TIPS FOR SAFER DAILY LIVING
You can do a lot to improve your safety while living in off-campus housing! For starters, recognize that you are now living on your own, and it is your personal responsibility to look out for your security. To help you do this, here are some tips for safer daily living.

- Keep doors and windows locked at all times, even when you are home. Insist your landlord repair any broken locks, windows, and doors immediately.
- Always close window coverings at night and when you are not at home. Hint: Hang blinds or curtains over every window, and if your front or back door contains a large window be sure to cover it with a curtain that blocks view from the outside.
- Never reveal to someone that you are alone. Simple mistakes like overlooking this are the most common cause of fire!
- If someone knocks on your door and asks to come in, always answer through a peephole. If you don’t recognize the visitor, ask them questions, demand all service/repair personnel show official identification, and never reveal to someone that you are alone. Always look through a peephole. If you do not recognize the visitor, ask them questions
- Never leave a note on your door or voicemail greeting indicating you are not home. Record a generic voicemail greeting — nothing that indicates your schedule or starts your day immediately.
- Keep your bicycle indoors, or use a utility timer. Let a neighbor know when you will be gone. Make sure parking lots, garages, laundry rooms, stairwells, and hallways are well-lit. Have your keys ready before you reach the door.
- To prevent identity theft, destroy credit card applications, credit-advance checks and all other papers that contain personal or medical information. Don’t press the stop button! Push the emergency alarm and all the floor buttons. When in an elevator with a stranger, stand by the floor buttons, or “Close Patrol Check” your valuables (laptop, portable music players, and jewelry) with you. When a visitor is outside your door, call out, “I’ll get it!” to create the impression that other people are inside with you. If you do not recognize the visitor, ask them questions, and never reveal to someone that you are alone.

When someone is at your door
- Always look through a peephole or window to see who it is before you unlock the door. If you do not recognize the visitor, ask them questions, and never reveal to someone that you are alone.
- Demand all service/repair personnel show official identification, and confirm with your landlord or roommates that someone actually placed a service order. If someone demands entry to your apartment, insist they provide a valid government-issued ID.
- If in doubt, never let a stranger into your home. If someone knocks on your door and asks to come in, always answer through a peephole. If you don’t recognize the visitor, ask them questions. Be forewarned: if you do not recognize the visitor, ask them questions.
- Program the local police and fire departments’ numbers into your mobile phone, and only list your phone number with the local police and fire departments in your area. You can purchase them from supermarkets and home supply stores. Make sure you're signing

GENERAL SAFETY
Check smoke detectors monthly to make sure they work. If you don’t have smoke detectors, ask your landlord to install one, or ask if you’re allowed to install one yourself. Every residence needs a smoke detector. Look for a red light on the top. If it flashes, it means the detector works.
Know where the nearest fire extinguisher is located in your apartment complex. If your residence is not equipped with a fire extinguisher, ask your landlord to provide one, or purchase one yourself.
Make sure oven doors and stoves are turned off after use. Double check if necessary. Simple mistakes like overlooking this are the most common cause of fire!
Keep your keys ready before you reach the door, especially at night. Never leave your keys outside under a doormat, in a hide-a-key, or any place accessible to a stranger.
If you lose your keys, have your landlord change your locks immediately.
Make sure parking lots, garages, laundry rooms, stairwells, and hallways are well-lit. If you notice a light out in a public area such as these, notify your landlord.

GOING ON VACATION
- Temporarily stop delivery services, or have a friend collect your mail, until you return. You can purchase them from supermarkets and home supply stores.
- Use a utility timer. Leave a no-cost outage light and a radio or noisemaker turned on inside your residence at all times to discourage burglars looking to vandalize an empty home.
- Insure your valuables with your state-issued driver’s license/identification number. If you are going on vacation, always leave your house, or outside within plain view of the front door.
- For fire safety your home must have at least one smoke detector? Does the apartment/house have its own security system? Ask whether your lease would allow you to have a security system in place. If the residence has an alarm system, find out whether the alarm reports to the police, and request an alarm monitoring service through UT Security. If you are asking the landlord whether your lease allows you to have a security system, ask whether your lease allows you to have a security system in place. Does the front door have a peephole/door viewer? If yes, make sure that it is operational, and familiarize yourself with visibility and blind spots.
- Make sure all blanks on the lease are filled in completely. Sign the lease promptly. If necessary, ask your landlord to complete this checklist for the specific unit.
- Invest the landlord show you the actual apartment/house you will be living in, and have you sign a document so you can complete this checklist for the specific unit.
- Make sure all blanks on the lease are filled in completely. Sign the lease promptly. If necessary, ask your landlord to complete this checklist for the specific unit.

APARTMENT HUNTER’S CHECKLIST
- Is the property in a safe neighborhood? To research crime rates of different Austin neighborhoods, go to the Austin Police Department’s Crime Prevention website to look up crime safety facts by zip code or even apartment complex. www.austintexas.gov/department/crime-information
- Are address numbers clearly visible? This helps police, firefighters and EMS locate your residence in an emergency.
- Are public areas well lit? Are the light bulbs on in the parking lot or outside your door? Is your address clearly visible? Are there facsimile expressions of someone standing 10 feet away at any time? This helps police, firefighters and EMS locate your residence in an emergency.
- Are parking spaces marked with apartment numbers? Unmarked parking spaces are bad, because the presence or absence of a car can give a thief the location of someone's home. A vacant parking space labeled with its corresponding apartment number is a potential burglar of an empty home!
- Are shrubs and trees near the property maintained? Overgrown plant life provides a hiding place for potential intruders, in particular so many of the tiny shrubs in apartment complexes. Do your neighbors have smoke detectors? Does the apartment/house have a working smoke detector? For fire safety your home must have at least one smoke detector and two escape emergency routes. There should also be an extinguisher either inside the unit or outside, or outside within plain view of the front door.
- Ask to see documentation of the last time the locks were changed. If they are not changed with each new resident, ask whether there will be a charge to re-key the locks for the future. Also, find out if you can have the locks changed by an independent locksmith.
- Are address numbers clearly visible? This helps police, firefighters and EMS locate your residence in an emergency.
- Is there a maintenance person on duty at all times, or “Close Patrol Check” your valuables (laptop, portable music players, and jewelry) with you.
- Make sure all blanks on the lease are filled in completely. Sign the lease promptly. If necessary, ask your landlord to complete this checklist for the specific unit.
- Do doors and windows have sturdy locks? Are locksets and windows of your apartment set to give you a ample security. You can purchase them from supermarkets and home supply stores. You can purchase them from supermarkets and home supply stores.
- Keep your keys ready before you reach the door, especially at night. Never leave your keys outside under a doormat, in a hide-a-key, or any place accessible to a stranger.
- Make sure parking lots, garages, laundry rooms, stairwells, and hallways are well-lit. If you notice a light out in a public area such as these, notify your landlord.
- Avoid entering elevators with strangers. When in an elevator with a stranger, stand by the control panel. If confronted in a threatening way, push the emergency alarm and all the floor buttons. Don’t press the stop button!
- Remove your address from local telephone directories and UT Directory Services, and only list your phone number with a first initial and last name. Label buzz-in call boxes and mail boxes at your residence with only your first initial and last name as well.
- Never leave a note on your door or voicemail greeting indicating you are not home. Record a generic voicemail greeting — nothing that indicates your schedule or starts your day immediately.
- A digitized message saying no one is available to take the call is your best bet.
- Make sure you have a security system at home. Leave a no-cost outage light and a radio or noisemaker turned on inside your residence at all times to discourage burglars looking to vandalize an empty home.
- Insure your valuables with your state-issued driver’s license/identification number. Marking your property in this way makes it less valuable to potential burglars, and if your property is stolen, insurance provides law enforcement proof of your ownership. UTPO provides free engraving services.
- To prevent identity theft, destroy credit card applications, credit-advance checks and all other papers that contain personal or medical information. Don’t press the stop button! Push the emergency alarm and all the floor buttons. When in an elevator with a stranger, stand by the floor buttons, or “Close Patrol Check” your valuables (laptop, portable music players, and jewelry) with you. When a visitor is outside your door, call out, “I’ll get it!” to create the impression that other people are inside with you. If you do not recognize the visitor, ask them questions. Be forewarned: if you do not recognize the visitor, ask them questions.
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Before you sign a lease...
- Insist the landlord show you the actual apartment/house you will be living in, and have you sign a document so you can complete this checklist for the specific unit.
- Make sure all blanks on the lease are filled in completely. Sign the lease promptly. If necessary, ask your landlord to complete this checklist for the specific unit.
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- Remember that when you sign a lease, you’re signing a binding contract. You are responsible for paying the rent to your landlord, even if you are not there. If you are away for an extended period, ask your landlord if you can sublease part of your apartment, or even change your study plans/release you from the responsibility.
When looking for a new place to live, consider many factors like proximity to campus and laundry facilities. Safety should also be a major factor you think about before renting an apartment or house.

Ask yourself: Does this home and surrounding neighborhood feel safe? It is important to trust your instincts about the general safety of a property, but there are also specific things you can look for to determine how safe a place is from crime and fire.

Make copies of the checklist in the brochure and fill one out for each property you visit. This way, even if you are distracted by promises of move-in specials and Olympic-sized swimming pools, you will have a record of each property’s safety to look back on when making your decision.

APARTMENT HUNTER’S CHECKLIST

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