

SIX THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN ANY LEASE

1. Be aware of the total rent due under the lease, not just the portion your student is planning to pay.
 - Joint & several liability clauses in most leases make every tenant liable for the whole amount due under the lease.
 - Students often change plans leaving the remaining tenants holding the bag.
 - In Minnesota landlords do not have a duty to mitigate damages by making an effort to re-rent. (Wisconsin landlords must try to re-rent.)
 - Subleasing is often an option, but many leases limit subletting.
2. Make sure the lease contains the name and address of the property owner.
 - Minnesota law requires landlords to include the name and street address of a responsible person in written leases under most circumstances.
 - A post office box is not a sufficient address.
 - When landlords fail to provide adequate contact information it is seldom an oversight.
3. Make sure the lease has spaces for all the tenants to sign.
 - Both Minneapolis and St. Paul have occupancy limits for most properties.
 - If a landlord is willing to rent to five or six tenants but produces a lease that only has space for three signatures, there may be a problem.
 - The tenants who sign a lease will be taking on greater risks and responsibilities than those who don't.
4. Pay attention to lease provisions regarding utilities.
 - Written leases should clearly state who pays for what utilities.