



6 EASY STEPS TO BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Would You Want To Be Your Neighbor?



START HERE

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

When you move off campus, you join a new community, and one with very different expectations from where you were before. Where you may once have been surrounded by fellow students, now you're in a mixed neighborhood with students, families, senior citizens, and others. Being a good neighbor means accounting for the needs and interests of those around you as you live your life off campus, and these six steps can help!

STEP 1

UNDERSTAND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY YOU'LL BE MOVING INTO

- When you move somewhere new, it's important to know what is expected of citizens. Keeping up with those expectations won't solve all problems, but it's a great way to limit the potential for issues.
- To view city ordinances, start with [OCL's page of frequently cited ordinances](#) for students. For more depth, check out the [City of Evanston's library of ordinances](#).
- Need more? Try calling 311 (whether in Evanston or Chicago) to learn about ordinances that might apply to your experience.

STEP 2

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

- Take a moment to introduce yourself! In person is always best, so keep trying until you connect with the neighbor. Be sure to exchange contact information.
- Need a way to open the door to a good conversation? Bake some cookies to bring with you. Or, invite them to your place for lemonade, a snack, or even dinner.
- It's never too late! Even if you have been living at your place for months, reach out!



STEP 3

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

- Learn about your neighbors' lifestyles. Do they work early morning shifts, or from home? Do they have small kids? Being mindful of schedules – and sharing yours as well – can help identify potential problem areas that you can then respond to.
- Ask about the neighbors' experiences in the area as well. What's been enjoyable about living amongst students? What's been challenging? What advice would they share? You can also share the experience you'd like to have, and hear out any of their questions or concerns.

STEP 4

ACT WITH THOSE AROUND YOU IN MIND

- Treat those around you with care, based on what you've learned and on the local ordinances. When you're trusted in these areas, you're more likely to be trusted with a social gathering.
- Observe quiet hours between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. Loud music, events, and chatter may result in unhappy neighbors, but also with the police knocking on your door!
- Remember: noise travels farther than you think! Plan not just with your neighbor in mind, but also the people across the street, and in the houses behind you.
- Control your pets. Keep your pet's noise under control, and clean up after them!

STEP 5

MAINTAIN YOUR HOME

- Keep your yard tidy and neat. If you're responsible for mowing the lawn, do so regularly.
- Take care of your sidewalk and any porch areas. If required by your lease, this includes shoveling snow and using de-icing salt during the winter.
- Ensure that garbage does not pile up. In Evanston, all garbage must be in the appropriate containers. Need more? Call 311 for help with bulk pickups or extra containers.



STEP 6

HOSTING A SOCIAL GATHERING

- Discuss plans with your neighbors in advance. When you understand their concerns, you can make a joint plan to mitigate them – or reconsider your plans. Leaving a note is not sufficient!
- If you're planning an event for your fraternity, sorority, or RSO...then stop! Your residence is not a satellite venue for your organization, and the neighborhood is not a reasonable spot for such events. Host the event on campus or at an off-campus commercial venue instead.
- If your gathering extends past 10 p.m., move the festivities inside. Lower the music, and remind guests to come and go quietly.
- If you lose control of your event (uninvited guests, overly intoxicated guests, too loud, etc), call 911 and request help from the police. You're far less likely to have trouble if you take steps to resolve the problem.
- Clean up after your gathering before 10 a.m. on the next day, and follow up with your neighbors to check on their experience.

HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP?

Even the best plans can go wrong, and establishing and maintaining neighbor relationships can be tricky. Don't hesitate to reach out to OCL for guidance in navigating these situations. If you'd specifically like guidance on managing a conflict with a neighbor, you can also consult with the University's Ombudsperson for conflict coaching: northwestern.edu/ombuds

NORTHWESTERN'S OFF-CAMPUS LIFE OFFICE

Off-Campus Life's mission is to serve as the first point of contact for students moving and living off campus

Off-Campus Life
Scott Hall, Lower Level
601 University Place
Evanston, IL 60208

847-491-8430
Instagram: @northwestern_loc
offcampuslife@northwestern.edu
northwestern.edu/offcampus