

Off-Campus Housing and Tenant Toolkit

A Resource Guide for Graduate Students



As an NECO student living off-campus, you are a tenant with specific legal rights under Massachusetts law. While the College cannot provide legal advice or mediate private lease disputes, we have compiled these professional resources to help you resolve apartment issues independently.

1. Know Your Rights (The Basics)

Before taking action, confirm the legal requirements for landlords in Massachusetts:

[Massachusetts Tenant Rights Overview](#)
[Renting in Boston Portal](#)

2. Getting Repairs Done (Self-Help)

If your landlord is unresponsive to maintenance issues (leaks, heat, pests), use these steps:

[How to Get a Landlord to Make Repairs](#)
[The Housing Code Checklist](#) (Note: Certain issues, like rodent infestations, must legally be addressed within 5 days.)
[Taking Action Without a Lawyer](#)

3. Reporting to the City (Enforcement)

If a landlord refuses to remedy an unsafe condition, the City of Boston can intervene:

Call 311 or use the [BOS:311 App](#) (Report non-emergency housing code violations like no heat or structural issues.)
[Office of Housing Stability](#)

4. Legal Representation and Referrals

If you need a lawyer to review a lease or represent you in a dispute:

[Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School](#) (free/pro bono)
[Greater Boston Legal Services](#) (free/pro bono)
[Boston Bar Association Referral Service](#) (Reduced rate: initial consultation approximately \$25 for 30 minutes)
[Massachusetts Bar Association Referral](#)

NECO Disclaimer

New England College of Optometry provides these resources for informational purposes only. Lease agreements are private contracts between the student and the landlord. NECO does not vet landlords or provide legal mediation. For emergencies regarding your immediate safety, please contact 911.