

A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL OFF-CAMPUS LIVING



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

Photo: Stephen Salpukas

LIVING IN WILLIAMSBURG

Williamsburg is a vibrant community, one that offers an ideal setting in which to pursue your education. Understanding your rights and responsibilities as well as the services available to you will set you up for success in living off-campus.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. [Your rights as a tenant](#)
2. [Your responsibilities in your neighborhood](#)
3. [The resources and services available to you](#)

(Use the links to go to a specific section.)



PART 1: YOUR RIGHTS AS A TENANT

WHERE TO LIVE

Once you intend to live off-campus, finding the right rental situation is key. Here are some resources for your search.

- www.wmoffcampus.com has property listings targeted at W&M students, faculty and staff.
- www.whoseyourlandlord.com offers evaluations of landlords from prior tenants and can help you consider what it might be like to live in a specific property. Add your own evaluation to help others choose in the future.

LEASE CONSIDERATIONS

The lease is the legal document that spells out your obligations as a tenant. Read and consider it thoroughly before signing. Some basic questions you should ask:

- ❖ Be aware of the City's 3/4-person rule and how a prospective rental property aligns with your roommate plans (number of roommates, rent/cost sharing, etc.).
- ❖ How much is the rent? When is it due, and how must it be paid (where, what form, etc.)? When is rent past due and what's the fee for that?
- ❖ When does the lease begin and end? Do you need to give notice before moving out? Can you sublease to another person?

LEASE CONSIDERATIONS

- ❖ Are you comfortable with the safety features of the residence? Are there functioning fire alarms and extinguishers, etc.?
- ❖ What about utilities? Are they included? If not, be sure you understand your responsibilities to the utility providers.
- ❖ Who is responsible for maintenance and repairs for the property (appliance repairs, etc.)? Will you be doing the lawn care?
- ❖ Will you be getting renter's insurance? It's an affordable way to protect your belongings in case something happens.
- ❖ Are there other restrictions included of which you need to be aware?

LEASE CONSIDERATIONS

- ❖ Did the landlord complete a damages walkthrough and give you a copy at move in? Is it accurate? Did you document any existing damages (e.g., pictures) to be sure you aren't held responsible later?
- ❖ Do you need to complete a walkthrough with the landlord before moving out? Does the lease require you to have the apartment professionally cleaned before move out?
- ❖ How much is the security deposit? What are the terms regarding its repayment after you leave?
- ❖ Seek advice from others (e.g., parent(s)/guardian(s) or a lawyer), particularly if you have concerns over any lease terms.

BASIC TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❖ Know and understand your lease.
- ❖ Be a respectful neighbor to those living around you.
- ❖ Properly dispose of trash and recycling.
- ❖ Keep the property in good shape. Report maintenance issues per the terms of the lease.
- ❖ See the [Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act](#) for a full description of each parties' responsibilities.

BASIC LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❖ Ensure the property meets minimum safety standards.
- ❖ Ensure the lease is followed.
- ❖ Address and fix issues in a timely manner per the lease terms.
- ❖ Maintain effective communication.





PART 2:
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN
YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

WELCOME!

When you move in, it's a good idea to politely introduce yourself to your new neighbors. You may want to exchange contact information to facilitate good communication. You may also want to ask neighbors to let you know personally of any issues (noise, trash, etc.), and be prepared to respond if they do. (If you don't, they have every right to report matters to the authorities.)

TRASH COLLECTION-CITY

- ❖ Find your assigned collection day (Monday or Tuesday) by entering your address on [the city's website](#). You can also sign up for email and text reminders from the website.
- ❖ Residents must use the City-provided garbage carts (the blue lid is for trash, the green lid for recycling).
- ❖ Place your cart at the curb before 7:00 a.m. on your assigned collection day. The lid must face the street and make sure the cart is away from parked cars, utility poles and boxes, trees and bushes.
- ❖ Retrieve your cart the same day. Don't leave it at the curb.
- ❖ Bulk collection may be scheduled at no charge up to three times per year.

RECYCLING-CITY

- ❖ Recycling is collected on trash collection day every other week. Use the City-provided garbage cart with the green lid.
- ❖ Items don't have to be separated and don't put your recyclables in plastic bags. Just toss them in the cart.
- ❖ Place your cart at the curb before 7:00 a.m. on your assigned collection day. The lid must face the street and make sure the cart is away from parked cars, utility poles and boxes, trees and bushes.
- ❖ Retrieve your cart the same day. Don't leave it at the curb.

APARTMENTS AND LIVING IN SURROUNDING COUNTIES

- ❖ Your apartment complex may not participate in trash and recycling collection. It may have its own trash compactor or collection area. Your lease should contain details.
- ❖ See [the James City County website](#) for details on collection centers if you need to dispose of your trash yourself.
- ❖ You can purchase [trash coupons](#) online or at the center. Bulk trash collection can be arranged in advance for a fee.
- ❖ See the [York County website](#) for details if you live there.

PARKING IN THE CITY

- ❖ Know how many parking spaces are available to you on your rental property.
- ❖ Be sure you're aware of the City's parking requirements for your residence.
- ❖ Consider how guests factor into your parking plans if hosting others.
- ❖ Expect enforcement of any parking violation. If you break the rules – even for a short time – it's likely you'll get a ticket.

NOISE AND ALCOHOL

The local municipalities and Commonwealth of Virginia have statutes in place regulating excessive noise and public alcohol use. Take the time to get familiar with them before you move in.

Failure to follow these statutes can result in fines and legal charges as well as charges through the Student Code of Conduct.

NOISE IN THE CITY

- ❖ The City's noise ordinance prohibits excessive noise that can be heard across property lines or through a shared wall between two units between the hours of 11:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.
- ❖ Put simply, if your neighbors can hear it, it's in violation of the ordinance. See sections 12-70 through 12-77 of the City code for specifics.

PARTIES AND NOISE

- ❖ Whether called a party, social activity, meeting or anything else, a gathering of 10 or more people creating plainly audible sound across property lines for a half-hour or longer between 11:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m. is considered a large party nuisance under the City's noise ordinance.
- ❖ Remember that often the loudest noises are created when guests are leaving (slamming doors, speaking loudly, etc.).

PENALTIES FOR NOISE

- ❖ Per the code, “Anyone who violates the noise ordinance shall be deemed guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$300.00 for the first offense, \$500.00 for the second offense within a 12-month period. Any subsequent offense within the same 12-month period shall be punishable as a class 1 misdemeanor. Each day the violation is committed or permitted to continue shall constitute a separate offense and shall be punishable as such.”
- ❖ Plus, noise violations are referred to W&M and potentially subject to resolution under the Student Code of Conduct.

ALCOHOL

- ❖ Even if of legal age (21 years old), drinking in public places, or offering someone else a drink (whether or not it's accepted), is against state law. So is selling or providing alcohol to anyone under legal age
- ❖ Be aware of what is a “public place” (e.g., the street and the sidewalk) in relation to your residence. See § 4.1-304 and §4.1-308 among others for specifics.
- ❖ When living off-campus, you need to consider the consequences not only of your actions, but also of those that occur in your residence (whether or not it was you).

W&M STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

- ❖ W&M's Student Code of Conduct applies off-campus as well as on-campus.
- ❖ Any arrest or citation is subject to W&M review and can lead to disciplinary action in addition to criminal court action.
- ❖ Off-campus violations include alcohol issues, DUI, and assault and relationship violence.

MORE GOOD NEIGHBOR STRATEGIES

- ❖ Don't wait for a problem. Introduce yourself to your neighbors. Friendliness can go a long way!
- ❖ Be considerate of the little things like keeping voices down when outside at night (walking, talking on the street, etc.). Avoid slamming car doors if you or others arrive at your residence at night.
- ❖ If you want to host a social gathering, know what your responsibilities are under the noise ordinance and act accordingly. You may want to let your neighbors know ahead of time.



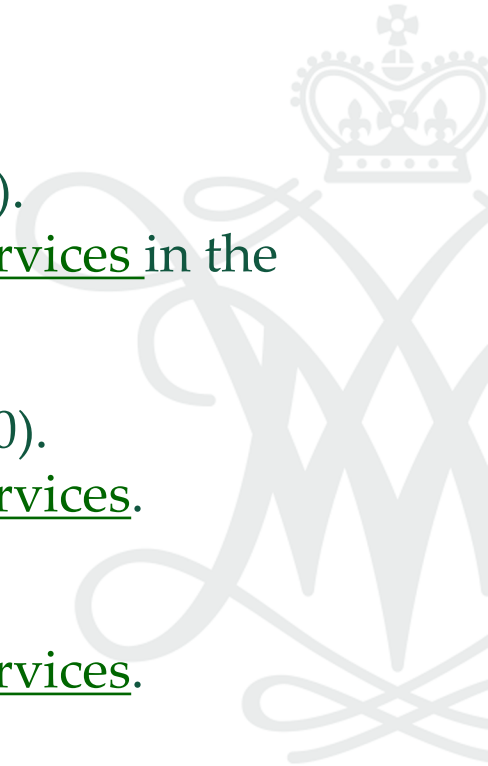
PART 3:
RESOURCES AND SERVICES
AVAILABLE TO YOU

RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Williamsburg and the surrounding areas offer a number of resources and services to residents. From public safety to transportation and beyond, you're part of a community. Be sure you're aware and take full advantage of what's available to you.

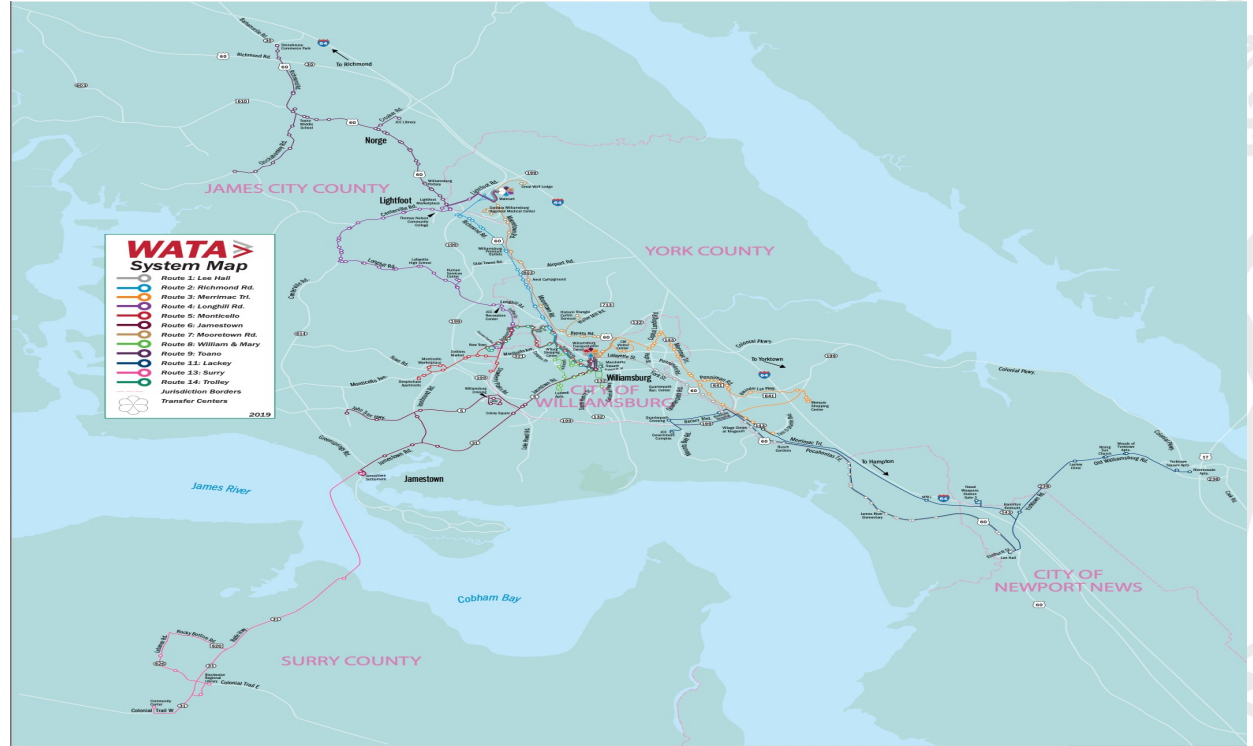
PUBLIC SAFETY

- ❖ In an emergency, always dial 911.
- ❖ Williamsburg Police (non-emergencies, 757-220-2331).
Be sure to check out the full range of public safety services in the City.
- ❖ James City Co. Police (non-emergencies, 757-253-1800).
Be sure to check out the full range of public safety services.
- ❖ York Co. Sheriff (non-emergencies, 757-890-3630).
Be sure to check out the full range of public safety services.
- ❖ W&M Police can be reached at 757-221-4596.



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- ❖ You can get basically anywhere using WATA and you ride free with your W&M ID. And the buses have a rack for your bike.



W&M PARKING & TRANSPORTATION

❖ Riding a bike to campus?

You need to register it. This protects your bike and helps in case it's ever stolen.

Only store your bike on one of the racks around campus.

Don't leave it anywhere else, especially chained up.

And be sure you know the rules of the road when riding.

❖ Driving a car to campus?

You need a parking decal.

Be sure you know the rules and regulations.

NEED MORE INFO?

- ❖ For questions about city services, contact info@williamsburgva.gov. Check out the City's [webpage for new residents](#).
- ❖ For questions about James City County services, contact general.services@jamescitycountyva.gov.
- ❖ For questions about York County services, contact webmaster@yorkcounty.gov.
- ❖ Having issues in your neighborhood? Contact Michael Fox at (757) 221-1346 or mjfox1@wm.edu.
- ❖ For questions about student conduct, contact (757) 221-2509 or studentconduct@wm.edu.





Wherever you live, you're part of the W&M Community. Thanks for being a good neighbor!