Safety & Security in your house

This information is relevant for Undergraduates, postgraduates, international and home students

Living in a Student House can be a great experience, but it is important to maintain safety standards to ensure that you don't become a victim of theft and are prepared in case there is an emergency. Some things may sound obvious but it is best not to expect others to do it.

Fire Hazards

- Agree a place where a spare key is kept and make sure everyone knows where that location is - this is particularly important in case you need to leave in an emergency.
- Make sure all exit doors are kept clear.
- Check smoke detectors are working.
- Ask your landlord if they can provide a carbon monoxide detector - From 1st October 2015 it is compulsory for all landlords to fit smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in rental properties.
- Ensure that your soft furnishings, such as beds and sofas, are fire resistant.
- Check that you receive a gas safety certificate when you move in.
- Use an adaptor when using non-UK electrical appliances.
- Be aware of the risks when smoking or using candles. Most tenancy agreements will have a term where you agree to not do this.
- Read Fire safety in shared or rented accommodation [PDF]

Preventing Burglary

- If your house still has a sign advertising its availability, ask your landlord/agent to remove it - property signs alert burglars to it being a multi-occupied student property
- Use your window locks
- Always lock the front and back door and all the windows when the house is unoccupied
- Lock the front and back doors overnight and make sure you remove the key so your housemates can get in!
- Fit net curtains or blinds to stop anyone looking into your property. You should ask your landlords permission to do this
- Don't have curtains drawn permanently
- Avoid leaving bikes in the front garden even if they are locked
- Take all your valuables home with you during the holidays
- When you buy new valuables (e.g. laptop, TV) don't advertise them by leaving the packaging outside
- Register any item with a serial number for free at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)
- Consider marking your property with a ‘SelectaDNA’ kit
- Get home contents insurance and keep it up to date
What is a SelectaDNA kit?

This kit can be used to mark any property which has the potential to be stolen in a burglary or other related crime. The most important items to mark are electrical items such as TVs, laptops, games consoles etc.

Each kit contains:
• Instructions
• A bottle of SelectaDNA formula
• Stick applicator
• Tamper resistant warning labels
• SelectaDNA window stickers
• Registration Form

If you would like a kit, please contact Student Community Assistants on communityprojects@reading.ac.uk

If you would like further advice or to speak with somebody in person then a Students’ Union Adviser may be able to help. The specialist advisers offer a confidential service, independent from the University so they can discuss your case with you in private.

Contact us by email at advice@rusu.co.uk, or visit us in the RUSU building.

You can book an appointment or attend a drop-in session. Drop in runs on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday (11.00am-1.30pm) and Wednesday (2pm-4.30pm)

Reviewed July 17