

A Guide to Living in Aiken Village

This site was designed to be a reference guide about Aiken Village living. It was written to answer some of the most commonly asked questions about the Village. Please read through this site and bookmark it for easy reference. If you have other questions or need assistance, please contact one of the Resident Assistants, come by the Aiken Village office, or visit the main Housing Office in Herbert Hall.

Moving into the Village

When moving into the Village, residents should check their apartments thoroughly for damages, missing items (i.e., window screens, fire extinguishers), or unclean areas. Although each apartment is thoroughly cleaned before new tenants arrive, some areas may have been inadvertently overlooked. If you find any damages or something that needs attention, please mark it on your copy of the apartment inventory form and return it to the office. The problem will be corrected as soon as possible. When you move out, we expect you to leave the apartment clean.

Super basic television cable, local telephone service and voice mail, water, and sewer are provided to all tenants at no additional charge. Electricity is ready to use upon move-in. To activate electricity, locate the fuse box in the pantry or closet and turn all switches to the "ON" position.

Tenants will pay their electricity fees on their consolidated bill from Garner Hall at the same time rent is due. Payment for all fees is due by the 9th of each month without notice.

Although super basic cable is provided, tenants must call Northland Cable Company (9-323-1615) if any problems arise or if residents want to add premium channels. Satellite dishes are not allowed.

Aiken Village uses the University's phone system; therefore, remember to press "9" to get an outside line if you are dialing a Starkville number (323, 324, 320, 338 prefixes are just a few examples) and just the last five (5) digits of a campus number if you are calling on campus.

Long distance service may be obtained from MSU Telecommunications at 5-2214, in the basement of Lee Hall. Problems with phone service must be reported to the Housing Department Networks office at 5-2143.

Apartments are heated by gas. Residents are responsible for paying their own gas bills each month. Residents must go to Mississippi Valley Gas (9-323-2741) at 402 University Drive to have the gas turned on. An \$85.00 deposit is required.

All apartments are equipped with smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Check your smoke detectors by pressing the test button on the detector. If the batteries are okay, it will beep. **DO NOT REMOVE BATTERIES FROM THE SMOKE DETECTOR WITHOUT REPLACING THEM IMMEDIATELY** (See "Safety Standards" for our policy regarding handling and mishandling of smoke detectors.). Locate

your fire extinguisher and make sure the pressure gauge arrow is in the green area which indicates it is charged. Please note any exceptions to the above on your inventory form at check-in.

Newsletters are published periodically. Please read the newsletter because it is one of the best ways that the Village staff has to communicate with the residents. Please call the office with any suggestions, comments, or submissions for the newsletter.

Transferring Apartments

You can apply for a transfer to another apartment and be placed on the waiting list after living in the Village for six months. Transfers are not granted during major move-in or move-out times (Dec / Jan, May / June, or August) You are responsible for cleaning your apartment before you transfer to another apartment. Damages and cleaning charges will be assessed for leaving an apartment in an unsatisfactory condition.

Aiken Village Office

The Aiken Village office hours are Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. The phone number is 5-2133. You can make maintenance requests, and ask questions about policies and procedures in the office. Resident Assistants or your Residence Director are also available if you have questions. The telephone numbers for the resident assistants can be found on the bulletin board by the office or by calling the office during regular office hours.

To contact the resident assistant on duty, please call the pager number which is posted at the office of Aiken Village.

The cashier's office will mail a bill to you each month. It is your responsibility to pay your rent and electricity to the cashier's office by the 9th of every month. Other fees such as re-key charges and any maintenance charges will be added to your statement. You can pay rent in the cashier's office with cash, check, or credit card, or you can call the Cashier's Office and pay using your credit card. If fees are not paid within 60 days, your school records will be put on hold. The eviction process will be invoked if payments are 60 days overdue.

Maintenance requests can be made by visiting or calling the Aiken Village office during office hours. If an emergency (electrical, water, or heating problems) arises after office hours, call a resident assistant directly, or use the pager number, and he/she will help you. If there is still no answer, call the MSU police at 5-2121. The maintenance staff will respond to the problem as quickly as possible. Most routine requests are handled within a 48-hour time period. Emergency situations will take precedence over minor problems. Occasionally residents will be charged for repairs if the damage was caused by the resident or a visitor of the resident. Because Summer is a very busy time for the maintenance staff, requests for repairs may take longer to respond to than at other times of the year. Most large projects (screens, doors, air conditioners, closet doors, drilling holes) are handled collectively every few weeks. Regular health and safety inspections will be conducted periodically without notice. They usually run concurrently with the extermination service

within the apartments.

Community Standards

Air Conditioners: Personal air conditioners are allowed in Aiken Village. Each air conditioner will be installed by the maintenance office for \$5.50 (which will be billed directly to your account). The tenant must place the air conditioner under the window where it is to be installed.

Appliances: Appliances with open coils, flames, or those which pose an electrical overload are prohibited for safety reasons. Dishwashers, freezers, washers, and dryers are not allowed. If one of these appliances is found, the resident has 72 hours to remove it from the complex permanently. If not properly taken care of within 72 hours, the appliance will be confiscated and discarded and the residence life judicial process may be pursued.

Bicycles: Bicycles must be kept in the bicycle rack or inside your apartment, not on balconies or in front of apartments (due to fire ordinances). Any bicycle left on the side walk or grass is subject to being confiscated. Confiscated bicycles will be processed in accordance with the Housing and Residence Life abandonment property policy.

Children: Parents are responsible for the actions of their children and their guests. Children are expected to follow Aiken Village policies.

Closing: During university holidays and break periods, the Aiken Village office is closed. However, if you need assistance, please call the resident assistant on duty or the MSU Police Department at 5-2121. During Spring Break, the break in May and August, the main office in Herbert is open 8-5 Monday through Friday, (662) 325-3555.

Combination Lock Doors: The laundry room is open by combination lock. The combination can be obtained in the Aiken Village office or from a Resident Assistant. Residents will be notified of combination changes. These facilities are for Aiken Village residents only. In the interest of safety, please do not give the combination out. Let the office or Resident Assistant staff know immediately if you observe suspicious or unfamiliar individuals in these facilities. After hours, please call your Resident Assistant. If you are unable to reach a Resident Assistant, please call MSU police, 5-2121. The Resident Assistant on duty will lock the laundry room each night as a safety precaution when the office closes.

Construction and Painting: Residents may not change the inside or outside of the apartment or buildings. Apartments are painted before residents move in and should not be painted by residents at any time. Damages will be assessed and charged to a tenant's account.

Contract: The Aiken Village contract runs from August 1 until July 31. Up-to-date records of proper identification (marriage license, social security, passport, identification of children) must be maintained. Please read the contract, as the department follows these policies very closely. Adding anyone to an apartment must be cleared through Housing. Sublease of an Aiken Village apartment is in violation of the

contract.

Faucets: Outside faucets are not to be used by Aiken Village residents (i.e., no car washing).

Floors: Residents are not to drive nails into the floors or use any type of self-adhesive flooring material, double-sided tape, adhesive, carpet tacks, or strips on the floors.

Furnishings/Outside Equipment: Furnishings in public areas may not be removed for use in a resident's apartment for any reason. Large pieces of furniture may not be left outside on porches or around or in the stairwells. Each resident is allowed to leave only two lawn chairs, a grill, and three potted plants on the porches. Leaving items out other than these is a violation of policy. Students in violation may be prosecuted. Resident Assistants will complete a situation report for any resident in violation. Any items appearing to be abandoned under the stairwells and in breeze ways will be treated as abandoned property.

Garbage Bags: Six (6) garbage bags a month will be provided to one (1) bedroom apartments. Ten (10) garbage bags each month will be provided for two (2) bedroom apartments. You can pick these garbage bags up at the office at the beginning of each month. Please place all garbage in plastic bags, tie securely and place inside the dumpster. Do not set garbage on porches, sidewalks, or beside the dumpster, even temporarily. If the dumpster is full, please find another one. Garbage left outside of the containers invites roaches, rodents, and other animals. Please do your part to keep the grounds clean by making sure that all trash is placed in the dumpster and trash around the vicinity of your apartment is picked up. Please take part in the recycling effort in the Village. Check with your Resident Assistant to see what items can be recycled.

Gardens: Gardens will be allowed in designated areas only. If you wish to have a garden, please contact either the office or your Resident Assistant to find out the proper location.

Guests: Overnight guests may stay a maximum of 72 hours. Special requests may be made to the Residence Director. Please remember that no more than three people may stay in a one-bedroom apartment and no more than four people may stay in a two-bedroom apartment at any time. This is a federal law to ensure our residents receive adequate housing. Residents are responsible for the behavior of their guests, including all financial charges resulting from damages and/or cleanup due to the guest's behavior. Guests must follow all rules and regulations of Mississippi State University and the Department of Housing and Residence Life policies for Aiken Village. Herbert Hall is a conference building and may have space available for guests at a nominal charge.

Keys: Keys will be issued to the resident at check-in. An extra key may be issued to children age 12 and older. A parent must accompany the child to sign for the key. A temporary key may be borrowed from the Aiken Village office but must be returned within 48 hours. If a key is not returned, the resident will be charged for a lock change. Keys may not be reproduced, nor will they be issued to guests. No exceptions. If a key is borrowed from the office, a picture ID with social security number must be presented.

Lost Keys: If you lose or break your apartment key, please contact the Aiken Village Office during business hours. After hours and on weekends, contact the Resident Assistant on duty. If you lose your apartment or mail key, there will be a lock and key charge billed to your account.

Locks: Locks may not be added to your apartment doors or closets.

Meat or Other Foods: Meat or any type of food may not be hung, stored, or left outside for any reason.

Musical Instruments: Electric guitars, drums, pianos, or other loud instruments may not be played in the apartments during quiet hours. Please be considerate of your neighbors. If an instrument becomes a problem, you will be asked to remove it. Radios, stereos, and television sets should be set at reasonable volume levels such that other residents are not disturbed. Excessive noise violations could result in eviction.

Parking: The Village has assigned parking spaces by each apartment. If you have more than one car, the second car must be parked in visitor parking. Residents of Aiken Village MUST purchase a “Day Student” or a “Shuttle” parking decal from the MSU Police Department on campus at the beginning of the school year in August. Cars without current parking decals will be ticketed by the MSU Police Department. Driving or parking on lawns, sidewalks, or areas other than streets, roadways, or parking lots is expressly prohibited. Individuals loading and unloading vehicles should let the Aiken Village office know and then move their vehicles promptly once they are finished. Please be aware that Aiken Village maintenance may use the areas behind buildings to operate and park heavy equipment.

IF SOMEONE PARKS IN YOUR PARKING SPACE, PLEASE PARK IN VISITOR PARKING AND CALL MSU POLICE AT 5-2121.

Pavilion: The pavilion may be reserved by Aiken Village residents **only**. At the Aiken Village Office, fill out a reservation form and present your MSU ID. Reservations are made on a first come, first serve basis. Residents using the pavilion are responsible for cleaning the area once the activity is finished. Alcoholic beverages may not be served in the pavilion as this would be a violation of the student code of conduct for Mississippi State University.

Pest Control: To help control pests, (1) Keep all clothes, shoes, and other personal items off the floor and baseboards. (2) Make every effort to keep food in containers and off of floors and counters. (3) Do not store cardboard boxes or bags.

The Department of Housing and Residence Life is required by law to spray apartments on a regular basis. A comprehensive pest control program is effective only when all areas of a building can be treated on a regular basis, so please cooperate by preparing your apartment for spraying. If you have a legitimate medical reason to avoid pest control treatment, you should provide the Aiken Village office with documentation from a physician so that alternative treatments can be devised to ensure total coverage for the building. Questions or concerns regarding pest control may be directed to Keith Yeatman, Housing maintenance, 5-2190; or Bryan Collins, Aiken Village maintenance, 5-3357.

Pets: Animals are not allowed to be kept in Aiken Village. Fish in aquariums of 20 gallons or less capacity are permitted. Residents found with animals will have 24 hours to remove the animal from the Village. Judicial action may be pursued and could include eviction.

Private Enterprise: Residents may not engage in operating or maintaining a business from their apartment.

Quiet Hours: Quiet hours are established by each individual Hall Association in accordance with guidelines established by the Residence Hall Association and the Department of Housing and Residence Life. For special events scheduled by the Hall Association within the hall, flexibility is permitted with regard to quiet hours. Amplified music out-of-doors is permitted only in accordance with its own policy found in the university policies website <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security.html>. Courtesy hours are those times of the day not designated as quiet hours. (Example: 10 p.m. -10 a.m. may be quiet hours; 10 a.m.-10 p.m. would be courtesy hours.)

Screen Doors: Please make sure that your screen door is closed completely. The doors are somewhat fragile and easily damaged if they are left standing open in the wind or if they are slammed shut. Please report any broken parts of doors to the Aiken Village Office immediately. If a door is severely damaged (slats missing, screen pushed or pulled out, wind damage, broken door knobs, or other problems), the replacement cost may be passed along to the resident.

Shuttle Service: The MSU Shuttle stops in Aiken Village at the sidewalk between buildings 30 and 32 on its way to campus daily. The shuttle runs every 7-10 minutes from 7:00 am to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday when the University is open. When the shuttle service is not running, residents may contact MSU Police at 5-2121. They will escort to and from campus. The shuttle also runs on Saturday mornings, 9:00 am-noon, to Wal- Mart and Kroger. Please call MSU Transportation for more information at 5-8120.

Smoking: As part of the university's smoking policy, smoking is **prohibited** in all areas within university housing, including inside individual apartments, laundry areas, and offices.

Solicitation: Solicitation by any individual, group, business, or organization is prohibited in Aiken Village.

Telephones: Residents of Aiken Village need to provide their own phone. If problems arise, call the Housing Network Office (5-2143) to report the problem. A Housing staff member will come to your apartment to check your phone and the phone line. If the problem is in the line, the Housing staff member will call the appropriate office to report it.

Vandalism: Vandalism of Housing and Residence Life facilities, including the pavilion and flower beds, costs all residents in terms of rent increases. In some instances, destruction of property poses a safety threat to all residents, as in cases of fire or damage to electrical equipment. Residents and/or their guests face disciplinary action and possible arrest and conviction if found guilty of vandalizing university property or other residents' personal property. This also includes areas such as the pavilion, laundry room, trash containers, and flower beds.

Walls: The Aiken Village maintenance staff will drill holes for pictures. They will not drill any holes in the mortar joints, the ceiling, or any wooden part of the apartment. Residents may be charged for requesting

an excessive amount of holes to be drilled in the walls.

Water Beds/Hot Tubs: Water beds and hot tubs are not allowed in the residence halls or apartment complexes.

Safety Standards

Apartment Security: When leaving your apartment for any reason, you should lock your door. Lock your door when you are sleeping or remaining indoors for an extended period of time. Report lost keys or damaged lock mechanisms immediately to your Resident Assistant or the Aiken Village office. Should theft occur, contact your Resident Assistant and the MSU Police immediately.

Children: Village children should not be allowed to play unsupervised and should never be allowed to play in the street. MSU Police will assist in enforcing this policy. There is a children's playground by the pavilion in the center of the Village.

Cooking: Please do not leave cooking food unattended. Be sure that pots and pans (especially those containing grease) are removed from heat immediately after cooking. Turn burners "off" when not in use. Use freestanding woks on the counter top instead of wok pans on the stove eyes. Residents causing burn damage to the stove may have to replace the stove at their personal expense.

Damages: Mississippi State University, including Aiken Village and the Department of Housing and Residence Life, is not responsible for personal items of residents which may be damaged, stolen, lost, or broken while living in any campus housing facility. We cannot replace or repay tenants for fire/water damage, electrical irregularities, etc. Residents should carry their own personal property insurance (renter's insurance).

Drainage and Sewage: Problems may occur if the sink, commode, lavatory, or bathtub are used improperly. To avoid clogging the kitchen sink, do not pour grease or food down the drain. If your sink becomes clogged, please report the problem, and the maintenance staff will respond promptly. However, if it is found that you did not use proper procedures for disposal of food and grease, you will be charged to have your sink unclogged. Please do not dispose of coffee grounds, food, cigarette butts, feminine products, or paper towels in the sink, toilet, or tub.

Electrical Outlets Use: Overloading electrical outlets poses a serious fire hazard. If a circuit breaker is tripped, your breaker box is located in a closet in the apartment. The electrical outlets are not grounded; therefore, you may want to use a surge protector with your personal electrical equipment.

Fire: There is a fire extinguisher and smoke detector in each apartment. If a fire extinguisher is used, please notify the MSU Police Department and your Resident Assistant so that a new extinguisher can be provided.

Firearms and Fireworks: The use and possession of firearms, fireworks, BB guns, pellet guns, air guns, paint guns, stun guns, potato (spud) guns, bows and arrows, or any other form of weapons or explosives is strictly prohibited by the University and the Department of Housing and Residence Life. Possession of

a gun anywhere on the MSU campus is a felony and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Full explanation of this policy and a list of prohibited items may be found in the university's policies at <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security.html>.

Flammable Materials/Liquids: Use and storage of flammable materials/liquids in residential facilities is strictly prohibited. Fire hazards such as newspaper stacks, excessive trash, improper wiring, and open flames (including candles, incense, and potpourri burners) are prohibited as well.

Laundry Room: The Laundry room is located in Building 20 just next to the Aiken Village Office. The units are coin operated. Washers take approximately 25 minutes and dryers take roughly 45 minutes. Please help keep the laundry room clean and the doors closed. For security reasons, the laundry room will be locked each night by the RA on duty when the office closes.

Mail/Packages: The Village is serviced by the Starkville Post Office. Please check your mail every day.

If you are expecting a package from UPS, Federal Express or another carrier, it will be delivered to your door. If you are not at home, the package will be left at the Aiken Village office. You must bring your delivery notice and ID to claim your package.

Maintenance Emergencies: During office hours (7:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.), call the Aiken Village Office at 5-2133. If an emergency occurs after hours, call the Resident Assistant on duty by using the on-call pager number. If you do not get a response in 10-15 minutes, call the beeper number again. You may also try to contact the Residence Director (5-6929) or one of the other Resident Assistants in the Village. Please call the MSU Police Department (5-2121) if no other staff member can be contacted. A maintenance emergency includes electrical, water, and heating problems that affect the entire apartment or entire building. If the emergency is caused by a resident's action, any costs from the Physical Plant will be passed along to the resident.

Smoke Detectors: Your smoke detectors should not be disabled and should have a working battery in it at all times. If your smoke detector "chirps," visit the maintenance shop or the office to replace the battery. You must bring the "dead" battery with you. Please remember that these detectors are for your welfare and the welfare of the students who reside in the entire building. Tampering with a smoke detector is a violation of the student code of conduct. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Severe Weather: MSU has a severe weather warning system. Severe weather warning sirens will sound when the National Weather Service issues a severe thunderstorm warning or a tornado warning. In each case, warnings mean that severe weather conditions (thunderstorm or tornado) exist, have been spotted on radar, and may affect the area. Watches mean that conditions could develop. When sirens sound, seek shelter immediately. No area in any building can be guaranteed totally safe; however, some areas are safer than others. You and your family should become familiar with severe weather procedures before severe weather comes.

General procedures to follow when severe weather sirens sound:

1. If outdoors, seek shelter in a nearby building.
2. Seek shelter in the lowest floor in an interior room

(bathroom in Aiken Village).

3. Avoid areas on the south and west walls of buildings.
4. Avoid areas with exterior doors and windows, glass areas, and areas where chemicals are stored.
5. At an inside wall, crouch on elbows and knees with your hands behind your head.
6. There is no “all clear” signal. All warnings are considered void one hour after the sirens have sounded. Subsequent sounding of the sirens means a new warning has been issued.
7. After the warning has terminated, normal activities can resume.

Vandalism of Safety Equipment: Vandalism of emergency and fire equipment is subject to immediate disciplinary action and will not be tolerated. Acts of vandalism include, but are not limited to, pulling alarms, stealing signs, stealing or maliciously discharging fire extinguishers, and disabling smoke detectors. Vandalism of safety equipment compromises the safety of all residents in the event of an emergency. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Walkways and Balconies: Space must be left open along walkways and porches in the Village for access in case of a fire. Each apartment may have three plants, two lawn chairs, and one grill on the wall beside the front door. Items may not be stored under the stairwells. In the interest of fire safety, the Department of Housing and Residence Life reserves the right to decide if any items are appropriate to be placed in this space. If items are determined to be inappropriate, the resident will be contacted and asked to remove the items immediately.

Moving Out

Students are allowed to live in Aiken Village for five (5) years. Students may terminate their Contract which begins for the Fall semester and continues through the Summer semesters of the next calendar year by giving written notice to Herbert Hall by July 1, prior to the beginning of the Fall semester; by November 1, prior to the beginning of the Spring semester; and by April 1, prior to the beginning of the Summer semester. Any student who does not cancel the contract before these dates will forfeit \$100.00 of the \$200.00 security deposit and will be responsible for all the rent up to the date of checkout.

The “Intent to Vacate” form is posted on the office window so that you can always find out when they are due. You must schedule a pre-check-out inspection with your Resident Assistant five days prior to your departure date. He/she will provide additional instructions regarding check-out procedures and check-out options.

You are responsible for cleaning your apartment. Damages and cleaning charges will be assessed for leaving an apartment in an unsatisfactory condition. Information about the cleaning of your apartment for check-out will be available from your Resident Assistant.

Please do not leave any unwanted items inside or around your apartment. Take all garbage to the dumpster. You will be charged if the Village staff has to remove your unwanted items.

Aiken Village Association

The RHA Village Association is an organization where residents discuss suggestions, concerns, and policies regarding the quality of life in Aiken Village. Members are elected family housing residents who volunteer their time to serve as liaisons between residents and the family housing staff. RHA Village Association information and meeting announcements are published in the newsletter and posted in the office. All residents are urged to attend the meetings. *Please contact your Resident Assistant if you would like to become involved in the Aiken Village Association.*

Important Telephone Numbers

Aiken Village Maintenance	325-3357
Aiken Village Office	325-2133
Aiken Village Pre-School	325-3909
MSU Cashier's Office-Garner Hall	325-2071
MSU Financial Aid	325-2450
MSU Graduate School	325-9703
MSU Housing-Herbert Hall	325-3555
MSU Housing Network Office (telephone problems)	325-2143
MSU International Student Services	325-8929
MSU Police Department	325-2121
MSU Registrar's Office (Schedule)	325-2022
MSU Transportation (Shuttle Service)	325-8120
MS Valley Gas Company	323-2741
Northland Cable Company	323-1615