

# COVID-19 Housing and Residence Life Procedures and Guidelines

Fall 2020 marks a unique time at NSU as we transition students back to campus after the arrival of COVID-19 in our country. Northeastern State University aims to deliver its mission while protecting the health and safety of our students and minimizing the potential spread of disease within our community. You will be transitioning from your households and communities back to your rooms and the campus community. **It is not solely about you** and your own personal safety against the virus, but also **about the community** and your effort and responsibility to keep things safe. In order to accomplish this, all residents and students must adhere to necessary standards to keep themselves and the campus community safe from the continued spread of COVID-19.

As a resident within NSU Housing and Residence Life, COVID-19 will impact your housing experience as Housing and Residence Life continues to make public health-informed decisions. The policies and guidelines below are incorporated into the Residence Hall Handbook and are applicable to all residential students. As always, we will update you with timely information about specific health and safety guidance important for our residential students.

## Overview

1. **Health and Safety:** We expect that all members of the NSU Housing community—residents, staff and visitors—act in a manner that demonstrates respect and consideration for those around them, including the health and safety of all community members. All residential students are prohibited from creating a health or safety hazard within NSU Housing facilities. The University may request or require a resident to leave campus housing if their continued presence in the housing community poses a health or safety risk for community members. Residential students are required to comply with health and safety laws, orders, ordinances, regulations and health and safety guidance adopted by the University or Housing and Residence Life as it relates to public health crises, including COVID-19. This guidance will evolve as the public health crisis evolves and may include, but is not limited to, social distancing, limitations on mass gatherings, wearing a face covering, COVID-19 diagnostic and surveillance testing (including before or upon arrival to campus), contact tracing, disinfection protocols, limitations on guests within residence halls, and quarantine / isolation requirements (including before or upon arrival to campus). Adherence to health and safety requirements applies to all residents, staff and visitors and extends to

all aspects of residential life, including bedrooms, bathrooms, community kitchens, lounges, computer rooms, courtyards and other common spaces.

2. **Acknowledgement of Risk:** Residents of NSU Housing facilities must understand the potential hazards that may be caused by communicable diseases, and the potential to contract COVID-19, on a college campus and within student housing. Residents will follow all directions from Northeastern State University to remain in compliance with orders or guidance from the Center for Disease Control, the State of Oklahoma, the City of Tahlequah, Cherokee County or other appropriate governmental authorities. In the event that a resident is showing signs or symptoms of a communicable disease or virus, the resident has an obligation to report their status to NSU Housing and Residence Life and must take such steps as may be required or recommended by governmental authorities to prevent the spread of the communicable disease or virus within the NSU community.
3. **Quarantine / Isolation / Separation:** At any time, the University or Housing and Residence Life may request or require a resident to leave campus housing when that resident's continued presence in the housing community poses a health or safety risk for community members. Residential students are required to comply with requests from Housing and Residence Life to leave their assigned space due to COVID or any other public health emergency. Failure to do so is a violation of the Residence Hall Handbook and may subject a student to emergency removal from their assigned space. Not all NSU Housing residential rooms or halls are appropriate for self-quarantine or self-isolation. In those situations, where a student is recommended to self-quarantine or self-isolate, students may not be permitted to continue residing in their residential space and will need to relocate to a safe off campus location (home, etc.). Removal from campus housing to isolate or quarantine does not constitute a termination of a residential student's housing contract. Residents arriving to campus from other countries must self-quarantine for 14 days before arriving to campus. If options to quarantine at home, or at a safe off campus location, are not available, residents will coordinate with Housing and Residence Life for a quarantine space that may include local hotels. If not already in communication with Housing and Residence Life staff, residents should contact the office at (918) 444-4700, or at [housing@nsuok.edu](mailto:housing@nsuok.edu) for assistance.
4. **De-Densifying Efforts:** Residential students are required to comply with any de-densifying efforts needed on campus due to COVID-19 or any other public health emergency, including, but not limited to, the relocation of all or some residential students to alternative housing. Relocation does not constitute a termination of a residential student's housing contract.
5. **Dining Services:** Dining service, including where and how it will be offered to residential students, is subject to the discretion of the University and is subject to modification to address public health concerns. Due to health and safety guidance adopted by the University or Housing and Residence Life, NSU Dining

Services may limit the occupancy of dining halls, limit the amount of time students may reside within dining halls or make other operational adjustments needed to address health and safety concerns.

6. **Cleaning:** Facilities Management, in conjunction with Housing and Residence Life, will continue to implement and modify its cleaning protocols to address COVID or other public health emergencies in the interest of minimizing the spread of disease. Housing and Residence Life staff will educate and inform residential students about appropriate cleaning protocols within their assigned spaces to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within residence halls.
7. **Termination:** Upon reasonable notice, Housing and Residence Life reserves the right to terminate housing contracts due to public health emergency needs, including COVID. In the event Housing and Residence Life terminates housing contracts due to public health concerns, NSU will offer fair and reasonable reimbursements for impacted students as appropriate and based on information available at that time.

In the event of a conflict between this COVID-19 Housing and Residence Life Procedures and Guidelines and the remaining sections of the Residence Hall Handbook, this Section will apply.

## **Social Distancing**

Per information from the CDC, COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within approximately 6 feet) for a minimum of 15 minutes. Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. To help ensure that all residents are following proper social distancing, the following policies are in place.

1. **Guest and Visitation** Outside guests are prohibited in rooms, suites or common spaces. Outside guests are defined as anyone who doesn't live in the building or floor. Residents who live on your floor or building may visit your room, but each resident of a room/suite is limited to 1 guest at a time. All guests of a room/suite must be approved by all roommates/suitemates before the guest can visit. When guests are present all individuals must wear masks. No overnight guests are allowed.
2. **Desks** The front desks for all buildings will be closed. Staff will be available by phone 24 hours a day to help with any issues that may arise. Duty phone numbers are posted at front desks and on your floors. Equipment that is typically available at the desk (ie. pool sticks, ping pong paddles, and vacuums) will not be available for check out. We recommend that residents bring items such as vacuums.

3. **Social Spaces** All social spaces will be closed except laundry rooms. In spaces that cannot be closed, seating will be removed to help provide social distancing when those spaces are in use. This includes the Cobb Kitchen.
4. **Elevators** Elevators are limited to a maximum of two (2) residents at any time. This increases social distancing and reduces contact between residents. Elevators are located in Cobb Hall and Wyly Hall.

### **Personal Responsibility**

It is the personal responsibility of all residents to ensure they are doing what they can to keep themselves and other members of the NSU community safe and healthy.

Transparency about your health is paramount during this time. We have a responsibility to ourselves, our families and our community to work together to keep everyone healthy and safe.

*These personal responsibilities include, but are not limited to:*

1. **NSU requires faculty, staff, students, contractors, volunteers and visitors across all NSU locations to wear a mask or approved face covering that covers your nose and mouth. Masks or approved face coverings must be worn when in enclosed public and common areas on campus and outdoors when physical distancing is not easily maintained unless an exception is met. Masks should be worn in combination with other measures, such as strict physical distancing and proper handwashing.**

**Wearing a face mask improves the health and safety for everyone and is required when outside of your room or suite, especially in high traffic areas such as hallways, laundry rooms, and while visiting other rooms in your residence hall (outside guests are not permitted, see above).**

2. Per CDC guidelines, **social distancing of at least 6 feet** should be practiced by all residents outside of your room or suite.
3. **It is required that any symptoms or diagnosis of COVID-19 be reported to the Office of Housing and Residence Life to receive information about how to proceed safely.** Residents should report by calling the Housing and Residence Life office (918-444-4700), emailing [housing@nsuok.edu](mailto:housing@nsuok.edu), or calling your residence hall's posted duty number.

4. Though it is already expected that every resident's room or suite remains clean throughout the year, it is vital that all residents practice **wiping down surfaces with disinfectant on a daily basis** (desk tops, door knobs, counters, chairs, etc.) to limit the spread of bacteria and germs that could cause someone to get sick, especially in common areas such as bathrooms. Cleaning supplies will not be supplied by Housing and Residence Life and students are encouraged to provide for their own personal cleaning products.
5. Per CDC guidelines, **regular hand washing for at least 20 seconds and avoiding contact with your face** are also ways to ensure everyone stays as healthy as possible during this time.
6. The NSU "**Report Concern**" link located at the bottom of every NSU page is there for us, as a university, to help you and answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to utilize the "**Coronavirus Concerns**" link to ask questions or report any concerns you may have regarding the virus.