

Orientation Guide for Occupants of Farm Housing

This orientation guide is for farm management to use when training farm workers to safely live in farm-provided housing. Farm managers should review all systems in the housing and set expectations with workers about use, cleaning, and maintenance of the facility. Both managers and workers have important responsibilities to ensure a good housing experience for everyone.

Goals

1. Provide safe, sanitary, and comfortable housing for workers.
2. Maintain housing in a good state of repair for the enjoyment of current and future employees.

Responsibilities

Both farm workers and farm management are responsible for maintaining this housing so that it is safe and comfortable. Employees are responsible for keeping the housing clean and ensuring that the property is not damaged unnecessarily. Managers are responsible to inspect the housing for health and safety reasons, and to make any needed repairs.

Inspections

An assigned person will inspect this housing regularly to be sure it is clean and safe.

This housing will be inspected every _____ by _____, who can be reached at _____.

Housing Rules

1. Respect the other people who live in the housing, treat others as you want to be treated by them.
2. Take care of the housing, inside and out, keep it clean and avoid causing damages. It is provided for your comfort and safety and for others who will live there in the future.
3. Housing assignments are made only by the owner and employees may occupy only the housing to which they are assigned.
4. Report any problems with the housing right away, the owners want to fix problems quickly before they get worse.
5. No cooking is permitted in any rooms except the kitchen.
6. Occupants are forbidden to tamper with smoke or carbon monoxide detectors in any way. Report any issues to management.
7. Occupants may not remove furniture or equipment from the housing premises without specific permission from management.

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8. Smoking is forbidden inside the housing. Smoking is allowed outside in designated areas.
9. The use or possession of illegal drugs is forbidden throughout farm-provided housing and all farm properties.
10. Overnight guests are not permitted in farm-provided housing. Guest must leave the premises by 10:00 PM Sunday through Friday and 12:00 AM (midnight) on Saturday.

Kitchen Care and Food Safety

Cleaning

Clean up crumbs and food waste immediately after eating. Do not leave open containers of food out.

Wash dishes after eating and clean countertops, tables, and sinks with hot, soapy water.

Sweep kitchen floors every day. Mop floors at least once a week.

Cockroaches can be kept out of the housing. They are present when the kitchen is dirty and food and water is available for them. Wipe up spills right away and report any leaks to management. See [Cornell factsheets](#) for more resources to detect and prevent cockroaches.

Refrigerator

The refrigerator keeps food cool and prevent it from spoiling. Set the thermostat to stay under 40 degrees.

Any opened perishable food should be kept in the refrigerator as well as any food marked as needing to be refrigerated (milk, eggs, cheese, meat, yogurt, vegetables, etc.). If it was refrigerated when you bought it, then you need to refrigerate it at home!

Frozen meat should only be defrosted in the refrigerator, not on the counter or anywhere else.

Be respectful of the space and make sure all people have room to keep their food. Clean up any spills immediately.

Stove

Be careful not to boil food over or spill food on the burners. This damages them. Clean the stove when something spills on it.

Do not put tinfoil under the burners. When burners do not work, please tell management.

Do not leave pots of cooked food unattended on the stove.

Do not use a cookie sheet for cooking tortillas on the stovetop, use a griddle or frying pan.



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Do not use the stove for heating the house and do not leave burners on when unused, someone could get burned or a fire could start.

Trash and Recycling

Cooking fats, oils, and grease should **never** be put down the sink drain, it will clog the pipes. Instead, allow them to cool, put into a container, and throw out in the trash.

Keep lids can on the trash and recycling containers. Empty containers when they are full and bring them to dumpsters or recycling collection point. Never keep full trash bags in your house.



Resources

[USDA Guides for food safety and kitchen cleanliness](#), this website contains many factsheets and guides in English and Spanish. The two below focus on food safety issues, especially the four food safety keys: wash, separate, cook, chill.

Be Food Safe, English, [Brochure](#) and [Poster](#)

Be Food Safe, Spanish, [Brochure](#) and [Poster](#)

Minnesota Extension [factsheet](#) on keeping the kitchen clean.

Mississippi [factsheet](#) on cleaning the kitchen, includes information about cockroaches and other bugs.

Bathroom

Toilet

Put the used toilet paper into the toilet bowl and flush, toilet paper will not clog the pipes.



Do not put any other paper or waste in the toilet, it will clog the pipes. Feminine products go in the trash.

If your toilet runs, open the back and make sure the handle, float, or flapper is not stuck. If it gets stuck or runs frequently, tell management.



Clean the toilet at least once per week.

Pour ½ cup of bleach into the bowl, let sit for a few minutes, and scrub bowl with a toilet bowl brush. Clean outside of bowl and toilet seat with bathroom cleaner and wash cloth or sponge.

Shower and Sink

Hot water should come within a minute of turning on the water. If no hot water comes, report the problem to management.

Turn water off all the way when finished using.

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Keep curtain in shower so water won't splash onto the floor. Wet bathrooms will get moldy.

Use bathroom fans, if available, during and after showering to carry away moist air.

Clean the shower and sink at least once per week. Spray the sink and shower with bathroom cleaner and wipe down with a wash cloth or sponge.

Resources

Tennessee [factsheet](#) for cleaning the bathroom.

Bedrooms

Mattresses and bedding must be kept on the frames provided, do not put them on the floor. Keep beds separated at least 36 inches (91 centimeters) apart.

Bedbug covers must stay on the mattresses, they are there for your protection. Use sheets on the mattress and wash them weekly. Do not sleep directly on the mattress, it is more sanitary to sleep on clean sheets. See [Cornell factsheets](#) for more resources to detect and prevent bedbugs.

Avoid eating or keeping food in bedrooms, it attracts insects and mice. Make sure to clean up any used dishes or food containers.

If you lock your door then you must provide a key or combination to management.

Windows and Doors

Doors and windows are for your comfort and safety, they provide fresh air and a place to exit in an emergency. Do not place furniture or other objects in front of windows or doors that might block people from exiting.

Keep screens in place for safety and pest control. Do not push on the screens, they will break or tear easily. Insects will enter through holes or tears in the screens.

Make sure windows and doors open and close properly. Report any problems to management.

Broken glass will lose heat quickly, making rooms uncomfortable and wasting energy and money. Report any broken glass in windows or doors.

Washer and Dryer

Do not overfill the washer, lightly fill with clothes, do not pack them in. Use laundry detergent in correct amounts.



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Do not overfill the dryer, there must be room for clothes to move about while the dryer is running. Empty the lint filter after each load, leaving the lint in the filter can cause a fire.

Ask management if you have questions about operating these machines. Tell management if these machines do not work.

Common Areas

Living rooms are for the enjoyment of all, be respectful of each other and share the space.

Take care of the furniture and electronics that are provided. Clean up any spills right away.

Heating Systems

Interior doors affect heating systems, some systems need air to flow from bedrooms to common areas to work properly.

The thermostat controls the heating system and it is usually found in a common area. Keep the thermostat around 70 degrees. Turn down the thermostat if your room is too hot, do not open the window.

In cold weather, do not open your window if the heat is on. If windows are open and the heat is on, the heating system will run constantly wasting energy and money.

Report any problems with the heating system to management.



Air Conditioners

Air conditioners cool the air inside the building. Windows and doors should be closed when the air conditioner is on to keep the cool air inside. Do not operate the heating system at the same time as the air conditioner. Air conditioners drip water as a normal part of operation, this water should drip outside. Report any air conditioner problems to management.

Water System

Your house should have both hot and cold water. If the hot water doesn't come after a few minutes, tell management. Do not let water run if it is not being used.

Any water leaks should be reported to management right away. If your water is unusual or changes in any way, tell management.

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Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Smoke alarms can save your life! They detect smoke or fire and make a loud alarm to warn of fire dangers and wake up sleeping people so they can escape to safety out of the house. If a smoke alarm goes off, make sure everyone exits the house to safety.



If a smoke alarm goes off due to normal cooking, open windows and turn on fans to clear the smoke from the house. Never remove batteries or otherwise tamper with an alarm. If a smoke alarm makes a beeping noise it may need new batteries, report this to management.

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless gas that can kill people. It comes from burning materials such as gas or wood. A carbon monoxide detector sounds an alarm if the gas is present so that people can exit the house to safety. If the alarm sounds, make sure everyone is awake and exits the building, contact management immediately!



Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are used to quickly put out a fire such as a grease fire on a stovetop.

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