

Frequently Asked Questions from Oxford House

Q. When an emergency meeting is held to vote on expulsion of a member for using or disruptive behavior, does the member in question have a right to attend the meeting and vote?

*A. Yes, in a democratically run Oxford House, **every member** has the right to vote, even if they suspected of breaking house rules. **Emergency meetings should not be held without the member in question being present** (unless, of course, this member cannot be found within a reasonable amount of time – the Residency Contract allows for an eviction for relapse in a person’s absence after 72 hours).*

Q. Does Oxford House, Inc.’s status of being a “tax exempt” non-profit organization mean that individual Oxford Houses don’t have to pay state sales tax on house purchases?

A. No, all states taxes have to be paid on house purchases. “Tax-exempt” in the case of Oxford House means that Oxford House, Inc. does not have to pay federal taxes on income they receive to start Oxford Houses and that contributions to Oxford Houses or Oxford House, Inc. are considered tax deductible by the IRS.

Q. When a member is expelled from the house and owes money on phone bill, fines, etc., can the house keep that member’s unused rent paid to the house in advance to cover unpaid bills?

A. No, by law unused rent must be returned to the expelled member.

Q. Can the house keep an expelled member’s belongings in return for unpaid rent or expenses?

A. No, houses cannot legally keep belongings in lieu of unpaid bills. The goods should be kept in a safe place and if not picked up within a reasonable amount of time, a certified letter should be sent to the individual or his/her family giving them a time (at least two weeks) when the goods will be disposed of or given away if not picked up. The certified letter will protect houses if an expelled member decides to sue for the belongings.

Q. What if a zoning inspector from the city shows up at our door? Do we let him/her in?

A. Politely ask the inspector to call the telephone number of your local Outreach Services Representative or the Oxford House, Inc. office, (301) 587-2916, before they do an inspection of the house.

Q. What if our house receives a document stating that our house is being sold or foreclosed?

A. Call Your local Outreach Services Representative or Oxford House, Inc. on the toll-free number (1-800-689-6411) and someone will advise you on how to proceed.

Q. If our house is moving to another location or shutting down, can we use the security deposit as the last month's rent?

A. No, the landlord's security deposit is meant to cover damages to the house only – it is never to be considered as rental payment unless the landlord agrees to this arrangement – in writing – after the walk-through inspection is completed.

Q. Can residents have locks on their bedroom doors?

A. No, boarding houses have locks on doors because people rent rooms and do not participate in the managing of the house directly. Oxford Houses are run by the residents and behave like families. The residents share the entire house. By locks, we mean dead bolts, hasps, padlocks or other heavy-duty hardware of this type. This does not mean the hardware that is part of the doorknob for privacy, such as for bathrooms.

Q. How much time must elapse before a relapser can return to a house?

A. The Oxford House Manual suggests that members should not be readmitted until there is a clear demonstration that he/she has returned to solid sobriety. Most houses in Virginia have guidelines that clearly state that a person evicted for relapse must attain at least one month of no drinking or drugging in order to reapply to the house or another Oxford House.

Q. Can a resident be put on a contract?

A. This is a house group conscience, but should only be used as a last resort to help a person to change negative behaviors. The house must vote, including the person in question, and the terms should be documented in the minutes and with the person in question.
TOUGH LOVE WORKS.

Q. Does the President of an Oxford House have a vote?

A. Yes, the President pays an equal share of rent and has an equal vote like all other residents.