Winter is upon us and that brings new responsibilities as an off-campus student. Your lease should describe your responsibility regarding winter clean-up: shoveling the drive-way, parking areas, pathways, stairs and sidewalks.

District of Columbia law requires that property owners clear snow and ice from sidewalks, handicap ramps an steps within the first eight hours after the snow, sleet or ice stops falling.

If ice cannot be removed, property owners may spread sand or salt to make the sidewalks safe. The D.C. government does not plow alleys. If necessary, alley trash collection will be moved curb-side.

The Mayor of D.C. determines when it is necessary to declare a snow emergency. ALL vehicles must be removed immediately from SNOW EMERGENCY ROUTES. Illegal parking vehicles are subject to a $250 fine, not including towing and impound fees.

As temperatures drop in the Washington area, tenants look to their building’s owners to provide adequate heat. If landlords fail to comply, they could face a fine of $1,000 and other potential penalties and fees from the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA).

District law also requires minimum temperatures be maintained in living areas during cold weather regardless of the calendar date.

What Landlords Must Do: Keep heating equipment in good repair and capable of maintaining temperature of at least 70 degrees. If any living unit where the tenant cannot control or set the temperature, the building heat must be kept at least 68 degrees between 6:30am and 11pm, and 65 degrees between 11pm and 6:30am. Additionally, they must get every furnace, boiler, and central heating system inspected between March 1 and September 1 of each year.

What Tenants Must Do: Check your thermostat to make sure it’s on and in heat mode. Contact your landlord, property manager, or building superintendent to report any problems immediately. If your problem is not solved, call DCRA’s housing inspection staff at (202) 442-9557.

What DCRA Will Do: Contact the property owner or agent to tell them about the complaint. Dispatch an inspector to investigate the solution. Issue a notice of the violation to fix the problem. Any property owner who does not comply with any Notice of Violation may get a fine of $1,000 as well as other penalties and fees.
A Message from the Dean of Students Office

Contributed by Michelle Espinosa, Associate Dean of Students

Dear American University Student:

Welcome back!! I hope you had an enjoyable Winter Break and that the time away from campus gave you a chance to re-energize for your new classes and the excitement that the spring semester brings. We all have visions of warm spring weather that will eventually arrive, but there are still a few months of cold winter weather to manage. Winter weather can present unique challenges to students living off-campus. Here are a few tips and recommendations to make your lives easier and safer!

Trying to warm up your house or apartment? Be Safe!

- Don’t overload electrical outlets with space heaters or electric blankets;
- Unplug blankets and space heaters when not in the room;
- If you have a working fire place, talk to your landlord and be sure it has been properly maintained and is ready for use before lighting a fire.;
- Keep a container of water close by the fire place at all times and never go to sleep or leave your residence without first completely extinguishing the fire;
- Don’t place any flammable items near the fire place (blankets, pillows, newspapers, etc.);
- Talk with your roommates about a fire evacuation plan and make sure all windows and doors can be opened and used as an exit in an emergency;

Hoping for a snow day or two…or three? Be prepared!

- Buy a snow shovel and other snow removal equipment;
- Buy a few bags of rock salt to help melt ice and keep your front walk and porch steps safe;
- Make arrangements for snow removal if you are required to do so as a tenant;
- Establish a plan with roommates for shoveling your front walk and the sidewalk in front of your house. (Go the “extra mile” and shovel the walk and sidewalk for your closest neighbors too!);
- Let your landlord know if your gutters and downspouts need to be cleared or make arrangements for it to be done if you are responsible for this;
- Know and abide by the parking rules in your neighborhood as they relate to snow removal;

Planning to host friends at your residence this semester? Be mindful and considerate of your neighbors!

- If you host a gathering, take steps to monitor and control your guests’ behavior. Keep noise levels to a minimum, and end your party at a reasonable hour;
- Communicate with neighbors about your plans and provide contact information so they can reach you if needed;
- Identify one or two roommates as “house managers” any time you have friends over. They can manage guests, monitor noise, clean up the yard and surrounding area, and respond to phone calls or neighbor concerns if the need arise;

Renting Licensed Spaces

Do your upstairs neighbors vacuum their floors in the middle of the night and wake you up? Are you having trouble deciding how you and your roommates are splitting utility costs? Do you and your landlord disagree about whether the refrigerator should be replaced? We’re here for you. AU Conflict Resolution Services can help with both on- and off-campus conflicts.

AU Conflict Resolution Services provides both mediation and conflict coaching to help manage conflicts. Mediation is a process in which two or more conflicting parties agree to sit down and talk about the issue and how to address it in a mutually acceptable way with the help of an impartial mediator. Conflict coaching is an option for individuals who would like to explore ways to address their conflicts on their own in one-on-one meetings. Best of all, AU Conflict Resolution services are free, voluntary, and confidential.

AU Conflict Resolution Services hopes you have a fantastic semester living off-campus, but when problems arise, we’re here for you. Contact us at conflictresolution@american.edu.

IMPORTANT!! IMPORTANT!! IMPORTANT!! IMPORTANT!! IMPORTANT!!

Residential Housing licenses are required for all rental properties in the District of Columbia including homes, apartments, condominiums, basement apartments and apartment buildings.

It is important to make sure that the person you are renting from has the appropriate license to rent. A licensed space is up-to-date with fire and safety codes. It also means that there are no structural issues with the space. If you currently reside in a space that does not have a rental license, it’s possible that you may be forced to leave.

We are currently working with Off-Campus Partners, the host of the off-campus posting site, to verify that all off-campus housing opportunities posted on the site have the proper license to rent.

You can find more information through the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs at dc.gov/DC/DCRA.
**Resources for Students**

**Contributed by Ethan Becker-Menditto, Facilities Coordinator**

**Student Advantage**

It’s never too early to start planning that spring break getaway. Save money by affordably traveling with an American University ID with **Student Advantage**. Benefit from exclusive travel discounts at Amtrak, Greyhound, and Lyft. American University Student Advantage cardholders also receive exclusive discounts of up to 40% online and in-store with national brands including discounts at Foot Locker, Target.com, RiteAid.com, and Lenovo, to name a few. Four years of continued discounts for only one payment of $45!

Order your AU ID with Student Advantage by visiting this site to order online [www.studentadvantage.com/au](http://www.studentadvantage.com/au). If you would like additional information on the program, please contact Student Advantage directly at 1-800-347-7554.

**Center for Diversity & Inclusion**

**Contributed by Kerry Diekmann, Coordinator for Women’s and Gender Equity Programming**

The Center for Diversity & Inclusion (CDI) is an office on-campus dedicated to enhancing first-generation, LGBTQ, multicultural, and women’s experiences through education, outreach, and advocacy. CDI hosts workshops, dialogues, and other programs on a variety of issues and topics. Our workshops discuss privilege, creating inclusive communities, LGBTQ identities, and supporting first-generation students, while our dialogues have included topics on race in America, supporting women of color, faith, and spirituality, and defining feminism. In addition to the various programs, all of the full-time staff meet with students to discuss identity, academics, and a variety of other topics. Lastly, CDI advocates on behalf of students to better policies and practices that ensure everyone feels included at AU.

For more information about CDI, please visit [http://www.american.edu/ocl/cdi](http://www.american.edu/ocl/cdi) or contact us at cdi@american.edu. If you would like to meet with one of our full-time staff members, please email them directly or come to MGC 201 and MGC 202, where we also have 2 lounges for students to study or relax in between classes.

**Year2@AU**

**Contributed by Daniel DeHollander, Resident Director—Centennial Hall**

The Year2@AU team recognizes that your second year at AU may be presenting you with some challenges and opportunities that were not there last year. Therefore, we encourage you to attend the following events where we are making an effort to address needs of sophomores specifically:

**Panel in the Perch: Leadership and Self-Discovery**

Monday, January 26, 2015 (8pm)
The Perch (Centennial Hall)
Website: [https://www.facebook.com/events/980493608645393/](https://www.facebook.com/events/980493608645393/)

**The Major Games**

Wednesday, February 4, 2015 (11am-2pm) Mary Graydon Center 2 and 3
Website: [http://www.american.edu/cas/advising/The-Major-Games.cfm](http://www.american.edu/cas/advising/The-Major-Games.cfm)

**Helpers in the Hatch: Decision Making**

Monday, March 23, 2015 (8pm)
The Hatch (Leonard Hall)

**College Student Property Insurance**

Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Service offers personal property insurance designed specifically for college students. Insuring cellphones, laptops, electronics, and all other student property, learn how you can avoid claims on your personal homeowner’s policy and recover more of your loss at a very affordable cost. Visit [www.collegestudentinsurance.com](http://www.collegestudentinsurance.com), or call 1-888-411-4911 for more information.
Clawed’s Corner
By Clawed Z. Eagle
AU Mascot & Housing Expert

Clawed, If you were looking for off-campus housing near AU, where would you live?

I would look for a tall sturdy tree near the Potomac River. You, on the other hand, should take a look at our Off-Campus Posting website. All of the D.C. properties on the website have provided the Housing & Dining Programs Office with a copy of their Basic Business License (BBL) which protects the landlords as well as you, the tenant. Some additional great features of the Posting Site is that it has both a roommate finder, and a furniture posting. Happy hunting!

Can you share some tips on how to be a good neighbor?

Whenever I move into a new tree, I always make sure to introduce myself to the other birds around me. I also avoid screeching late at night, and having big nest parties so that I do not disturb any neighbors. You should always make an effort to meet your neighbors and be considerate of them before you invite people over.

Clawed, What does it mean that my apartment is exempt from “Rent Stabilization”?

Rent Stabilization, commonly referred to as “Rent Control” is the regulatory policy that limits and/or restricts the rental amount and frequency of rent increases in property deemed non-exempt to the provisions of the Housing Act of 1985. If your property is exempt, it means that it is not subject to rent stabilization.

Got questions for Clawed??? Email him at
offcampushousing@american.edu
Disorderly Conduct Amendment Act of 2010

It is unlawful for a person to make an unreasonable loud noise between 10:00pm and 7:00am that is likely to annoy or disturb one or more other persons in their residences. [Sec. 211. Disorderly conduct, (d)]

A copy of the act is available through this link: www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/

Love using your AU ID for Student Discounts???
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www.facebook.com/auonecard