Information courtesy of Housing and Residential Life

Before you start looking
You will soon need to make some important decisions concerning off-campus housing. Before you do anything, you need to take some time to weigh the pros and cons of living with a roommate. Do you want to live with others or alone in a studio or one bedroom apartment? Do you want to share a room? How many roommates do you want to live with? Remember, signing a lease can commit you to coexistence for up to a year. Be sure to also think about the following issues before you begin your search:

- 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 special 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 so having a roommate is changing from a preference to a necessity. The more roommates you have, the less some of your expenses may be. Sharing a room can save you even more money.

COMPANIONSHIP — Going home to an empty house may not be your idea of pleasant living. Having someone to share your ups and downs with and to accompany you to a movie or dinner at the last minute can be a great asset.

SAFETY — Be sure to consider issues of safety when considering whether or not to share an apartment or house. A roommate’s assistance can be invaluable during an emergency or illness, not to mention the added feeling of security a roommate provides.

CONVENIENCE — Somewhere, housework and the other drudgeries of life are not quite so bad when the responsibility is shared. Roommates are also great for answering the phone when you are not at home, loaning you money when you can’t find your wallet, and letting you into the apartment when you lock yourself out.

Why live alone?
PRIVACY — Probably one of the most common reasons for living alone is privacy. Living alone gives you the freedom to choose who and when you want to entertain. It also gives you a real choice about spending time alone.

NO HOUSEHOLD CONFLICTS — If you live alone, you have no one to blame but yourself if the rent and the bills are not paid on time. No one will eat your last piece of chocolate cake or insist on keeping the windows open or shut.

Most Cal Poly students are living on a budget. Having a roommate is no longer a preference — it is a necessity. The more roommates you have, the less some of your expenses may be. Sharing a room can save you even more money.

TOM SANDERS
MUSTANG DAILY

Need help finding off-campus housing?

If you are looking for some guidance and housing resources . . .

. . . come to the

"OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING FAIR!"

Wednesday, April 6, 2005
10 AM to 3 PM
Chumash Auditorium in the UU

Valuable information and resources will be provided to help in your search for off-campus housing.

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Finding roommates

FRIENDS — Living with a friend has several advantages. You are probably familiar with many of each other’s quirks so there are fewer surprises and chances are you have quite a bit in common. However, living with a friend may also have some disadvantages. It can be a quick way to end a good relationship. A friend may expect to do everything with you. Seeing someone at class, social hours and home may burn out your friendship. Everyone needs time alone, and sometimes friends have trouble understanding this. It’s best to really weigh the pros and cons before you decide to live with your best buddy.

PEOPLE IN YOUR MAJOR — Many of your fellow residents will be moving out of the residence halls and into off-campus housing next year, and one of them may just be the roommate you are looking for.


Selecting a roommate

If you have decided to live with someone else, an important thing to do is to take a good look at yourself as a potential roommate. Look carefully at your positive qualities (sense of humor, ability to listen, cooking abilities, etc.) and your faults (moody in the mornings, sloppiness, etc.). Be sure to be as honest as you would want your roommate to be with you.

More importantly, what are your needs? What do you want out of a roommate relationship, and what must you have? For example, must you have your own room? Do you fall apart if you don’t sleep between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.? What is there about you or your lifestyle that is absolutely crucial to you? If you have always been a slob/smoker/morning person, or whatever, don’t kid yourself into thinking you can change now. If you want to change, great. But don’t decide to live with someone who is allergic to smoke just to see if it will make you quit. By the same token, decide what things you might be willing to compromise on to suit your roommate’s tastes.

Giving these matters some thought ahead of time will make it a lot easier when you actually start interviewing prospective roommates.

Potential roommates

Interviewing or having an in-depth conversation with a potential roommate is usually a good way to share and discuss your expectations. Be sure to meet in person — a phone conversation just won’t do for something this important.

Explore how each of you feels about different topics, and if you aren’t clear about something, ask.
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- Upgraded studios
- Computer center with high speed wireless access
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- 2 heated pools
- Convenience store
- On site Woodstock's Pizza
- Custom painting
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- 2.5 acre park
- Roommate matching program
- New Residence Life program with tons of activities
- Discounts for residents at many local businesses
Moving day — information you need to have

Moving into a new place carries 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 when you move in. Make sure the furniture is included in the contract.

• Make sure that the unit you're looking at is the actual unit you're renting and not a model.

• 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 the Inventory and Condition Report with the owner or manager present.

• Make sure 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 a copy of the Off-Campus Housing 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.

Sharing the Load

Be sure to share responsibility for the utilities with your roommates. 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 a phone account in his or her name, and a third roommate opens the water and garbage accounts in his or her name. Arrangements for turning on your utilities should be made at least one week before anyone actually moves in. Be sure to pay particular attention to the bills for water and phone and the potential costs to the household of excessive use.
Finding a place within your budget

Once you have made your decisions on the location you prefer and who you want to live with, it is time to start looking for a place. There are several resources to help you find a place to live.

Rental Housing Costs

Rental housing costs vary considerably depending on amenities, how long a renter stays in one place (longer tenancies are associated with more reasonable rents), number of roommates (more roommates lower shared costs), location (rentals near Cal Poly tend to be more expensive) as well as utilities and eating habits.

Average Housing Costs

In Fall 2004, the average cost of house and apartment rentals advertised through the Off-Campus Housing Listing service were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE RENT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 BEDROOM HOUSE</td>
<td>$937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 BEDROOM HOUSE</td>
<td>$1174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSE</td>
<td>$1766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOBILE HOMES</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDIO APARTMENT</td>
<td>$656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 BEDROOM HOUSE</td>
<td>$1792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 BEDROOM HOUSE</td>
<td>$2163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 BEDROOM HOUSE</td>
<td>$2950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOBILE HOMES</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDIO APARTMENT</td>
<td>$656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 BEDROOM APT</td>
<td>$790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 BEDROOM APT</td>
<td>$1173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 BEDROOM APT</td>
<td>$1444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE ROOM</td>
<td>$5524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARED ROOM</td>
<td>$407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** These are average costs of listings within the San Luis Obispo Area only

Off-campus Housing Listing Service:

Off-campus rental listings are available through Cal Poly's Housing Office home page. This service not only provides the listings are automatically deleted after two weeks, but also to list properties that are available for rent. Older listings are automatically deleted after two weeks.

To lower the cost of living in San Luis Obispo, students should live with roommates and try to stay at one residence for long periods of time. Housing close to Cal Poly tends to be more expensive.

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**TOM SANDERS**

**MUSTANG DAILY**

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For more information, visit Cal Poly's Off-Campus Housing Listing service at [this link](http://www.calpoly.edu/housing).
In addition, the Web site also provides links to several property management companies and to off-campus student housing complexes that are members of the off-campus housing association. To access the Web site go to http://www.housing.calpoly.edu and click on "off-campus."

Local newspapers
Another useful resource is the Tribune, San Luis Obispo's daily paper, the New Times, a free weekly publication and the Mustang Daily, Cal Poly's daily paper.

You can also access The Tribune and the New Times on the Web at www.thetribune-news.com and www.newtimes-lo.com, respectively.

Once you have made your decisions on the location you prefer and who you want to live with, it is time to start looking for a place. There are several resources to help you find a place to live.

University Union
On the first floor of the University Union, there is a bulletin board that provides the opportunity to advertise as well as search for available rentals.

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.

Month-to-Month vs Lease Agreements
Now that you have found a place to live, you need to know about all the details of moving in.

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 (30 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.
Costs
continued from page 8
(for example, failing to pay rent or damaging the property). The dis­
advantage 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.

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

Renter’s checklist
Before you rent or lease a place, be sure that the rental meets the required housing stan­
dards. Listed below is a checklist with 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 safe­
ty 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 win­
dows 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 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 over­
crowded conditions exist at the residence? You may be forced to move out if overcrowded condi­
tions violate 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. A permit is required if over five adults occu­py the residence.

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. Though the land­lord or owner is at fault for breaking safety codes, you may be forced to move for safety rea­sons should the city determine that living conditions are unsafe. Substandard housing conditions should be reported to the City Community Development Department at (805) 781-5856.

Off-campus rental listings are available through Cal Poly’s Housing Office home page. On the site, renters can search available rentals and list properties that are available for rent.

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Knowing legal obligations is important

The following legal information is an overview of landlord/tenant law as it relates to people looking for housing. This information is not a substitute for legal advice where the problems are serious or complex.

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:

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

Your Right to Privacy

Tenants have a basic right to privacy in their rental units. California law states that the landlord may enter a rental unit only for the following reasons:

1. In an emergency.
2. To make necessary or agreed upon repairs, decorations, alterations or other improvements (after giving the tenant proper notice).
3. To show the rental unit to a tenant or buyer, or to contractors or workers who are to perform work (after giving the tenant proper notice).
4. When the tenant has moved out or has abandoned the rental unit.
5. If a court order permits the landlord to enter.

The landlord must give you at least 24 hours notice before entering the rental unit, except in an emergency or if the tenant has surrendered (given up) or abandoned the rental unit. The tenant cannot withhold permission unreasonably. The landlord can enter the rental unit only during conventional business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday), unless the tenant agrees to other times.

The landlord cannot abuse the right of access or use it to harass or constantly disturb the tenant. If the landlord violates your rights, you may file a lawsuit for invasion of privacy or trespass.

If you are renting a single room in a privately-owned home where the owner resides, you may be considered a lodger, not a tenant. The California Civil Code describes a "lodger" as a person contracting with the owner of a dwelling unit for a room or room and board within the dwelling unit personally occupied by the owner. The owner may choose to retain a right of access to all areas of the dwelling unit occupied by the lodger and have overall control of the dwelling unit.

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:

1. Ask your landlord to rectify the situation.
2. Follow up with a letter and send it certified or registered mail. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself. (See appendix for roommate agreement from page 49)
3. Allow reasonable time for repairs.

First-time renters should educate themselves about the legal obligations of landlords and tenants.

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www.slocakery.com
Legal
continued from page 10

repairs. What is reasonable depends on the situation and the type of repair. The law usually considers 30 days to be reasonable, but if the problem makes the rental unit unfit for living, a shorter period may be considered reasonable.

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.

Repair & Deduct Remedy
The repair and deduct remedy allows you to deduct money from your rent to pay for repairs of conditions that are covered by the implied warranty of habitability. As a practical matter, the repair and deduct remedy allows you to make needed repairs of serious conditions without filing a lawsuit against the landlord.

Here is how the repair and deduct remedy works. You must inform your landlord about the needed repairs and allow the landlord a reasonable amount of time to make the needed repairs. If the landlord doesn’t make the needed repairs within a reasonable amount of time, you may either make the repairs, or hire someone to do them, and deduct the cost from your rent.

see Legal, page 19

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AIDA's
The same section of the Civil Code that requires all landlords to keep a premises 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. use and operate gas, electrical and plumbing fixtures properly. (Examples of improper use include electrical outlet overload and allowing any gas, electrical or plumbing fixture to become filthy.)
3. dispose of trash and garbage in a clean and sanitary manner.
4. refrain from destroying, damaging and defacing the premises or allowing anyone else to do so.
5. use the premises in an intended, living and dining rooms, kitchens and bedrooms for their proper and respective purposes.

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. In addition, the landlord is not obligated to repair any items damaged due to the tenant's negligence.

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 facilities in good working order, including hot and cold running water and connection to a sewage disposal system.
3. Gas facilities in working order.
4. Heating facilities in working order.
5. Floors, stairways and railings in good repair.
6. Adequate trash receptacles in good repair.
7. An electrical system which is in good working order with at least two outlets — or one outlet and one light fixture, in every room. Common stairs and hallways must be lighted at all times.
8. Clean and sanitary buildings, grounds free from debris, filth, rubbish, garbage, rodents and vermin.
In addition, all windows and doors must have secure locks and necessary bolts to secure the premises and 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.

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The Temple belongs to the Jodo Shinshu tradition of Pure Land Buddhism.
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Welcome to the San Luis Obispo Off Campus Student Housing Association (OCSHA). Established in 1991, it is the goal of OCSHA to public awareness of the advantages of utilizing off-campus student housing. The association is comprised of seven members and eight complexes, all-specializing in off-campus living. OCSHA bylaws state, but are not limited to, members having 24-hour on-site management and renting to students. The members of the association provide a large variety of housing to meet all students' needs. There are many affordable housing options for students within walking distance or a short bus ride from the campus.

Our members include:

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Townhouse Apartment Living for Students

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Important questions to ask before signing lease documents

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. Are there laundry facilities in the building? If not, are there facilities nearby?
12. Is the apartment near public transportation? If not, how will you get to campus?
13. How far are grocery and convenience stores from the apartment? What about other places you shop, eat, work, etc.?
14. What happens if you lose your apartment keys?
15. Is the street well lit?
16. Does the apartment have an adequate lock? Is there a dead bolt?
17. What happens if you lose your apartment keys?
18. Is there a doorbell? Does it work?
19. Is there storage space allocated for you outside the apartment?
20. Is there a private, secure mailbox?
21. 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?
22. Are there ample wall outlets?
23. Do the light fixtures work? Will you need additional lighting in the apartment?
24. Are there sufficient phone jacks?
25. What do you call for emergencies or repairs? Is there someone on call at all times for emergencies?
26. Are there laundry facilities in the building? If not, are there facilities nearby?
27. Is there a private parking area?
28. Is there a security system?
Advice for new roommates

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). Do not try to anticipate your roommate’s likes and dislikes. 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 don’t think your roommate will like it. The idea is to do the things you want to do and feel comfortable doing.

Likes and 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 terrible. Don’t get hung up on the negatives. If you think that the fact that your roommate can smell first thing in the morning is great, tell him or her so. By the same token, if the sound of Bruce Springsteen at 6 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. When your differences are severe, you must both compromise, or it could be one very, 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. Treat gently on one another’s ego.

Home Security Tips
While the student moves into the house to increase visibility:
- Clearly mark your address on the front of your building.
- Close and lock doors, windows, garages, and sheds.
- Install door peep holes.
- Install electronic security, fire and emergency.
- Keep home well-lit and curtains closed at night.
- If you live alone, use initials rather than Ms., Mrs. in directories.
- Do not let anyone inside who you do not know or who you have not planned on visiting.
- Have a lighting notification system to let neighbors know you’re OK.
- 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.

Questions
continued from page 16
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 electricity)? Who pays for and/or controls the heat? When is it turned on?
32. Is the apartment air-conditioned? Who controls and pays for it? When is it turned on?
33. Are appliances gas or electricity? 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 fixtures, 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. that you have to pre-planned meetings periodically (maybe once or twice a month) so that they can sit down over coffee or dinner and talk business. Besides talking about personal problems or accomplishments, this is a good time to decide things like who is going to deal with the landlord when something needs to be fixed.

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Legal continued from page 12
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month) period. The amount of rent
withheld for the repairs cannot be
more than the amount of one
month's rent. And you cannot use
this remedy if you, your guests or
your children caused the damages
that need repair.

Negotiate A Reduced Rent
If the landlord is tardy in repairing
the problem and it doesn't involve a
serious health or safety threat, con­
sider negotiating with him or her to
temporarily reduce the rent until the
problem is rectified. If he says he
can't get someone to fix the prob­
lem for a week or two, ask that your
rent be reduced to compensate you
for the inconvenience. This should
motivate him to repair the problem
quickly. Be sure to confirm your
conversation by writing him a note
including the date the landlord
promised the repair would be done. Keep a photocopy for yourself.

Rent Withholding
California law allows you to with­
hold (stop paying) your rent if your
landlord does not fix serious condi­
tions that are covered by the implied
warranty of habitability. You can
only use this remedy under the fol­
lowing circumstances:
1. The needed repairs or defects
must seriously affect your health
and safety. 2. The conditions must
be serious enough to make the
rental uninhabitable (has such seri­
ous problems or defects that it will
affect your health and safety.) 3.
The needed repairs or defects must
be more serious than when you use
the repair and deduct remedy. In
order to prove a violation of the
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witnesses and copies of letters
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Tips
Better to find out now than afterward. Be tactful, but more importantly, be honest. If either of you paints too rosy of a picture, you are in for some nasty surprises later on.

If you live with someone long enough, your true feelings will eventually come out. If you take some time to discuss the following topics before you start living together, you will be able to prevent some of the most common problems:

• Who are you? Discuss your background, your family, activities, and anything else that you would want your new roommate to know about yourself.
• Likes and dislikes regarding smoking, drugs, drinking, pets, music, etc.
• Overnight guests: boyfriend, girlfriend, family and friends. This is a biggie. Be honest about your feelings, many roommates run into big trouble over this one.
• Study habits: where, when, 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
Now for all the details of organization. You need to decide what goes where, who provides what, who shares what, etc. It is time to start making some compromises while being respectful and as each question is resolved, he sure to write it down on your Roommate Agreement, located in the appendix. Be careful of pitfalls at this point. Sharing expenses on things like refrigerators, furniture, pets, etc., may sound like a money-saving option, but when the household dissolve it can be pretty ugly. Try to even out expenditures by having each person pay for one or more large items.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR UTILITIES, PHONE, ETC. — Be sure to record who paid the deposit on the utilities and phone and also agree on how the bills are to be shared monthly. One good way to ensure collective responsibility is to have each individual take responsibility for at least one utility.

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.

SHARING HOUSEHOLD DUTIES — Work out a schedule. Chores can be divided equally, or assigned on a daily or weekly basis. Be careful of pitfalls at this point.

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