

House policies (draft)

There are three levels of belonging to the house:

1. Guests and very short term people (say three months or less) 2. Members 3. Core members

Members

The members will decide all but the most serious issues, which are handled by the core group. However, the members consider all issues and make recommendations to the core group.

Core members

The core members deal with admitting new members, asking members to leave, large financial issues, etc. Residents that support the vision of the house and who want to get a little more involved, are encourage to apply to become core members, after living at the house for 6 months (after Sept. 1, 2007).

[Note: the above structure is loosely based on an existing community that was written up in Communities Magazine. Winter 1994 issue, page 45]

House meetings

Currently all members meet monthly. For decisions to be reached, a quorum of 4 is required. Consensus is strived for but, if consensus can not be reached after a reasonable attempt, then we resort to consensus-minus-one. If a decision still can't be reached a majority vote will be taken. Consensus means reaching decisions that everyone can live with, not necessarily decisions that you personally want. The Core members will likely meet more frequently and decisions will likely be based on consensus.

Rent subsidy / donation fund

A portion of the rents will go into a fund to be used for subsidies and donations to charity. Members may apply for a subsidy. The idea is to provide financial support so people don't need to work full time and can have more time to devote to service. It would be based on need and a commitment to doing extra service. The maximum that one can apply for is \$400.

House fund

A portion of the rents will go into a house fund. Members decide how to spend the money. Currently the fund is used for floor cleaning, kitchen equipment, plants, decorating, etc. Money from this fund must be spend on house-related things, and can not be used for general rent reductions. Purchase over a certain amount must be approved by everyone in advance. Currently this fund also covers any amounts owing by residents who fall behind in rent.

Note: the house operates on a non-profit basis. Rental amounts pay for the fixed costs (insurance, mortgage, taxes, repairs, renovation materials, internet, and basic phone line). All of the rest of the money is used for the house fund and subsidy/donation fund. Any temporary vacancies would need to be covered by one of these funds.

Food

Guidelines – when buying food please consider the environmental, ethical, and social implications. If possible choose foods that are low on the food chain, local, organic, gathered, or rescued from being thrown out (such as slightly damaged produce sold at half price).

Food Sharing System – For details see the sheet posted on the side of the fridge.

Eggs/dairy – if you eat eggs, please only buy ones that are as free-range and organic as possible. The same goes for cow's milk and other dairy products.

Bulk foods – Place in a clear glass jar and label with the name and date. Don't buy too much - the oils in whole grains and other foods oxidate over time and gradually turn rancid.

Leftovers – If you eat food from a pot and there is less than one serving remaining, then you are responsible for putting the remainder into a small bowl or container, and cleaning the pot.

Kitchen

Compost – Currently we have a two tier composting system. The big white bucket is for city compost. Put anything biodegradable in there, including cardboard food containers, cooked leftovers, dairy products, eggs, hard shells, etc. In the small bucket, used for garden compost, put clean veggie and fruit scraps, etc.

Cutting boards – the large rectangular cutting board with the metal hock is not for cutting garlic and onions.

Dishes – Please wash or rinse your dishes right after using them, or place them on your self.

Wipe up after yourself – Leave the sink and counters clear for others to use. Clean up your crumbs.

Cleaning cloths – Don't leave the sponge or cloth soaking wet. For floor spills, use a rag from under the sink.

Stove top – Avoid leaving pots of leftovers sitting on the stove. It is too warm due to the pilot lights.

Toaster oven – For oily foods use the tray.

Water filter – only run purely cold water thru the filter. Hot water that comes from a tank is not clean.

Bathrooms

Toilets – Leave the seat down. In the upstairs, the toilet lever can get stuck if you attempt to do a half flush. You have to physically move it to the off position if this happens. If you hear running water, check the toilet.

Showers – make sure the shower curtain is tight to the wall. Please wipe up any spills. Also remove hairs from drain. If it is not too cold outside, open the window during and/or after your shower.

Sinks – wipe out the sink after using. There is a cloth under the sink for this purpose.

First person awake

Open the living room curtain (if closed) to let light in for the plants. Turn off lights in bathroom (night light), basement stairs, and any other lights left on – such as the in kitchen and porch.

Last person to bed

Turn off all lights except the bathroom night light and basement stairs light. Lock doors. Turn off porch light (if on).

Shoes in house

Remove your outdoor footwear when coming in, especially on wet days. Wearing shoes and boots can be noisy on the stairs. For warmth consider getting slippers.

Individual jobs

Each resident agrees to take on two or three small jobs such as sweeping the kitchen floor, compost, garbage, recycling, organizing the fridge, washing rugs, etc. See sheet on fridge for the full list.

Rotational floor cleaning

The house fund pays \$20 to residents for cleaning all the floors. This includes a thorough sweeping and moping of all floors in all living spaces, hallways, stairs and bathrooms. In the basement no moping is necessary, but sweep a path to the laundry. Shake carpets outside. Sweep front porch and steps.

This job is done on a rotational basis every three to four weeks. If it is your turn and you leave it for longer than four weeks, it can then be done by whoever feels like doing it, and the \$20 will go to that person instead. See list on fridge.

Quarterly cleaning party

Every three months a date is agreed upon by everyone for a thorough house cleaning of 3 hours. Everyone should participate if possible. If you have to miss it, \$30 is paid to the others who cleaned, or three hours of cleaning is made up at a later date. During the three hours, there are no guest, personal breaks, or lengthy phone calls permitted. But don't worry it can be fun and satisfying to get the house really clean. Music is played and we may take a break as a group.

Laundry

- Please **empty your pockets of loose change, nails** etc. They can slip thru the drum and break the pump.
- Everyone has their own laundry powder or liquid (preferably environmentally-friendly). There is also a separate laundry soap for washing house clothes, rags and rugs.
- Please don't use any chemically scented products.
- If using commercial detergent, don't use very much – front loading machines use much less water so you need less detergent. It is recommended to use a product marked "low suds".
- Don't wash single items, because the spin cycle will become unbalanced and won't work properly.

Drying clothes

When using the outdoor clothing line you may need to wipe off the wire with a rag if it hasn't been used in a while. Always use the wheeled device (see drawing) midway thru putting up your laundry as it reduces sagging and stress on the line. Please remove clothes promptly once dry. Also please bring the clothes pegs back inside.

Fire

Kitchen grease fire – put out with baking soda above stove. Or with fire extinguisher if more serious.

House fire – Fire extinguishers are in the kitchen, at the foot of the basement stairs, at the second floor landing, and at the front door.

Burning candles – If you are into burning candles, you must ask to have a smoke detector installed in your room.

Fireplace – always make sure firebox door is closed when leaving the room.

Fireplace

Starting a fire – make sure you (or someone else) has time to see the fire to the end. It generally needs frequent stoking. Clean glass with dry or wet newspaper. Enjoy.

Firebox door – make sure it is closed and latched before leaving the room. It is designed to burn more efficiently when the door is closed, anyway. When the door is open, watch out for flaming embers popping out (especially when burning softwood).

Avoid letting the fire smolder – this will coat the glass and chimney liner with creosote, which increases the chance of a chimney fire. The fire burns bright and most efficiently when regularly stoked and tended to.

Putting out fire – let it burn down naturally to avoid smoldering. When completely out and cool, close the flue vents to prevent the warm house air from being sucked out the chimney.

Emergencies – there is a kettle of water by the fireplace to use for putting out stray fires. Or grab the fire extinguisher by the front door or in the kitchen.

Heating / Cooling

The thermostat is currently set to 19°C during the winter, as decided by past residents. If more or less heat is desired from time to time, use the plus and minus buttons to temporarily change the heat in the house. Push the +1, +2, or +3 to ensure that the new setting lasts for one hour, two hours or three hours. If your room is generally too cold, adjust the valve for your radiator, located next to the boiler. If you go away for several days turn your rad valve down. If you live on the third floor and use an air conditioner, please keep it turned off while you are away during the day.

Utilities

Water, electricity and gas are all metered. Please conserve these resources. The costs have been estimated for warm months and cool months. Everyone pays the monthly estimate which includes about \$5 extra over the historical average. As the actual bills come in, money will be reimbursed if the bills are under the estimated amount.

Guest policy

Residents are allowed to invite personal guests to stay free for up to two weeks in their room. After that they are asked to pay \$35 a week per guest to the house fund. One month maximum, subject to most people being OK with it. Food-wise it is best to add extra days to the food list so that you don't need to buy separate ingredients, and the guests can feel more integrated into the community.

There are plans to create a separate guest room that could be used to invite people from out of town who want to check out and support what we are doing. This could also generate some revenue for the coop.

Romance

When inviting a boyfriend or girlfriend over please be sensitive about using common spaces for romantic dates. Others in the house may feel awkward about imposing on your privacy. If you get into a relationship with another in the house, it may be best to move out and seek a more private living situation.

Storage

If storing anything in the basement, please make sure it is neatly and tightly packed and kept together. Currently there is no storage fee. You may be asked to move stuff to make way for renovations. There is also space in the shed for things.

Stray cats

Please don't feed stray cats. This will increase their presence and may help to make them more fertile.

Selling the house

If and when the house is sold, any profits will be donated to charity and/or to non-profit intentional community project(s). This would amount to the selling price less any capital gains taxes owing and less the original investment of \$70,000 adjusted for inflation.