



# Roommate Questionnaire, Do's and Don'ts, and Pre-screening Checklist

## Schedule

- What is your typical weekly schedule?
- Are there any certain days/times that you need the house to be quiet?
- How often are you at home or out of town?
- Do you spend more time in the living room or bedroom when you're at home?
- Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend that may be coming by the house often? If yes, how many days of the week and will they be contributing towards the bills?
- Are you currently expecting any out of town guests that may be staying for a certain period of time?
- How often do you have a daytime or overnight guest(s)?
- How do you spend your free time?
- How often do you cook?

## Personality

- How would you describe your personality?
- What do you do for a living?
- How often do you listen to music when you're at home?
- Can you fall asleep with the TV on or with music playing?
- Do you get cold or hot easily? What temperature do you keep the thermostat on?
- Do you have any food or pet allergies?
- What type of relationship are you looking to have with your roommate (cordial, friendship, etc.?)
- Did you build a friendship with your past roommates?
- What are your pet peeves?
- How sensitive are you to smell?
- How do you want to handle any conflicts (sit down conversation, text message, etc.?)
- Does it bother you if someone else moves your belongings?
- Are you comfortable with me decorating our shared spaces with my home décor?
- How clean do you keep shared areas when you have a roommate?

## Experience

- Have you ever found a roommate online before?
- When was the last time you had a roommate?
- What kind of problems did you experience with previous roommates?



## Understanding the property

- Will anyone else have keys to the house?
- How safe is the neighborhood?
- Have you had any issues with bugs in the house (mice, spiders, ants, roaches, etc.?)
- Are there any security cameras within our shared spaces?
- Are there any appliances, devices, or objects that require special instructions to operate?
- Will I have a designated place to park every day that's close to the front door?
- Are there any outside noises that could affect my sleep (noisy neighbors, traffic, etc.?)
- Would there be any reasons that someone would need to come into my bedroom?
- Would it be okay if I put a lock on my bedroom door?
- Is the house fully furnished and how much furniture can I bring?
- How much storage space will I have in the kitchen, closets, etc.?



## Understanding the agreement

- When are you available for me to move in?
- Do you own or rent the property? If owned, will I be responsible for splitting the cost of repairs?
- Will I need to pay a deposit?
- Will I need to sign a lease or put anything in writing?
- How should I send you the rent payment each month?
- How much notice do you need before I move out and how should I provide it?
- Is eating/drinking allowed in the bedroom?
- If rent is late due to an unexpected and uncontrollable incident how much time can you give me before you require that I move out? *It's important to know if your roommate would be willing to work out a deal or immediately kick you out.*
- How should we split up the chores?
- Will I be required to do any outdoor chores such as yard work?
- Are there certain items that you want to or don't want to share (food, spices, toilet paper, dish soap, cleaning supplies, etc.?)



## Don'ts

- Never visit or show a property alone.** Meet at a public place first or video chat before giving the home address. Have a friend or relative with you on the day of the showing or visit. Start by showing the exterior of the property first until you feel comfortable.
- Don't give your contact information out too soon.** Wait until you've asked all the important questions to eliminate giving your information out to so many people. This includes an email address, home address, and phone number. Social media has made it very easy to use this information to find out where someone works, lives, and even hang out.
- Don't make any payment or provide a key until there has been an exchange of both and the rental agreement is signed.** The best time to make the exchange is on move-in day and the rental agreement is signed. Don't skip this step just because you're in a rush to have a roommate.
- Don't pay in cash.** Try using PayPal, bank transfer, etc. so that you have proof of your deposit and monthly payments in case you have to take legal action.

## Dos

- Make a video of the property.** Before showing the property, send them a video so they can get a better idea of what it will look like in person.
- Share Social Media pages.** After narrowing down your search, share links to each other's pages to get a better sense of their personality. Do not share if any information can lead to your location.
- Get a copy of their driver's license.** This will verify their full name and identity with a picture.
- Get a copy of their paystub.** For employment verification and legal purposes. All you need is the company's name and address everything else can be blacked out. If you ever have to take legal action against them, you can provide this information to the authorities to allow them to serve court papers.
- Collect rent a few days early.** If you are the sole person on the lease or the homeowner, make sure your roommate agreement includes a payment due date a few days earlier than your actual due date. This way will allow you to have enough days to come up payment if your roommate's rent is late.
- Keep your door locked when you're in your room.** This will give you some security that nobody will be able to just walk in.
- Interview at least 2-3 candidates.** Take your time to interview multiple candidates. Nobody's going to be perfect but you can spend time searching for someone that meets most of your preferences.
- Trust your instincts.** If the offer seems too good to be true for the price or they can't meet your demands, it's best to spend the time to start over and view more candidates.
- Use Google Maps to check out the location.** Utilize the street view option to see the neighborhood and the nearby streets. Also perform a Google search for crime stats for that neighborhood or city.
- Sign a rental agreement even if it's month to month.** It's easy to forget what you may have verbally agreed upon so make sure there's a clear written statement that you can refer back to.
- Take pictures of the room before moving in and share with your roommate.** Make sure you are both aware of any prior damages and current damages when it's time to move out.
- Ensure that both parties agree on all the house rules before moving in.** Put it in writing.

## Etiquette

- Try to greet your roommate when you see them.** Most of us have to keep a smile on our face all day long at work, and when we get home we want our "me" time. A simple "hello", can go along way.
- Let your roommate know if you're expecting visitors.** Try to let them know in advance or shoot them a text if you plan on showing up with a company. Nobody wants to be caught in their cartoon pajamas.
- Discuss the "open door" policy.** Is your roommate welcome to go into your room if you're not home?
- Adjusting the thermostat.** This can turn into a bit of a battle when both have each preferable settings. Try to reach an agreement in advance.
- Try having 2 trash cans.** It may be best to have two trash cans. This way each person is responsible for taking out their own trash.
- Share chores.** Make a chore chart with your roommate so that the common areas can stay clean.
- Air out your dirty laundry, literally.** Now that you have a roommate, it's time to get out of the habit of throwing a load in the washer or dryer before you leave the house. Discuss how clothes should be handled in the event you or your roommate forget to remove the clothes out of the machine(s).
- Don't borrow anything without asking.** Some roommates will say, "You're welcome to borrow anything you like." Even if this is the case, it might be better to ask or send a text message in advanced.

To search for a good roommate takes time. The more time you spend screening the better your chances are of finding someone that you can feel safe and enjoy sharing your space with. You've asked all the right questions, but your work isn't done yet! It's not only crucial to ask the tough questions but also to verify your roommate's identity and criminal history if possible.

### Verify Identity



#### Drivers License Or Passport

Unfortunately, there are times in which roommates disagree or decide to break the agreement. If you're unable to resolve the issues, you may need to involve the authorities. It's very common that people use their nicknames as middle names. You can be secure knowing that you have their legal name and photo if needed.

### Check for Criminal History



#### Background Check

No matter how awesome and trustworthy your potential roommate may seem it's crucial to get a background check completed. The Census Bureau states that 29.5 percent of adults have a criminal record, so make sure you're well-informed. Several companies advertise \$9.99 nationwide background check but they don't tell you that many of the cities, states, and counties do not share or update the information on their databases.

### Verify Employment



#### Paystub



#### Email Verification

Ask for the most recent paystub or ask your potential roommate to email you from work or school account. If a roommate agreement is broken and the issues escalate to the court system, the authorities will need your roommate's legal name and address to serve the papers. If your roommate is no longer living with you, they are most likely not going to call or text you with their current address to avoid legal ramifications. Providing your roommate's employment information is a helpful way to aid authorities to find your roommate.

### Video Chat & In-Person Meeting



#### Video Chat



#### Meet In Person

This is the most skipped safety step because it can be so time-consuming. Since you pretty much expect that everyone's will be on their best behavior during the interview, you will want to have a video chat to try to get a better feel of who the person is when they're in a comfortable environment. It also verifies the identity of the person you will be meeting in person.

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