



Off-Campus  
**STUDENT  
SAFETY**  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

# Off-Campus Student Safety

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# STUDENT SAFETY

The following tips offered by the City of Syracuse Police Department are designed to help you reduce your chances of becoming a victim of crime. You may already be aware of some strategies, but others may be new to you. Remember to trust your instincts and use common sense.

## general **SUGGESTIONS**

- Be aware of your surroundings. Many crimes occur right under the nose of people who just did not notice anything suspicious.
- Safety and security are everyone's responsibility. You can reduce the possibility of becoming a victim of a crime by being alert to your environment.
- Your safety and security ultimately depend on you. You must take responsibility for your own safety.
- Report all crime and any suspicious activity to the Syracuse Police Department (911) or the Department of Public Safety (315-443-2224).

## what is **SUSPICIOUS?**

Suspicious activity is anything even slightly out of the ordinary for the area or time of day in which it occurs. According to the Syracuse Police Department, the most obvious things to watch for and report are:

- Strangers entering your neighbor's apartment.
- Strangers trying doors to see if they are locked.
- The sound of breaking glass or other loud noises.
- People carrying bolt cutters and tools—especially near bicycles.
- People running—especially if carrying something valuable. They could be leaving the scene of a crime.



**BURGLARS STRIKE IN ANY NEIGHBORHOOD. THEY ARE OPPORTUNISTIC AND ALWAYS LOOK FOR EASY TARGETS SUCH AS HOMES THAT ARE LEFT OPEN, NOT WELL MAINTAINED, OUT OF EYESIGHT OR EARSHOT OF NEIGHBORS, OR OBSCURED BY LANDSCAPING OR FENCING.**

## on the **STREET**

- Avoid walking alone. As an alternative, use the Department of Public Safety's Shuttle U Home program when returning to your off-campus residence. For more information visit, [publicsafety.syr.edu/students/shuttle\\_u\\_home.html](http://publicsafety.syr.edu/students/shuttle_u_home.html).
- Walk facing traffic.
- Use well-lit and well-traveled routes, away from alleys, entries, and bushes. Avoid parks, vacant lots, and other deserted places.
- Walk purposefully and confidently, and keep moving. Be aware of your surroundings.
- Always let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- Dress sensibly. Do not flaunt expensive jewelry.
- Carry only necessary credit cards and cash.
- Carry purses or handbags close to your body.
- Trust your instincts. If something or someone makes you uneasy, avoid the person or situation and leave as soon as possible.
- Try to use ATM machines during the day. If you must use an ATM during evening hours, use one that is well lit or in an attended gas station or grocery store.
- Always know where you are and where you can find help if needed. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going.
- Keep your head up and do not be afraid to make eye contact with others.



- If you think someone is following you, change directions several times and head toward lights and people. Go to a public place or a police station. Do not go home.
- Stay sober and coherent. People under the influence are more likely to be victims of a serious crime or accident.

## BEFORE renting an APARTMENT

Survey the residence for the following security features:

- Does the apartment have metal or solid core wooden entry and exit doors? Are these doors equipped with deadbolts? Are the locks mounted securely? Have the doors been re-keyed since the last tenant moved out?
- Can visitors be observed without opening the apartment door, either through a door "peephole" viewer or window?
- Does any outside vegetation block doors or windows from public view? Does the vegetation provide places for concealment at entrances or along walkways?
- Is there adequate lighting at the building entry doors and along walkways? Are the outer doors kept locked at all times?

## IN YOUR apartment

- Keep your doors locked at all times, especially when you are alone or sleeping, or the apartment is unoccupied (even if only for a few moments).
- Determine who is on the other side of the door before opening it. Have repair or service personnel show official identification and confirm their presence with the person requesting the service. Delivery persons should remain outside to await the person requesting the delivery.
- If you return home and something looks questionable (e.g., a slit screen, broken window, or open door), do not go inside. Call the Syracuse Police Department from a safe location. Do not clean a burglary scene before the police arrive.

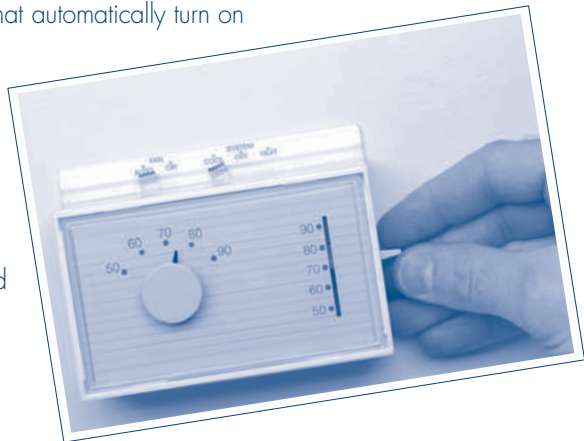


- Be sure you have blinds or curtains on your windows. Always keep your windows covered at night and leave lights on in two or more rooms.
- Make a list of your valuables and record any serial numbers.
- Be sure all outdoor lighting fixtures are in working condition. Ask your landlord to make immediate repairs to the fixtures.
- Place valuable items out of sight and in locked areas. Do not leave valuables unattended in common areas such as laundry rooms and lounges.
- Ask your landlord to maintain and trim shrubbery.

THE BEST WAY TO MINIMIZE YOUR CHANCES OF BECOMING  
A VICTIM IS TO TAKE SENSIBLE PRECAUTIONS.

## BEFORE LEAVING for long breaks

- Secure all windows and have curtains on them.
- Lock sliding doors, and place a wooden or metal bar in the track of the doors.
- Unplug all electrical items. Refrigerator and lights with timers can remain plugged in.
- Do not hide spare keys outside.
- Be sure there is good lighting around doors, especially those doors not visible to passersby.
- Use light photocells or timers that automatically turn on interior and exterior lights at a predetermined time or when there is motion.
- Take valuables with you if possible. Do not leave any valuable items near windows.
- Make sure beds, couches, and other flammable objects are at least two feet away from heat sources.



- If you have a security alarm, turn it on when leaving.
- Arrange for a trusted neighbor to watch over your house or to store your valuables while you are away.
- Keep your thermostat set to a temperature no lower than 55° F. You must keep your apartment heated all winter long so that your pipes will not freeze—even while nobody is living in the house. Frozen pipes cause extensive and expensive damage to a home's plumbing and heating systems. If you turn off your heat, you could be responsible for repairs!
- Ask the post office to hold your mail until you return from break. Forms are available at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).

## in your **MOTOR VEHICLE**

- Turn the ignition off and take your car keys with you, even if you just have to run inside for a minute.
- Lock your doors and close your windows when exiting your car.
- Park in well-lit areas and near other cars.
- Keep valuables out of sight, preferably locked in the trunk.
- Have your keys ready when you approach your car.
- Always drive with your car doors locked.
- Keep your car in good running condition. Make sure you have enough gas to get where you are going and to return.
- Always inspect your car before entering. As you approach the car from a distance remember to look underneath it in case someone is hiding there.



# FIRE SAFETY

Living off campus includes being responsible for your personal safety and the safety of those around you. Fire safety is one of the responsibilities you will assume. Make sure you know what your role is as a tenant with regard to fire safety, and what responsibilities your landlord assumes.

## required **FIRE PROTECTION** devices

The New York State Fire Code and City of Syracuse Property Code require that smoke detectors be installed in all common areas, including basements. Detectors must also be installed inside and outside each sleeping area. It is the landlord's responsibility to install these devices, but the tenant must make sure the devices are in place and are tested monthly. Make sure you know how to replace the batteries in your smoke detectors. A smoke detector's early warning can provide you with the extra time essential to a successful escape.



# tips for **PREVENTING FIRES** in your **HOME** or **APARTMENT**

- Keep smoke detectors in proper working condition. Install new batteries at the beginning of each semester.
- Never ignore a fire alarm. Evacuate immediately, even if there is no smoke.
- Have an escape plan. Know where the fire exits are, and have two escape routes from each room.
- Do not overload electrical outlets. If you need to plug multiple appliances into an outlet, use a power strip.
- Extinguish candles and incense when unattended. Never place a candle near curtains, posters, or anything else that is flammable. Keep candles away from fans, open windows, or anywhere they can be knocked over.
- Don't leave food unattended on the stove or in the microwave. Turn off your stove and oven whenever you leave your apartment.
- Extinguish all smoking materials thoroughly. When smoking, use a sturdy "non-tipping" ashtray.
- Clean up immediately after parties and take trash outside.
- Keep flammable materials at least three feet away from water heaters, furnaces, and other flame sources.
- City of Syracuse fire ordinances prohibit the use of any open-flame device, including grills, on porches or overhangs. Grills must be placed at least 12 feet from a structure.
- Do not store gasoline, lighter fluid, etc., inside your house or apartment.



- Make sure beds, couches, curtains, or other flammable items are at least two feet away from heat sources.
- Portable heaters can be dangerous if used improperly. Read the instructions carefully.
- Do not run your clothes dryer without a lint filter; clean the filter between every use.
- Always check the wattage in light bulbs to make sure you are using the correct wattage in light fixtures. This protects against overheating.
- Do not hang items from fire sprinklers.



## IN CASE FIRE does strike

- If you hear an alarm, leave at once, and close all doors behind you. Call 911, say: "I want to report a fire," and give a complete name and address. Stay on the phone until the dispatcher releases you.
- Don't try to fight the fire or waste time collecting valuables.
- Avoid elevators. Use the stairs.
- Feel all doors before opening. If a door feels hot, or if smoke is seeping out, do not open it.
- If you awake to a smoke-filled room, avoid breathing deeply, cover your nose and mouth with a cloth if possible, drop to the floor, and crawl to an exit.
- If you become trapped in your apartment and cannot reach a fire exit, do not panic. Close your door and seal off cracks with wet towels. If you can, call the fire department and give them your name, address, and location in the building. Open a window for air and signal for help. Do not jump. Wait for help.
- If you find yourself in smoke or heat, stay low, where the air is better. Take short, quick breaths through the nose until you reach safety.



# RENTER'S INSURANCE

Fifty-four percent of renters do not have renter's insurance. Before moving into your rental home, make sure your belongings are protected. Landlords and property owners will not be responsible for personal property.

There are two main reasons for obtaining renter's insurance. The first, and most obvious, is to protect your property against damage. Some policies even cover theft of your property from your home and your place of work. Renter's insurance can cover fire and smoke damage, theft, vandalism, and damage from windstorms and other natural hazards. Specific coverage will depend on your particular policy.

The second reason to get a policy is for liability coverage, which protects you from a civil suit brought because of your negligence. Some policies also pay medical costs if people are injured on your premises.

## IMPORTANT considerations

Renter's insurance usually ranges from \$65 to \$225 a year. To determine how much coverage you need, add up the cost of replacing all of your possessions. Every policy is slightly different. Shop around for the policy that meets your needs. Prices vary from company to company, as does protection. Many local agents carry policies from different insurance companies, so shop for the best deal. It is important to note that some companies will not insure students, so shopping for a competitive price may be difficult.



Haylor, Freyer & Coon offers a personal property protection plan at special rates to all enrolled SU students. For more information about this plan, call 866-535-0456 or e-mail [student@haylor.com](mailto:student@haylor.com).

**DEDUCTIBLE:** Most policies have a deductible—a specific amount deducted from every claim you file. For example, if your \$400 camera is stolen, and you have a \$100 deductible, you will receive \$300 for your claim. The purpose of a deductible is to eliminate paperwork for small claims. Unfortunately, insurance companies and students may have different ideas of what constitutes a small claim. It is a good idea to shop around; deductibles can vary significantly.

**LIABILITY:** Liability coverage can range from \$100,000 to \$300,000. In most cases, more coverage is better. Check to see if your policy covers attorney costs in a civil suit and/or medical costs for those who are injured due to your negligence.

**MINIMUM COVERAGE:** Some policies won't cover your property for less than a specific amount. The typical minimum is between \$10,000 and \$15,000. In the case of a shared residence, each person must get their own policy to cover personal property and liability.

## **VARIABLES THAT CAN AFFECT YOUR RATES:**

- If you live in or out of city limits;
- If the structure is wood frame or brick;
- The amount of theft and fire deterrents the home has (e.g., dead bolts, smoke detectors, etc.);
- Your student or non-student status, and sometimes marital status;
- If you live in a complex with four or more units;
- If you have other policies with the insuring company (e.g., auto insurance); and
- How much property and liability coverage you want or need. Policies can be tailored to your specific needs.

## **PARENTS' HOMEOWNER'S COVERAGE**

Students up to age 25 are typically covered under their parents' homeowner's insurance, so you may already be covered. Ask your parents to review their policy to determine what will and will not be covered in the event of a loss.

## **EMERGENCY** numbers

**Gas Emergency (National Grid):** 1-800-892-2345

**Poison Control:** 315-476-4766

**Power Outage (National Grid):** 1-800-867-5222

**Syracuse Fire Department:** 911

**Syracuse Police Department:** 911

**SU Ambulance:** 315-443-4299

**SU Department of Public Safety:** 711—on campus  
315-443-2224 —off campus

**University R.A.P.E. Center:** 315-443-7273

## **NON-EMERGENCY** numbers

**SUNY ESF Police:** 315-470-6666

19 Bray Hall

**Syracuse Police Department:** 315-442-5111

511 South State Street

**SU Department of Public Safety:** 315-443-2224

005 Sims Hall

**SU Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services:** 315-443-5489

754 Ostrom Avenue

**Westcott Policing Center:** 315-472-0528

473 Westcott Street





# SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Division of Student Affairs

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