

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) **Q.** When an emergency meeting is held to vote on whether to expel a member, does the member in question have the right to attend the meeting and vote.

A. Yes. In a democratically run Oxford House, every member has the right to vote. Even if there is suspicion of use or evidence of disruptive behavior, the member in question has the right to be present and has a vote. Emergency meetings should not be held without the member in question, unless the member cannot attend within a reasonable period of time.

- 2) **Q.** When a member moves out, and has paid their EES in advance for the week or month, when is the house obligated to return their money?

A. The house has thirty days to return the unused portion of EES to a mailing address provided by the member.

- 3) **Q.** Can a house keep an expelled member's belongings to pay for any expenses they owe?

A. No. Houses cannot legally keep belongings in lieu of unpaid EES. A reasonable period of time must be given to the expelled member to retrieve their belongings. They can be moved to another part of the house as to allow access to living space for another member. It is a good idea to send a return requested letter to the last known address for the expelled member telling them that if the belongings are not picked up within a period of time they will be donated to charity. The return requested letter will help protect the house if the expelled member decides to sue for their belongings.

- 4) **Q.** How should a house help a member that is behind on their EES or showing disruptive behaviors?

A. This should be decided by the group conscience of the house in a meeting with the member in question. Issues like disruptive behavior and nonpayment of EES should be addressed as soon as possible. A "Contract" can be written between the member and the house that stipulates the exact nature of the problem and what the house expects from the member to correct it. Remember to keep the principles of recovery above the personalities of individuals.

5) **Q.** Oxford House Inc. is 501c3 tax exempt nonprofit as recognized by the IRS. Does this mean that individual Oxford Houses don't have to pay sales tax on purchases?

A. No the tax exempt status for Oxford House Inc. means that it does not pay Federal income taxes for contributions it receives. This does not affect the individual houses obligation to pay local sales taxes.

6) **Q.** Can members have locks on their bedroom doors?

A. No. Boarding Houses have locks on doors because people rent rooms and don't participate in the management of the house. Oxford Houses are run by the residents and act as a family with the residents share the entire house. Locks are intended to mean dead bolts, padlocks, or any hardware that is not part of the doorknob, for privacy when the member is in the room.

7) **Q.** Can a member of an Oxford House take prescribed narcotics while living at the house?

A. There may be occasions when a resident has a medical need for narcotic medication. Every effort should be made to find a nonnarcotic alternative. If narcotic medication becomes necessary, the house's group conscience should consider if this might trigger or have a negative effect on any member's recovery. It is suggested that the member having to take the narcotic have a letter from their doctor acknowledging that they are aware of the individual's addiction and that there is no other alternative treatment. Certain safety measures should be taken such as a lock box for the member to keep their medication safe and accountability that the member is taking the medication as prescribed. Any sharing, selling or stealing of the medication is grounds for expulsion.

8) **Q.** What should a house do if a city inspector shows up or tries to contact the house?

A. Ask the inspector to contact Oxford House Inc. at (301) 587-2916 before inspecting the house.