

January 9, 2015

Dear American University Student:

Welcome back!! I hope you had an enjoyable winter break and that the time away from campus gave you a chance to re-energize for your new classes and the excitement that the spring semester brings. We all have visions of warm spring weather that will eventually arrive, but there are still a few months of cold winter weather to manage. Winter weather can present unique challenges to students living off-campus. Here are a few tips and recommendations to make your lives easier and safer!

Trying to warm up your house or apartment? Be Safe!

- Don't overload electrical outlets with space heaters or electric blankets.
- Unplug blankets and space heaters when not in the room.
- If you have a working fire place, talk to your landlord and be sure it has been properly maintained and is ready for use before lighting a fire.
- Keep a container of water close by the fire place at all times and never go to sleep or leave your residence without first completely extinguishing the fire.
- Don't place any flammable items near the fire place (blankets, pillows, newspapers, etc.)
- Talk with your roommates about a fire evacuation plan and make sure all windows and doors can be opened and used as an exit in an emergency.

Hoping for a snow day or two...or three? Be prepared!

- Buy a snow shovel and other snow removal equipment.
- Buy a few bags of rock salt to help melt ice and keep your front walk and porch steps safe.
- Make arrangements for snow removal if you are required to do so as a tenant.
- Establish a plan with roommates for shoveling your front walk and the sidewalk in front of your house. (Go the "extra mile" and shovel the walk and sidewalk for your closest neighbors too!)
- Let your landlord know if your gutters and downspouts need to be cleared or make arrangements for it to be done if you are responsible for this.
- Know and abide by the parking rules in your neighborhood as they relate to snow removal in the streets.

Planning to host friends at your residence this semester? Be mindful and considerate of your neighbors!

- If you host a gathering, take steps to monitor and control your guests' behavior. Keep noise levels to a minimum, and end your party at a reasonable hour.
- Communicate with neighbors about your plans and provide contact information so they can reach you if needed.
- Identify one or two roommates as "house managers" any time you have friends over. Think of them as your "Designated Drivers." They can manage guests, monitor noise, clean up the yard and surrounding area, and respond to phone calls or neighbor concerns if the need arises.

Good Luck during the spring semester!!

Sincerely,

Michelle Espinosa, Associate Dean of Students