

Off-Campus Living Resource and Reference

GUIDE



From the Executive Director of University Housing

Our purpose in producing the online "The Off-Campus Living Resource and Reference Guide" is to assist you with your transition to a more independent lifestyle and to help you make good, informed decisions regarding your future living options. Most of you have lived on campus, and are now ready to live more independently, on or near campus, with friends or by yourself, either in an apartment or house. With so much to think about and so much to learn, Cal Poly's University Housing is pleased to offer this resource guide to help educate and direct students about housing options, and living independently.

As most of you know, University Housing will be opening the final phase of the Poly Canyon Village Apartment complex this coming Fall. Poly Canyon Village provides students modern, fully-furnished apartments with private and shared bedrooms, a knowledge center, retail plaza, mail center, swimming pool and recreation center in addition to an independent and flexible lifestyle with all the convenience and amenities of living on-campus. For more information on living in Poly Canyon Village, please feel free to contact the Poly Canyon Village Administration Office at (805)756-9300.

For students wishing to relocate off campus, this handbook also provides helpful tools and information. There are many apartment complexes in town that cater to students exclusively and have placed advertisements in this handbook. Go check them out! Also many students need information on setting up utilities, familiarization on landlord/tenant rights, etc. This handbook includes tips and information such as where and how to find housing, 'leases' versus 'month to month' rentals, landlord/tenant responsibilities, renter's checklist for safe housing, legal information, and more. Also included are letters of welcome to you from the SLO Police Department and your soon-to-be neighbors in the San Luis Obispo community. This guide is a great tool and should be kept handy during the process of searching for housing.

It is our hope that you will find this resource guide helpful. If you need further assistance or information now or in the future, please feel free to contact the University Housing Office, Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Sincerely,



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Executive Director of University Housing

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We have made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of all information within this handbook, however, there may be unintentional errors, deletions, or changes without notice. Cal Poly's University Housing shall not be held liable for any damages whatsoever arising from errors and omissions. The opinions expressed in these materials should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the State of California or University Housing. While this publication is designed to provide accurate and current information about the law, readers should contact an attorney or other expert for advice in particular cases, and should also consult statutes and court decisions.

Cal Poly's University Housing acknowledges the Department of Consumer Affairs, Community Development Department of San Luis Obispo, and several other California Universities for contributions and segments adapted from their various publications.

From the SLO Police Department

Dear Cal Poly Student Residents,

Congratulations on taking that big step moving off campus! The San Luis Obispo Police Department (SLOPD) wishes you every success in your new endeavors. Moving off campus will involve making lots of important decisions and choices, from who to live with, where, how to divide expenses and household responsibilities, to how to entertain. We want you to be as safe and successful as possible. We ask that you consider the following things in moving off campus.

Theft – Student houses and vehicles around Cal Poly have a higher percentage of thefts than all other city neighborhoods. This is often due to doors and windows being left unlocked and lots of highly desirable items that are easy to steal (computers, stereos, DVD players, bikes, etc.). Having large parties with lots of people you don't know in your house is another opportunity for someone to easily steal your valuables. Keep an eye out for your friends and neighbors as well.

Noise – Get to know, and be respectful of your neighbors. Violations of the noise ordinance (any noise that can be heard past your property line between 10 pm and 7 am) can be expensive! SLOPD can send Student Neighborhood Assistance Program (SNAP) employees first to noise complaints we receive. If the SNAPS observe a violation they issue a Disturbance Advisory Card (DAC) to tenants of the property. This is a formal warning from SLOPD. If the SNAPS are met with abuse or non-cooperation or the noise doesn't cease, SLOPD officers will then respond and issue a citation for the violation. Noise citations are \$350, first citation; \$700, second citation; \$1000, third citation. The police department is not required to give warnings (send the SNAPS) or DACs, and can issue multiple citations (to all roommates) at one residence.

Alcohol - The most common arrest in San Luis Obispo is for Drunk in Public (647f Penal Code). Driving Under the Influence is another frequent arrest. You don't want these convictions on your record or to have to list them on your job applications. Most of the fights and sexual assaults that we respond to also involve alcohol.

Protect Yourself – Have a **PLAN** when you drink

Partner with someone that you trust when you go out drinking

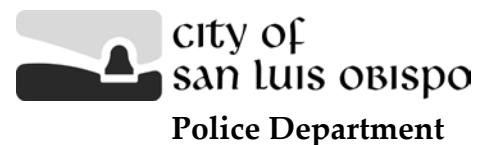
Limit alcohol and make good decisions

Avoid risky decisions

Never place your safety in the care of a drunk person

We wish you good luck in your new role as a San Luis Obispo resident and community member. Take good care of yourself and your friends, be safe and make smart choices! For more information please visit our website at respectslobro.com or pick up one of our Moving Off Campus brochures (available at Cal Poly's Housing Office).

San Luis Obispo Police Department
1042 Walnut St.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93410
Office of Neighborhood Services
805-781-7186



Before you start looking

- How much rent can you afford?
- Do you want a place by yourself, or do you want to live with roommates?
- How far from campus do you want to live?
- What kind of transportation will you need/have?
- What kind of life-style do you want? A quiet and studious atmosphere, a very social home life, or a bit of both?
- What kind of physical setting is appealing to you?

Consider carefully the pros and cons of the following factors:

Why have a roommate?

ECONOMY Most Cal Poly students are on a budget, sharing a room can save money.

COMPANIONSHIP Having someone to share your ups and downs with and to accompany you to a movie or dinner can be a great asset.

SAFETY Be sure to consider issues of safety when deciding whether or not to share an apartment or house. A roommate's assistance can be invaluable during an emergency or illness.

CONVENIENCE Housework is not quite so bad when the responsibility is shared.

Why live alone?

PRIVACY One of the most common reasons for living alone is privacy. Living alone allows you the freedom to entertain or spend time alone.

CONVENIENCE If you live alone, you pay the rent and utilities. No one will eat your last piece of chocolate cake or insist on keeping the windows open or shut.

SPACE Living alone allows you to live in a very small living space without feeling too crowded.

Finding roommates

FRIENDS Advantages: You are probably familiar with many of each other's quirks so there are fewer surprises, and you do not need to search for a roommate. Disadvantages: It can be a quick way to end a good relationship. Weigh all the pros and cons before you decide to live with your best buddy.

ON-CAMPUS ACQUAINTANCES Many of your fellow residents will be moving out of the residence halls or apartments and into off-campus housing next year.

PEOPLE IN YOUR MAJOR If you love Shakespearean Sonnets, chances are you are not looking for a roommate who sleeps with a calculator. See what your classmates plans are for housing.

Selecting a roommate

Interview a potential roommate and discuss your expectations. Be sure to meet in person; a phone conversation won't do for something this important. Discuss how each of you feels about different topics, and if you aren't clear about something, ask. Better to find out before rather than after you sign a lease. Be tactful, but more important, be honest!

- **Who are you?** Discuss your background, your family, and activities.
- **Likes & Dislikes:** Regarding smoking, drugs, drinking, pets, music, etc.
- **Overnight Guests:** Boyfriend, girlfriend, family, friends. (This is a biggie!)
- **Study Habits:** When, where, and how often?
- **Kitchen Arrangements:** Will you share food costs? What are your nutritional needs? Who will do the dishes? How often? Does three-month-old spaghetti in the refrigerator make you crazy?
- **Housekeeping Habits:** How neat and tidy are you really?
- **Sleeping Needs:** What hours? How much? Windows open or closed?

Sharing expenses with roommates

SHARING HOUSEHOLD DUTIES Work out a schedule. Chores can be divided equally, or assigned on a daily or weekly basis. If there is any one particular task which you really hate, now is the time to say so. You might consider one person always taking out the trash in exchange for the other roommate always doing the vacuuming. Be fair and do not overburden any one person.

SHARING HOUSEHOLD ITEMS Sharing expenses on things like refrigerators, furniture, pets, etc., may sound like a money-saving option, but when the household dissolves it can be pretty ugly. Try to even out expenditures by having each person pay for one or more large items.

SHARING PERSONAL POSSESSIONS Make sure it is clear from the start how you and your roommate feel about sharing things like clothes, cars, etc. If you set guidelines now and write them down, you can avoid arguments later.

COOKING If you live with other people (or have friends who live nearby), cook as a group. You will eat a greater variety of meals, and will not have to do all of the work every night!

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR UTILITIES, PHONE, ETC. One way of ensuring an equitable division of this responsibility is for each member of the household to sign for at least one utility. For example, you open an account with PG&E in your name, another roommate opens an internet account in his/her name, and a third roommate opens the water and garbage accounts in his/her name. Be sure to record who paid the deposit on the utilities, and agree on how the bills are to be shared monthly. Arrangements for turning on your utilities should be made at least one week before anyone actually moves in. Be sure to give particular attention to the bills for water and phone and the potential costs to the household of excessive use.

Budgeting: How to cut costs and save money*

Cutting costs and saving money is an issue for students working their way through college on a limited budget. Following are some tips for lessening the strain on the wallet:

- Attend school year-round to graduate in three or four years.
- Live with trustworthy friends who will shoulder their share of the bills.
- Rental housing costs vary considerably depending on amenities, length of lease, number of roommates, and location (rentals near Cal Poly tend to be more expensive).
- Don't eat out and don't eat elaborately. Eat high protein foods like peanut butter and beans instead of meat meals.
- Get a job. Work and save your money. Don't be an impulsive buyer, and don't be tempted by friends' spending habits. Overcome the urge to splurge.
- Create a budget. Keep track of everything you spend, and write it down. Examine all expenses for a 30-day period and set about reducing expenditures. For example, instead of buying soft drinks and candy from expensive vending machines, purchase them in bulk at the local grocery or discount store.
- Do not use credit cards unless it is an emergency.
- Call your credit card companies to work out a payment plan and/or lower their percentage rates. Also, get a copy of your credit report and make sure that all of the information is correct.
- Remember...if you take care of the pennies, the dollars will take care of themselves.

*Excerpts taken from "Budgeting 101", issue of "National On Campus Report" with permission from Magna Publications.

Finding a place to live

Once you have made your decision on the location you prefer and who you want to live with, it is time to start looking for a place.

UNIVERSITY HOUSING'S OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING LISTING SERVICE

Off-campus rental listings are available through Cal Poly's University Housing home page. This service not only provides the opportunity to search for available rentals, but also to list properties that are available for rent. Listings are automatically deleted after two weeks. In addition, the web site also provides links to several property management companies. To access the Housing web site go to <http://www.housing.calpoly.edu> and click on "Off Campus."

OTHER RENTAL RESOURCES:

- The Tribune, San Luis Obispo's daily paper at www.sanluisobispo.com
- The New Times, a free weekly publication at www.newtimesslo.com
- The Mustang Daily, Cal Poly's daily paper at www.mustangdaily.net
- Craig's List at slo.craigslist.org
- ASI classified ads at www.asi.calpoly.edu/classifieds

When is the best time to look for housing?

If you are looking for a place to live starting in the Fall, you should start looking in April or May before you leave for the summer. Many of the large apartment complexes start renting as early as Winter Quarter. If you are looking to live in a smaller apartment complex or in a privately owned rental, you may not need to start looking until July.

*NOTE: Most student complexes begin taking applications at the end of February and March.

Month-to-Month vs. lease agreements

If you find a rental unit that rents on a month-to-month basis, then essentially you have a tenancy that expires at the end of each month and is renewed with the next payment of rent at the beginning of the month. The length of time between required rent payments (thirty days) determines the required length of notice a landlord must give you before raising the rent, changing other terms of the tenancy, or lawfully ending the rental agreement. It also determines how much notice you must give the landlord before moving out of the rental unit. If the rental unit you are interested in has a 10 or 12-month lease agreement, then you will have the security of a long-term agreement at a known cost. Your rent cannot be raised while the lease is in effect unless the lease agreement provides for rent increases. The landlord cannot evict you during the period of the lease except for certain reasons (for example, failing to pay rent or damaging the property). The disadvantage is that if you need to move, a lease may be difficult for you to break, especially if you and your landlord cannot find a tenant to take over your lease.

If you need to break your lease, be sure to read information provided at the website of "California Tenant Law" at www.caltenantlaw.com/breaklease.htm or call Cal Poly's ASI Office (805.756.1281) to schedule a 15 minute free legal consultation with a local lawyer.

Remember that once you are 18, you are legally responsible for all documents which you sign, including a lease for a residence hall or an off-campus house or apartment. Carefully read the terms of your lease and know its provisions before you sign it. Remember that you and your roommates are jointly and separately held responsible for payments of your lease.

Whether you and your landlord decide on a lease or a month-to-month agreement, be sure to have everything in writing and be sure that you make a copy of everything.

Renters' Safety Evaluation

Before you rent or lease a place, be sure the rental meets the required housing standards. Listed below is useful criteria for evaluating the safety of a residence.

Consider these conditions before renting or leasing:

Conversions Was the living area converted from a garage or attic? Most garages, attics, sheds, and basements do not meet safety codes. Ceilings must be a minimum height of 7 ¹/₂ feet. If the room has a sloping ceiling, one half of the room must be taller than 7 ¹/₂ feet. Ventilation must be provided either by windows or by a mechanical system.

Heating Is heating provided? The heating system must be able to maintain a room temperature of 70 degrees. Portable heaters do not meet this requirement. Before using gas appliances, have the gas company check them for safety. Water heaters must not be located in bathrooms or in any room which is used for sleeping.

Maintenance Does it appear that the dwelling unit has been properly maintained? Look for exposed wiring, tacked-on extension cords, or overloaded outlets. Inspect for charring around outlets, fixtures, or appliance vents. Smoke detectors must be installed. Don't miss signs of obvious disrepair such as broken windows, warped or loose floor boards, or stairs.

Overcrowding Do overcrowded conditions exist at the residence? You may be forced to move out if overcrowded conditions violate city zoning or safety codes.

If you rent or lease a home in the R-1 or R-2 zones, certain standards apply. These standards include number of bathrooms, parking requirements, and square footage per person.

Exiting Does the dwelling provide a direct exit to outside or to a corridor? Bedrooms must have at least one window that is large enough (six square feet) for an adult to easily crawl through in case of emergency. All apartments must have a door to the outside that is at least 3 feet wide.

Parking Is there sufficient parking off the street? Parking in front yards, on lawns, or other yard areas is not allowed.

The city enforces Zoning Regulations and Building Safety Codes. But this doesn't prevent illegal construction or conversions from occurring. By renting or leasing a residence that does not comply with safety codes, you may be living in an unsafe environment.

Substandard housing conditions should be reported to City Code Enforcement (if living in the city) at 805.781.7180 or County Code Enforcement (if living outside city limits) at 805.781.4571

Questions You Need to Ask

When you conduct your search for that perfect rental, make sure you protect yourself by asking the following important questions before you sign the lease:

1. Who lives around you in the building? What about adjacent properties and the neighborhood in general?
2. Is the building clean/well maintained on both the interior and exterior?
3. Does the landlord live on the premises? Is there a maintenance person living there or in the vicinity?
4. Are there private grounds around the apartment?
5. Has the apartment been exterminated since the previous tenants moved? If not, when will it be done?
6. Does the apartment need to be painted? If so, who will paint it and/or pay for paint?
7. Does the building have a security system?
8. Are hallways well lit? Are there fire extinguishers and smoke detectors?
9. Does the building have a fire escape? If not, where is the nearest emergency exit?
10. Is the street well lit?
11. Does the apartment door have an adequate lock? Is there a dead bolt?
12. What happens if you lose your apartment keys?
13. Is there a doorbell? Does it work?
14. Whom do you call for emergencies or repairs? Is there someone on call at all times for emergencies?
15. Are there laundry facilities in the building? If not, are there facilities nearby?
16. Is there storage space allocated for you outside the apartment?
17. Is there a private, secure mailbox?
18. Is there private parking available? If so, is it free? If not, where can you park? If you have to park on the street, what are the parking rules there?
19. Is the apartment near public transportation? If not, how will you get to campus?
20. How far are grocery and convenience stores from the apartment? What about other places you shop, eat, work, etc.?
21. How, where, and when do you dispose of trash?
22. Is there sufficient closet space in the apartment?
23. Will your furniture fit comfortably in the apartment?
24. If the apartment is furnished, is the furniture adequate for your needs and in good condition?
25. Are there ample wall outlets?
26. Do the light fixtures work? Will you need additional lighting in the apartment?
27. Are there sufficient phone jacks?
28. Are there enough windows in the apartment? Do they work? Do they lock? Are screens provided?
29. If the apartment is carpeted, is the carpet clean and in good condition?
30. Who pays for utilities? What is the average cost per month?
31. How is the apartment heated (gas or electric)? Who pays for and/or controls the heat? When is it turned on?

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32. Is the apartment air-conditioned? Who controls and pays for it? When is it turned on?
33. Are appliances gas or electric? Are they in good condition? When were they last serviced?
34. Is the refrigerator clean and in good condition? Is there plenty of freezer space?
35. Is there ample water pressure in both the kitchen and bathroom?
36. Who pays for water? Do the faucets, traps, or toilets leak?
37. Is there a shower as well as a tub in the bathroom?
38. Are there any signs of water damage around water fixtures or on the ceiling?
39. What are your limits in decorating the apartment? Can you hang pictures without being penalized?
40. Are there draperies, rods, or blinds included?
41. Are there any stipulations regarding guests, parties, etc?
42. Is there ample room to study for all occupants of the apartment? Is there sufficient privacy?
43. Are there limits to the number of allowable occupants in the apartment?
44. What are the requirements for full refund of your security deposit?
45. Are pets or children allowed? If so, is there an additional charge?

Also, if possible, talk to other tenants that live there. Ask them if the landlord is fair and responsive. Make sure all agreements you reach with the landlord are in writing, make sure all damages/deficiencies are noted and get a copy of the lease signed by the landlord. In addition, check with the Better Business Bureau to see if they have any complaints on file against your prospective landlord or rental agency.

Home security tips

- Trim shrubbery around the house to increase visibility
- Clearly mark your address on the front curb
- Close and lock doors, windows, garages, and sheds
- Ask landlord if it is possible to install door peep holes
- Ask landlord if it is possible to install electronic security, fire, and emergency systems
- Keep home well-lit and curtains closed at night
- If you live alone, use initials rather than Ms., Miss, or Mrs. in directories and on personal checks
- Do not let anyone inside whom you do not know, or whom you haven't planned on visiting
- Have a lighting notification system to let neighbors know you're okay
- Notify police when you are planning on being out of town
- Don't leave notes on doors as to your whereabouts
- Do not leave a house key near entrances

Moving in

Moving into a new place carries with it obligations and commitments that go beyond the specific conditions listed in the lease or rental agreement. It's important to remember that by moving in you are implicitly accepting the place as it is. That's why you must inspect the actual unit into which you'll be moving before you sign the lease or rental agreement. Below we've listed some of the move-in issues you'll need to consider:

- If the unit you wish to rent is furnished, find out from the owner or manager whether the furniture you're looking at will be the same furniture that you'll find there when you move in. Make sure the furniture is included in the contract.
- Make sure the unit you're looking at is the actual unit you're renting and not a model unit.
- Check the doors and windows for security. If security appears questionable, get a written commitment from the owner or manager that specifies a date, before the beginning of your tenancy, by which repairs will have been made and the problem fixed.
- **AN INVENTORY AND CONDITION REPORT*** should be filled out within the first three to five days of your tenancy. How much of your security deposit the owner or manager returns to you will be determined not only by the cost of cleaning the property but also by the cost of fixing any damage for which you can be held accountable. It's best to complete an INVENTORY AND CONDITION REPORT* with the owner or manager present.
- Make sure that both you and the owner or manager sign a copy of the completed INVENTORY AND CONDITION REPORT. Keep one copy for your records, and give another copy to the owner or manager.
- Keep all the paperwork pertaining to your tenancy in one place, along with your copy of the Off-Campus Living Resource and Reference Guide. Relevant paperwork includes your copy of the contract, your copy of your ROOMMATE AGREEMENT*, copies of requests for maintenance, and your copy of the INVENTORY AND CONDITION REPORT*.

No matter what the condition of your apartment when you move into it, you are responsible for leaving it in the condition you received it—except for any damage noted in your INVENTORY AND CONDITION REPORT*.

***Sample forms available at housing.calpoly.edu/off_camp_listings.cfm**

Things to bring with you when you move in

Cleaning: soaps, disinfectants, liquid cleaners, mops, vacuum cleaner, sponges, paper towels, and rubber gloves.

Bathroom: toilet & facial tissue, toilet brush, bath mat and towels, bath and hand soap, toothpaste, shampoo, and a First Aid Kit.

Kitchen: Dishes, cups, pots and pans, utensils, strainer, can opener, and timer. You will need pot holders, an oven mitt, dishtowels and a dish drying rack, along with dishwashing liquid, measuring cups and spoons, foil, plastic wrap, plastic bags and cleaning supplies paper products including tissues, paper towels, and napkins. Some students may also want to bring a teakettle, coffee maker, one-piece popcorn popper, rice cooker, and toaster oven along with cooking staples like, flour, sugar, salt, pepper, baking soda, spices and condiments.

Miscellaneous: light bulbs, flashlight, hammer, screwdriver, pliers, electrical surge protector power strips (to plug in computers, radio, etc.), telephone, answering machine, scissors, pencil & notebook, envelopes, and extra cash for emergencies.

Remember when you relocate ...

Change Your Address

Obtain Change of Address and Mail-Forwarding cards from your local Post Office.
Make sure your banking institutions and doctors offices are aware of your new address

You may need to notify these companies of your new location:

- Gas Electric Water Telephone Garbage
 Insurance Cable Internet

Utilities

San Luis Obispo Garbage Co. 805-543-0875

So. California Gas Company 1-800-427-2200
www.socalgas.com

AT&T (Telephone) 1-800-310-2355
www.att.com

PG&E (Electric) 1-800-743-5000

Charter Communications (Cable) 805-431-4115

Water, City of SLO 805-781-7133

When calling to hook up your utilities, be sure to have your identification numbers handy along with your permanent and new address!

We also recommend taking notes when signing up for and discontinuing services at your rental. Writing down answers to the following questions will help you remember what the service representative told you about cost and for what services you have signed up for.

Service Company called _____ phone number _____

Date and time called _____

Name of company representative I spoke with _____

Cost or charges quoted for set-up or installation _____

Discounts applied for or promised _____

Monthly charges or fees _____

Responsibilities

As a Landlord

An owner of residential rental property is required to provide a dwelling in habitable condition. It must also be kept in good repair. California Civil Code section 1941.1 states that a dwelling must have the following:

1. Effective waterproofing and weather protection of roof and exterior walls, including unbroken windows and doors.
2. Plumbing or gas facilities maintained in good working order.
3. A water supply capable of producing hot and cold running water and connected to a sewage disposal system approved under applicable law.
4. Heating facilities that are maintained in good working order.
5. Electrical lighting with wiring and electrical equipment maintained in good working order.
6. Building, grounds, and appurtenances at the time of the commencement of the lease or rental agreement, and all areas under control of the landlord, kept in every part clean, sanitary, and free from all accumulations of debris, filth, rubbish, garbage, rodents, and vermin.
7. An adequate number of appropriate receptacles for garbage and rubbish, in clean condition and good repair
8. Floors, stairways, and railings maintained in good repair.

In addition, all windows and doors must have secure locks and necessary bolts to secure the premises and maintain the safety of the resident. Smoke detectors are also required by state law. It is also the landlord's responsibility to install and maintain the inside wiring for one telephone jack. These are minimum requirements. Other conditions in the property may make it not "habitable."

As a Tenant

The same section of the Civil Code that requires all landlords to keep a property habitable also requires a tenant to use the property properly and to keep it clean. Specifically, Civil Code section 1941.2 requires the tenant to:

1. Keep the premises "as clean and sanitary as the condition of the premises permits."
2. Dispose of trash and garbage in a clean and sanitary manner.
3. Use and operate gas, electrical, and plumbing fixtures properly. Examples of improper use include electrical outlet overload, flushing large foreign objects down the toilet, and allowing any gas, electrical, or plumbing fixture to become filthy.
4. Refrain from destroying, damaging, defacing, or removing any part of the structure, dwelling unit, facilities, equipment, appurtenances, or allowing anyone else to do so.
5. To occupy the premises as an abode as intended, using living and dining rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms for their proper and respective purposes.
6. Have good communication with your landlord.
7. Be prompt with your monthly rental payment and utilities.
8. Keep the landlord informed of all maintenance problems as they arise.
9. Take responsibility for your guests' and visitors' behavior. Be sure that you and your guests follow all parking regulations
10. If there is a yard, keep the yard presentable; pick up trash and perform any required yard work.
11. If pets are allowed, keep your pet under control.

Where a tenant violates these responsibilities, contributing substantially to the existence of dilapidation, the tenant cannot hold the landlord responsible for the fact that the unit is uninhabitable. Further, the landlord is not obligated to repair any items damaged due to the tenant's negligence.

- SNAP (Student Neighborhood Assistance Program) is for you and your landlord's benefit. SNAP's role is to maintain harmony between students and the community. SNAP is a division of the San Luis Obispo City Police Department and can be reached at (805) 781-7317.

- If you have a major problem that is left unresolved:

- Submit in writing
- Keep copies
- Send certified mail
- Take pictures

- If conflict continues or escalates contact SLO Solutions at (805) 549-0442 or visit www.slosolutions.com (see free help for students on page 16).

Remember, even though you are renting a room, house, or an apartment - it is your home. Treat it with care and responsibility while it is yours.

As a Roommate

THE TRIAL PERIOD When you first set up your household, there should be a period of time in which you and your roommate(s) concentrate on just being yourselves and living the way you want (within reason, of course). If you have always listened to the stereo for an hour before falling asleep, now is not the time to change the habit just because you think your roommate will not like it. The idea is to do the things you want to do and feel comfortable doing.

LIKES & DISLIKES During the trial period, keep a list (mentally or on paper) of the things your roommate does that bug you, and things you think are terrific. Don't get hung up on the negatives. If you think that the fact that your roommate can smile first thing in the morning is great, tell him/her so. By the same token, if the sound of Pink Floyd at 6:00 a.m. makes you queasy, now is the time to talk about it.

RE-EVALUATION After a week or two of "doing what comes naturally," and making your respective lists, you should set aside some time for a long talk about the ways your living styles clash or go well together. Be honest, but avoid calling the other person or his ideas petty, wrong, or anything else derogatory. Frankly discuss what you cannot tolerate, are indifferent to, or really enjoy. Where your differences are severe, you must both compromise, or it could be one very long year together. Remember that the potential for hurt and/or anger is very high. Neither your lifestyle, nor that of your roommate, is inherently good or bad, just different. Tread gently on one another's ego.

AFTER YOU TALK IT OUT Although you have talked out your problems, and possibly made some compromises, keep the lines of communication open. If something new bothers you, or your compromises are just not working, talk to your roommate. The idea is to keep life running smoothly. Many roommates try to have pre-planned meetings periodically (maybe once or twice a month) so they can sit down over coffee or dinner and talk business.

As a Neighbor

Now that you have moved into a rental unit, you should be aware of city municipal codes which can be found at www.codepublishing.com/ca/sanluisobispo/. Following these codes will help keep your neighbors happy and avoid enforcement by the City.

NOISE Be considerate at all times. Be especially aware of the noise you make at night or in the early morning. Your neighbors may be trying to sleep. Set amplified sounds at a reasonable level. Be sure the sound stays confined to your dwelling, especially between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

MECHANICAL PARTS Parts don't belong in the front yard. This means parts from airplanes, boats, camper shells, cars, or any other items.

FURNITURE Keep indoor furniture inside, please! Only outdoor furniture belongs outside. Barbecues and chairs can be placed on the lawn for special occasions. If you want to keep outdoor furniture and barbecues in the front yard, they must be confined to a porch or walled patio.

BOATS and TRAILERS DMV-licensed vehicles, including a boat or a trailer, may be parked in your driveway or in the rear yard screened from public view.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES You can park your currently-licensed RV in your driveway. RVs can also be parked in rear yards if screened. Remember - RVs may never be used as permanent dwellings. Visiting RVs may be parked in your driveway for up to seven days, but may not be connected to the sewer system.

WEEDS and TRASH Keep weeds down and get rid of trash immediately. You can be cited for having overgrown yards and debris in your yard.

VEHICLES Vehicles cannot be parked on lawns. You can get a parking ticket if you do so. It's okay to work on your car, but be sure the car is in the driveway and that the job doesn't take more than three days. If the work is going to take longer, please store the vehicle in the garage. Dead cars should be stored or towed away.

ROOFS You are required to have a permit for solar collectors, antennas, and other equipment that is normally placed on roofs. Chairs, tables, beds, and other furniture may not be placed on roofs.

FIRE BBQs are great. Open-pit fires and burning of trash or other items in your yard is prohibited.

ANIMALS While in the yard, your dog should be fenced or on a leash. When you take your dog for a walk, keep him on a leash.

If you are concerned about how your neighbor treats his/her property, first politely let your neighbor know what is causing you trouble.

If that doesn't work contact the Office of Neighborhood Services at (805) 781-7186.

Rights and Obligations

Your rights and obligations: When you rent a place to live, you enter into a specific legal relationship with the owner/landlord. Knowing and fulfilling your legal obligations as a tenant and maintaining friendly, open communication are the best steps you can take to prevent hassles with your landlord. Be sure to:

- Pay your rent on time.
- Comply with the terms of your rental agreement.
- Keep your home tidy.
- Repair anything you or your guests damage, except those resulting from normal wear and tear.

As a Tenant, you have certain rights:

The landlord must give you notice before entering the rental unit, except in an emergency. The landlord cannot abuse the right of access or use it to harass or constantly disturb the tenant.

Repairs

California Law requires the landlord to maintain the rental unit in sanitary and habitable condition. The law requires that the rental have effective waterproofing and weather protection, plumbing, sewer, electrical and heating systems in good working order, and hot and cold running water. Building must be free of trash, vermin, and other pests. If you have a situation that needs your landlord's attention, you should:

- Ask your landlord to rectify the situation.
- Follow up with a letter and send it certified or registered mail. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself.
- Allow reasonable time for repairs. What is reasonable depends on the situation and the type of repair.

If the landlord doesn't make the requested repairs and doesn't have reasonable justification for not doing so, you may have several remedies, depending on the seriousness of the repairs.

Unsafe Housing

Many renters aren't aware of, or may not worry about improperly maintained housing or safety issues until they find themselves in situations which cost them time and money. It is important for renters to ensure that potential housing situations are safe and fair before they sign a lease. You are urged to ask questions and carefully inspect the property in which you are interested, so that your housing choice is an informed one. The City of San Luis Obispo has a hotline available for tenants wishing to report code violations. This hotline was established by SLOPD's Neighborhood Services Department so that students and other residents can have an easy way to contact the city about potentially substandard housing situations. To report a violation, tenants should call (805) 781-7172 or visit: <http://www.slocity.org/police/renters.asp>.

Free Help for Students

Tenants who are confronted with questionable or possible illegal actions are advised to consult with an attorney. If you don't know exactly what you are doing, you can easily get yourself into serious trouble. If you have any questions or concerns about using any of the above remedies, you can visit www.housingadvocates.org or for a FREE LEGAL CONSULTATION, Cal Poly students can make an appointment for a one-time, 15-minute legal consultation in the ASI Business Office, UU 212, or by calling (805) 756-1281. Appointments are available every other Friday from noon to 1:45 p.m. and are made on a first-come, first-served basis.

For information regarding FREE mediation services specializing in landlord/tenant conflict, neighbor/neighbor conflict, and roommate/housemate disputes, contact SLO Solutions at (805) 549-0442 or visit www.slosolutions.com

Moving out

When your lease ends, or you decide to end your month-to-month rental agreement (be sure to give proper notice), it will be time to end your tenancy. Approach moving out correctly to avoid most problems. If you do not, you might lose money and time.

Here are some of the important procedures you should follow when it comes time to move.

CHECK YOUR SIGNED RENTAL AGREEMENT Be sure to check your rental agreement for any information or expiration dates and procedures for terminating rentals. You should begin renewing or extending the lease well before it expires.

NOTIFY YOUR LANDLORD Notify your landlord in writing of the date on which you plan to move out. Make sure to keep a copy for yourself. This must be done at least 30 days prior to your moving date, or you may still be held liable for rent.

SETTLE ALL BALANCES Take care of all the miscellaneous charges due at the beginning of your final rental period.

NOTIFY ALL UTILITY COMPANIES At least two weeks before your move out date, call all of the utility companies and notify them that you want to discontinue service.

REMOVE ALL TRASH and PERSONAL BELONGINGS Be sure to remove all trash and personal belongings. Clean all floors, bathrooms, closets, fixtures, kitchen, utensils, etc. **It is your responsibility to return the residence in the same condition that it was given to you.**

INITIAL INSPECTION BEFORE TENANT MOVES OUT The landlord must perform an initial inspection if the tenant requests it. The purpose of the initial inspection is to allow the tenant an opportunity to remedy identified deficiencies to avoid deductions from the security deposit.

INSPECTING THE RESIDENCE Have your landlord inspect the residence, in your presence, after you have moved all of your things out and cleaned up. Have him/her sign a statement indicating that the apartment is in satisfactory condition. If the landlord refuses to meet you or if you feel there may be a future dispute regarding any condition, take pictures of the entire apartment after you have cleaned it.

RETURN ALL KEYS to the landlord. If you do not, you may be assessed a key replacement charge which can be expensive.

LEAVE A FORWARDING ADDRESS with the post office and the landlord.

If One Roommate is Moving

The steps that a single-departing roommate should take are similar to those cited above. Differences are noted below.

NOTIFY ALL THOSE AFFECTED BY YOUR MOVE This means your roommate(s) and your landlord. Notice must be given 30 days in advance, and you'll protect yourself if you give the notice in writing.

CLEAN UP You should clean your room and a fair share of the common areas of the house.

HELP FIND REPLACEMENT TENANTS This is particularly important if you are breaking a lease before it expires. If you're under a month-to-month agreement, helping the household find new tenants is polite, but it isn't your legal responsibility.

DISCUSS FINANCES If you pre-paid the last month's rent upon move-in, can you apply it now that you're moving out? Perhaps, but the household as a whole is responsible for paying a full rent payment to the landlord.

TERMINATE HOUSEHOLD ACCOUNTS IN YOUR NAME If any of the bills (internet, cable TV, etc.) are in your name, have the accounts transferred to one of the remaining tenants. This protects your credit rating in case future roommates aren't responsible about paying the bills.

Security Deposit

The most common kind of disagreement between landlords and tenants is about the refund of the security deposit. For this reason, California law (see CivilCode 1950.5) specifies a procedure that a landlord must use if he or she wants to keep all or any part of a security deposit.

A landlord may use the security deposit for FOUR purposes only:

1. For cleaning the rental unit when the tenant moves out, if the unit was not as clean as when it was rented.
2. For repairs other than normal wear and tear caused by the tenant or the tenant's guests. If the rental agreement allows it, for the cost of restoring or replacing furniture, furnishings, or other items of personal property, exclusive of ordinary wear and tear (including keys).
3. For unpaid rent.
4. A landlord can withhold from the security deposit only those amounts that are reasonably necessary for these purposes. The security deposit can't be used for cleaning or repairing items damaged only by normal wear and tear, for repairing defects that existed in the unit before you moved in, or for cleaning a rental unit that is as clean as it was when the tenant moved in.

If you have questions or concerns about your deposit, you can get more information by visiting the California Department of Consumer Affairs online booklet "California Tenants" www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/or by calling 1.800.952.5210.

Within three weeks after you move, your landlord must either send you a full refund of the security deposit, or mail an itemized statement that lists the reason and amount of any

Cleaning Tips

Here is a short list of tasks you may need to complete when moving out in order to get back your security deposit.

- ❑ **The Bathroom:** Scrub bathtub and shower including shower curtain/door and tile; scrub inside and outside of toilet; scrub sink, medicine cabinet, and mirror.
- ❑ **The Kitchen:** Clean out cupboards, drawers, counter tops, and scrub sink; disinfect and defrost refrigerator; clean stove, oven, and broiler; scrub the floor.
- ❑ **Other Rooms:** Vacuum carpeting thoroughly and remove spots; clean and wax hardwood floors; remove fingerprints and other marks from woodwork and walls; take down all pictures or posters and remove all nails and tacks from walls; spackle all holes in walls; vacuum furniture and empty all drawers.

Your landlord should provide you with a complete list outlining specific cleaning needs prior to your check out. Get this list ahead of time so you can plan for cleaning: supplies you will need, how you and your roommates will divide the responsibilities, the time it will take, etc.

Of course, if the place was a mess when you moved in, this is not required. But you will need to have pictures to prove it or the landlord can withhold your security deposit for any of the above problems.

Fire safety tips

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and approximately 25,000 are injured. An overwhelming number of fires occur in the home. There are time-tested ways to prevent and survive a fire. It's not a question of luck. It's a matter of planning ahead.

Fire prevention is something very important to review when you move into your new place. It is always a good idea to have a fire extinguisher in the unit. Test all smoke alarms monthly to ensure they work properly. Make sure that everyone understands the escape plan and recognizes the sound of the smoke alarm.

CANDLE SAFETY

- Over the last decade, candle fires have almost tripled from the 5,460 reported in 1990
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't flip over easily, are made from a material that can't burn, and are large enough to collect dripping wax
- Avoid candles with combustible items embedded in them

COOKING SAFETY

- Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Most cooking fires start with the ignition of common household items (e.g., food or grease, cabinets, wall coverings, paper or plastic bags, curtains, etc.)
- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires.
- If a grease pan fire occurs use the lid, if you can safely do so to put out the fire or **use baking soda (NOT baking powder, flour, or starch)**
- Never pour water on a grease fire and never discharge a fire extinguisher onto a pan fire, as it can spray or shoot burning grease around the kitchen, actually spreading the fire.
- If there is an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you and your clothing.
- If there is a microwave fire, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives.

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Often called the silent killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. Vehicles or generators running in an attached garage can also produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

- After purchasing an alarm, call your local fire department's non-emergency telephone number to find out what number to call if the CO (carbon monoxide) alarm sounds. Post that number by the phone.
- CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms.
- NEVER use the oven to heat your home
- Use BBQ grills, which can produce CO, outside only, not in the home or garage. When camping, remember to use battery-powered heaters and flashlights in tents, trailers, and motor homes.

GRILLING

- Position the grill well away from siding, deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches

HOME HEATING

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn and turn them off every time you leave a room or go to bed
 - When buying a heater, choose devices with automatic shut-off features
- For more Fire Safety Tips or Fire Prevention visit: <http://www.NFPA.org>

Things to know when living off campus...

Alcohol - It is unlawful to consume alcoholic beverages or to be intoxicated in public areas, including front yards, streets, parking lots, etc. For more information contact SLO Police Dept. at (805) 781-7317.

Animals/Pets - Please check with your landlord or management co. for lease guidelines on pet ownership BEFORE you bring a pet home; many rental properties do not permit pets of any kind. When outside of your home, dogs must be on a leash. If you need to find a new home for your animal or you have questions about licenses or animal laws, please contact Woods Humane Society (805) 543-9316 or SLO County Animal Services (805) 781-4400 for assistance.

Ambulance Service - 24-hour emergency service is available by dialing 911.

Budget - In addition to your monthly rent, remember to include any other costs; such as cell phone bill, cable/internet, electricity, furnishings, groceries, and or insurance.

El Corral Bookstore - (Located in the University Union, Building 65). For store hours and information, call 756-5322, or visit the Bookstore web site www.elcorralbookstore.com.

Emergency - Call 911. For non-emergencies call San Luis Obispo City Police (805) 781-7317 or Cal Poly University Police (805) 756-2281.

Fire - Make sure you have the appropriate hibachi / barbeque to use. Open pit fires and burning of trash or other items in your yard is prohibited.

Health Center - Appointments, Counseling Services, and Out-Patient Medical services are FREE to enrolled Cal Poly Students. Other medical services such as Urgent Care, Pharmacy, Optometry, etc. are also available, but do have a small fee. Cal Poly's Health Services is located in Building 27 (next to Recreational Sports). For more information, call (805) 756-1211, and or visit the Health Services web site www.calpoly.edu/~hps/.

Hospitals:

French Hospital: 1911 Johnson Ave, San Luis Obispo, CA (805) 543-5353

Sierra Vista Hospital: 1010 Murray Ave, San Luis Obispo, CA (805) 546-7600

House and Yard (Curb appeal) - Keep your home looking nice. Pick up trash, make repairs when they are necessary, keep up with all yard work, and remember to bring in your trash cans on the day your trash is picked up.

Some cities will cite you for having an overgrown yard (i.e., weeds, grass, trees, shrubs) and debris in your yard or for not bringing in your trash cans. Contact SLO City Public Works office with questions: (805) 781-7200.

Only "Outdoor" furniture and barbeques belong outside. Keep living room sofas inside your home and not on your front lawn or on roof tops. If you have furniture that can be donated contact Goodwill Industries at (805) 544-0542.

Landlords - Be sure that you and your roommates know who your landlord or management company is, and how to reach them at all times of the day. Including, "after hours" emergency phone numbers. This information should be provided to you along with a copy of your lease.

Leases - Remember that once you are 18, you are legally responsible for all documents that you sign, including a lease for a residence hall or an off-campus residence.

- Always, read ALL the terms of your lease and know its provisions before you sign it.
- Make sure that everyone that is sharing the costs of the rental property is listed on the lease agreement so that all roommates are jointly or separately held responsible for payments of your lease or any damages.
- Consider who your roommates will be, and always be clear as to who is responsible for paying what, when and how much.

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Legal Information - Fifteen minutes of free, legal consultation is provided to Cal Poly students, faculty, and staff. To schedule an appointment, call the Associated Student, Inc., Business Office at (805) 756-1281 or go to Building 65, room 212.

Neighbors (Neighborhoods) - REMEMBER that your neighbor might NOT be a college student and won't appreciate loud music or parties.

- Make time to meet your neighbors.
- Be courteous and respectful.
- It's always a good idea to let your neighbors know when and if you will be having a party. Offer your phone number to as a way to encourage them to call you FIRST and not the police, if the party gets too loud.
- When having a party - keep in mind the impact of parking issues on you and your neighbors. Encourage friends to carpool or walk. Remember that there is a 10 pm noise curfew in San Luis Obispo. Contact the San Luis Obispo Police Dept. for more information. (805) 781-7317. Try to keep the noise to a minimum from 10pm-7am daily.

Occupancy Limits - Apartments/Homes in the R-1 or R-2 zones have certain standards which include number of bathrooms, bedrooms, parking requirements, and square footage per person. (This usually applies to most homes/dwellings in the Cal Poly area). A permit may be required if more than five adults occupy the residence. Contact the SLO City Community Development office at (805) 781-7180 for more information. REMEMBER that you could be forced to move out if overcrowded conditions violate zoning or safety codes.

Off-campus housing information - (www.housing.calpoly.edu) We offer assistance or information for the following:

- Off-Campus listings. You can either search for or list available rentals, subleases, and the need for roommates.
- Contact information to privately owned off-campus complexes.
- Links to "Renters" information and forms, such as, Tenant's Rights, Fair Housing office, Creative Mediation, Move-in/out Check list, and more.
- Off-Campus Student Housing Association - The Association is made up of some of the largest privately owned student housing complexes in San Luis Obispo. In order to be a member of the Association, a complex must house only students, provide 24-hour on-site management, and consist of at least 15 units. Association apartment complexes are all located close to the Cal Poly campus and on the city bus routes. Visit the Association website www.slo-offcampushousing.com to obtain more information about the various off-campus student housing association apartment complexes.

Parking -

On-campus parking is very limited. Students are encouraged to utilize the transportation services that are available or use bicycles. If driving to school, remember to purchase a parking pass at the Cashier's Office in the Admin. Building 1, Room 133, (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 pm). For more information, go to the University Police home page (www.afd.calpoly.edu/Police/) and select "Commuter and Access Services."

Off-Campus parking can be limited as well. Make sure you ask your landlord or management Company if a parking permit is needed.

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Safety – Always be aware of your surroundings and do not leave doors or windows open when you are not home or at night. Walk with a friend, and never alone, especially at night. Cal Poly and other counseling organizations in town have services for you to use.

- Escort Van – is a free service that takes you home on and within a mile off campus. Visit www.afd.calpoly.edu/police for stop-information.
- S.A.R.P (Sexual Assault Recovery and Prevention Center of SLO) – 24 hour Rape Crisis Line and Counseling: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or (805) 545-8888 (Free of charge)
- “Safe Ride Home” – Available to anyone needing a safe ride home within the San Luis Obispo City Limits between the hours of 9pm and 3am. Contact (805) 235-7233 for pick up and or UPD (805) 756-2281 for fee information.
- S.A.F.E.R Program (Sexual Assault Free Environment Resource) – Visit their web site (<http://www.studentlife.calpoly.edu/sfr/>) or call them at (805) 756-2476 for more information.

Transportation – There are various ways to get to campus, around town or back home.

- Amtrak - Amtrak (www.amtrak.com) has bus pick up and drop off on campus (across from Sierra Madre Hall, on Grand Ave) for most train connections.
- Bicycles – Cal Poly University Police advises locking bikes to the bike racks at all times. Try using a high grade “U-Lock” (i.e., Kryptonite) with a lock-reinforcing accessory (i.e., Bad-Bones) as an extra precaution. Students are encouraged to register their bikes with Cal Poly’s University Police in case of a theft.
- Carpools - The campus Commuter Services office offers carpool partner matching services for students, faculty, and staff. There is an ongoing list maintained for such matching. (http://www.police.calpoly.edu/index_commuter.htm#11).
- Escort Van - The Escort Van, offered by the Community Service Officer (CSO) division of the University Police, makes scheduled stops at Kennedy Library, University Union, and the Business Building (Building 3) in front of the vending machines. Arrangements to be picked up from other locations on the Cal Poly campus can be made by calling the University Police at (805) 756-2281.

Skateboarding - is prohibited on streets and sidewalks in the downtown area as well as on the Cal Poly campus and is enforced with a fine or ticket. For more details, Contact the SLO City Police Dept. at (805) 781-7317 or Cal Poly University Police at (805) 756-2281.

SLO Regional Rideshare – (www.rideshare.org) or (805) 541-2277 is a one-stop shop for the Regional/County Bus or “RTA” (805) 541-2228 - has four bus routes that come through campus from the North County, South County and North Coast Areas; schedules are available on buses, at the UU Info. Desk, Library, State Cashiers and the University Police office. Subsidized passes are available. SLO City bus, called the “SLO Transit” or the SLO Trolley (805) 781-4472 or (805) 541-2877 - which serves the city and campus; schedules are available on buses, at the UU info desk, State Cashiers, Library, and University Police office. Cal Poly students, Staff and Faculty, ride for FREE, by simply showing their campus ID card.

Ride-On Shuttle - (805) 541-TRIP – Shuttles are available for rides to medical appointments, Airport pick-up/drop-off, Amtrak, Greyhound, and charters for special occasions.

Vehicles - Be considerate of your neighbors by parking in your assigned parking space or at the curb nearest your home. Encourage friends who visit to park with respect to your neighbors. Keep inoperable vehicles and parts on your own property or dispose of them quickly and properly so that it does not become an eyesore. Vehicles don’t belong on lawns. You can get a citation for leaving them there. If you are driving your car to campus, remember that you need a parking pass. To purchase a pass, please visit the Cashier’s office in the Admin. Building 1 or purchase one through your my.calpoly.edu portal or visit http://www.police.calpoly.edu/index_parking.htm.

Sample Forms & Letters

Sample Forms & Letters can be found on University Housing's website at housing.calpoly.edu/off_campus.cfm

- Tenant Resume
- Roommate Agreement
- Emergency Contact Form
- Rental Agreements
- Inventory Checklist
- Holding Deposit Receipt
- Maintenance Request Letter
- Rental Agreement for a Room in a Private Home
- 30-Day Move-Out Letter
- Sublease Agreements

**University Housing
Cal Poly
One Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0207
805.756.1226**

housing.calpoly.edu

