

# The O.C. Link: February

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## House Hunting 101

House hunting can be stressful (especially during midterm season), so we have prepared a few tips to ensure that everything goes smoothly!

1. Make sure the rental unit is within your price range, taking into consideration food and utility costs as well.
2. Take notes on each rental so you remember the pros and cons of each place.
3. Ensure all doors and windows have proper locks. You will later want to get a lock change written into your lease to verify your security.
4. Question previous tenants as to why they are leaving. Was it because of problems with the unit or landlord?
5. Think about the differences in bedroom sizes. How will you choose who gets which room without conflict?
6. Consider **five** different places before settling on one. This is to ensure that you are making an informed decision with the place that you choose.
7. Be absolutely certain before signing a lease. There is no reason to rush into making such an important decision which will affect an entire year of your life—tons of rental listings come out after March 1<sup>st</sup>, when students covered by the RTA have given their notice.

## Giving your Notice of Termination

First of all, if you are covered by the RTA (you do not live with or share a kitchen and/or bathroom with your landlord and his/her immediate family) it's important to remember that you do not have to speak to your landlord about your future plans until 60 days before your lease term ends. For most leases, which end April 30<sup>th</sup> 2015, this date would be Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 2015. If you do NOT give notice you automatically become a month-to-month tenant at the end of your lease term.

As soon as you give notice your landlord can begin to show your rental unit. He or she must only attempt to notify you about a showing, which can take place anytime between 8 am and 8 pm. So be strategic about when you're okay with showings starting. The longer you wait the longer until you get to avoid students walking through your house.

You can use the N9 Form to give notice, or provide a written letter to your landlord outlining the date you will be terminating your tenancy. For more information you can go to the Landlord and Tenant Board's website:

[http://www.ltb.gov.on.ca/en/Key Information/STEL02\\_111862.html](http://www.ltb.gov.on.ca/en/Key%20Information/STEL02_111862.html).



## Surviving Showings

As soon as you give notice your landlord can start showing your rental unit at any time between 8 am and 8 pm after making an attempt to contact you. This is a busy time for students without the hassle of showings going on, so here is a list of important things to consider to ensure that showings go as smoothly as possible.

1. Remind your landlord that he/she can only show the house after all tenants have given their notice of termination. In Ontario this needs to be done no later than 60 days before the end of the lease date or tenants can continue on a month-to-month basis.
2. Consider the fact that your landlord must at least attempt to give you notice before bringing potential renters through the house. They cannot show up unannounced—

however, if your landlord called one roommate and no one answered, that is acceptable.

3. Hide any valuables or small items that could be stolen.
4. Try to keep the house relatively clean so that it looks more attractive to prospective renters. You can try negotiating with your landlord—if he or she plan to show the house only when someone is home or on certain days, you will all ensure the house is spotless.
5. If your landlord or rental unit have been good, try to inform the incoming tenants of that. The sooner someone signs the lease, the sooner you will no longer have to deal with house showings.

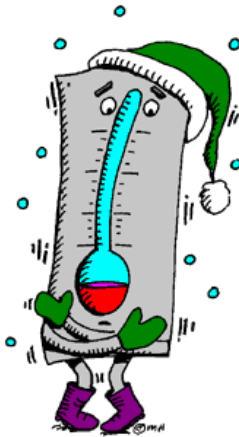
### REMINDER: Heat Requirements

London has heat requirements that must be met from September 15th-June 15th! They are:

20°C from 6 a.m. – 11 p.m.

18°C from 11 p.m. – 6 a.m.

Your landlord must provide, maintain, and repair the heating system of your rental unit. If it's not working, submit a repair request.



### Roommate Resolutions

Not everyone is used to sharing space with someone else, and sometimes things don't turn out as perfectly as one would hope. Here are some tips for communicating effectively with roommates without burning any bridges:

1. Face-to-face conversation: Whatever you do, don't express your frustrations through text. Talking face to face allows real-time and immediate attempts at resolution which tends to lead to compromises and negotiations. Specifically communicate about what you need and what you can give.

2. Keep outsiders out of the conversation: The last thing you want to do is strain your relationship with your roommate by bringing an outsider into the dynamic. Roommate conversations often deal with personal subjects. Even if the outsiders' intentions are pure and good, it may leave one roommate feeling bullied or attacked.
3. Be clear and concise: Be clear about what is bothering you. If you don't tell your roommate that there is a problem they won't be able to do anything about it.

#### How to address the issue:

1. Approach your roommate in private.
2. Confirm that this is a good moment to talk. If one of you feels rushed, the person will be less able to communicate effectively.
3. Be direct: address the issue in regards to their behaviour rather than their character. This will put them less on the defensive.
4. Be patient: remember there are two sides to every story.
5. Allow each of you to present what you think the problem really is.
6. Revisit a roommate agreement (if you have one)
7. Remember that a solution will probably involve each person giving something and getting something. The solution may not be your ideal scenario, but it should be an improvement on the current state of things.

If you are having trouble resolving roommate issues, Fanshawe offers a free Mediation service where you can sit down with an objective third party to address the conflict email Glenn Matthews at [gmatthews@fanshawec.ca](mailto:gmatthews@fanshawec.ca) to inquire.

## Rental Insurance

Don't wait until you return home from a night out to find your home broken into to start thinking about renter's insurance. If all your personal items have to be replaced you're likely looking at thousands of dollars out of your pocket—not to mention the personal and academic information you had stored in it. However, an insurance policy that covers your personal belongings can help you!

#### Why should student tenants purchase insurance?

- Insure your personal belongings in the event of theft, fire or flood.
- In the event of disaster or theft, you will be able to file a claim with your insurance company to get money in order to replace your lost belongings.
- In addition to insurance for your personal belongings, consider liability insurance. In the event a tenant causes damage or destruction to the rental property, the landlord's insurance company could seek payment from any tenant or guarantor on the lease.
- Minimal monthly fee (price will range depending on your coverage, but can be under \$20/mo).

What should I do if I want insurance?

- Call a few insurance companies in London (use Canada411.ca to search for local companies).
- Get estimates from companies to compare the price and offered coverage.
- Ask your parent/guardian to find out if their home insurance policy will cover the loss of your belongings at your rental unit. You may already be covered by their existing policy.
- Take photos and write down serial numbers of all valuable items (Eg. Jewelry, electronics, etc.). Store in a location other than your rental accommodation.

Did you know that once a property is rented, there is a different classification for landlords to ensure their property is insured? While this insurance does not usually cover the tenants if they suffer a loss, it could come into play if a tenant does suffer a loss and they can show that the landlord was negligent in some way to cause the fire. It is always a good practice to ask if the landlord has proper insurance.



## Stop, Drop and Read!

This isn't just any plain old article. This is fire safety! What's more exciting than fire safety? Well I can think of a few things, but this is far more important than any of those. I mean, can binge watching Netflix really save your life? Fires can start so quickly and spread so rapidly that you could turn your back for a second and the entire kitchen could be in flames, especially when your cooking is as questionable as mine. Here are a few tips to make sure your home doesn't go up in flames:

1. Test your fire alarms. You should be testing your fire alarms every month to ensure that they are still working. Chances are, you won't actually know if your fire alarm is working unless something goes off to trigger it. Hopefully it will never be triggered,

but in the event that there is a fire, you want to make sure that it will protect you. Batteries should be replaced once a year.

2. If you have a small grease fire that starts while cooking, turn off the burner and smother the fire with a lid. Let it burn itself out. The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is cooking unattended. Most kitchen fires involve the cooktop. If you are baking, roasting or boiling food, check regularly and remain home while you cook. Remember to set a timer so you know when to take it out. If you leave the kitchen when frying, grilling or are finished cooking, remember to turn off the stove.
3. If you use candles in your home, be sure to blow them out when you leave the room or go to bed. Try and avoid the use of candles if you are feeling very tired and may fall asleep before putting them out. Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can catch fire. Keep your candles on a sturdy uncluttered surface. When lighting candles, ensure that your hair or any clothing is not close to the flame.
4. If you do smoke, do so outside, many household fires start as a result of cigarettes that have not been properly put out. Ensure that your ashtray is deep and sturdy, keep any items that can burn away from it. Before throwing away butts and ashes, make sure they are completely out by dousing them with water or sand.
5. Clean the lint sheet out of your dryers!
6. If you are using a space heater in your bedroom, remember to not plug the heater into an extension cord, and instead plug it in straight into the wall. Remember to turn it off whenever you leave the room, even if it's only for 20 minutes.

## Is YOUR home safe?

Making your home safe is not hard, and is very important!

- If you live in a basement bedroom, making sure you have some type of dresser or stand underneath your window in case of emergency is important.
- When buying candles try to purchase those in safer containers. Blow these out when leaving the room, again, even if it's only for 20 minutes. Keep all flammable items away from the open flame.
- Lock your door every time you enter or exit your home. Although it may seem stupid if you or a roommate will be home, thieves have taken advantage of this in the past and stolen from empty rooms without the other roommates even noticing.
- Locking your bedroom door is also a good idea, especially if you're going to be away for the weekend.
- Close your curtains at nighttime, especially if you live near the ground and your room can be seen from the street.
- If you're going away for a while, make sure no valuables can be seen from the street, and keep the serial numbers and models of all your electronics in a safe location (away from the objects)



## Around the town

By Ricky

As Londoners struggle through the harsh winter winds and snow, here are a few events happening this month to consider going to:

1. London Lightning Games (\$) (February 1<sup>st</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015): Come out and support your local basketball team. Competing with athletes from Windsor, Mississauga, and Brampton, these games will definitely keep you at the edge of your seat!
2. Toupee for a Day (February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015): London is hosting a free skate from 1pm-3pm at Victoria Park to raise awareness for different types of cancer.
3. London Toy & Collectibles Expo (\$) (February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015): If you love collecting collectibles and playing around with toys, this Expo is for you! It is located in Centennial Hall from 9:30-2:00pm. Admission is \$4.
4. Jersey Boys (\$) (February 10-15, 2015): Jersey Boys is back in London for the February 10<sup>th</sup> performance. They will be playing at Budweiser Gardens. Buy tickets at Budweiser Garden's website!
5. Chinese New Year at White Oaks Mall: Want to celebrate Chinese New Years' in style? Come down to White Oaks Mall to embrace the culture from 1:30 - 4:30pm on February 14<sup>th</sup>!
6. London Knights (\$) (February 16, 2015): The London Knights will be playing against the Saginaw Spirit on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Come on down to the gardens to support them!

## February Newsletter Quiz

Submit the answers, either true or false, to these questions to [gmatthews@fanshawec.ca](mailto:gmatthews@fanshawec.ca) by **February 28<sup>th</sup>** and be entered in a draw to win a \$25 bookstore gift card! The winner will be contacted by email and announced in the March/April 2015 newsletter.

1. You can use the N9 form to terminate your lease at the end of the lease term.
2. Negotiating with your landlord during showings season can help make the process smoother for everyone.
3. A good way to confront your roommate is on their facebook wall with a list of offences they've committed throughout the entire year.
4. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed once per year.
5. The last roommate to go to sleep at night is the person who has to lock the door.

Good luck!

Fanshawe College Housing Mediation Service Counselling and  
Accessibility Services

Wednesdays, 8:30a.m. – 4:30p.m **call:** 519-452-4282

Fanshawe Housing website OR Visit! **Monday – Friday: (519)661-3787**