

WELCOME

The West Springfield Housing Authority welcomes you and we sincerely hope that you enjoy your new home.

Residing in a development such as this will be, for most people, a new experience. You will be sharing with many other families, and the West Springfield Housing Authority, the mutual obligation to make the development a pleasant and attractive example of community life in our town.

The Housing Authority must provide efficient management as its contribution to sound financial administration. To this end, we will repair and maintain the property and, with your assistance, keep it attractive and a credit to the community.

All occupants should be aware of their neighbor's right to privacy and peaceful enjoyment of their apartment. Management will gladly receive your suggestions or observations and will advise and aid you in meeting and resolving problems that may arise; it will cooperate to the fullest extent in making your occupancy agreeable and pleasant. Cooperation of all concerned is the basis for success in any housing development.

Important Numbers

Housing Authority	Emergency	788-0988
	Maintenance	788-0988 ext. 101
Police Department	Emergency	911
	Non-Emergency	263-3210
Fire Department	Emergency	911
	Non-Emergency	732-2650
Ambulance	Emergency	911
	Non-Emergency	732-2650
Council On Aging		263-3264

Be a Good Neighbor

Be considerate of other tenants. You will find by being courteous and cooperative with them, they in turn will be considerate of you. Everyone is entitled to peace and quiet in their home, especially in late evening hours. Please keep volume of radios and televisions down low and do not slam doors.

This handbook is designed to let you know about life at one of our developments. The handbook outlines the rules and regulations not explained in the lease, the way to have repairs done in your apartment and the best way to take advantage of the many features of your apartment. It will help to make your residency in one of our communities a very pleasant experience.

The Management Office

The Executive Director's office is located at 37 Oxford Place. It is open from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The telephone number for the office is 413-788-0988.

If you have any complaints or problems, please call the office and report them. If you wish to make an appointment with the Executive Director, you may call the office to schedule this. Please note, that if you have a serious complaint that you would like to resolve, you must put your request in writing and sign the complaint. Written complaints without a signature will not be acted upon. The Executive Director and staff of the West Springfield Housing Authority will listen and help you in any way possible.

If you have any maintenance emergency after 4:30 p.m. or on weekends or holidays, you may call 413-788-0988 and leave a message with the answering service. The service will page maintenance.

Board Meetings

All West Springfield Housing Authority board meetings follow the Open Meeting Law. Anyone wishing to speak at a meeting must request in writing to be put on the agenda at least one week before the scheduled meeting. Our meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month, at 5:30 p.m., in Oxford Place Community Hall.

Rent Payments

Your rent is due and payable on the first (1st) of the month and will be considered delinquent on the seventh of each month. You will be charged a \$25.00 late fee for rents that are not received within the month they are due.

Your rent must be paid by check or money order to the Management Office. NO cash payments will be accepted. A \$25.00 fee will be charged for any personal check returned due to insufficient funds. If you are away during rent payment time, it is your responsibility to contact the office about the rent payment. You may mail or hand-deliver your rent payment. You also have the option of signing up for Direct Debit for rent payments. There is a drop slot on the door to the management office for rent checks or correspondence.

Your rent is based on your income and family composition. Management will provide you with notification and forms when it is time for your annual re-certification. All rent and information obtained by the West Springfield Housing Authority is kept confidential. If your income changes at anytime during the year, you are required to notify the office immediately.

Rent Calculation and Re-Certification

Each year it is mandated by your lease that you update information regarding your income, assets and family composition. Management will provide you with a Continued Occupancy Form for you to fill out. This form provides Management with important information used to calculate your rent properly. You must be sure that all information is filled out and contains current, verifiable information. You must also provide Management with any receipts of medical expenses in order to receive a deduction.

Lease and Policies

All residents receive a copy of their Lease and Handbook when they first become a resident. Your Lease is a binding contract between you and the West Springfield Housing Authority. Your Lease assures you the right to live in your apartment as long as you abide by it and follow the rules and regulations contained therein. The Resident Handbook explains the rules set forth by the Board of Commissioners. Read your Lease and handbook very carefully.

Guests

Friends and relatives are welcomed; however, a constant overnight guest may constitute a violation of the guest policy, thereby putting the tenant in violation of his/her lease agreement. The tenant is responsible for the conduct of their guest at all times while on the Housing Authority premises. The tenant is responsible for damages to property and noise complaints caused by their guests. As defined in the lease, no guests may remain on the premises for more than twenty-one (21) nights in a twelve (12) month period unless otherwise approved by management.

Smoking

Smoking will not be allowed in the office, community room, laundry room, all common areas, hallways or restrooms. Smoking is allowed in resident's unit only.

Smoking is allowed outside in the areas designated by the presence of a receptacle. When smoking outside, all cigarettes/cigars must be completely extinguished before being thrown away in one of the receptacles provided.

Temporary Tenant Vacancy

As a tenant, you must notify management if you are going away on an extended vacation. If you have a prolonged illness in which hospitalization or nursing home care is necessary, you must obtain a statement from your doctor, stating your illness and the date in which you can return to your unit. Your rent must be paid during your absence.

Community Centers

There is a Community Room Use Policy. The Community Room is open for use by all residents and housing authority staff. This room may be reserved for a special event by submitting an application to the office prior to the next board meeting. Applications for Community Hall use must first be approved by the Tenant's Association president. When you use the room, please be sure to pick up after yourself and your guests.

Decorations cannot be used unless approved by management first. All garbage must be removed and the room must be returned to original condition.

There is a kitchen in the Community Building that contains a stove, refrigerator and adequate cupboard space for storage and counter space for the preparation of food.

Tenant Organization

The Tenant Association is a tenant organization comprised of tenants from each development. The association meets monthly and discusses issues and plans social events. Membership is open to all and tenants are encouraged to join.

Mail Boxes

Every tenant has their own mail box. At the time of lease sign up, you will receive a key for your mailbox. If mailbox key is lost, there will be a \$5.00 charge for replacing the lock and key.

Laundry Facilities

Commercial, coin-operated washers and dryers are located in the Community Building. These are for the use of residents or their homemakers

only. This equipment is owned and operated by the Housing Authority. **Under no circumstance should this laundry equipment be used to wash and dry clothes for persons other than our residents.** Residents and homemakers are asked to be considerate of others by using only one washer and/or dryer at a time. Cost for washers/dryer is \$1.00 per load.

Please be sure to leave the machines and the laundry area clean for the next person.

- CLEAN OUT THE WASHING MACHINE AFTER USE
- CLEAN OUT THE LINT TRAPS IMMEDIATELY AFTER USE
- DO NOT WASH RUGS OR ANIMAL BLANKETS
- PLEASE FOLLOW POSTED INSTRUCTIONS AS TO THE AMOUNT OF DETERGENT TO USE. **USE LIQUID DETERGENT ONLY.**

Repairs and Maintenance

If something needs repair, please call the office, 788-0988. Please leave a voice mail, messages are checked though out the day if you were unable to speak to anyone in the office. Please call immediately if you notice conditions that may get worse and endanger your health, safety or the property. After hours, leave a message with the answering service and they will contact the maintenance person on call.

The Maintenance Department operates on a work order system issued by the office. All work must be done through this system so that we may maintain records properly. We will not enter your unit without your permission unless there is an emergency. When you call for work to be done, please let us know if maintenance may enter the unit if you are not at home. There is no charge for maintenance repair unless the damage is caused by the resident or their guest.

Emergencies

To report maintenance emergencies on weekends or nights, call 413-788-0988.

We have an answering service that will take your call and deliver the message after regular office hours. Please remember that the answering service and the West Springfield Housing Authority staff are well-trained in maintenance emergencies and may determine that your call is something that can wait until regular office hours.

Please don't call a contractor yourself. If you have a police, fire or medical emergency, please dial **911**.

If you get locked out of your apartment, you may call the emergency number listed above and a maintenance person will be sent to assist you. Tenants will be charged at \$25.00 fee for any lock-outs after hours, weekends or holidays.

Pet Policy

Residents are allowed to have one pet not to exceed forty (40) pounds as an adult. If you plan to get a pet, you must contact the office **before** you acquire a pet. We will inform you of your obligations and provide you with a copy of the Pet Policy. You will be required to sign a pet rider to your lease. There is a required pet deposit in the amount of your monthly rent or \$160 whichever is less. **Residents are not allowed to "pet sit" on housing authority property.** Residents are prohibited from feeding or harboring stray or wild animals. Pets are not allowed in the Community Room. Birds must be caged at all times and fish tanks are limited to 20 gallons.

Feeding Animals / Wildlife

Please do not leave food or scraps for the stray cats or other wildlife that may wander by. When feeding birds, your bird feeder should be off the ground and not attached to any part of our buildings. These animals may carry disease and could prove to be a very serious health and safety concern for our residents.

Hallways

Your back entrance may not be blocked with any items that would prevent safe and easy egress from your unit. These areas are your second means of egress and must remain clear for emergency evacuation from your unit. Additionally, some of these areas are shared areas. Please be considerate of your neighbors and their need for space and accessorize accordingly.

Parking

Residents must register their vehicle with the office and place a parking sticker on their vehicle's rear window. **There are no assigned parking spaces**, however there are assigned parking lots. You will be instructed as to what lot you are allowed to park. Handicapped spaces are posted and are exclusively for vehicles with placards.

Guests, visitors, and aides should use the parking areas designated for visitors and guests.

Unregistered vehicles or vehicles without plates are not permitted at anytime and will be towed at the owner's expense. Any vehicle left in the street during a snowstorm will be towed at the owner's expense. No parking is allowed on the emergency roadway at anytime.

Snow Removal

Residents are asked to cooperate with the maintenance staff during snow removal. Snow will be removed as soon as possible. During a storm, the maintenance staff will begin by plowing the streets into and around the development, and clearing walkways. They will clear the area leading to your front entry. When it is safe to do so, the maintenance staff may ask you to move your vehicle to an available spot in the visitors parking area so that they can clear your parking space.

Vehicles that are not moved may be plowed in and the West Springfield Housing Authority assumes no responsibility when this occurs.

Security

The security of all residents depends upon the cooperation and vigilance of each resident and their guests. For your protection, you are encouraged to abide by the following:

- 1) Do not open the building doors for anyone other than your neighbors and guests.
- 2) Always identify the person ringing your bell **before** you permit them to enter. Admit only **your** guests. Never let your neighbors' visitors in.
- 3) When entering or leaving your apartment and/or building, check the doors to make sure that they are securely locked.
- 4) Residents and guests should enter and leave by the main doors.
- 5) If you discover a building door open, please close it immediately.
- 6) **No** devices such as dead bolt locks, chains locks, etc. which would prevent the emergency pull cord system from operating are permitted.
- 7) If you observe anyone acting suspiciously, immediately call the police then the office.

Keys

You will receive two (2) apartment keys, (1) laundry room and one (1) mailbox key. Your apartment key unlocks the front and rear doors of your

building and both apartment doors to your unit. When you leave your apartment be sure to lock your doors.

If you lose your keys, contact the Housing Authority office. The Housing Authority will furnish all replacement keys. There will be a minimal charge for duplicate keys. Keys should not be duplicated without Housing Authority approval

Apartment Lock Outs

If you should get locked out during office hours, you may call the office for assistance. If you should get locked out during off-duty hours there is a fee of \$25.00.

Smoke Detectors

Your unit is equipped with a smoke detector. Some units have battery powered and some have units that are hard wired. Both types of detectors will sound a loud alarm in the event of smoke in your unit. These units are tested on an annual basis and replaced if necessary. The batteries are replaced annually. If you notice a chirping sound coming from your smoke detector, call the office immediately, as your unit is in need of a new battery or it is defective and will be replaced. There are also smoke detectors in the hallways of your buildings. If at anytime you hear a smoke detector going off, please exit your unit. In addition to the smoke detector in your unit, there is also a heat detector that will notify the fire department.

Disconnecting fire protection devices is a criminal offense under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 148, § 27A.

Residents should notify the housing authority immediately if there is a problem or malfunctioning fire protection device.

Remember that your back door is your fire exit. Do not block that door with any items!!!

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

There is a carbon monoxide detector installed in each unit. These units are electric plug in with a battery backup system. Do not move or unplug this unit without first getting management's permission. If this unit beeps every two minutes or so please contact the office, that is a sign the battery is failing and needs replacement.

Storage

In order to prevent any health or safety hazards, no storage of any kind is allowed in either the front or rear common hallway areas. Please keep all of your personal possessions within your apartment or designated storage area.

Pest Control

Occasionally we experience problems with insects. If you discover insects in your unit, please call the office immediately. We will call our pest control company and they will investigate the problem. However, preventing the problem is preferable. Proper cleaning and good sanitation habits will lower the opportunity for insects to establish residence in you apartment. It is important that you do not leave food scraps or grease around your apartment for insects to feed on. Additionally, dirty dishes should not be left in sinks or on countertops. Please help us to maintain a safe and sanitary environment for all residents.

Hallways

You are responsible for keeping hallways and common areas free of clutter. **NO** stairways, halls or corridors can be blocked with furniture, plants, etc. Easy access must be available at all times in the event of fire. In winter when hall heat is on, please keep hall windows closed to conserve energy use.

Inspections

The West Springfield Housing Authority makes every effort to inspect your units annually. If you need repairs, do not wait for the inspection. Call the office and report the problem immediately.

If during preventative maintenance inspections, Management notices serious housekeeping problems that could lead to future maintenance or fire issues they will bring these conditions to your attention and schedule a re-inspection. Also, if resident caused damage is noted, you may be charged.

Inspections of your unit will only be done with prior notice. If you are unable to be home when your inspection is scheduled and you do not want staff members to enter your unit, please call the office immediately to make other arrangements.

Housekeeping

The upkeep of your apartment is your responsibility. Clean the walls, carpets, tile floors, counters, appliances, windows, etc. If resident caused damage is noted, you will be charged for such repairs.

Appliances

The stoves and refrigerators in your unit are the property of the West Springfield Housing Authority. It is your responsibility to keep these appliances in good condition. Should you have any questions or problems with the appliances, please call the office.

Small Appliances

You are not allowed to have portable dishwashers, washing machines, clothes dryers, freezers or electric heaters in your apartments. Do not overload electrical outlets or leave appliances on when not in use.

Decorating

Management must be consulted prior to altering your apartment in any way. Wallpaper of any kind cannot be used at all. Any work that will affect the structure of the building or cause future problems may not be done. Requests for improvements should be made in writing to the Management Office. If any improvement is made without written permission, the cost of restoring the unit to the original condition will be charged to the resident.

Please use the standard picture hangers available in any hardware store. If you intend to hang any large, heavy mirrors or decorations please consult with maintenance for the best way and place to mount them.

No decals, scotch tape, transfer pictures or contact paper may be placed on kitchen cabinets, stoves, refrigerators, walls, doors, bathtubs, or any part of your dwelling.

Shades/Blinds

Window shades/blinds are provided by the West Springfield Housing Authority. If a shade/blind is damaged by normal wear and tear it will be replaced by the West Springfield Housing Authority. If the shade/blinds is damaged by the residents, the resident will be responsible for the cost of the replacement shade/blind.

Insurance

The Housing Authority is not responsible for the contents in your apartment. It is up to the resident to have renter's insurance for their personal property. We recommend that you contact your insurance agent to assistance.

Air Conditioner

All air conditioner units are the sole property and responsibility of the tenant. The West Springfield Housing Authority is not liable for maintenance, repair, replacement, or disposal of air condition units. Air conditioners MAY NOT be placed in the dumpster.

The West Springfield Housing Authority will not install or remove air conditioners.

Thermostats

Your apartment is equipped with an individual thermostat to control the heat in your apartment. You may adjust this thermostat to meet your individual needs. If you experience problems with your heat, contact the Housing Authority Office.

Trash

Trash barrels are located behind each apartment building. No barrel is assigned to any one apartment. Trash is picked up weekly by a private contractor. Residents should place their trash/garbage in plastic bags before placing it in the barrels. Your cooperation is important for the health and welfare of the other residents.

On occasion, items for disposal cannot fit into a trash barrel and/or a trash barrel becomes full before the scheduled pick up. In cases like this please

call the Housing Authority Office so arrangements may be made to handle the overflow.

Recycling

We provide a recycling area for your convenience and encourage you to recycle. Please refer to the guidelines published by the Town.

Master Antenna/Cable/Satellite Television

All apartments have been wired for cable television. If you wish this service, call Comcast in Springfield. Senior discounts may be available. Individual satellite dishes are not permitted.