



Mercy Housing

*Welcome To Your  
New Home!*

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This workbook is designed to be used as part of a housing orientation that includes a case manager and a refugee family. It is NOT intended to be a stand alone document.

This has been written as a collaborative effort between the African Community Center in Denver, Colorado and Mercy Housing, Inc. Illustrations and conceptual design have been provided by Carol Kimball. The African Community Center is a program office of the Ethiopian Community Development Center (ECDC) based in Washington, D.C.

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Throughout this workbook, you will find icons on certain pages. This is what each icon means:



This means your caseworker, the person who is going through this book with you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

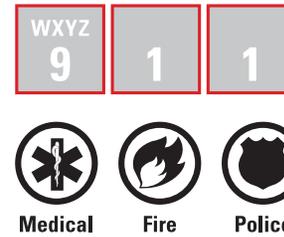
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



This means your landlord or apartment manager.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



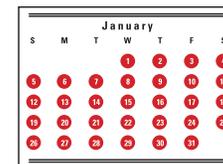
Dialing 9 1 1 on your telephone will bring you help fast. Only call if you really need help in personal emergencies.



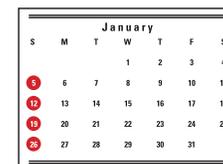
This means ***NO!*** Do not do what the picture shows.



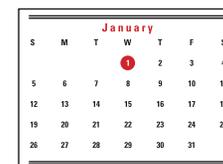
This means you are wasting your money. Try not to do these things.



Do this every day.



Do this once a week.

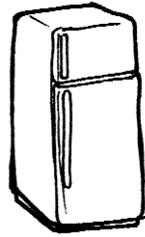


Do this once a month.

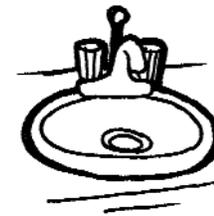
# Common Items & Their Names



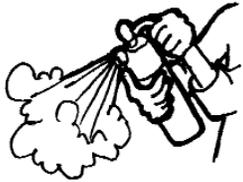
Eviction Notice



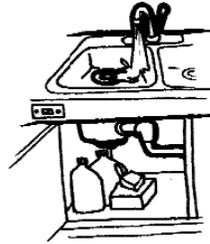
Refrigerator  
Fridge



Sink  
Faucet



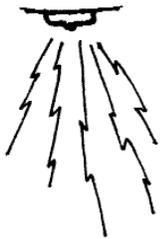
Fire  
Extinguisher



Garbage  
Disposal



Bathtub  
Tub



Smoke Alarm



Stove  
Range



Toilet



Dumpster  
Trash  
Garbage



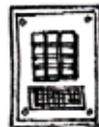
Dishwasher



Thermostat



Clothes Washer  
Washing Machine



Intercom



Window A/C  
Air Conditioner

# Paying Bills

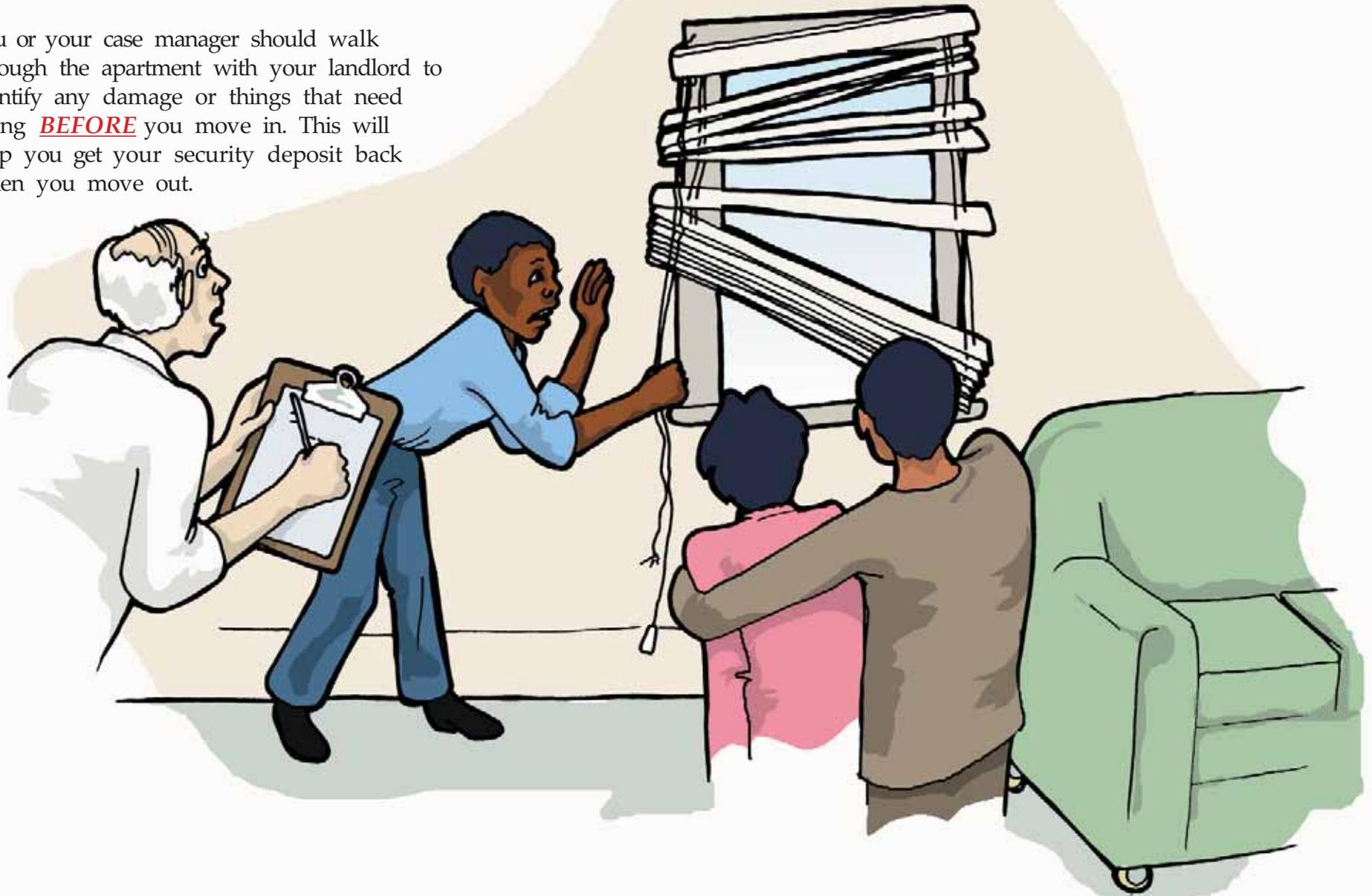
January						
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You must pay your rent, utility and other bills on time **EACH MONTH** to establish and maintain good credit. Good credit will help you borrow money to buy a house, a car or pay for a college education. Use a checklist to help you pay your bills on time.

**NEVER MAIL CASH!**



You or your case manager should walk through the apartment with your landlord to identify any damage or things that need fixing ***BEFORE*** you move in. This will help you get your security deposit back when you move out.



January						
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January						
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Clean your carpet with a vacuum cleaner at least once a week. Clean up spills with soap and water immediately. Hardwood floors should be swept weekly.

Furniture, excluding appliances, may be your property to keep when you move out. It will last a long time if you keep it nice! Your landlord will expect you to take all of your furniture and belongings when you move out. If you have questions about furniture you may keep, read your lease or talk to your case manager.

Remove shoes on entering your apartment. This will help keep the carpets clean.





Don't pour liquid on the carpet. It will soak through the layers underneath and make a stain that is hard to remove.



Clean up spills **IMMEDIATELY**

You may be able to use an aerosol rug cleaner which you can buy at the grocery store.



**NEVER USE BLEACH  
ON CARPET!**



If you have trouble with a stain, ask your case manager or apartment manager for advice.



For more serious stains, you can rent a rug cleaning machine from most grocery stores.



Teach children ***NOT*** to play in the drapes or window shades, and ***NOT*** to mark on the walls.

Teach children to be careful of the things in your apartment.

Do ***NOT*** let them climb or jump on the furniture.



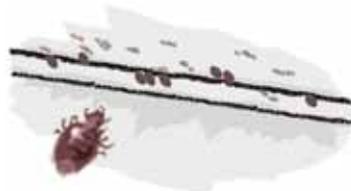
BEDBUGS



Bedbug bites are sore and red.



NEVER BRING FURNITURE  
FROM THE STREET INTO  
YOUR HOME!



Bedbugs live in folds of fabric, edges of walls, in carpets and in bedding.

If you have bedbugs, wash all bedding in hot water with soap and dry in a hot dryer. Vacuum mattresses, furniture, carpets, and edges of walls and take the vacuum bag outside to the trash right away.



Move beds and couches away from the walls. Don't let covers touch the floor. Put cans with liquid soap in them under the legs of bed frames.

## FOOD PREPARATION



If you damage the counter tops, you will have to pay for them. When using a knife, use a cutting board.



**NEVER PUT A HOT PAN DIRECTLY ON A COUNTER TOP OR THE FLOOR!**

Use a hot pad or dry cloth under the hot pan.



**NEVER CUT DIRECTLY ON THE COUNTER TOP!**



**NEVER CUT ON THE FLOOR!**

## MEAL CLEANUP

January						
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29	30	31				



Never leave food out on the counter without covering it. This will attract insects, rats and mice.

**YOU MAY HAVE TO PAY FOR PROFESSIONAL PEST CONTROL IF THIS HAPPENS!**



It is better to cover food and keep it in the refrigerator. Clean the inside of the refrigerator regularly with soap and water.

**WHEN YOU MOVE OUT, YOU WILL HAVE TO PAY IF YOUR REFRIGERATOR IS NOT CLEAN!**



## COOKING & BAKING

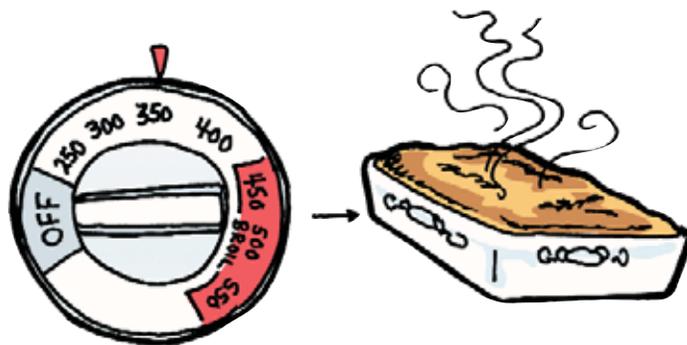
When cooking food on top of the stove, always begin with medium heat. If you begin with high heat, you will burn the food and scorch the pan. You may even burn the bottom out of the pan!



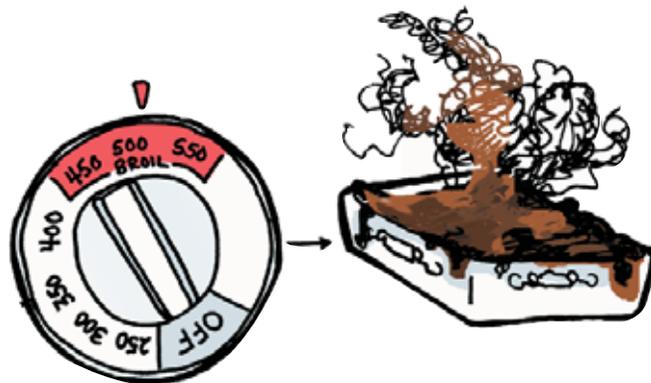
Use a dry cloth or hotpad to handle pans and dishes that have been on the stove or in the oven

**HOT BURNERS AND OVEN RACKS CAN BURN YOU!**

## COOKING & BAKING



To use the oven for most cooking or baking, set the dial at 350, or follow the recipe instructions. Turning the dial all the way up will burn your food. Clean up any spills as soon as the oven or stove top is cool.



**DO NOT COOK FOOD DIRECTLY ON THE STOVE BURNERS!**

## DISHWASHER

A dishwasher kills germs on dishes and silverware. It does not scrub dishes or take the place of a garbage disposal.

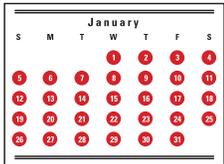
Always scrape any food scraps into the garbage and rinse the dishes before putting them in the dishwasher.

You must use a special soap designed for dishwashers. It is concentrated so do not overfill the cups. Never put liquid soap or laundry detergent in the dishwasher.

Sweep floors daily and mop with soap and water weekly.



## STOVE



Wipe up grease and food spills **IMMEDIATELY**, and clean your stove daily.



Don't put grease down the sink. Pour it in an empty can and put it in the trash.



Spilled or burned food and grease are dangerous. They smell bad and attract bugs, rats and mice.  
**SPILLED GREASE CAN CAUSE FALLS!**  
**SPILLED GREASE CAN CAUSE FIRES!**

## SINK/GARBAGE DISPOSAL

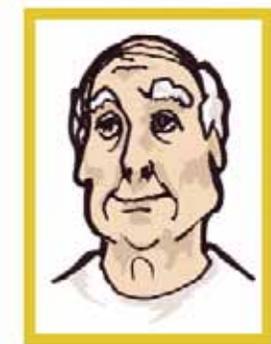


Your home may have a garbage disposal that grinds food scraps.

Always run cold water when using the disposal.



Don't put bones, egg shells, fruit pits, onion peels, celery or metal down the sink or disposal.



If your garbage disposal jams, water may back up in the sink. Turn it off and call your apartment manager.

**NEVER PUT YOUR HAND DOWN THE DISPOSAL!**

## GARBAGE / DUMPSTER

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Place garbage in the provided trash bins in your apartment. Line them with plastic garbage bags.

Take out your garbage every day to a secure garbage can or dumpster. The smell of garbage will attract insects, rats and mice, and can cause complaints from your neighbors to the apartment manager.

**NEVER** leave garbage in the hallway of the apartment.



If your community has a recycling program, follow their instructions for sorting items.



## GENERAL CLEANING

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The bathroom must be cleaned weekly. This includes the floor, and the inside and outside of the toilet, sink, bathtub or shower.

Do not allow hair or any other items to go down the drains.



## TOILET PROBLEMS

January						
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Clean inside and outside the bottom of the toilet weekly. Wipe urine off of the floor right away.

**IF YOUR TOILET OVERFLOWS, CALL YOUR APARTMENT MANAGER RIGHT AWAY!**



Use a brush to clean the toilet.

**DO NOT USE THE TOILET BRUSH FOR ANYTHING ELSE!**

Never flush women's sanitary products, garbage, food, paper towels, large amounts of toilet paper or other items down the toilet.

**TEACH YOUR CHILDREN NOT TO FLUSH THEIR TOYS OR OTHER ITEMS DOWN THE TOILET.**



## WATER LEAKS & SPILLS

Always keep the shower curtain inside the bathtub, and always clean up water on the floor right away.

A safety mat inside the tub can prevent falls.

**IF YOU HAVE A CLOG OR A LEAK, CALL YOUR APARTMENT MANAGER RIGHT AWAY!**

You will have to pay for water damage that you don't report.



1. Sort clothing into light and dark colors.
2. Use the warm wash/cold rinse setting unless the tags inside the clothing have different instructions.
3. Start the machine and add laundry detergent, then clothes.
4. Do not pack clothes into the washing machine or dryer.
5. Always clean out the lint filter in the dryer.
6. Do not leave your clothing unattended.



Landlords must provide a smoke alarm in your apartment.

The smoke alarm must work. It could save your life.

**IF YOUR SMOKE ALARMS HAVE BATTERIES, YOU MUST SEE THAT THEY WORK, AND REPLACE THEM ONCE A YEAR. CHOOSE A DAY THAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU.**



Test the smoke alarm by pushing the button on its front.

If the alarm goes off while cooking, turn it off by pushing that button.



**NEVER REMOVE OR THROW AWAY A SMOKE ALARM!**

If your smoke alarm doesn't work, call your apartment manager. Know where the fire extinguishers are in your apartment or building, and learn how to use them.



**NEVER THROW WATER ON A GREASE FIRE!**



- 1) If the fire is small, try to smother it by covering it with another pan or lid.
- 2) If the fire is too big, use the fire extinguisher as you have been shown. After any use, your apartment manager must recharge your fire extinguisher so it will work the next time you need it.
- 3) If you don't think you can put the fire out,

**GET PEOPLE OUT OF THE BUILDING AND CALL 9 1 1!**

**LIVES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THINGS!**



WXYZ  
9 1 1



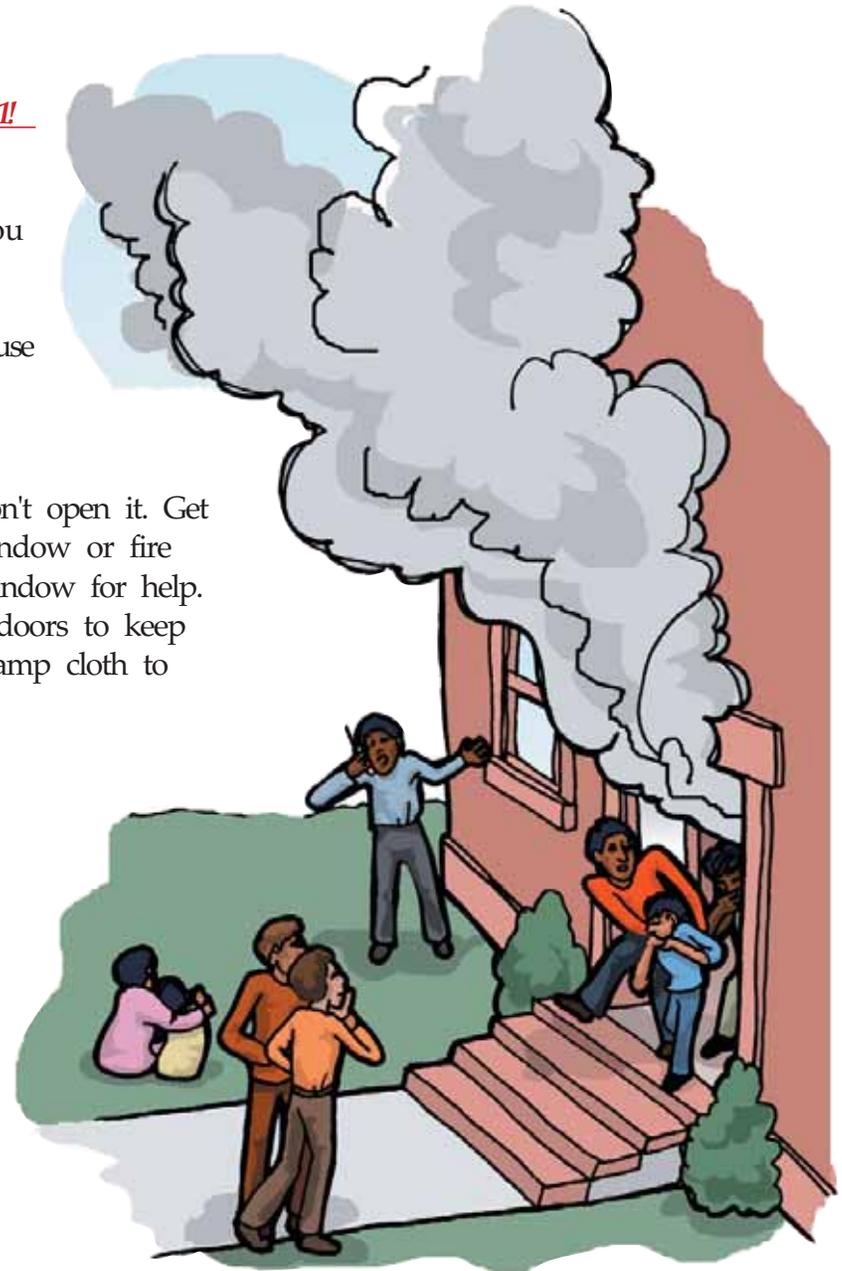
**IF THE FIRE IS TOO BIG TO PUT OUT, CALL 9 1 1!**

If you can, get outside. Stay low to keep under the smoke and try not to breathe it. Alert neighbors if you can.

**NEVER** get in an elevator to get away from a fire use the stairs.



If your door is hot, don't open it. Get out a ground floor window or fire escape or wait at a window for help. Put wet towels along doors to keep smoke out, and use damp cloth to breathe through.

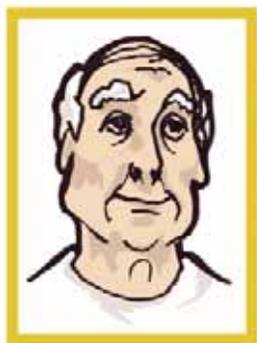




Hallways and common areas not kept clear are dangerous and may trap you in an emergency.



Keeping the common areas of your apartment building clean makes it safe and will help you get along well with your neighbors.



Door and window screens are important to keep children and pets inside your home, and to keep bugs and animals out.

If screens are missing or torn, call your apartment manager!



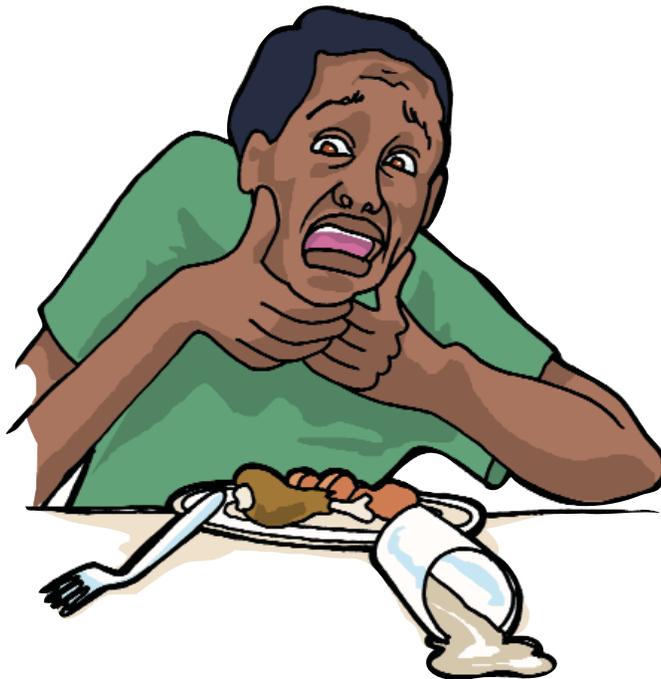


CALL 9 1 1 IF SOMEONE IS BADLY HURT!

Rescue people will come right away to help you.

When they have found out the problem, they can help you decide if you need an ambulance to get to a hospital.

There are some things you may have to pay for.



American cigarettes will keep burning even if you're not smoking them.

Always be sure cigarettes are no longer burning before throwing them out.



Do not smoke in bed, or any place you can fall asleep.



You will be charged for burns in your apartment.



Do not smoke around children or pregnant women.



Adults and children should never unlock your door or use the intercom to let anyone in that you do not know.



WXYZ  
9 1 1



**IF YOU SEE PEOPLE STEALING, CALL 9 1 1!**

Always keep your door locked, even when you are home. For safety, shut and lock your windows before you leave.

Don't let strangers come through the lobby door with you.



If you forget your keys or are locked out of your apartment, it can cost \$50.00 or more to have your landlord open the door. If you lose your keys, it can cost even more to replace the locks.



Ask strangers to show you their identification before you let them in, including people in uniform.



Read your mail and put important papers in a safe place.

Call your case manager for help if there is anything you do not understand.



Check your mailbox daily. Do not throw "junk mail" on the lobby floor.



If a notice is posted on your door, you must respond **IMMEDIATELY!**

This is how eviction notices are delivered.



Landlords often require written notice before they will make repairs. Use a Repair Request, or ask your case manager for help.

The website [www.refugeehouse.org](http://www.refugeehouse.org) has a Repair Form you can use.



My toilet is clogged.



My garbage disposal doesn't work.



My faucet is leaking.



My stove doesn't work.



My screens need repair.

## Being A Good Neighbor

Most people go to sleep around 10 p.m. Please keep children quiet, keep conversation at a low level, and don't play loud music between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m.

You must follow your landlord's rules about noise. These rules can be found in your lease.



## Noise; Problem Solving; Pets



If you have disagreements with your neighbors, try to work them out together. If you cannot, ask for help from your case manager or apartment manager.

Some apartments allow pets. Be sure you know what animals are okay.



Renters usually pay for heat, electricity, and air conditioning. These utilities can be very expensive. Follow these tips to keep your utility bills low.

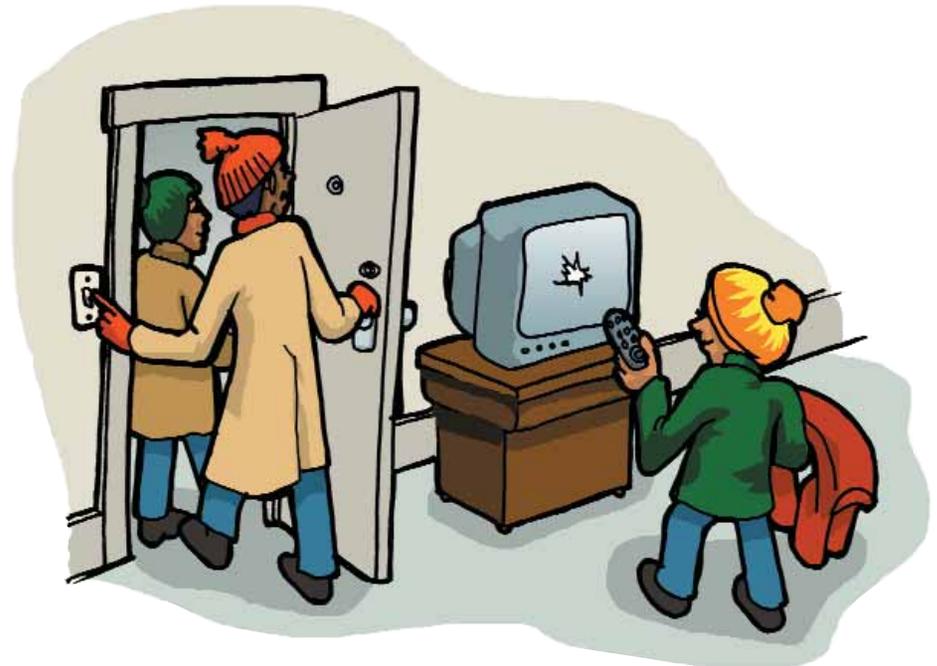
The thermostat controls the temperature in your apartment. It should be set between 65 and 75 degrees in the winter, and between 70 and 75 degrees in the summer, if you have air conditioning.



Turning the thermostat all the way up does **NOT** make the heat come on any hotter or faster, and if you forget to turn it down again, costs a lot of money.



**IF THE FURNACE OR AIR  
CONDITIONING IS RUNNING,  
WINDOWS SHOULD BE CLOSED.**



Always turn off most of the lights and entertainment appliances when you leave your apartment. Leave one or two lights on so thieves will think someone is at home.



**NEVER HAVE THE WINDOWS OPEN WHEN THE HEAT IS ON!**

If you can feel air blowing around closed doors or windows, ask your landlord to add weather stripping to keep the cold out.



Wearing socks, long pants and tops with sleeves, or extra layers of clothing will keep you warmer, and is cheaper than turning up the heat.



NEVER USE A STOVE OR OVEN FOR HEAT!



Keep the refrigerator doors closed as much as possible. Leaving the door open wastes electricity and can cause food to spoil, which will make you sick.

# Summary

- 1.) Pay your bills.
- 2.) Keep things clean.
- 3.) Take care of property.
- 4.) Know how to deal with fire and other emergencies.
- 5.) Pay attention to mail and notices.
- 6.) Be a good neighbor.
- 7.) Do not waste energy.



Pay Bills



Keep Things Clean



Take Care of Property



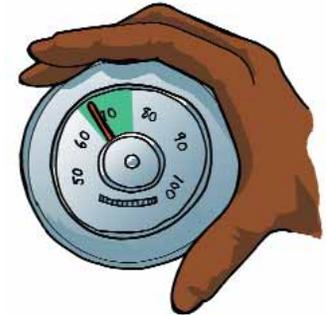
Know How to Deal with Emergencies



Read Mail & Notices



Be a Good Neighbor



Do Not Waste Energy

*Key collaborators on this project are:*

**Jennifer Gueddiche**, Program Director of the African Community Center, **Scott Robbins**, Refugee Housing Project Manager for Mercy Housing, and **Carol Kimball**, Artist, with interns **Jennifer Harden** and **Zara Tenore**.



## Mercy Housing

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English 1006

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