



A GUIDE TO LIVING IN A SHARE HOUSE

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Introduction

This document is designed to assist you and your house mates as you move in together. Working through the issues before moving in can make a great deal of difference to your share house experience. However, if you are already in a share house you might also find it helpful to go through this document to help keep things running splendidly.

The basic idea of this document is to help you establish some house rules, a roster and a way of resolving any problems that arise.

Many people have moved into a share house situation thinking that everything will work out. What could go wrong, these are my friends right? And we're all Christian, so living together is going to be a breeze! Unfortunately we are all far from perfect and we all have different expectations. Lots of people have ended up hurt, frustrated and financially worse off with once great friendships strained because they failed to discuss basic living issues up front.

How do you use this document?

Step 1

You will work through all the possible issues with your house mates and establish some written standards and rules to live by.

Step 2

Set up a roster of duties.

Step 3

Establish a regular house meeting so that any problems can be fixed before they blow up.

Step 1. Establishing some house rules

As a house discuss the issues on the next few pages and work out where you stand on these.

You may find that your house mates have very different standards than you, however you need to come to a consensus and you may have to compromise.

Once you have discussed the issue write out a house rule.

Some of these issues may not be relevant and you may not need to make a rule, but consider them all carefully.

Once you have decided on your standards you need to write them up and put them in a highly visible place in the house, I suggest the fridge door. This way you will be reminded of them and visitors will respect them too. There is an examples of a house rule sheet at the end of this section.

The non-negotiables

Firstly there a few rules which are not negotiable, things like...

- ▶ You must pay your rent and bills on time, If you do not pay your rent or bills on time YOU ARE STEALING.
- ▶ Your behavior should not be offensive to other housemates or neighbors.
- ▶ After making the house duty roster and house rules you MUST obey these rules.
- ▶ You must respect and follow the standards of the lease you agreed to when moving in.

The negotiables

Now there is a heap of other stuff that you will need to work out together. Obviously this list is not exhaustive, we have put in the things that most often cause problems in a share house. You may need to bring up extra stuff we have missed.

On the next page is the list of issues to work through, you will see the general heading, then a few possible issues to think about and finally an example of a house rule that might help you make your own up. The box can be used to write your thoughts or own rules.

NOISE - Inside (tv, music, instruments, people, exams etc), Outside (coming and going esp. at night etc)

Eg. No loud noise before 7am and after 10pm, extra considerations for those studying

VISITORS - curfew, friends staying over night, drop in friends, telling housemates about friends visiting

Eg. Visitors must obey house rules at all times, no visitors after 9pm week nights and 12pm on weekends

BOYFRIENDS/GIRLFRIENDS - in bedrooms, times to visit, staying over

Eg. By no means will bf/gf stay the night, bedroom doors opened when bf/gf are in the room

USE OF COMMON ROOMS - area for studying, personal messes or belongings

Eg. No personal mess in the common rooms - no study mess in lounge rooms

BEDROOM TIDYNESS - doors shut, hygiene

Eg. If bedrooms are messy the doors should remain shut off from the rest of the house, no food or other perishables should be kept in the bedroom to avoid vermin

SHARE FOOD - use of kitty for small items, not eating more than fair share so some housemates don't miss out

Eg. Buy own food and share expenses for small communal items such as milk, bread and cleaning items OR purchase food as a house and ensure all housemates receive a fair share of the food

BATHROOM/SHOWER USE - hot water availability, length of showers, leaving personal items in bathroom, cleaning up mess after using bathroom

Eg. Minimise showering time in peak use such as mornings, don't leave personal items lying around, wipe all surfaces after use

SHARING HOUSEWORK - share responsibilities, cleaning roster, what jobs need doing

Eg. The responsibilities of cleaning the house are everyone's, the cleaning roster should be obeyed at all costs

STUDY AREAS - study books/notes in common rooms, noise around study areas

Eg. No study or personal items should be left in common rooms, study should not occur in common rooms when other housemates are relaxing

OTHER HOUSEMATES PROPERTY - use of others items, breakages, lost property, borrowed property

Eg. If you borrow it - return it, if you break it or lose it - replace it

LOANING MONEY FROM HOUSEMATES - when is it ok?

Eg. It is NOT acceptable to borrow money from your housemates particularly to cover living expenses

ALCOHOL - allowing drinking, regularity, quantities

Eg. Drinking is permitted however getting drunk is not

STANDARDS ON THE LEASE - display lease, agreement, compliance

Eg. The lease has been agreed upon by all housemates, any new housemates should sign the lease and have names put onto lease

PAYMENT OF RENT - who pays, when to pay, how much

Eg. Rent is due (day) as per lease agreement, rent must be paid in full 2 weeks in advance, absolutely NO exceptions

NOTIFICATION OF REPAIRS - person in charge, procedure

Eg. (Name) is in charge of calling the rental agent when a repair is required, follow up on repairs with trades person is (name's) responsibility

HANDLING OF BILLS - person in charge, what bills

Eg. Each person in the house is responsible for 1 bill, all housemates must pay their portion of the bill before person in charge pays company OR an estimated \$??/week has been made to pay bills each housemate must contribute \$?? To the kitty each week - NO EXCEPTIONS

Eg. Late payment of bills is not acceptable, nor is it acceptable for 1 person to be out of pocket - you MUST pay your share of the bills on time

YARD MAINTENANCE - who, when, how

Eg. The lawn must be mowed and weeds pulled every fortnight, if noone in the house is capable or has time - pay someone to do it!

What now?

Put the important rules on a piece of paper and stick it to the door of your refrigerator (or somewhere prominent)

An example of a house rule list

123 Example street Armidale

HOUSE RULES

- ▶ **The cleaning roster is to be followed on pain of death**
- ▶ **The lounge room, kitchen and bathrooms are common rooms, don't leave your stuff lying around in them**
- ▶ **Do not park your car on the grass**
- ▶ **Boyfriends/girlfriends don't stay overnight**
- ▶ **Boys/girls in your room means the door stays open**
- ▶ **Guests must follow the house rules**
- ▶ **Its ok to drink but not get drunk in this house**
- ▶ **No smoking in the house**
- ▶ **Showers need to be short (less than 5 min) in the morning as we all need to get through and there ain't that much hot water!**
- ▶ **No pets in the house (goldfish exempt)**
- ▶ **There is a house dinner and meeting every Wednesday night, you must be there**
- ▶ **The rules are not negotiable, if you want them changed bring it up at the house meeting**

Step 2 Organising a roster

As a house determine how regularly these jobs need to be completed. From these decisions develop a house roster to allocate an even share of the jobs. It is best to rotate weekly between house jobs so everyone does a fair share of the work.

House Jobs	Regularity				What does this involve?
	D	W	F	M	
Sweeping					
Vacuuming					
Wash up					
Clean Kitchen					
Clean bathroom					
Clean lounge room					
Dust cobwebs					
Empty house bins					
Put bins on street					

House Jobs	Regularity				What does this involve?
	D	W	F	M	
Wash house linen (bathmats/tea towels)					
Empty fridge					
Cooking					
Shopping					
Mow Lawns					
Weed Garden					
Trim branches and hedges					
Sweep outside paths/garage					

What now?

Make a duty roster and stick it to the door of your refrigerator (or somewhere prominent)

Example duty roster

123 Example street Armidale

DUTY ROSTER

Week starting	Kitchen	Lounge room	Bathroom	Lawn
26-Jun	Dale & Wayno	Kevin	Thorpy	Dale
3-Jul	Thorpy & Dale	Wayno	Kevin	
10-Jul	Kevin & Thorpy	Dale	Wayno	Wayno
17-Jul	Wayno & Kevin	Thorpy	Dale	
24-Jul	Dale & Wayno	Kevin	Thorpy	Kevin
31-Jul	Thorpy & Dale	Wayno	Kevin	
7-Aug	Kevin & Thorpy	Dale	Wayno	Thorpy
Saturday the 12 th (10am to 1pm) we have all got to weed/maintain the gardens				
14-Aug	Wayno & Kevin	Thorpy	Dale	
21-Aug	Dale & Wayno	Kevin	Thorpy	Dale
28-Aug	Thorpy & Dale	Wayno	Kevin	

Kitchen duties

Daily

- Packing and unpacking dishwasher
- Wipe down tables and benches
- Wash up
- Feed the chickens

Bi-weekly

- Sweep or vacuum floor

Weekly

- Mop floor
- Clean dishwasher filter

Lounge room duties

Daily

- Fix up throw rugs
- Put things away
- Sweep up fire place (winter)

Bi-Weekly

- Vacuum – before and after WUF

Weekly

- Dust tv, mantle pieces etc
- Put out bin and recycling (Tues night)

Bathroom

Daily

- Wipe down sink

Weekly

- Clean toilet, bath and shower
- Vacuum and mop floor
- Change hand towel and bath mat
- Wash towels and tea towels

Lawn

- Mow it, mow it good

Step 3 The house dinner and meeting

The house dinner and meeting is an essential part of living in a share house. Doing this regularly will allow any issues to be brought up before an emotional explosion. The house dinner/meeting is the perfect place to adjust the rules, the roster and check on the house finances.

HOUSE DINNER PROCEDURE

1. Share preparation or take turns to cook a meal for the house
2. Eat a meal together as a house
3. All housemates must attend and be on time
4. No one other than house mates should be in attendance
5. Pray together after the meal – pray for each other, the house, the church, things discussed at dinner and the house meeting to follow
6. Have the house meeting after the meal and prayer time
7. Use this time to discuss issues related to the running of the share house that have arisen in the house over the last week.
8. Don't bring up personal problems with other housemates
9. Develop a standard and a procedure to deal with each of the issues – refer and adjust house roster and rules accordingly
10. Pray again at the end of the house meeting

WHERE TO GO IN A CRISIS...

Money

- Act quickly – when you lose your job make immediate decisions
- Speak to your minister
- Speak to an older member in the congregation
- Speak to your parents
- Approach creditors etc. and set up a payment plan that is compatible with your current financial position
- It is not acceptable to borrow or rely on housemates for financial help at this time

Repeated and willful breaking of house rules or roster

- Bring forward for discussion at each house meeting
- Discuss with minister or older member of the congregation as a house and try to reach a mutual understanding of living together
- Contemplate searching for alternate house to live

If the house roster and rules have been decided upon as a house there should be no reason or excuse for not sticking to them. If you are not happy with the house rules, perhaps that house is not the right one for you.

Some extra stuff

Your home is a mission field. Use it to build relationships with christian and non-christian friends. Here are some tips for entertaining on the cheap!

Food

- Spaghetti bolognaise

Splash of olive oil

1 onion

garlic

500gm mince (on special \$5/kg)

400gm tin tomatoes

1 tin tomato soup

Salt and pepper

1pk 500gms penne or spaghetti pasta

Fill saucepan with water and bring to boil, add all the pasta with a pinch of salt. Boil till cooked. In the mean time make the mince sauce. Pour a small amount of oil into a pan, dice onions and brown, add crushed garlic. Brown mince and drain fat. Combine in one saucepan with tinned tomatoes and tomato soup. Cook for a further 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

When serving, grate cheese on top.

This should feed at least 4 people – more if you serve with bread. It should only cost about \$8 max to make so works out at about \$2 for a very filling and healthy meal.

- Pumpkin soup

Olive oil

2 onions

Garlic to taste

1 small or ½ large pumpkin

Chicken or vegetable stock powder

Water

Salt and pepper

300mls cream (optional)

Brown 2 onions in olive oil. Add crushed garlic. Cut up half a large pumpkin or a whole small pumpkin (butternut). Add to pan with enough stock made up in water (read quantities off packet) to cover pumpkin. Cook on medium heat till pumpkin is soft. Blend with stick

blender (make sure it is not too hot if using a plastic blender) or mash up with a fork. Add cream if desired for creamier soup.

This soup freezes very well so it is great for a quick meal. Do not add cream if you want to freeze. Add cream to bowl after heating.

- Easy scones

600mls of cream

600mls of cheap lemonade

6 cups of self raising flour

Preheat oven to 180°C. Mix all ingredients together in a bowl, add extra flour if needed to manage stickiness. Roll dough out on clean table and cut with circular cookie cutter or use a glass. Place on floured tray in oven for about 10 to 15 minutes. Serve with jam and cream. This recipe makes heaps and is great if you are having people round for supper or even supper at church...

Entertainment

- Board games – borrow from friends or purchase cheap from Vinnies
- Cards
- Video nights – Civic Video specials: or borrow from friends
- Bush walks
- Bike rides
- BYO Picnics
- Veggie gardening – this can save you money too!
- Have people round for supper or desert instead of dinner