

MSU Student Housing Cooperative

OWNER'S HANDBOOK





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Welcome to Your New Home!

When we say, “We own it!” it’s not just a cute phrase.

You own your space, and share it with friends, classmates, coworkers, and family. Family is truly what your housemates will become—you’ll share laughter, smiles, meals, memories, and more with a wide array of individuals!

In the SHC, our Members take responsibility for their living situations and themselves. There’s no landlord to complain about, and no University Housing Director to monitor you. Your House is a living-learning community, and being part of the co-op will become an identity you share with over two hundred current Members, and forty years of SHC alumni who came before.

You own it—we all do.

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RUNNING YOUR HOUSE

CHORES

You and your housemates signed up to do the collective work it takes to maintain a house. This is what keeps costs lower than other housing options. Chores and House Jobs are the primary channel by which you will do so. Every member is expected to put in a certain number of hours per week as determined by their House constitution.

House jobs include washing dishes, food preparation in houses with meal plans, cleaning common spaces, outdoor maintenance, serving as a House Officer, Office Labor, and plenty more.

HOUSE MEETINGS

House meetings are where you decide how to use your money, improve your House, and, really, how you want to live together. Disputes can be settled and grievances aired. They can be used to build community: maybe you'll plan parties, movie nights, or a cook out! House Meetings are NOT optional.

HOUSE CONSTITUTIONS

Each House's constitution defines its individual rules and policies. It helps the House run smoothly by outlining how you and your housemates elect officers, assign jobs, hand out fines and credits, and organize parties. House constitutions cannot override the Board Policy Manual or Code of Operations.

House constitutions contain rules to protect Members from apathy, distrust, and any manner of danger to the cooperative values by which we all agree to live. The policies they describe should address the ways your House agrees to be equitable, autonomous, and utilize democratic member control.

Speaking of democratic member control, if your constitution is out of date and no longer reflects the way your House does business, it is entirely in your power to suggest changes at a House meeting! (See page 35 for more information.)

House constitutions may be found on the SHC website under each House's tab.

HOUSE OFFICERS

Members in these roles make decisions for the full cooperative system and solve day-to-day troubles of the House. It's everyone's responsibility to help the House run smoothly, but the officers should be helpful experts at it. Take a look, and if a position strikes your fancy, consider running for it yourself!

Board Representative

Your Board Rep is responsible for updating the House on current SHC issues. They also attend meetings of the Board of Directors, and participate in other committees of the Board. (See pages 12-13 for more information.)

Make sure your Board Rep is posting copies of the Board meeting agendas in the House and reporting back at House meetings, or you'll be left out of the loop when the SHC makes major decisions.

Education Officer

Your Education Officer is your go-to resource when you have questions about the SHC and your House. Do you want to get involved in the co-op? Do you want to update your house constitution? Contact your Education Officer! They will also be trained to be resources on topics the membership deems integral to living cooperatively in the SHC.

This officer solicits articles and artwork from Members for the Pine Press, and writes and edits content themselves!

Finance Officer

Your Finance Officer pays your House's bills, budgets House money, and ensures everyone is paying their charges. They keep you and your housemates informed of House finances by posting charge sheets and giving reports at House meetings.

Ask your Finance Officer how to understand a charge sheet! It's every Member's responsibility to understand House finances. After all, it's your money!

Facilities Officer

Your Facilities Officer facilitates the physical development and maintenance of your property. You should be helping to maintain the space yourself, but this officer is there to help when you can't. If they can't help, they can get in touch with people who can!

Membership Officer

Your Membership Officer is your go-to person for conflict resolution. If you're having trouble resolving conflict with another Member in your House, go to this officer for help! They also oversee room picks and changes.

Membership Officers also coordinate finding new Members for the House for the upcoming contract year and when there are vacancies. They give tours to prospective Members and educate them about cooperative living.

Co-op Policies

Some House rules will be common across the SHC, as they are derived from membership contracts, and the Code of Operations. These documents can be found at <http://www.msu.coop/governance/>. Some of these rules are also based on the law!

Alcohol

Do not give alcohol to those under the legal drinking age. Do not sell alcohol at your parties, or collect money at any party with alcohol, even if it's for a great cause. You could lose the rental rights to your House! Don't have common sources of alcohol, or your house could be held liable for providing alcohol to minors.

Guests

A Guest is defined as a non-Member who stays at the House for three or more consecutive days, or seven non-consecutive days in a month. A House may not have overnight guests that exceed the occupancy limit given by the City. This capacity can be found in your contract.

All Guests must sign Guest contracts. Should a Guest break their contract, their host is liable for any costs that accrue. Guests have the same responsibilities as members (e.g. those who dirty the dishes should clean the dishes, too), but don't have the same rights. If a Guest would like to earn those rights, and you have space available in the house, that person needs to apply for SHC membership like any other prospective member.

Paint

Talk to your housemates before you paint common areas. If you get too wacky in your own room, your House can vote to make you re-paint your bedroom when you move out—on your dollar.

Parking

Each House has parking spots for 80% of their Members. Parking is provided, but not guaranteed. Some Houses with small lots have spaces allocated elsewhere, specifics of which can be found in the Code of Operations.

Party

Parties must not be publicly advertised (make your Facebook event Invite-Only), and you can't advertise having alcohol. Designate one sober housemate who will be present to talk to cops should they come by.

Pets

Some houses allow pets! Dogs aren't permitted as pets, but some may reside in the houses as service animals. All uncaged animals must be registered with the SHC, and you must get permission from 100% of your House. If your animal causes damage, your House may hold you responsible for it.

Smoking

No smoking is allowed in the Houses. If you see a covered smoke detector, uncover it! It's a crime to cover 'em up, and subject to a fine.

SHC

STRUCTURE

COOPERATIVE IDENTITY*

Definition of a Cooperative

An autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Cooperative Values

Co-ops are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-op members believe in honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Cooperative Principles

- 1. VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP:** Co-ops are voluntary, and open to everyone able to use their services who will accept the responsibilities of membership.
- 2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL:** Co-ops are democratically controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.
- 3. MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative.
- 4. AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE:** Co-ops are autonomous, self-help organizations.
- 5. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION:** Co-ops provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees.
- 6. CO-OPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES:** Co-ops become stronger by participating in the co-op movement.
- 7. CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:** Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.

* As defined by the International Co-operative Alliance at <http://ica.coop/en/what-co-operative>

SHC MISSION STATEMENT

Our cooperative principles promote quality housing and services. As individuals, we are empowered through democratic participation to create a community equally accessible to all. As an organization, we are committed to expanding the cooperative movement.

OUR COOPERATIVE ENDS

Board Policy outlines the various Ends, or goals, of the SHC. Our Ends are inherently tied to our identity as a cooperative, and define what the SHC hopes to offer our four constituents.

MEMBER RESIDENTS: Will actively participate in the co-op movement; live in an intentional community; be exposed to diversity; live in safe and secure homes; create an empowered environment; demonstrate social responsibility, ecological stewardship, and environmental sustainability.

UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES: Will flourish through cooperative support.

NEIGHBORS: Will understand and appreciate cooperative culture.

THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT: Will be a light shining in every current and alumni member; be visible, attractive and awesome; end isolation in sub-cultures that suffer institutional oppression; grow and become more diversified.

POLICY GOVERNANCE

In the Spring of 2016, the SHC began operating under Policy Governance. Under this style of governance the Board may focus on long-term goals instead of micromanaging day-to-day operations.

The Board of Directors uses member input to develop policy, the President and Executive Director oversee the executive functions of the organization, and operational committees complete daily operations such as educating members and maintaining facilities.

The Board monitors whether the Executive Team (the President and Executive Director) are in compliance with policy. Members may appeal operational decisions to the standing committees that made them, or comment during the Member Input section of any regular Board meeting agenda.

Policies in the new Policy Manual are categorized into four different sections:

- **ENDS POLICIES:** These define the impact we want the SHC to have on our members, neighbors, underserved communities, and the co-op movement as a whole. (See page 11.)
- **EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS:** What the Executive Team cannot do.
- **GOVERNANCE PROCESSES:** The rules and procedures of the Board.
- **BOARD-MANAGEMENT DELEGATIONS:** The relationships between the Board, Staff, and members of the Executive Committee.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board is the legal governing and policy-making body of the SHC and is charged with acting in the best interest of the cooperative corporation. Within the context of Policy Governance, the Board develops the policies that govern the organization, and monitors the Executive Team as they complete what is required of them by Policy. Contact the President, who chairs the Board, if you have any questions or want to get involved!

Meetings of the Board are open to all members!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee (EC) reports to the President in order to fulfill operational duties and limitations assigned by Board. The President, Vice Presidents, and Corporate Secretary sit on the EC as voting members, and the Executive Director serves as a non-voting member. The committee works in partnership with the professional staff.

A typical EC meeting provides its members with the opportunity to share their progress on projects and other operational tasks, as well as to ask for opinions and thoughts on further action steps.

You may also attend EC meetings! Just make sure before hand that they don't have any confidential discussions on the agenda.

OPERATIONAL COMMITTEES

Each Committee is composed of an officer from each House and is chaired by a member of the Executive Committee.

Committee meetings are open to all members!

Education

Chaired by the Vice President of Education, this committee educates SHC Members through the publication of the Pine Press, workshops, and events.

ELEMENTS OF A TYPICAL MEETING:

- Professional development skill shares to learn the skills needed to perform your duties.
- Brainstorming and planning for upcoming events, workshops, and Pine Press issues.
- Discussion of dates and events to add to the SHC Calendar.

Facilities

Chaired by the Vice President of Facilities, the Facilities Committee provides preventative and predictive maintenance in the Houses.

ELEMENTS OF A TYPICAL MEETING:

- Updates from the VPF regarding project coordination and upcoming House inspections.
- Officer reports and skill shares to address the condition and problems in each House.
- Discussions of long term projects, and sustainability in and expansion of the SHC.

Finance

Chaired by the Corporate Treasurer, this committee plans and develops House Budgets, discusses co-op financial policies, and keeps Houses financially afloat.

ELEMENTS OF A TYPICAL MEETING:

- Training and coaching for Finance Officers.
- Turning in monthly financial documents from each House.
- Planning for financial literacy workshops.

Membership

Chaired by the Vice President of Membership, this committee is responsible for recruiting new members and keeping our spaces safe and healthy.

ELEMENTS OF A TYPICAL MEETING:

- Education regarding recruitment, covering topics such as touring and advertisement.
- Discussion of outstanding SHC membership issues.
- Problem solving related to mediation and conflict resolution in the houses.

WELCOME TO THE OFFICE!

The Office is the hub of SHC organizational activity! Sound boring? Well think again!

The Office, just like our Houses, belongs to you: drop in anytime during business hours. While you're here, feel free to use the printer or meeting space, check out the SHC archives, and get to know your Staff and fellow co-ops.

That's right, some of your fellow co-ops can be found here on the regular; working in stipended EC or Fellowship positions, as Office Labor, or sometimes just hanging out! You'll also find our experienced professional staff. Everyone is working towards the improvement of the system as a whole and this absolutely affects you at the House level!

OFFICE LABOR SQUAD

Members such as yourself can receive House credit/points/hours for working in the Office. Office Labor keeps the office organized and serves as an important line of communication from the office to your Houses. This saves the co-op, and by extension you, money that would otherwise be spent on secretarial and custodial services!

Many have used their Office Labor hours as a way to develop and exercise unique skills related to career and life goals. Some examples include working on the SHC's publications, graphic design projects, social media accounts, community outreach, IT, and our Non-Profit application process!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

President

The President is the face of the SHC internally and to external organizations. They chair the Executive Committee and the Board, and supervise the Executive Director. The President oversees the SHC's governance process and assists the EC and staff on their initiatives. They can be available to meet with members to discuss a policy-related visionary ideas. The President is elected by the Membership.

Vice President of Education

This position coordinates all educational events—from New Member Orientations to EC retreats! They also develop trainings based on member input and interest. (Some recent examples include anti-oppression and consent.) The VPE is also the Publishing Manager of the Pine Press—Contact them if you want to get involved! The VPE is elected by the Membership.

Vice President of Facilities

When they aren't inspecting houses, overseeing city inspections, or facilitating the SHC's grant program (see page 45), the VPF educates the membership about emergency protocols, preventative maintenance, and making homes more sustainable and secure. They can also help members like yourself learn the skills you need to maintain your own property! The VPF is appointed by the Board of Directors.

Corporate Treasurer

This position chairs the Finance and Investment Committees. The Corporate Treasurer has charge of the SHC finances, working closely with the President and Executive Director. They give regular financial reports to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. The Corporate Treasurer is appointed by the Board of Directors.

Vice President of Membership

To keep the SHC at capacity, the VPM advertises the co-op and teaches Membership Officers about the approval process for prospective members. They prepare new members by developing and orchestrating New Member Orientation (NMO), and are a resource for facilitation and mediation for current members. If you ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe, or want to file a grievance the VPM is here to help. The VPM is elected by the Membership.

Corporate Secretary

The Corporate Secretary serves concurrently as a Member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. They are responsible for signing official documents, completing the Executive Team's evaluation, and organizing monitoring report surveys to be presented to the Board of Directors. The Corporate Secretary is appointed by the Board of Directors.

FELLOWSHIP POSITIONS

There are many opportunities to make a difference in the SHC while also building your resume and practicing professional skills. The SHC Fellows Program was created as a way to encourage members to take on heightened responsibilities to support short-term strategic goals.

Each year, the SHC will be looking for Fellows to complete projects in the following areas:

- Brand development and communications.
- Alumni outreach and fundraising.
- Finance and House accounting.
- Ecological and energy sustainability.

Each fellowship receives a monthly stipend and is expected to spend 15-20 hours/month working on a personalized project or work plan. Fellows may work with existing Committees, members of the Office Labor Squad, or else organize new co-op-wide focus groups or caucuses. Depending on each Fellow's needs, the SHC can work with academic advisors to fulfill independent study credits or meet research requirements.

Applications are available on the SHC website each year as they become available.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION*

The goal of the Co-op Alumni Association is to create a broad network. We want to include other Lansing area cooperative alumni, which is why we aren't labeling ourselves as the SHC Alumni Association.

One of the largest issues in campus area housing co-ops across the country is turnover. While members often have a great impact on their spaces, when they leave that knowledge and experience often leaves too. But alumni have the opportunity to pass along what they learned to younger generations.

Bringing alumni back to a cooperative organization can harness and rekindle pride in the co-op and the cooperative values that resonate throughout the course of our lives. It also creates opportunities for fundraising, networking, storytelling and advising.

The Association has conducted research, formed an inner alumni steering council, and established the role of Alumni Coordinator. Our main goals right now are to build our database, establish an official status for our association, continue spreading the word, and plan events, workshops, and other opportunities for the next few semesters.

We firmly believe that once a co-oper, always a co-oper, and even after leaving the system, members can still be a part of it.

* Excerpted from *Wind Through the Pines* Vol 1 Issue 1.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Let's face it: even the best co-ops need help sometimes! That's why we have an amazing group of staff to help maintain a sense of continuity from year to year, and provide counsel based on years of past experience.

Executive Director

holly jo Sparks

The Executive Director partners with the SHC President to plan, develop and implement the policies and strategic objectives approved by the Board. They manage and motivate professional staff and Member Labor, and advise the Executive Committee on effective operations of the cooperative. Alongside the President, this position plans new initiatives and ensures the long-term accountability and sustainability of the cooperative as a whole.

Member Services Coordinator

Nola Warner

The MSC's purpose is to serve SHC members. They are a reference point for a vast array of different cooperative resources. Their job is to make sure that your questions are answered and you have the tools to succeed as a member. They are a non-voting member of the Membership and Education Committees, where they help ensure members' values and ideals are heard, recognized, and acted upon.

Financial Coordinator

MC Rothhorn

This position brings cooperation into financial coordination! Along with the other staff members, they ensure that you have accurate and relevant financial data to review in order to make loving, cooperative decisions that grow SHC and the co-op movement. Their responsibilities include bookkeeping, payroll, record keeping, and supporting the annual corporate and house audits.

Maintenance Coordinator

Mike McCurdy

The Maintenance Coordinator works to make sure our Houses (our second biggest asset after quality Members such as yourself!) stay in healthy, safe condition. They are responsible for making sure the Houses abide by the City, State, and Federal expectations. They're also responsible for helping make Capital Improvements on the Houses.

FINANCE AND PAYMENT

WHAT YOU PAY

As Member-Owners, none of us pay rent! Nobody is making a profit from your charges. Instead, your money, in the form of charges, supports your House's livelihood and the Cooperative that you own.

Assessment

Paid on a monthly basis, this is your financial contribution to the SHC as a whole. Unlike rent, where you pay to have access to a space, this money is what goes towards things like mortgages and capital maintenance, the costs you accrue as owners of your properties.

Assessment for Non-Singles is two-thirds the amount charged for Singles. Assessment is determined based on a budget that evaluates affordable market rates, projected expenses, and contributions to reserves for capital repairs, emergencies, and expansion.

House Charges

Also paid monthly, YOU determine this portion of your charges (along with the rest of your House of course!) These include utilities and whatever amenities your House decides to provide. Netflix? Cable? Pantry food? A meal plan? All fall under House charges.

If you hear the term “monthly charges,” this refers to a lump sum of Assessment and House Charges.

Shares and Dues

Shares and Dues are one time fees that are paid when signing a contract with the SHC.

Shares are your economic participation, your investment in the co-op. With your shares you buy into a democratic housing system! This upfront cost is returned after you leave the co-op and the house audits are processed.

Dues are an \$80 charge that supports our partner organizations like the North American Students of Cooperation and the East Lansing Food Co-op. Once paid, you become a member of these co-ops as well! Visit their websites (see page 49) to learn more!

How You PAY

When paying your monthly charges, you can pay via the following methods:

- **ONLINE:** Head over to the “Current Members” tab on the SHC website to pay directly from your checkings or savings account. You may need to get your login information from the Member Services Coordinator beforehand. Paying online saves the SHC money by eliminating processing fees and work time!
- **IN PERSON:** Drop by the office and talk to the MSC. When you pay in person you can use credit, debit, check, cashier’s check or money order! Anything except cash.

WHEN YOU PAY

- **1ST OF THE MONTH:** Charges are due. You may pay ahead of time if need be. If you are going to have trouble paying, be sure to contact your Finance Officer, and the Office to discuss your options.
- **5TH OF THE MONTH:** At midnight, a 5% late charge is added to the total amount you owe if you haven't paid your balance to below \$100.00.
- **7TH OF THE MONTH:** A Notice to Quit is sent to every Member who owes over \$100. This is a legal document that gives you 7 days to pay your balance.
- **15TH OF THE MONTH:** The SHC files a Summons and Complaint* in the district court, which sets up a court date. Court costs are added to your balance. To stop the process, pay your balance in full.
- **TEN DAYS AFTER THE COURT DATE:** Once the court has issued a judgement, you have ten days to pay your balance and court costs in full or else you must leave the House. You still need to pay your balance even if you leave the House.
- **ELEVEN DAYS AFTER THE COURT DATE:** The judge sends a Writ of Restitution. If you don't leave voluntarily a sheriff helps you pack your possessions, and escorts you from the premises.
- **AFTER EVICTION:** If the SHC has not yet received your balance, it may send your balance to a collections agency.
- **FREQUENT LATE PAYMENT:** Once a Member has received five NTQs they become ineligible to sign a new contract with the SHC.

*The average cost of taking an individual to the Summons and Complaint stage is more than \$150, which includes court costs, process server costs, and a minimal attorney fee.

WHERE MONEY GOES AND WHEN

- Each month, you pay Assessment and House Charges together to the SHC.
- In the middle of the month, House Charges are transferred to your House's account.
- The Co-op collects Assessments before transferring House Charges to the House Account.
- If you or your housemate doesn't pay Assessment, that cost is covered by other members' House Charges, meaning your House will have a smaller income to cover budgeted expenses.
- If your House overspends its yearly budget or has unfilled vacancies, the deficit is divided equally and a charge is distributed to all Members of the House after its audit. Continuing Members must pay back their portion, and Members who have moved out will have the charge taken from their share.
- If your House underspends its budget, apply the same philosophy! You will receive a credit to your account if you're still in the system, and your share will increase if you've left it.
- While it's the job of your Finance Officer to keep track of the budget, it's everyone's responsibility to monitor spending. Hold your Finance Officer accountable by making sure they report specifics at every House meeting and that the House is in line with its budget. You may need to adjust House Charges to accommodate budget needs.

FINES AND CREDITS

Under certain circumstances, SHC members may be subject to fines, but don't worry, as long as you keep up with your responsibilities this need never be you!

Becoming part of a cooperative means agreeing to take part of the collective work it takes to maintain your House and the co-op as a whole. If you don't fulfill these responsibilities, whether it be a committee meeting, chores, office labor, or attending a House meeting, you will be fined. See your house constitution for details.

On the other hand, if you go above and beyond, your House or an Executive Committee Member can assign work credits to lower your charges for the month. Contributing to the physical development or maintenance of a House? Picking up someone else's chores? Get credit for the extra labor you put in!

How To Co-op

GLOSSARY

- **AMPO:** All-Member Party and Orientation, the semesterly co-op party! (Called FAMPO for Fall and SPAMPO in the Spring.)
- **CHARGE SHEET:** The monthly form that lists Members' charges and is posted by the office and Finance Officers.
- **CODE:** The Code of Operations. These are standard operating procedures used by the Staff & Executive Committee to manage the SHC.
- **GUFF:** General Unrestricted Free Food. Food and supplies that any Member may use at any time.
- **HOUSE FOOD:** In some Houses, another term for Guff. In others, it refers to food only to be used by cooks for meals intended to feed the house.
- **THE LISTSERV:** An email list connecting you to other co-ops. Used to relay party announcements, political rallies, shout outs, etc.
- **MONTHLY CHARGES:** The lump sum of Assessment and House Charges paid monthly to the SHC.
- **NMO:** New Member Orientation. Attendance is mandatory for this semesterly educational event.
- **NTQ:** Notice to Quit. The legal notice sent by the office for non-payment of rent.
- **PANTRY:** Prominent in Houses with meal plans, refers to a vague blend of House food and/or Guff.
- **THE PINE PRESS:** The SHC's monthly co-op newsletter. Content ranges from short stories to news articles, to recipes... Anything you can think of that would interest your fellow co-ops!
- **RELEASE REQUEST:** The form required to release your contract and find a replacement.
- **WIND THROUGH THE PINES:** The SHC's Annual Alumni Publication.

CHANGING HOUSE CONSTITUTIONS

Does the difference between written policy and House practice cause tensions in the House, confusion in new members, or ripples in House culture? If so, it may be time for an update. Your House's Education Officer is your point person for this process.

The steps for changing a House Constitution vary, but there are some things to keep in mind:

- Your constitution will outline the steps needed to change any policies.
- It may make more sense to change house culture to match the expectations of the constitution, than to create policy that excuses certain behaviors.
- When drafting changes, everyone in the House should be given the opportunity to include their input.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Addressing smaller issues as they come up promotes a culture of accountability and support, even if it may seem easier to let things go. Here are some suggestions for how to do so:

1. Think about where your anger or frustration is coming from. Are you mad that your housemate didn't do the dishes or because you spent time picking up their slack despite school and working two jobs? Isolating the real cause of the problem will better facilitate finding a mutually beneficial solution.
2. Try talking to them in person. Remember that productive conversation occurs when both parties are in a good mental space. Ask where they feel safe to chat.
3. Go to your Membership Officer. Membership Officers are trained in conflict mediation, and can help facilitate a dialogue if talking to your housemate one-on-one doesn't get through to them.
4. Contact the VPM. If your housemate is not contributing to the House, or is acting in ways that are detrimental to it, they are violating their contract. As such the VPM can alert members that their actions are grounds for eviction.
5. Submit a grievance to the VPE, VPM or MSC. A grievance committee will convene as soon as possible, talk to both parties, and issue a recommendation for moving forward, outlining of repercussions should they not be followed.
6. Appeal the recommendation to the Board if grievance committee didn't follow a fair process or missed information that may have come to a different solution.

HARRASSMENT

If you are faced with issues of harassment or are feeling unsafe due to the actions of another Member of your House, feel free to skip steps 1-4 and move on to the grievance process. In cases where the Member is breaking their contract a grievance committee can initiate eviction after consultation with the Executive Director and the SHC legal team. You can also contact the police if you think they will be able to meet your needs.

PROBLEM MEMBERS

A problem Member refers to those whose actions egregiously violate the tenets and policies of the SHC. This could mean refusal to do chores, harassing another Member, stealing, destruction of property, or other illegal activity.

In such a situation, it is imperative that Members of the House take action, as staff and Members of the EC won't know what's going on if you don't. The following two pages list actions of recourse for such situations.

REFERRALS

The Member Referral process is defined in Title 1 of Code. If a Member is put on Referral, the MSC and Vice Presidents of Membership and Education should be notified.

House Referrals

A Member on House Referral may not sign another contract until re-approved by the House. These are issued by the House, using the decision making process described in their House constitution.

Issuing this type of referral is a message from the House that the given Member is not a good fit. Maybe the Member's behavior doesn't merit expulsion, but it still doesn't exemplify the spirit of cooperation. This can be helpful if the House is fine with the Member's bad attitude, but don't want the behavior to continue for next year's occupants.

Desk Referrals

A Member on Desk Referral may not sign another contract until approved by the Membership Committee. These may be issued by the MSC, VPM, VPE or Executive Director.

This kind of referral is issued when a Member exhibits continued problems, which may include uncooperative behavior (as is defined in the Code of Operations), non-payment, or non-work.

EXPULSION

Expulsion removes Members without pursuing a formal eviction. It is a last resort measure, and should be pursued only after attempting to resolve this issue through the Grievance Committee.

REASONS FOR EXPULSION:

- Continual poor or non-performance of duties.
- Malicious destruction of property.
- Use of force or threat, including sexual harrasment, against the House Members or guests.
- Nonpayment of money owed.
- Continuous violation of House rules.
- Discriminatory harassment.

The full expulsion procedures are detailed in the Code of Operations. The VPM and VPE will happily help you and your house navigate the process.

EVICITION

Evictions are a formal process by which the SHC takes back legal possession of the space from someone who had a contract. Evictions are usually the result of nonpayment.

REASONS FOR EVICTION:

- Major breach of contract.
- Refusing to leave after the contract is up.
- Nonpayment.

If a Member is evicted they will no longer be permitted to live in the SHC and their Member Share is forfeited.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE POLICE

When the cops come knocking, know your rights and be prepared to address the situation. The following tips are meant to guide your interactions with the police if you don't know where to start.

- Police don't have the right to come inside the House or into individuals' rooms without a specific warrant.
- Assess the situation when you open the door: who should be talking to the police? At a party this will be your house Sober Rep. If someone called them, they should be the one to talk. Likewise, if they need to talk to a specific member of the House you should fetch that person.
- When retrieving the appropriate individual, close the door behind you! An open door may be considered an invitation to come inside.
- Police may act like their requests are mandatory in order to fish for the permission they actually need.
- If things get confrontational, it can result in fines or serious trouble. Obviously try to avoid this, but in some cases police may be the instigators. Record names, badge numbers, etc.
- After every police interaction, a Member of the house should submit a written Incident Report to the SHC. The SHC can help your House handle the situation quickly and effectively. Send incident reports to the President or MSC.

MOVING OUT EARLY

The SHC does not permit subleasing within the Houses. You may, however, find another person to take over the remaining part of your contract, subject to House approval and completion of the necessary paperwork. This paperwork is called a Release Request.

Until a new member replaces your space in the House, you will be responsible for House Charges and Assessment.

After filing a Release Request with the Member Services Coordinator, you are responsible for finding a replacement. It may be the case that your House or the SHC can draw from a waitlist to release you from your contract sooner, but you should be proactive and communicate with the MSC and your Membership Officer about this possibility.

HOUSE IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE?

You and your house are responsible for keeping your finances in check. Your Treasurer will help facilitate this, but as an owner you should know how to spot trouble signs and address them!

THE SIGNS:

- A Member has a balance of more than one month's charges on their account.
- Your Finance Officer can't reimburse you for something because they are waiting on a transfer.
- Your Finance Officer can't pay the bills.
- Your Finance Officer won't show you the House bank account
- Your House bank account holds significantly less money than 10x the number of people in your House.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT:

- Actively monitor House finances and make sure everyone in the House pays charges on time.
- Ask your Finance Officer why the House is having financial trouble.
- Discuss your concerns and look for solutions with the Corporate Treasurer.
- If your Finance Officer is the cause of the problem, elect a new Finance Officer at a House meeting.

If something happens and you are unable to pay, talk to your Finance Officer immediately. It gives you the best chance of getting back on track. The Member Services Coordinator is another excellent resource if you have questions about your own account.

MAINTAINING YOUR HOUSE

As a Member-Owner of your House, it is up to you and your housemates to maintain your House! This could mean taking care of maintenance needs on your own or looking for outside help. When something is broken, just follow the following steps!

- Try to fix it yourself! Search youtube or wikihow, grab some tools, and get to work! Many Houses have tools of their own, but if you're in need of an essential tool, the SHC has a tool library you can access from the website.
- Ask another housemate or your Facilities Officer to help. Remember that while your Facilities Officer is there to help facilitate repairs, they may not have more specialized knowledge than you, so work with them instead of expecting them to fix the problem for you!
- If the problem is beyond what your House can handle, contact the Vice President of Facilities or complete a maintenance request online. Remember, your House should never be doing electrical work!
- In an emergency, call up the Maintenance Coordinator. If they are not available, call a contractor. This contact information can be found on page 48. Don't call our staff after-hours unless it's a genuine emergency!

TROUBLESHOOTING FIRE ALARMS

The City of East Lansing requires homes with over 15 occupants to have a wired smoke alarm panel connected to two telephone lines. Bills for these telephone lines are sent to the SHC office.

Big Houses (Have Wired Alarms)

THE PANEL STARTS BEEPING:

- Indicates “trouble.”
- The panel has an error code that IDs the problem.
- Call Mike McCurdy or VPF immediately to report the trouble.
- If the beeping persists, call Boynton Fire & Safety. (See page 48.)

FALSE ALARMS:

- The fire department will be dispatched when the alarm goes off, even if it is a false alarm due to excessive heat or smoke.
- Call 911 to report the false alarm, although the City of East Lansing will not cancel the dispatch.
- The fire department will have to clear the alarm.
- If there are still problems in clearing the alarm, call Mike McCurdy, the VPF, or Boynton.

Small Houses

Since you are not connected to the city, you will likely be able to silence false alarms yourself! Check with one of your continuing housemates to see how to do this for your house’s particular alarm.

You will, however, need to call 911 if there is a serious fire, as the fire department will not be alerted automatically.

NEED MONEY FOR A PROJECT?

Is your House interested in home improvement? The SHC may have the funds for you!

Maintenance Grants

This grant funds Houses that wish to independently undertake improvement projects outside the reach of their Routine Maintenance Budget.

- Your Facilities Officer may bring applications to a Facilities Committee meeting at any time.
- Each House may receive an equal share of the Maintenance Grants budget as approved by the Facilities Committee.
- At the last Facilities meeting of the contract period, Houses that have used their share of the funding may apply for the use of any leftover funds, but those who have not used theirs will be given priority.

Physical Development Grants

Apply for this kind of grant for larger home improvement projects!

- Applications are due October 1st in the Fall, February 1st for Spring, and June 1st for Summer.
- Your Facilities Officer will bring them to a Facilities Committee meeting.
- Not every House is eligible to receive this grant each semester: the best projects are chosen by the Facilities Committee.

RESOURCES

RESOURCE LIST

Maintenance

The Maintenance Coordinator can be an excellent contact, but if they are unavailable the following contacts can be great resources. Be sure to identify your House, and be ready to tell them the office's address as well as your own. (See the back cover!)

Plumbing

Budget Rooter
517-882-3007

Miles Plumbing
517-646-6222

Electric

F.D. Hayes
517-482-0608

Largent Enterprises
517-327-6161

Pest Control

Rose Pest Solutions
517-322-9422

Eradico
517-351-6085

Power Failure

Board of Water & Light
Outage Line
877-295-5001

Fire Alarm Safety

Boynton Fire Safety
517-316-9911

Appliance Repair

Ace Appliance Service
517-393-1866

Heating

Fay Lett & Sons
517-371-4100

CLS Mechanical
517-323-8412

Miles Heating
517-646-6222

Gas Leaks

Consumers Energy
800-477-5050

Trash

Granger
517-372-2800

Wellness

ASMSU Legal Services
asmsu.msu.edu/services/legal-services/
517-353-3716

Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)
rcpd.msu.edu
517-884-7273

LGBT Resource Center
lgbtrc.msu.edu
517-353-9520

The Listening Ear
www.theear.org
517-337-1717 (hotline)

MSU Counseling Center
counseling.msu.edu
517-355-8270

MSU Sexual Assault Program (MSU SAP)
endrape.msu.edu
517-372-6666 (hotline)

Olin 24-hour nurse
517-353-5557

Women's Resource Center
wrc.msu.edu
517-353-1635

Cooperatives

Lansing Bike Co-op
lansingbikecoop.org

East Lansing Food Co-op
www.elfco.coop
517-337-1266

NASCO
www.nasco.coop
info@nasco.coop

City

East Lansing Police
517-351-4220

Dept. of Public Works & Environmental Services
517-337-9459

Community Relations Coalition
www.wealllivehere.org
517-432-0125

SHC

Member Facebook Group
facebook.com/groups/msustudenthousingcoop

Facebook Page
facebook.com/msushc

Google Calendars
bit.ly/meetingscalshc bit.ly/socialcalshc

CONTACT US

Office

10am-5pm, Monday-Friday
541 E. Grand River Ave
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-355-8313
info@msu.coop
www.msu.coop

Executive Committee

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MAINTENANCE COORDINATOR
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517-488-7702

ALUMNI COORDINATOR
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House Emails

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