdoor lights
- Space Heaters of any kind

**In addition, the following common-sense rules are in effect:**

- **Windows and doors must be shut** from November 15th through April 15th.
- **All air conditioning units** must be removed from the windows by November 1st.
- **Seasonal items** must be removed from all common areas, sidewalks and patios by November 1st. Any items left outside or in common areas after this date will be considered abandoned personal property and disposed of without further notice. **NO WARNINGS WILL BE GIVEN.**
- You must at all times keep your apartment and appliances clean, safe and in sanitary condition. Failure to do so is a breach of your lease.
- Please do not allow trash to accumulate inside of the apartment. Cockroaches are disease-carrying bugs and Shires Housing will not tolerate their presence.
- **Please do not put grease in the drains.** Grease should be put into a container and thrown away when it hardens. Grease can clog up sewer lines and cause them to back up into the apartments.
- **Please do not put feminine hygiene products, spent razor blades, microfiber cleaning cloths, paper towels, etc. down the toilet.**
- **Please do not use screws to hang pictures;** use picture hooks with small nails or push pins. **Damage done to the walls will be repaired at the resident's expense.**
- Do not throw trash out the windows.
- Do not put any object (such as a mirror with screws) on any door within your apartment. The doors are hollow and any object attached to the door will cause damage which you will be required to pay for.
- Do not overfill closets as this will make it difficult to operate the doors and may damage the closing mechanisms.
- Use a cutting board when cutting items on the counter top.
- No plug-in air fresheners, please!
- No antennas, air conditioners or clotheslines are to be screwed to the windows or building.
- No satellite “dishes”
- Due to fire regulations, sidewalks, porches, patios and common hallways must not be obstructed or

used for any purpose other than entrance or exit from your apartment or the building.

- Baby carriages, bicycles, tricycles, toys, shoes, trash and other personal items cannot be left in the hallways, walkways, entrances, exits or common areas of the building.
- You may redecorate your apartment only with the written permission from the Executive Director or Property Manager of Shires Housing.
- When cooking food on the stove or in the oven, it should be watched carefully so it will not cause smoke or a fire.
- **Electrical extension cords are not permitted.**
- **Water beds are not allowed.** A water bed holds a tremendous amount of water; a leak could cause a great deal of damage to the apartment.
- There are no washer and dryer hook-ups in many of our apartments. Therefore, washing machines (portable or built-in), dishwashers (portable or built-in), and clothes dryers are not permitted, except where hook-ups are in place.
- If your community has a common laundromat or your apartment is equipped with a washer/dryer, the washers and dryers are for resident use only. They are not available for use by the general public or by your friends and relatives.
- If you have a problem with a washer or dryer, please call us (442-8139). If you are using one of our laundromats, please do your part to keep the appliances working by not overloading the machines, checking/cleaning out all pockets before washing. Please keep the laundromat clean and the dryer lint screens emptied.
- Shires Housing is not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen laundry.
- Telephones and cable tv must be installed where wiring is built into the walls, in the kitchen, living room or master bedroom. Make all arrangements directly with the telephone and cable company business offices.
- Do not use doorways or stairs for storage.
- Do not hang rugs, clothing or bedding out of the windows.

# Yards And Grounds

Keeping up the appearance of the community in which you reside is a job you share with us.

- You are responsible for keeping the area around your apartment - front and back - clean and neat. Please do not leave your children's bicycles and toys lying around outside.
- Please allow the grass to grow by walking on the walkways and make sure your children play in any designated playground/recreation area. Playground equipment must be used in a safe and responsible manner.
- Playground and recreation areas are to be used during daylight hours (no later than 9:00 pm) only.
- No tents, trampolines, tire swings, "kiddie" or other pools or sand boxes are to be put on the property. Do not affix basketball hoops or other recreational equipment to the buildings or grounds.
- We expect everyone will help to keep the property free of debris by not littering and by picking up trash.
- **Shopping carts are not allowed on the property.**

# Safety and Consideration

Living in close proximity to other residents, you must take into consideration the rights of others—Consider your neighbors as you would like them to consider you.

- Bicycle riders, please consider the safety of pedestrians and small children playing on the sidewalks. Adults and older children should ride bicycles in the street.
- Ball players, please consider the safety of children in the playground areas (as well as the safety of windows) and play ball at public playgrounds if at all possible.
- **Children should be properly supervised at all times either by parents or responsible baby sitters.** Please instruct your children that bicycles, tricycles, skateboards, roller-type skates or scooters cannot be used in the community roadways or parking lots.
- The use of charcoal grills is not permitted.
- The use of gas grills may be permitted outside your apartment on an open patio or deck. You must contact Shires Housing to get approval for use. Due to fire regulations, gas grills cannot be used on a porch or patio that has an overhead roof and propane tanks cannot be stored in the building. Please be cautious of the smoke caused by your grill. Smoke can cause damage to your or other apartments if windows are open.
- Please respect the rights of neighboring property owners.

# ENERGY SAVING & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Shires Housing has taken great care to provide items and weatherization work to ensure the reduction of energy costs. You can help keep the cost down by setting thermostats at 68 degrees. Extra blankets, insulated drapes and warm sleepwear will help to keep you warm. Turn thermostats off when windows are open. Residents should consider monthly payment plans with Green Mountain Power Company. These plans spread the expense over a year's time, which helps you to budget and gets you into a routine of regular payments with no surprises.

## Heating - Maximum 70°

As you all know, we are facing rising energy prices for gas and oil heat. Even though heat and hot water are included in your monthly rent, keeping energy costs in check will help prevent large rent increases. Please keep your thermostat set between 65 degrees and 68 degrees. Don't "fiddle" with a thermostat setting; that wastes energy. If you feel chilly, put on a sweater. **THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO!**

**In addition, we recommend the following to reduce your environmental impact. We can all help by doing our part in protecting our environment and preserving the earth's resources!**

Keep windows and doors CLOSED when the heat is on! If it is too hot, turn down the heat.

Keep shades UP in any part of the unit that gets sunshine- this will help warm the apartment for FREE! Remember to close the curtains if the sun is not shining or in the evening. Use heavy curtains or insulated drapes that keep warmth in.

Locking windows can also seal them tighter and prevent more air loss. Promptly notify Shires Housing if the weather stripping around your doors and windows is damaged or missing.

Arrange furniture so you are not sitting right by any cooler areas in the apartment.

Keep heat registers, radiators or baseboard heating units free of dust and don't block them with furniture. A heat deflector can be used over the floor registers to direct the heat into the room.

## Hot Water

Half the use of heat is in hot water, which is used year round. Be aware of your use of hot water as well and how it affects the amount of heat you are using!

- Take showers instead of baths
- When washing dishes, scrape the dishes before starting the hot water
- Wash clothes in cold water instead of hot

Generally... report any deficiencies with windows, doors, heating systems or hot water systems... this will help us catch and fix problems earlier.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## Complaints:

Please keep in mind that in any apartment living situation it is impossible to eliminate all noise. If something your neighbor does bothers you, let them know. They may not realize that the noise is carried into your apartment.

If you are unable to work out a complaint with your neighbor, let us know. Any problems you encounter must also be put in writing and mailed to Shires Housing. We will respond to verbal complaints in an emergency.

Maintenance personnel do not handle resident problems and complaints. PLEASE use the emergency maintenance system only for emergency maintenance problems! In the case of a maintenance emergency, Shires Housing reserves the right to enter an apartment to make needed repairs.

## Damages:

You are responsible for any damage caused by negligent or intentional actions of yourself, members of your household and your guests. You shall be held liable for any damages to your apartment, the buildings, grounds or furnishings. Damage liability includes damages to other apartments due to overflow from drains caused by negligence of residents or guests.

You are responsible for the cost of repairing broken windows and torn screens, unless it is caused by someone other than a household member or guest **and** you report it to the police as a case of vandalism at the time of the incident.

You will be charged for repairing damage caused by your children.

## Fire Prevention:

Your apartment is equipped with a fire extinguisher. Please do not remove inspection tags. If you have questions about its use, please call Shires Housing and we will make arrangements for a maintenance person to explain its operation to you.

## Smoke and CO Detectors:

Your apartment comes equipped with several smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors. The detectors will sound an alarm if they sense smoke and/or carbon monoxide. If there is a fire or your alarms are sounding, immediately vacate the building and call the fire department. Do not try to take any belongings with you.

If smoke from cooking has set the detector off, you can reset it by waving a magazine or newspaper back and forth rapidly under it or by blowing fresh air at it with a hair dryer. Do not at any time disconnect your smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, remove the batteries or shut off the electric breaker for the detector.



## **Personal Property/Renters' Insurance:**

Shires Housing does not assume responsibility for loss or damage to any personal property from any cause. We recommend that you look into renter's personal property insurance.

## **Unit Transfers:**

Unit transfers are NOT ALLOWED. The only exception to this is if your family size and composition changes, it may be necessary to move your household to a larger or smaller unit when one becomes available.

## **Abandoned Personal Property:**

Any personal property left in a common area, parking area, on the lawn or in your apartment after you have moved out, will be considered abandoned personal property and disposed of by Shires Housing without notice to you.

# **Welcome to your new home!**

**Families sharing the same space require the consideration and cooperation of everyone. Shires Housing is committed to insuring residents the quiet enjoyment of their housing.**

# MOVE-OUT CHECKLIST

**Clean your apartment before you leave, so that it is in the same condition as when you moved in, with the exception of normal wear and tear;**

- ✓ Refrigerator and freezer;
- ✓ Stove top and oven, and
  - Stove vent hood must be cleaned inside and out;
- ✓ Kitchen cupboards and drawers must be completely emptied, cleaned and wiped down inside and out;
- ✓ Kitchen and bathroom sinks, tub, shower, all faucets and toilet must be cleaned;
- ✓ Heating duct covers should be wiped down;
- ✓ Vinyl/linoleum floors should be washed and ready for waxing;
- ✓ Carpets should be steam-cleaned;
- ✓ Any holes in the walls should be filled in/spackled so the walls are ready for paint.

**If SHIRES HOUSING has to clean your apartment, you will be charged \$35 an hour (rounded up to the next full hour), which will be deducted from your security deposit.**

In addition, SHIRES HOUSING expects you to:

- ✓ Remove of all your household possessions and decorative accessories from the property
- ✓ Put only common household bagged trash in the dumpster

No items are to be left anywhere on SHIRES HOUSING property, this includes leaving items by the side of the road.

**If any items are left in the apartment or placed in or near the dumpster, SHIRES HOUSING will consider them abandoned property, have them removed and the cost of this removal will be deducted from your security deposit**

**Make arrangements to STOP or TRANSFER the following services**

- ✓ Post Office
- ✓ Cable TV and Telephone
- ✓ GMP (Green Mountain Power)—Make arrangements to TRANSFER the electric account BACK INTO THE NAME OF SHIRES HOUSING as of the date you move out.

**You must also -**

- ✓ Make arrangements with SHIRES HOUSING for return of all apartment keys.  
**You will be charged rent for every day that you retain possession of the keys.**
- ✓ Provide SHIRES HOUSING with a new mailing address for your year-end landlord certificate (VT renter rebate) and any other further correspondence that may be required
- ✓ Call Shires Housing office (442-8139) and confirm that you have vacated the apartment so that we can schedule a move-out inspection.