



**Residence Hall  
Policies and Procedures  
Handbook 2018–2019**



RESIDENCE HALL POLICIES AND  
PROCEDURES HANDBOOK 2018–2019

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This handbook provides you with a guide to the most commonly enforced policies within the residence halls, but is not all inclusive. Please refer to the Housing Occupancy Agreement, the Student Code of Conduct, and/or the Student Handbook for additional policies, procedures and regulations. Students who violate policy in this handbook or the Student Handbook may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct, Mediation and Education for disciplinary action when appropriate.

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## Policies

### ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

All students are subject to Massachusetts law, city ordinances and University regulations. The current Massachusetts drinking age is 21. Residents 21 years of age or older may possess and consume alcoholic beverages **ONLY** within their room with the door closed. Underage residents and their visitors may not possess or consume alcohol. Underage residents and their guests (regardless of age) may not be present in any residence hall room where alcohol is present. There are also reasonable limits to the amount of alcohol that an individual who is 21 years or older may possess in the residence halls at any given time.

Limits apply to full, partially full or empty containers:

- one 4-pack of wine coolers, **OR**
- one 6-pack of 12 oz. malt beverages, **OR**
- one 6-pack of 12 oz. beers, **OR**
- .75 liters of wine.

The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages in public areas (i.e. lounges, hallways, kitchens, game rooms, etc.) is not permitted. Public intoxication is prohibited while on university property or at university-sponsored activities or events. The sale, distribution or furnishing of alcoholic beverages to minors is prohibited.

Residents who choose to consume alcoholic beverages are responsible for their actions and should such behavior detract from the living environment, they will be held accountable through the discipline process. Residents are also responsible for making their guests aware of the alcohol policy and may be held accountable for any inappropriate actions of their guests.

The University's response to students found in violation of the alcohol policy will result in the sanctions found on the Student Conduct website ([www.fitchburgstate.edu/judicial](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/judicial)).

Common sources of alcohol such as beer kegs, cases and punch bowls or any amount of alcohol over the limits specified are prohibited in the residence halls. The University's response to students found in violation of the common source policy may result in the following minimum sanction: automatic loss of residence for at least one academic semester and restriction from all residence halls during that time.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG SANCTIONS**

Alcohol and/or Drugs Recommended Sanctions As recommended by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education it is the established practice of the Office of Student Conduct to disclose the result of a disciplinary proceeding to a parent or guardian as long as the student is under the age of 21 at the time of the incident and the proceeding has resulted in a violation of University drug or alcohol policies, or any federal, state, or local law (affiliated with drugs and/or alcohol). Such Notification is standard practice. Requests that the results not be released should be submitted to the Office of Student Conduct and shall be considered at the discretion of the Director of Student Conduct.

In compliance with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 [20 U.S.C. § 1011i; 34 C.F.R. § 86.1 et seq.; 55 Fed. Reg. 33,580 (Aug. 16, 1990)] the Office of Student Conduct publishes minimum recommended sanctions to violations of the drug and alcohol policy in the sanctioning guide.

The Hearing Body may at their discretion deviate from the recommended sanctions in considering all of the factors presented.

## **APPLIANCES**

The university reserves the right to confiscate any electrical items, cords, or items that may pose a concern for fire safety (candles, incense, etc). Item(s) prohibited by university policy for health, fire, or safety reasons may be returned to you when you check out of your residence hall or by another arrangement with your Resident Director when leaving campus property. Any confiscated item not claimed by the end of the current academic year will be considered abandoned property and discarded.

For health, safety and sanitation considerations, only the following appliances are authorized for use in the residence halls: small electrical appliances that have a completely enclosed heating element and are UL approved (i.e. coffeemakers and popcorn poppers); and, small microwaves and refrigerators that meet the residence hall specifications:

## **Refrigerators**

- Maximum size, internal dimensions of less than 4.0 cubic feet.
- Maximum of 2 running amps. Remember, your refrigerator must be unplugged during semester break periods.

## **Microwaves**

- Maximum wattage, less than 1000 watts.

Appliances that are not permitted in the student rooms are electric skillets, toaster ovens, electric blankets, hot plates, items with exposed heating elements, air conditioners, and halogen lamps. The high potential of fires and damage from these items make these provisions necessary.

## **BALCONIES & ROOFS**

For safety reasons, residents are not permitted on the balconies and/or roofs of any residence hall.

## **BICYCLES**

Residents are permitted to store bicycles within their room. Any damage to the room caused by storage of a bicycle will be assessed to the resident. They should not be mounted to the wall or ceiling. To insure safety within the halls and to avoid damage to the carpet or hallway, bicycles are to be walked—not ridden—within the residence halls. Fire regulations prohibit storing bicycles in hallways, stairwells, or public areas, except in designated areas.

## **COMPROMISING SECURITY**

Residents who choose to endanger other residents by propping open exterior doors; lending their keys/ID cards out to anyone; granting access to nonresidents or tampering and/or damaging exterior doors, locks or security phones will have their housing occupancy agreement reviewed, face disciplinary action and/or be subject to criminal charges.

## **DARTS AND DARTBOARDS**

Because of the potential for personal injury and property damage, darts and dartboards are not permitted in the residence halls.

## **DECORATIONS**

Posters, pictures, and knick-knacks can make a resident feel more at home. Decorations are encouraged as long as they do not create health or fire hazards or damage to the room. Candles are not permitted, even if unburned. Alcohol bottles may not be used for decorations or storage. Tapestries are permitted if they have been fireproofed and are labeled as such. No items may be hung from the ceiling or attached to the outside of student room doors. Nails, screws, and tacks on or in the walls, furniture or fixtures are prohibited. Only masking tape, double stick tape, or poster putty may be used on surfaces.

Residents can bring additional furniture, but remember all additional furniture and decorations are subject to the approval of room/suitemates.

## **DRUGS**

The use, possession or distribution of any illegal stimulant, depressant, hallucinogenic or narcotic drugs in or around the residence halls or at hall functions held on or off campus is prohibited and will be reported to Campus Police. Inappropriate use of prescription medication is also prohibited.

## **EXPLOSIVES, FIREWORKS, AND FLAMMABLES**

The university reserves the right to confiscate any electrical items, cords, or items that may pose a concern for fire safety (candles, incense, etc). Item(s) prohibited by university policy for health, fire, or safety reasons may be returned to you when you check out of your residence hall or by another arrangement with your Resident Director when leaving campus property. Any confiscated item not claimed by the end of the current academic year will be considered abandoned property and discarded.

The possession and/or storage of fireworks, explosives, gun powder, ammunition, or any flammables or material which may jeopardize the safety of others is strictly prohibited.

## **EXIT DOORS**

Using an Emergency Exit in a non-emergency situation may result in a fine and disciplinary action.

## **FIRE SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

Fire alarm systems and fire safety equipment are provided for the protection of the residents. The fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, fire alarm horns, pull stations, and emergency exit signs are critical safety equipment. Tampering with fire safety equipment can result in criminal prosecution, disciplinary action and/or housing occupancy agreement termination. Where fire sprinklers exist, all sprinkler heads must remain free of obstructions to allow them to operate properly. Nothing may be attached, or placed against any part of the sprinkler system, this includes piping.

Fitchburg State Residence Halls are required to hold a fire drill each semester and all occupants of the building are required to participate. Failure to participate can result in disciplinary action. Students who fail to vacate the residence hall during a fire alarm are subject to disciplinary action.

## **GAMBLING**

Illegal gambling is not permitted at Fitchburg State University. Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Betting on or selling “pools” pertaining to athletic or other events
- Card-playing, either “in person” or in an online environment, for money
- The use of university property, including phones and internet servers, for illegal gambling activities

- Involvement in bookmaking activities
- Online gambling, which the United States Government has deemed to be illegal.

The University recognizes that, for some individuals, gambling can become a destructive pattern of behavior. Resources are available on campus to assist individuals that may be experiencing problems related to gambling. The Counseling Services Office (978-665-3152) or the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling (1-800-426-1234, [www.masscompulsivegambling.org](http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org)) can provide such resources as appropriate.

## **HALL SPORTS**

Due to the likelihood of property damage and the potential for personal injury, ball playing, squirt guns, water fights, and “horseplay” are not permitted inside the residence hall.

## **INCENSE/NOXIOUS ODORS**

The burning of incense is not permitted. The odor may be disagreeable to other residents and the live coal is a fire hazard.

## **INSURANCE**

The University does not carry insurance to cover loss or damage to residents’ personal effects. Individuals desiring such protection must make arrangements for the necessary coverage at their own expense. To insure the safety of your belongings: Remember to always lock your room door when you leave your room. The University does not assume responsibility for loss of or damage to personal property.

## **KEYS**

Each student is issued their own room key and front door key or ID card with door access upon checking into the halls. Students are responsible for their keys/ID cards and are to carry them at all times. The exterior building doors to residence halls are locked 24 hours a day. For security reasons, students are not to loan or duplicate keys/ID cards.

Report all lost keys/ID cards immediately to your Resident Director. You may be issued a temporary key. For the safety and security of you and your roommate, your lock will be changed if you do not return the temporary key within three (3) days. There is a charge for replacing a key.

If you should lock yourself out of your room, the following persons should be contacted in the order listed to obtain assistance:

1. Your roommate/suitemate
2. Resident Assistant on Duty
3. Your Resident Assistant
4. Your Resident Director



Please remember that the building staff consists of students and their schedules do not permit them to be available at all times.

Request for doors to be opened is restricted to the door of the room of the person who is making the request. Doors to another person's room will not be opened for any reason.

### **LOUNGE/PUBLIC FURNITURE**

Public area furniture is provided for the use of all residents and may not be taken to student rooms. A charge may be assessed and/or disciplinary action taken if public area furniture is found in student rooms.

### **MAINTENANCE**

The University employs a maintenance and custodial staff to keep the halls in good physical condition. Requests for maintenance should be given to a Resident Assistant, e-mailed to [housework@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:housework@fitchburgstate.edu), or called into the maintenance work order line at 978-665-4014. The custodial or maintenance staff will then make necessary repairs. Residents may also complete a work order by stopping at the front desk of your building.

### **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**

Due to the disturbance that musical instruments create for other people, the playing of musical instruments in the residence hall rooms is prohibited. Contact your Resident Director concerning possible practice locations.

### **OPEN FLAMES**

Due to the danger presented by open flames, candles and other such items may not be used in student rooms.

### **PETS**

For health and sanitation reasons, only fish in an aquarium of 20 gallons or less are permitted in the residence halls. All other organisms, including birds, reptiles, spiders, insects and mammals are prohibited with the exception of documented service animals (3.07 code Title II). If you decide to bring a fish tank, remember that you need to make arrangements for your fish during break times. All electrical items must be unplugged during the semester break.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT**

Fitchburg State University provides an educational environment where adults must learn to settle their concerns in an appropriate manner. Any resident involved in abuse or harassment, including verbal abuse or threats, of another person will have their housing occupancy agreement reviewed for termination.

## **PUBLIC AREA DAMAGES**

At the start of the academic year, the physical condition of the public areas (hallways, bathrooms, carpet, lounges, etc.) on each floor will be recorded by your Hall Staff. Because we believe in the importance of the development of the community in each living unit and each resident's responsibility for that community, any damages to the public areas for which the responsible individual(s) cannot be determined will be assessed equally amongst all members of that community. The process of community assessment is the final option should all attempts by the community to identify the responsible person(s) be unsuccessful. Once assessed, the members of the community must make payment at the Office of Housing and Residential Services within 10 days. After 10 days, a \$10 late fee will be added and posted to your student account at Housing and Residential Services.

If a resident is found destroying or defacing University property in or around the residence hall, he/she will face disciplinary action and make restitution for the damages. The defacing of University property includes the use of any writing implement on any room door, wall, or clean surface not meant for this purpose.

Residents are responsible for the actions of their guests in and around the residence halls and will be held financially responsible for all damages caused by their guests. Residents and guests can also be charged by the Campus Police for damage to state property.

## **QUIET HOURS—24 HOUR COURTESY HOURS**

Quiet hours are maintained to help provide an atmosphere that is conducive to good scholarship and to promote an environment where individuals can learn and study. The enforcement of quiet hours is the responsibility of each resident.

Quiet hours are in effect daily from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. This is the usual time when most residents will sleep and study. However, courtesy hours are in effect at all times. You should expect to be able to study anytime. Please observe requests from your neighbor or roommate if they ask you not to disrupt their study time, regardless of the time of day. You would expect them to observe similar requests from you.

One purpose of the residence hall is to provide comfortable living accommodations for all students. Any action that interferes with a student's right to study is a violation of this standard and may be subject to disciplinary action. Stereos, video games, televisions, and voices should be kept at a level which confines the noise within that room. If you wish to turn up the volume, you should use headphones; failure to do so could result in the removal of the item. If you are unsure about what is an acceptable level of noise, please see your Resident Assistant.

During examination periods at the end of each semester, quiet hours are in effect 24 hours a day. In the event that a resident violates this regulation, the individual may be required to vacate the residence hall. Residents are expected to check-out of the residence hall within 24 hours of their last final examination or by closing time, whichever is earliest.

### **ROLLER BLADING/SKATE BOARDING**

Due to damage and safety concerns, roller blading/skate boarding within the residence hall and on porches is strictly prohibited.

### **ROOM CHANGES**

Room changes may take place as space is available and after occupancy has stabilized, which is usually two weeks after the start of the semester. You are encouraged to discuss room changes with your roommate. The student seeking the room change should contact his/ her Resident Director, who will initiate the room change process. You will receive notification if the change is approved. Do not move until you are notified that the change is approved. If you move without prior approval from your Resident Director, you may be assessed a fine, required to return to your original location and/or face disciplinary action.

### **ROOM CONDITIONS**

The condition of each room/suite/apartment is checked at the beginning and end of the year. To avoid being charged for damages for which you are not responsible, you should carefully check the Residence Hall Inventory Sheet provided by your Resident Assistant to make certain all existing damages are noted on the sheet. Any damages, which take place in your room, will be assessed to you and your roommate.

### **ROOM CONSOLIDATION**

Residents who find themselves in a room without a roommate may be required to either move in with another resident who also lacks a roommate, or have another resident move in with them. This process will continue through the seventh week of classes each semester when applicable.

### **ROOM ENTRY**

The Office of Housing and Residential Services respects the student's rights for privacy within the group living-learning environment and will strive to protect and guarantee this privacy. This policy is designed to ensure only legal and appropriate entry into a resident's room by specifically authorized staff, and to define the conditions under which authorized personnel may enter a student's room.

Rooms may be entered under the following conditions:

- To provide room maintenance inspections, repair service or safety inspection.
- When there is reasonable cause to believe that University regulations or laws are being violated.
- For an emergency situation that requires that the room be entered.
- When a resident vacates a room for a break period, authorized personnel may enter a room to provide room maintenance inspections, repair service or safety inspections.

Illegal materials or items in plain view will be removed if they are noticed in the course of a room maintenance or vacation inspection, or in response to a violation of University or departmental policy. The resident will receive written notification of this action if confiscation of property is required when the student is absent.

A student's room will not be entered without knocking. A sufficient time lapse will be allowed to provide the residents ample opportunity to open the door. If no response is received, the room may be entered under the four conditions listed above. Before entering a room with the use of a key, staff members will identify themselves.

Authorized University staff members who may enter a student's room are administrative housing staff members, Resident Directors, Resident Assistants and inspection, maintenance, custodial, and safety personnel.

## **ROOM FURNITURE**

Each student room is furnished with one desk, chair, and bed per student. Dressers and/or wardrobes are provided to permanent residents of a bed room and are to be shared in periods of expanded occupancy.

**Lofted beds** are only permitted in rooms with expanded occupancy.

All furniture provided by the institution must remain in the student room in which it has been placed. Under no circumstances can the furniture be removed from the premises. Unfortunately there is insufficient storage space in the buildings to allow us to offer storage of furniture or other items.

**Water beds** are prohibited in student rooms.

## **ROOM OCCUPANCY**

Massachusetts State Housing Code restricts maximum occupancy within residence hall rooms. The limit is based on the designated capacity of the room. Single rooms maximum capacity is three (3) persons. Double occupancy rooms have a maximum capacity of five (5) persons. Triple and quad occupancy rooms maximum capacity is seven (7) persons. Mara Village suites are limited to capacity of twelve (12) persons and Townhouse apartments are limited to capacity of twenty (20) persons.

## **SCREENS**

Screens are not to be opened or removed from windows. For safety reasons, ledges are not to be used for storage, nor are students allowed to walk or sit on ledges. Students will be held liable for damages to property or personal injury resulting from items being thrown from windows or falling from ledges. Removal of the screen will result in a \$25 fine and a charge to repair/replace damaged screens. Additional disciplinary action may also be taken.

## **SERVICE DESKS**

There are three service desks located inside the main entry ways of Aubuchon Hall, Herlihy Hall, and Russell Towers. These desks are operated by service desk attendants. Students are able to report concerns or facility work orders to the service desk attendants. Each student is expected to show their valid Fitchburg State OneCard when they enter the building to which they reside. Any person(s) who are not assigned occupants of the building must be signed in as a guest. Please refer to the Visitation/Guest section in this handbook for additional information. The host needs to sign-in their guest by providing their valid Fitchburg State OneCard and the guest needs to provide a valid Fitchburg State OneCard or ID. When the guest is exiting the building they must sign-out with the service desk attendant. Bags may be checked as students and guests enter the building. The owner of the bag is expected to open the bag for the service desk attendant to look inside.

## **SIGNS, PICTURES, AND POSTERS**

Massachusetts State law prohibits the removal of traffic and/or street signs. Therefore, traffic or street signs are not permitted in the residence halls. Pictures and other material that may be considered objectionable should not be displayed in areas that may be visible outside the student room. Signs are not allowed as window displays.

## **SMOKING**

The smoking of tobacco products is NOT permitted inside residence hall rooms or residence hall public areas, including: stairwells, hallways, suite baths, bathrooms, kitchens, lounges, etc.

## **SOLICITATION AND SELLING**

For reasons of resident privacy, safety and security, door-to-door solicitation of any type is prohibited. Report any solicitors to the staff or Campus Police immediately.

## **TELEPHONE HARASSMENT**

Massachusetts State Law provides that a person who, with intent to harass, annoy, or alarm another person but with no intent of legitimate communication, makes a phone call, whether or not a conversation ensues, commits harassment, a misdemeanor, and may face prosecution by the University through the courts and disciplinary action. Report all incidents of phone harassment to Housing and Residential Services and Campus Police.

## **THEFT**

Any resident found in the possession of another person's property will have their housing occupancy agreement reviewed for termination, and may face prosecution through the courts and disciplinary action. An atmosphere where residents can feel safe and secure must be maintained.

## **VISITATION/GUEST**

Visitors or guests are defined as persons who are not assigned occupants of the specific room, suite, or residence hall in question.

Overnight guests may stay any night of the week for a maximum of two (2) nights within a ten (10) day period, with the consent of the roommate and approval of the Resident Director. Consideration for room/suitemates and other floor residents dictates that guests do not infringe on the rights of assigned residents. Therefore, all guests, regardless of sex, must be approved by all residents of the room or suite. Guest must abide by all policies of the residence halls, and hosts are responsible for the conduct of their guests.

## **VISITOR HOST/ESCORT**

All guests must have a resident of the hall as a host, and must be escorted by the host at all times. Any person without a host will be escorted from the building. Residents are responsible for anyone they escort into the residence hall.

The following guidelines are to be followed:

- Guest calls host from exterior phone.
- Guest is met at front door by host.
- Guest signs in and out and shows a picture ID at the front desk.
- Guests must be escorted by their host at all times.

Residents who violate visitation/host policies may face the loss of their visitation privilege. Guests who violate visitation/host policies may lose their privilege of entering the residence halls.

## **WEAPONS**

Weapons such as firearms, knives, bows and arrows, as well as any ammunition, are prohibited in the residence halls. Be aware that according to Massachusetts law it is a violation to possess a weapon on campus, except for Campus Police Officers. Residents are permitted to carry pepper-spray, as long as they comply with Massachusetts law, which includes a permit to carry. Residents must also register a permit to carry pepper spray with Campus Police. Laser pens are permitted as long as they are being used for their designed purpose. Improper use of laser pens will result in disciplinary action.

# Disciplinary Procedures

Policies for the residence halls have been developed in an attempt to establish an environment in which a large number of residents may live together with maximum freedom while recognizing the rights of fellow residents. Ideally, all residents accept the responsibility involved in the community living situation and make an effort to be aware of how their actions affect their neighbors. When a resident violates this basic standard of community living by endangering the safety of other residents or violating any of the policies outlined by the University, this handbook, or the Housing Occupancy Agreement, this behavior must be confronted.



Violations of university policies, including housing policies are subject to disciplinary action through the student conduct process. The student conduct process is outlined in the code of Conduct and Discipline Process Handbook. Additional information regarding university policies may be found in the Student Handbook, and the EO/AA Plan. These documents may be found on the Student Conduct website at [www.fitchburgstate.edu/judicial](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/judicial).