



UMBC RESIDENTIAL LIFE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES GUIDE

LAST UPDATED AUGUST 2026

Living successfully together in our campus community builds personal integrity, civility, and citizenship. As part of our community, we are dedicated to six core commitments:

We inspire a culture of **collaboration**

We center student **success** and **growth**

We foster an **inclusive** and **supportive**

We engage with **civility** and **respect**

We bridge **learning** and **experience**

We prioritize **care** and **well-being**

To uphold these commitments, all residential students agree to observe our Community Living Principles and Residential Life Rules.

Policies and Expectations

In addition to this guide, residential students are accountable for the standards outlined in the abridged version of this guide, their housing license, the Residential Life website, verbal or written instructions from staff members, University policies, the Code of Student Conduct, Emergency Health and Safety Rules, and applicable local, state, and federal laws. Together, these form the complete framework of your Rights and Responsibilities as a resident.

Updates and Changes

Guidance and rules within this document may be updated as public health, safety guidelines, or university standards evolve (including directives from the University, CDC, USM, or local/state/federal officials). Residential students will be notified promptly of any updates via email from the University or Residential Life.

Policy Overview

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1) Alcohol

- a) The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by anyone under the age of 21 is prohibited.
- b) The manufacturing and/or selling of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- c) Providing alcohol to individuals under the age of 21 is prohibited.
- d) Possession of common source alcohol containers (e.g., kegs, party balls) is prohibited.
- e) Possession of alcoholic paraphernalia that is used for the overconsumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited.
- f) Residents of legal drinking age are required to label alcohol that belongs to them if they share a space with residents who are under 21.
- g) Possession of alcohol related paraphernalia (empty containers, beer bong, etc.) in any residential facility is prohibited.

2) Animals & Pets

- a) Pets and kept animals are prohibited in all residential communities, with the exception of fish.
- b) All aggressive and venomous fish are prohibited, and each resident is limited to one fish tank under 10 gallons that must be well-maintained.
- c) Feeding, touching, harassing, injuring, or killing any wildlife on campus is prohibited.
- d) Service animals and approved emotional support animals (ESAs) are permitted only with prior documentation and approval through Student Disability Services (SDS) and Residential Life annually.
- e) Residential staff are authorized to enter spaces to verify the presence or removal of an unauthorized animal.
- f) Failure to comply with pet guidelines can result in the administrative cancellation of your housing contract.

3) Beds & Furniture

- a) All University furniture must remain upright and in the room or space in which it was installed; it may not be disassembled, modified, or relocated.

- b) Mattresses must remain on bed frames and may not be placed directly on the floor.
- c) Residents may not raise, loft, or alter beds using concrete blocks, bed risers, or unapproved platforms.
- d) Residential Life reserves the right to charge labor fees to reassemble any university furniture or beds that have been altered.

4) Card & Swipe Access

- a) Unauthorized use, possession, duplication, borrowing, or lending of UMBC identification cards or resident access cards for any purpose is strictly prohibited.
- b) Residents must use their own UMBC identification card to swipe through locked doors and are prohibited from holding or propping open locked doors to allow unauthorized entry to others.
- c) Students are permitted a maximum of five (5) temporary or lockout card checkouts per academic year without penalty. Every lockout after the initial 5 is subject to Residential Life Conduct review.
- d) Failure to return a temporary access card as required may result in replacement fees placed on the student's account.

5) Community Disruption

- a) Noise that interferes with the study or sleep of others inside or outside of residential facilities is prohibited.
- b) Courtesy hours are in effect 24 hours a day, and residents must immediately comply with any staff or peer requests to reduce noise levels.
- c) Failing to comply with established quiet hours (10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Sun–Thu; 1:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. Fri–Sat) is prohibited.
- d) Continual 24-hour quiet hours are strictly enforced during final exam periods.
- e) Noxious odors—defined as any fragrance, aroma, or smell (e.g., cannabis, large amounts of dirty laundry, perfumes, etc.) that emanates too strongly and disrupts those around—are prohibited.
- f) The removal, damage, or tampering of residential resources, including floor decorations, bulletin boards, and fliers, is prohibited.

6) Community Security & Access

- a) Entering and exiting residential facilities must occur only through marked main entrances; using emergency fire exits, windows, or roofs is strictly prohibited.
- b) Propping, forcing open, or disabling the locking mechanisms of any interior or exterior door is strictly prohibited.
- c) Permitting unknown persons or unsigned guests into residential facilities, or assisting others in entering without following proper check-in protocol, is prohibited.
- d) Accessing or occupying rooftops, balconies for unauthorized gatherings, or closed/vacant rooms is strictly prohibited.

7) Computer Usage

- a) All personal wireless connections, including routers, tethering setups, and splitters, are prohibited within residential communities.
- b) All personal computers and gaming systems must comply with the university's electrical safety guidelines. [Electrical Safety Guidelines](#)
- c) All personal technology must be registered through the appropriate university IT services in order to access the campus network.

8) Controlled Substances

- a) The use, presence, possession, manufacture, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs, narcotics, unprescribed controlled substances, or synthetic compounds is strictly prohibited.
- b) In compliance with federal law (Drug Free Schools and Communities Act), the possession, use, or distribution of all forms of cannabis—including medical cannabis—is strictly prohibited on university property.
- c) The possession, use, sale, or distribution of drug paraphernalia (including bongs, grinders, pipes, syringes, inhalant/vape pens, empty cannabis containers, etc.) is prohibited.
- d) No person may knowingly remain in the presence of illegal drugs, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia within residential facilities.

9) Electrical & Appliances

- a) Unapproved electrical devices, octopus plugs, multi-plug outlets without surge protection, torchiere lamps, and halogen bulbs are prohibited.
- b) Appliances with exposed heating elements, exceeding 1,000 watts, or those presenting a fire risk (such as hot plates, space heaters, or immersion heaters) are prohibited in all residence halls.
- c) In residence halls, a single bedroom may contain no more than one refrigerator, which must not exceed 4.3 cubic feet. Personal microwaves are prohibited unless part of an approved micro-fridge unit. Unless approved, apartments are not permitted to have a microfridge.
- d) In apartment kitchens only, countertop cooking appliances (rice cookers, air fryers, toasters, toasters ovens, griddles) are permitted. Cooking must be monitored constantly; leaving food unattended is prohibited.
- e) 3-D printers, and induction devices are prohibited. LED strip lights with adhesive backs are prohibited; string lights are permitted on a single UL-approved strand per room and must not touch flammable items.

10) Failure to Comply

- a) Non-compliance with or refusal to follow written or verbal instructions from Residential Life staff, University officials, or law enforcement officers carrying out their duties is prohibited.
- b) Refusal or failure to leave a university facility or specific grounds when requested by an authorized university official is prohibited.

11) Failure to Report

- a) Failure to report a known violation of the Rights & Responsibilities Guide or University policies to a university official is strictly prohibited.
- b) Students present within or around residential spaces when a violation occurs may be held responsible alongside the primary actors if they fail to report it.

12) Fire Safety

- a) Activating a fire alarm without due cause, negligence while cooking, starting an unauthorized fire, or falsely reporting an emergency is strictly prohibited and subject to institutional fines and criminal prosecution.

- b) Tampering with, destroying, disabling, or misusing emergency and life safety equipment (smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, sprinkler heads, or fire exits) is strictly prohibited.
- c) Failure to immediately evacuate a residential building when a fire alarm is triggered, or re-entering without official authorization, is prohibited.
- d) Storing or using open flame devices (candles, incense), live cut trees, gasoline, lighter fluid, fireworks, or explosive chemicals is prohibited.
- e) Hanging, draping, or rigging any items from the ceiling, light fixtures, or fire sprinklers is prohibited. Wall decorations must not cover more than 50% of any single wall or door.

13) Gambling

- a) Engaging in gambling activities of any form is prohibited within all residential communities and facilities.

14) Housekeeping & Cleanliness

- a) Failure to maintain a clean, healthy, and sanitary residential space is prohibited.
- b) Residents must remove all trash and recyclables regularly and deposit items fully inside designated outdoor dumpsters or trash chutes. Storing personal trash on balconies, in hallways, or in common areas is prohibited.
- c) All open food items must be stored properly in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to prevent pest problems.
- d) Residents cannot refuse mandatory custodial, facility maintenance, or exterminator services.

15) Identification

- a) Failure or refusal to present valid University or government-issued identification upon request by an authorized building staff member or University official is prohibited.
- b) Knowingly supplying or providing false or misleading identification information is prohibited and may result in disciplinary/conduct action.

16) Public Areas

- a) Residence hall common rooms, corridors, stairwells, and lobbies must remain entirely free from obstructions, personal property, trash, or items that interfere with communal walkways, balconies, and stairwells.
- b) Storing furniture, large items, or accumulating trash on apartment balconies or breezeways is prohibited.
- c) Removal of public use furniture (lounge couches, chairs, tables, etc) from public areas is prohibited.

17) Recording Others

- a) Recording, filming, or distributing another person's image or voice without their explicit permission, where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists, is strictly prohibited.
- b) The installation or use of personal smart doorbells, video cameras, or recording devices (such as Ring cameras) on exterior room, suite, or apartment front doors facing public or community spaces is strictly prohibited.

18) Recreational Equipment & Activities

- a) Participation in active athletic or physical recreational activities (including soccer, football, basketball, skateboarding, rollerblading, riding scooters, etc.) is prohibited indoors or immediately adjacent to residential facilities.
- b) The possession or use of dartboards and darts inside residential facilities is prohibited.
- c) The use of water guns and water balloons is strictly prohibited indoors or immediately adjacent to any residential building.
- d) Outdoor recreational equipment, such as slacklines, must only be used on trees located 50 feet or more away from residential structures and must not cause damage.

19) Room Changes

- a) Changing housing assignments, switching rooms, or moving into another residential unit without the explicit, pre-approved authorization of the Residential Life Professional staff is strictly prohibited.

- b) Residents found in violation of unauthorized room changes are subject to student conduct actions, administrative reassignment, contract cancellation, or related fees.

20) Room Use Prohibitions

- a) Making permanent or semi-permanent alterations to rooms, suites, or apartments—including painting walls, applying wallpaper, or mounting items directly to housing furniture—is prohibited.
- b) Subletting, subleasing, or loaning out the use of an assigned room or apartment to any other individual is strictly prohibited.
- c) Actively seeking, contracting, or operating a commercial business enterprise within residential facilities is prohibited.
- d) Utilizing or occupying a vacant space or empty bed within an assigned suite or apartment is prohibited.
- e) Installing additional locks, chains, door bolts, or devices that preclude emergency entry by University personnel is prohibited. Objects must not obstruct the airflow of heating and air conditioning ventilation systems.

21) Roommate & Living Agreements

- a) Written roommate and suitemate living agreements, established in conjunction with Residential Life staff, are mandatory and enforceable.
- b) Violating any mutually agreed-upon terms outlined within the established roommate agreement is prohibited.
- c) For an agreement to be modified or updated after completion, all changes must be mutually acceptable and officially placed on file with the Community Director.
- d) A room change request may be denied without a Roommate Living Agreement on file.

22) Sexual Misconduct

- a) All forms of sex- and gender-based discrimination, harassment, exploitation, intimidation, coercion, voyeurism, stalking, sexual assault, relationship violence, domestic violence, and retaliation are strictly prohibited.
- b) Engaging in public sexual activity or masturbation in the presence of others within residential spaces is prohibited.

23) Smoking

- a) Smoking is prohibited across campus except within designated outdoor zones.
- b) The use of electronic smoking devices, including e-cigarettes, vaporizers, inhalant pens, juuls, or related vape devices, is prohibited inside or immediately around residence halls and entryways.
- c) Hookahs and electronic smoking tools may be stored in facilities, but used coals must be entirely cold to the touch upon disposal and are prohibited inside facilities while hot.

24) Solicitation & Posting

- a) Solicitation, unapproved commercial sales, or efforts to ask for monetary donations or time contributions are prohibited within all residential facilities.
- b) Distributing or slipping unapproved flyers, advertisements, or promotional items on or under doors, or placing anything on building exteriors, windows, glass, trees, or lamp posts is prohibited.
- c) Only officially recognized university entities and student organizations may display stamped promotional materials in designated bulletin board locations. Chalking sidewalks or any residential surface of residential communities is prohibited.

25) Transportation

- a) Operating, riding, or using non-motorized personal transportation (such as bicycles, skateboards, longboards, scooters, or rollerblades) inside residential facilities is prohibited.
- b) Bicycles, scooters, and related wheeled vehicles must be parked exclusively at provided outdoor bike racks and are prohibited from being stored or locked in public indoor areas (lobbies, hallways, stairwells, laundry rooms, or balconies).
- c) The use, storage, or charging of hoverboards, motorized e-scooters, boosted boards, and gasoline or electric-powered motor scooters is strictly prohibited inside all residential facilities.
- d) Maintaining or servicing motorized vehicles within residential areas is prohibited. Vehicles parked in unauthorized university zones are subject to towing at the owner's expense.

26) Visitation & Guests

- a) Hosting a guest requires advance permission from all roommates, and the visit must not impede a roommate's ability to sleep, study, or comfortably access the space.
- b) A residential host is limited to a maximum of four (4) guests present at any single time. Total occupancy within a bedroom should not exceed double the intended number of assigned residents (ex. 2 people in a single bedroom or 4 people in a double bedroom), and individual apartments or suites must never exceed eight (8) people.
- c) Residential Halls & Erickson Visitor Registration
 - i) All residential hosts are required to pre-register their guest(s) via the Housing Portal prior to their guest's arrival.
 - ii) Upon arrival, the host must meet their guest to check-in at the community desk. In the event that the community desk is closed, *the* host remains strictly responsible for ensuring the guest's registration is fully completed and should attempt to have their guest checked-in when the desk reopens.
 - iii) Hosts are expected to escort their guests to the community desk to check-out at the conclusion of their visit.
- d) Harbor & Apartment Visitor Registration
 - i) Hosts are not required to pre-register their guest(s) via the Housing Portal prior to their guest's arrival, unless the visiting guest is a minor (see below).
- e) Unescorted guests are prohibited; hosts bear full personal and financial responsibility for their guests' behavior and policy compliance.
- f) Registrations may not exceed a 24-hour period; extended stay guests must be re-registered and checked-in by their host once their original registration expires.
- g) Overnight guests are permitted to visit for a maximum period of no longer than three (3) consecutive nights.
- h) Residents and guests may have up to ten (10) overnight visits per semester. Cohabitation is strictly prohibited.
- i) Residents hosting overnight guests who are minors (under the age of 18) are required to submit an email request to their Community Director (CD) to obtain advance written approval prior to the guest's arrival.

27) Weapons

- a) The possession, storage, manufacture, shipment, receipt, or use of weapons, firearms, or munitions is strictly prohibited within residential facilities, regardless of a personal license.
- b) Prohibited weapons include, but are not limited to: firearms, BB/pellet guns, air rifles, paint guns, nerf or water guns, deadly weapons, bombs, fireworks, decorative or martial arts swords, bludgeons, and tasers.
- c) Knives are strictly prohibited, with the exception of kitchen knives used exclusively for food preparation within designated kitchen areas, or an ordinary pocketknife carried in a closed position with a blade of three (3) inches or less. Chef's knives must be stored in a soft carrier or block when not in use.