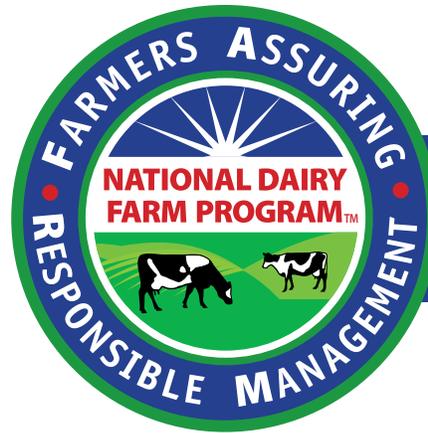


# Managing Employee Housing

FARM Human Resources Reference Manual 2018



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# Managing Employee Housing

# MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

The Management Checklist details key guidelines and best practices regarding management of employee housing. Management Checklist points are listed at the beginning of sections that correspond to the checklist topics.

- ✓ The dairy has consulted with an attorney to determine its local, state and federal requirements prior to providing worker housing.
- ✓ Dairy farm workers know the monetary value of farm-provided housing, even if it is provided free of charge.
- ✓ The dairy has a written housing agreement signed by all occupants that outlines management and worker responsibilities. The written housing agreement has been reviewed by an attorney.
- ✓ The dairy has a yearly budget for housing repairs and maintenance.
- ✓ A person is assigned to manage inspections and repairs of farm-provided housing.
- ✓ Routine inspections are conducted before new employees move in, when employees move out and at regular intervals in between.
- ✓ The dairy has a repair system in place for occupants to tell management when repairs or maintenance are needed. The system helps management track the status of repairs, including when the work is complete.
- ✓ Occupants know what to do if there is an emergency situation like a fire.
- ✓ The dairy provides functional fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in all farm-provided housing.
- ✓ The dairy has established house rules for occupants of farm-provided housing. The house rules are made available to occupants by posting the document within the house, putting it in the employee handbook, putting it in the housing agreement, handing it out during move-in or by some other means. The rules are translated into the workers' primary language(s).
- ✓ The dairy has a housing orientation for workers and their families when they move in. The orientation covers responsibilities, inspections, house rules, utilities, emergencies, maintenance/repair requests and how to clean/use facilities.

## Farm-Provided Housing

Farm-provided housing can be a valuable benefit for farm workers. Dairy farms are in rural areas where housing options can be scarce. Farm owners and managers offer housing benefits to:

- Reduce the burden on employees to find housing in areas with limited options
- Avoid a long commute for employees
- Provide a housing option that is of lower cost than other options in the area
- Attract high-quality workers

Properly managed housing gives dairy farm workers and their families a place to rest, relax and make memories. But without proper management, housing can quickly become a headache and a liability for farm owners and managers. This document covers legal considerations and management recommendations to promote safe, clean and comfortable living spaces for dairy farm workers.



## Shared Goals

Managers and workers have at least two shared housing goals:

- Provide safe, healthy and comfortable housing for workers.
- Maintain housing in a good state of repair for the health and enjoyment of current and future occupants.

Managers have the added goal to:

- Minimize property damage to decrease operational costs and maintain the value of the housing investment.

To achieve all these goals, farm managers must do three things:

- Set clear expectations about housing responsibilities and follow up with routine inspections to be sure they are met.
- Establish a culture that reinforces every day that both workers and management are responsible to keep housing in good condition for the benefit of everyone.
- Train farm workers about using, cleaning and maintaining the housing. The training should address how to report maintenance issues.



## Legal Context

- ✓ *The dairy has consulted with an attorney to determine its local, state and federal requirements prior to providing worker housing.*
- ✓ *Dairy farm workers know the monetary value of farm-provided housing, even if it is provided free of charge.*

Farms that provide housing should determine their legal requirements. Regulatory oversight varies based on the number of workers housed and the type of work arrangement (year-round, seasonal, etc.).

### **Wage Laws: Payment for Housing**

Farms must decide how to handle payment for employee housing. Options include:

- Provide the housing at no cost
- Include the cost of housing as a form of wages
- Charge for housing through a wage deduction

- Charge rent or a housing license fee separate from wages

Farms that provide housing as a form of wages or as a wage deduction should review federal and state wage laws.

- ***Federal rules on wage credits for lodging:***  
***Fair Labor Standards Act***

The reasonable cost of lodgings can be considered a form of wages, but an employee must agree in writing to receive part of their wages as lodgings. In this case, the lodging must be provided for the employee benefit, not for the convenience of the employer. Reasonable cost generally means the cost to the employer to provide it – not the fair market value. Because it is considered part of wages, lodging deductions can take a worker's cash wages below the federal minimum wage. The U.S. Department of Labor provides additional [guidance online](#).

- ***State rules on wage credits for lodging***

At the state level, farms should review laws around wage deductions and credits found in the FARM Legal Fact Sheets from the National Milk Producers Federation. The Legal Fact Sheets summarize deduction rules for each state and provide links to more information.

In deciding whether to provide housing as a form of wages, farms should consider the potential impact on overtime compensation and taxable income. When part of wages, the lodging credit becomes part of the regular rate of pay for calculating overtime pay, if applicable in the farm's state. Owners and managers should consult their accountant or payroll manager for guidance on tax implications.

No matter how a farm handles payment (or non-payment) for housing, the policy should be clear. Employees living in the housing should know exactly how much they are paying for housing – whether that is through a paycheck deduction or through a separate payment. Additionally, being clear on the value of housing can reduce tensions

between workers receiving housing and those that are not receiving housing. Any communication around the value of housing should be translated into the workers' primary language(s) to make sure they understand.

### **General Laws: Conditions and Maintenance**

Farms have an ethical responsibility to ensure housing is safe and a comfortable place for workers to rest, eat, relax and meet their living needs. It is also important to understand the legal requirements for maintenance and upkeep.

Federal regulations for employee housing, which are focused on migrant and seasonal labor, do not usually apply to dairy farms. Farms that provide housing for seasonal workers may benefit from reviewing federal requirements outlined below.

- ***The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA)***  
MSPA sets employment standards for migrant and seasonal workers. It is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. Each person who owns or controls housing for migrant or seasonal workers must comply with federal and state safety and health standards relating to housing. The federal safety and health standards for structures built after 1980 are set out by OSHA standard 1910.142. More details are found online.
- ***H2-A Visa Program***  
Dairy farms are not currently eligible to use H2-A visas for their year-round agricultural workers. Agricultural operations that use H2-A visas must provide housing at no cost to the worker. The housing must meet federal OSHA standards. More details are [found online](#).

At the state and local level, regulations vary widely. A few states have explicit laws about agricultural employee housing. The FARM state-by-state Legal Fact Sheets provide a good starting point for information about state ag housing laws. However, farms are encouraged to review their legal requirements with an attorney.

Additionally, landlord/tenant laws, building codes and public health codes may apply to the farm's housing depending on where the farm is located and whether workers have signed a lease. These laws vary by state and even county. For the most part, they focus on providing sanitary and safe conditions. This document outlines recommendations for management of farm housing for owners and managers to provide sanitary, safe and comfortable conditions.

### **Written Housing Agreement**

- ✓ *The dairy has a written housing agreement signed by all occupants that outlines management and worker responsibilities. The written housing agreement has been reviewed by an attorney.*

Having a written housing agreement helps both dairy owners / managers and their employees understand expectations about upkeep, rent/ payments and maintenance procedures (like repair requests). Even if the farm provides housing at no cost, a housing agreement is a useful legal document that can prevent problems down the road.

There are two main types of housing agreements: a license and a lease / tenancy. Dairies should review these two options with an attorney to determine the best one for their individual operation.

- ***License*** This type of agreement states that an employee is in the housing in connection with their job and under the owner's permission. The owner retains control over the premises.
- ***Lease / Tenancy*** A lease or tenancy agreement makes it easier to separate the housing from employee wages, but it gives a tenant the right of occupancy. Both the landlord (the dairy) and the occupant would have rights and responsibilities under state or local landlord-tenant laws.

Distinguishing between a lease and a license is not as simple as whatever title is given to the housing agreement. In other words, calling the agreement

a “License Agreement” does not make it a license. Without a legally-sound written agreement, courts will decide if the housing arrangement is a lease or a license when there is a dispute. A written agreement lets employers and workers agree on mutual terms before there is a problem; and, ideally, it creates clear expectations that help prevent misunderstandings and disputes.

### **Considerations**

A housing agreement should set clear expectations for using and maintaining the housing. When preparing a housing agreement with an attorney, farms may consider some of the following issues:

- **Defining Occupants** Often, employer’s want some control over who will be living in the housing. In single family housing, for example, the owner / manager may choose to limit the occupants to the employee, a spouse and children. While temporary visitors may be acceptable, dairies may want to avoid a situation in which extended family, such as cousins or grandparents, or friends live in the housing for an indefinite amount of time without prior approval. If family, especially children, will be living with the employee, the agreement should specify that work areas are off-limits to the worker’s family (like manure lagoons, milking parlors, etc.).
- **Housing Rules** A housing agreement is also an opportunity to state that the employee must follow house rules. The agreement should also specify the consequences for breaking the house rules. Dairies can define the rules within the agreement or in a separate document signed by the employee. Rules can include quiet hours, responsibility for visitors, pets and more.
- **Utilities** The housing agreement should state who is responsible for paying utilities. If paid by the employer, the agreement can state a cap above which the employee becomes responsible for the cost. One approach is to set up utilities in the employee’s name so that the dairy is not responsible for the cost if the employee quits.
- **Insurance** A housing agreement may also require employees to acquire renter’s insurance. It is good practice to check with the dairy’s liability insurance company to ask about coverage for worst-case scenarios.
- **Rent or Wage Deductions** Some dairies use wage deductions to collect payment for housing. State and federal law may limit the amount that can be charged for lodging as a wage deduction – either a set dollar value per day or up to the reasonable cost to provide the housing. Wage deductions have the benefit of easy administration. Other dairies may choose to charge rent.
- **Right to Inspections** The housing agreement should specify the owner’s right to periodic housing inspections. This ensures the dairy can identify and perform any necessary repairs in a timely manner. Housing inspections are described in more detail in Routine Inspections on Page 6.
- **Repairs and Renovations** The agreement should state whose responsibility it is to arrange and pay for repairs. Often, that depends on the type of maintenance needed. For example, a major appliance malfunction is usually the responsibility of the owner, whereas routine upkeep like changing lightbulbs are the responsibility of the occupant. The agreement may also specify that it is the occupant’s responsibility to notify management of repair needs and outline the process for occupants to request repairs.
- **Employment Separation** Check local laws before evicting any employee after employment ends to avoid inadvertent violations. The Housing Agreement can address the process and timeline for moving out after separation.

A housing agreement is a legally binding contract. Farms are encouraged to seek legal advice in creating the agreement. To accommodate non-native English speakers, owners and managers should have a translated copy of the housing agreement. An official legal translator should be consulted to translate the agreement.



## **Maintenance and Inspections**

- ✓ *The dairy has a yearly budget for housing repairs and maintenance.*
- ✓ *A person is assigned to manage inspections and repairs of farm-provided housing.*
- ✓ *Routine inspections are conducted before new employees move in, when employees move out, and at regular intervals in between.*
- ✓ *The dairy has a repair system in place for occupants to tell management when repairs or maintenance are needed. The system helps management track the status of repairs, including when the work is complete.*
- ✓ *Occupants know what to do if there is an emergency situation like a fire.*
- ✓ *The dairy provides functional fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in all farm-provided housing.*
- ✓ *The dairy has established house rules for occupants of farm-provided housing. The house rules are made available to occupants by posting the document within the house, putting it in the employee handbook, putting it in the housing agreement, handing it out during move-in or by some other means. The rules are translated into the workers' primary language(s).*

Farms that provide housing should have a yearly budget for repairs and maintenance. Keeping the house in good condition achieves two goals: (1) keeps employees living in a safe and comfortable environment; and, (2) protects the long-term value of the farm's investment.

### **Routine Inspections**

Regular housing inspections allow management to check on cleanliness and identify needed repairs. Owners should conduct the inspections or assign someone to complete them. An inspection checklist ensures consistency and helps keep track of any needed repair follow-ups. A Housing Inspection Checklist template is provided on Pages 16 and 17.

Inspections should be conducted:

- Before a worker moves in
- After a worker moves out
- At regular intervals in between

During the inspection, take pictures of any problem areas and keep them on file. Problem areas can mean items needing repair or issues with cleanliness. This paper trail helps document the condition of the housing in case there are any disputes.

Owners should consider setting up a regular schedule for inspections, like every other Wednesday or every 15th of the month. Regular inspections are important no matter the nature of the relationship with the occupants. For example, even for a family that has worked with the farm for years, an annual inspection is useful. The owner or manager may notice an issue during the annual inspection that the occupants did not see or did not realize was a problem.

### **Repair Request System**

Workers should not wait until an inspection to let management know about maintenance needs. Consider designating one person to be responsible for managing repairs. A good maintenance request system is one where: workers know exactly how to communicate a problem, they know when to expect the repair and they know when the repair is complete. The system must also help management keep track of repair needs and document them over time.

There are many repair request systems, for example:

- **Ticket System** Provide a stack of printed, bilingual forms (“tickets”) that workers can fill out to report any problems or request information/help about housing. Provide a box for workers to place the tickets. Check the box daily. On the ticket, write down the date that follow-up is complete. Follow-up can mean completing repairs, installing new appliances or answering occupant questions. Keep the tickets for the dairy’s records. A Repair Ticket template is provided on Page 20.
- **Journal System** Managers may wish to provide a binder or notebook at a central location for repair requests. The binder can be filled with pre-printed sheets for workers to fill out. A manager or designated person should check the binder every day and write down follow-up notes. A Repair Journal System template is provided on Page 21.

- **Phone System** Workers with low literacy may not be able to confidently fill out written maintenance requests. One option is to encourage workers to ask a housemate or co-worker to fill out the request. Another option is to set up a dedicated phone line or voicemail to report problems. Remind workers to state their name, their housing location and the problem. Check the voicemail daily and write down the issue in the ticket, journal or other written system so that it is documented.



### **Emergency Situations and Safety**

Emergency situations need to be addressed immediately. An overflowing toilet, a burst pipe or a heating malfunction in freezing weather can quickly cause expensive damage and/or endanger lives. Owners and managers may consider displaying a poster with directions on how to handle different types of emergencies.

Owners and managers should designate someone to be the emergency contact for urgent maintenance issues. Owners and managers may choose to have one person responsible for daytime hours and someone else for overnight hours. Occupants should know who to contact and how.

To promote on-going safety of occupants in farm-provided housing, owners and managers should:

- Ensure fire extinguishers are available and up-to-date on inspections. If possible, place the extinguisher close to the kitchen.

- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors during regularly scheduled inspections.
- Keep window and door locks in good working order.
- Ensure workers know evacuation procedures in case of natural disasters like tornado, hurricane, earthquake, mudslide or wildfires. Consider a poster that provides information on where to seek shelter in an emergency. If an evacuation shelter is an option, consider including a simple map on the poster to direct employees.

As a reminder, foreign-born workers may not be familiar with the 911 system. Never assume that everyone knows about it, even if they have lived in the U.S. for many years.

### ***Cleanliness and Incentives***

During housing orientation (see Orientation on Page 9), it's good to do a walk-through of the house and point out how to clean and use parts of the house. Knowing how to clean and the expectations for cleanliness is an important first step. The next step is actually finding time. Employees may have busy work schedules that make finding free time for cleaning difficult. Owners and managers may consider providing occupants with a suggested household cleaning schedule to help them plan, as found on Page 22. But while an employer can require that the house be maintained in good condition, the employer cannot dictate a cleaning schedule because employees are off-duty when at home.

Insect and rodent pests are both a nuisance and a health risk. Owners and managers should cover prevention tips during the housing orientation. Additionally, owners and managers should consider the following basic strategies:

- Provide bedbug-proof, zippered mattress encasements. Basic encasements are affordable and can be found online or at major stores.
- Provide traps and sprays so occupants can prevent and treat any problems.

- Check for cracks and crevices where bugs or rodents can enter. Patch any holes.
- Check for problems during routine inspections, like overflowing trash, that can attract pests. Work with occupants to correct the problem.
- Hire a pest control company to inspect and preventatively treat housing on a regular basis. The appropriate frequency will depend on the climate, the location and the type of housing.

Incentives are a useful tool to motivate good cleaning and upkeep habits. Owners and managers may consider providing a cash bonus, a pizza party or another prize to occupants of housing that maintain sanitary and damage-free housing conditions.

### ***Updates and Renovations***

Owners and managers may wish to update, renovate or offer new housing from time to time. It is useful to talk with workers about their viewpoint and preferences. For example, a new house – while more spacious and updated – may not appeal to occupants who prefer their current location because it is closer to work or family members.

### ***Culture***

Culture is essentially a group of people's understanding of "how things are done around here." Management must communicate, with words and actions, that housing is cared for, kept clean and repaired promptly.

A good housing culture is established by management training workers to care for housing (see Orientation on Page 9), following up with inspections, creating a way for workers to report problems/ask questions and, making repairs as quickly as possible. If management fails to communicate expectations, ignores problems or neglects their maintenance duties, then a poor housing culture will result.

## Community

Foreign-born workers or others who come from outside the local area may have trouble integrating into the community without help from the farm owner or managers. Many may not own a car or have a driver's license. Additionally, language can be a barrier.

### Considerations

- Offer regularly scheduled transportation into town to buy supplies or visit other stores.
- Introduce workers to neighbors.
- Tell workers and their families about local events, like fairs or festivals. A bulletin board may be a useful way to communicate.
- Create a list of local churches or other places of worship to give to employees.

### Orientation

✓ *The dairy has a housing orientation for workers and their families when they move in. The orientation covers responsibilities, inspections, house rules, utilities, emergencies, maintenance/repair requests and how to clean/use facilities.*

Hiring new employees takes a lot of thought – safety training, setting up payroll and more. Farms that provide employee lodging should also consider a housing orientation. Orientation is the

manager's opportunity to explain expectations and train employees on how to properly use, clean and maintain farm-provided housing. It is particularly valuable for foreign workers, who may be unfamiliar with facilities, appliances and systems commonly found in the U.S. Orientation should involve any family members who will be sharing the housing.

Below are some common topic areas and suggestions for content. Farm owners and managers are encouraged to tailor the orientation to fit the needs of their individual operation. In the following text, farm owners and managers responsible for farm-provided housing are referred to as "management."

### Responsibilities

Both farm workers and management are responsible for maintaining housing so it is safe and comfortable. Employees must keep the house clean and avoid any unnecessary damage. Managers make any needed repairs and will regularly inspect the housing for health and safety reasons.

*Note: Sometimes workers are not sure which maintenance issues they should tackle on their own versus reporting them to management. A simple table outlining responsibilities, like the following, is useful. The farm owner or manager may also choose to encourage workers to report any problems, even if ultimately the worker is responsible. This avoids a situation where a problem goes unaddressed for a long time.*

MANAGEMENT	WORKER / OCCUPANT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair major appliances, like stove or refrigerator</li> <li>• Repair structure problems, like a leaking roof or a broken door</li> <li>• Arrange for pest or bug treatments and/or provide traps</li> <li>• Fix toilets that leak or persistently will not flush</li> <li>• Pay for _____ <i>[Specify which utilities are paid by management]</i></li> <li>• Inspect house regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace lightbulbs</li> <li>• Keep the house clean – sweep, mop, wash windows, etc.</li> <li>• Don't leave food where bugs and rodents can get to it</li> <li>• Use plunger to try to fix a toilet before calling management</li> <li>• Pay for _____ <i>[Specify which utilities are paid by occupants]</i></li> <li>• Report any issues that management needs to fix</li> </ul>

## Inspections

An assigned person will inspect this house regularly to make sure it is clean and safe.

This housing will be inspected every \_\_\_\_\_ (weeks/months) by \_\_\_\_\_, who can be reached by phone at \_\_\_\_\_.

## House Rules

Anyone living in the farm-provided housing must follow the house rules.

*Note: The following are examples only. Farm owners and managers should tailor these to their individual operations. House rules should be translated into appropriate languages. For low literacy workers, read the rules out loud in the language they speak.*

- Keep the house clean and in good working order. Avoid causing any damage.
- Report any maintenance or repair needs to management as soon as possible. The sooner management knows about it, the faster it can be fixed.
- Quiet hours are between 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. Avoid making too much noise during quiet hours.
- Do not paint without permission from management.
- Do not remove furniture or appliances without permission from management.
- Do not remove or tamper with smoke alarms. They are there for your safety.
- Smoking indoors is prohibited.
- The use of illegal drugs is prohibited on the farm property, including farm-provided housing.
- Pets and other animals are not allowed without written permission from management. All pets must have up-to-date rabies shots.
- Long-term, overnight visitors are not allowed without permission from management. If you plan to have a visitor stay more than one week, please discuss it with management.
- Family and visitors are not allowed to enter the worksite, including the milking parlor, any barns, feed storage or anywhere near equipment or the manure lagoon. This is for the safety of family and visitors because they have not gone through safety training.

## Utilities

The following list shows who is responsible for setting up utility accounts and who will pay the bill.

*Note: Employers can consider the following list, where they circle 'Management' or 'Worker' for each type of utility. Any special situations should be clearly communicated to workers. For example, the owner/manager plans to split the electricity bill with workers. Or, the owner/manager will pay up to \$\_\_\_ for electricity and the worker is responsible for anything above that amount.*

- Electricity: Account set up by (Management / Worker). Paid by (Management / Worker)
- Gas: Account set up by (Management / Worker). Paid by (Management / Worker)
- Heat: Account set up by (Management / Worker). Paid by (Management / Worker)
- Water: Account set up by (Management / Worker). Paid by (Management / Worker)
- Internet: Account set up by (Management / Worker). Paid by (Management / Worker)
- Phone: Account set up by (Management / Worker). Paid by (Management / Worker)
- Cable: Account set up by (Management / Worker). Paid by (Management / Worker)

Owners/managers should consider how they want to handle satellite dishes. To avoid multiple satellite dishes, owners/managers can work with the satellite provider to set up multiple accounts with one dish. Or they can state that satellite dishes are not allowed in the Housing Agreement. No matter how an owner/manager wants to manage satellite dishes, they should decide in advance so they can tell employees during the housing orientation.

## Emergencies

If there is a fire or life-threatening emergency, call 911 from any cell phone or landline.

For other urgent matters, like an overflowing toilet or a burst pipe, call \_\_\_\_\_ immediately on his/her phone number: \_\_\_\_\_.



### **Maintenance or Repair Requests**

Report any maintenance or repair needs using the provided (notebook / tickets / phone line). Management cares about your safety and comfort. Reporting issues as soon as possible helps management address it sooner.

### **How to Clean and Use Facilities**

This housing is provided to you in good condition. Every occupant has a responsibility to make sure it stays that way. The best way to do that is to keep it clean and use it properly.

We will do a walk-through and talk about proper cleaning and use in each part of the house.

A cleaning schedule is optional, but you may find it useful to stay on track.

*Note: To avoid any obstacles to keeping the house clean, farm owners and managers may consider providing workers with cleaning tools and supplies (buckets, mops, sponges, and spray and liquid cleaners for floors, windows and other surfaces).*

## **KITCHEN**

### **Cleaning**

- Clean up crumbs and food waste immediately after eating. Do not leave out open containers of food.
- Wash dishes after eating and clean countertops, tables and sinks with hot, soapy water.
- Sweep kitchen floors every day. Mop floors at least once a week.
- Cockroaches can be kept out of the housing. They are only present when the kitchen is dirty and food and water is available for them. Wipe up spills right away and report any leaks to management.

### **Refrigerator**

- The refrigerator keeps food cool and prevents it from spoiling. Set the thermostat to stay under 40 degrees.
- Keep the refrigerator door closed when you are not taking out or putting in food.
- Any opened perishable food should be kept in the refrigerator as well as any food marked as needing to be refrigerated (milk, eggs, cheese, meat, yogurt, vegetables, etc.). If it was refrigerated when you bought it, then you need to refrigerate it at home!
- Frozen foods should be defrosted in the refrigerator, not on the counter or anywhere else.
- Be respectful of the space and make sure all people have room to keep their food. Clean up any spills immediately.

### **Stove**

- Be careful not to boil food over or spill food on the burners. This damages them.
- Do not put tinfoil under the burners. When burners do not work, please tell management.
- Clean the stove when something spills on it.
- Do not use the stove for heating the house and do not leave burners on when unused. Someone could get burned or a fire could start.
- Do not leave pots of cooking food unattended on the stove.
- Do not use cookie sheets for cooking tortillas on the stovetop; use a griddle or frying pan.

### *Kitchen Trash and Recycling*

- Cooking fats, oils and grease should never be poured down the sink drain. They will clog the pipes. Instead, allow them to cool, put into a container and throw out in the trash.
- Keep lids can on trash and recycling containers. Empty indoor containers when they are full and bring bags to the dumpsters or the recycling area. Never keep full trash bags in your house.

## **BATHROOMS**

### *Toilet*

- Put the used toilet paper into the toilet bowl and flush. Toilet paper will not clog the pipes. Do not put any other paper or waste in the toilet. It will clog the pipes. Feminine products go in the trash.
- If your toilet runs, open the back and make sure the handle, float or flapper is not stuck. If it gets stuck or the toilet runs frequently, tell management.
- Clean the toilet at least once per week. Pour ½ cup of bleach into the bowl, let sit for a few minutes and scrub the bowl with a toilet bowl brush. Clean the outside of the bowl and toilet seat with bathroom cleaner and a wash cloth or sponge.

### *Shower and Sink*

- Hot water should come within a minute of turning on the water. If no hot water comes, report the problem to management.
- Turn water off all the way when finished using.
- Keep the shower curtain inside the shower base so water won't splash onto the floor. Wet bathrooms will get moldy.
- Use bathroom fans, if available, during and after showering to draw out moist air.
- Clean the shower and sink at least once per week. Spray the sink and shower with bathroom cleaner and wipe down with a wash cloth or sponge.

## **BEDROOMS**

- Mattresses and bedding must be kept on the frames provided. Do not put them on the floor.
- Keep beds separated at least 36 inches (91 centimeters) apart. Bunk beds should be at least 48 inches apart.
- Bedbug covers must stay on the mattresses. They are there for your protection.
- Use sheets on the mattress and wash them weekly. Do not sleep directly on the mattress. It is more sanitary to sleep on clean sheets.
- Avoid eating or keeping food in bedrooms. It attracts insects and mice. Make sure to remove any used dishes or food containers.
- If you lock your door, then you must provide a key or combination to management.

## **WINDOWS AND DOORS**

- Doors and windows are for your comfort and safety. They provide fresh air and a place to exit in an emergency. Do not place furniture or other objects in front of windows or doors that might block people from exiting.
- Keep screens in place for safety and pest control. Do not push on the screens. They will break or tear easily. Insects will enter through holes or tears in the screens.
- Make sure windows and doors open and close properly. Report any problems to management.
- Broken glass will result in the loss of cold and hot air making rooms uncomfortable and wasting energy and money. Report any broken glass in windows or doors.

## **WASHER AND DRYER**

- Do not overfill the washer. Lightly fill with clothes; do not pack them in. Use laundry detergent in correct amounts.
- Do not overfill the dryer. There must be room for clothes to tumble while the dryer is running. Empty the lint filter after each load. Leaving the lint in the filter can cause a fire.
- Ask management if you have questions about operating these machines. Tell management if these machines do not work.

## COMMON AREAS

- Living rooms are for the enjoyment of all; be respectful of each other and share the space.
- Take care of the furniture and electronics that are provided. Clean up any spills right away.

## HEATING SYSTEMS

- Interior doors affect heating systems. Some systems need air to flow from bedrooms to common areas to work properly.
- The thermostat controls the heating system and it is usually found in a common area. Keep the thermostat around 70 degrees. Turn down the thermostat if your room is too hot. Do not open the window.
- In cold weather, do not open your window if the heat is on. If windows are open and the heat is on, the heating system will run constantly wasting energy and money.
- Report any problems with the heating system to management.

## AIR CONDITIONERS

- Air conditioners cool the air inside the building. Windows and doors should be closed when the air conditioner is on to keep the cool air inside.
- Do not operate the heating system at the same time as the air conditioner.
- Air conditioners drip water as a normal part of operation. This water should drip outside. Report any air conditioner problems to management.

## WATER SYSTEM

- Your house should have both hot and cold water. If the hot water doesn't come after a few minutes, tell management. Do not let water run if it is not being used.
- Any water leaks should be reported to management right away. If your water is unusual or changes in any way, tell management.

## SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

- Smoke alarms can save your life! They detect smoke or fire and make a loud alarm to warn of fire dangers and wake up sleeping people so they can escape to safety outside of the house. If a smoke alarm goes off, make sure everyone exits the house to safety.
- If a smoke alarm goes off due to normal cooking, open windows and turn on fans to clear the smoke from the house. Never remove batteries or otherwise tamper with an alarm. If a smoke alarm makes a beeping noise it may need new batteries. Report this to management.
- Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless gas that can kill people. It comes from burning materials such as gas or wood. A carbon monoxide detector sounds an alarm if the gas is present so that people can exit the house to safety. If the alarm sounds, make sure everyone is awake and exits the building. Contact management immediately!

## FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- Fire extinguishers are used to quickly put out a fire, like a grease fire on a stovetop.

## WASTE

- Kitchen trash and other garbage should be taken out frequently. If the bag is full, take it to the outside trash container and replace with a new bag.
- Outside trash containers should be kept closed. They have tight fitting lids so they do not attract raccoons and other pests.
- If the outside trash containers are full, please call management.
- The outside trash will be removed every \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in with day of the week]

## PESTS

- Rodents and insects are both annoying and a health risk. There are steps you can take to prevent an infestation.
- Bedbugs can come from secondhand furniture, like couches. When you are buying something, check for signs of bedbugs. Look for them in the seams of chairs and couches, between the cushions, in the folds of curtains and in the joints of wooden furniture.
- Bedbug covers must stay on the mattresses. They are there for your protection.
- Tell management if you notice rusty or reddish stains on sheets or mattresses. This can be a sign of bedbugs.
- Cockroaches can come in through cardboard boxes, so dispose of boxes as soon as you are done with them.
- Keep the housing clean and vacuum often to help prevent cockroach problems.
- Tell management if you see mouse droppings or any other sign of rodents.

## Resources

### General

- Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development. Cornell University. <http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/human-resource-management/worker-housing/>
- Essential Home Maintenance. Kansas State University, Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service. <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/s134c.pdf>

### Housing Agreements

- Sample Housing Agreement. Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops. Cornell Cooperative Extension. <https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/submission.php?id=621&crumb=bilingual%257C13> [NOTE: Contract law varies by state. Employers should consult with a licensed attorney to tailor a housing agreement to be sure it complies with local laws.]
- Sample Housing Agreement. Farm Employers Labor Service. <http://fels.net/Data/Laws/>

[Housing/Housing-Sample-Agreement-Eng-Spn.pdf](#) [NOTE: Contract law varies by state. Employers should consult with a licensed attorney to tailor a housing agreement to be sure it complies with local laws.]

- Where's your employee housing agreement? Dairy Herd Management. <https://www.dairyherd.com/article/wheres-your-employee-housing-agreement>

### Cleaning and Food Safety

- Protecting Your Home from Bed Bugs. Environmental Protection Agency. <https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/protecting-your-home-bed-bugs>
- Cleaning & Sanitizing the Kitchen. Colorado State Extension. <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/foodnut/kitchen-sanitize.pdf>
- Cleaning your Kitchen on a Budget. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Food Safety & Health. [https://foodsafety.wisc.edu/consumer/fact\\_sheets/Cleaning\\_Budget.pdf](https://foodsafety.wisc.edu/consumer/fact_sheets/Cleaning_Budget.pdf)
- Kitchen Clean-up. Oregon State University Extension Service. [http://foodhero.org/sites/default/files/resources/kitchen\\_clean\\_up.pdf](http://foodhero.org/sites/default/files/resources/kitchen_clean_up.pdf)
- Household Cleaning. UT Extension. <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/SP459-E.pdf>
- A Clean Kitchen Required for Food Safety. University of Minnesota Extension. <https://extension.umn.edu/sanitation-and-illness/clean-kitchen-required-food-safety>
- Cleaning the Kitchen. Mississippi State University Extension. <http://extension.msstate.edu/sites/default/files/publications/information-sheets/is1979.pdf>
- Be Food Safe Brochure. USDA and the Partnership for Food Safety Education. [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/f8d66b64-104b-4638-8f38-c203d-2cd8684/BeFoodSafe\\_Logo\\_All\\_Ads.pdf?MOD=AJPERES#page=2](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/f8d66b64-104b-4638-8f38-c203d-2cd8684/BeFoodSafe_Logo_All_Ads.pdf?MOD=AJPERES#page=2)
- Be Food Safe Poster. USDA and the Partnership for Food Safety Education [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/7ac29301-d89e-4121-ba63-3fe64626e11f/BFS\\_Brochure\\_SP.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/7ac29301-d89e-4121-ba63-3fe64626e11f/BFS_Brochure_SP.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)

### Housing Orientation Checklist

Orientation Performed By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC	TALKED ABOUT? If Yes, ✓
Responsibilities	
House Rules	
Reporting Repair Needs	
Emergency Situations	
Inspection Process and Schedule	
Kitchen	
Bathrooms	
Bedrooms	
Windows and Doors	
Washer and Dryer	
Common Areas	
Heating and/or Air Conditioner	
Water System	
Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Alarms	
Waste	

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Housing Inspection Checklist

	Condition		Cleanliness			Notes
	Working	Damaged / Broken	Good	OK	Bad	
<b>Living Room</b>						
Floor & Floor Covering						
Walls & Ceiling						
Doors						
Lighting Fixtures						
Windows & Screens						
Window Coverings						
Smoke Alarm						
Carbon Monoxide Alarm						
<b>Kitchen</b>						
Floor & Floor Covering						
Walls & Ceiling						
Doors						
Lighting Fixtures						
Windows & Screens						
Window Coverings						
Cabinets and Drawers						
Counters						
Stove/Burners, Controls						
Oven/Range Hood						
Refrigerator						
Dishwasher						
Sink & Plumbing						
Garbage Disposal						
Fire Extinguisher						
<b>Bathrooms</b>						
Floor & Floor Covering						
Walls & Ceiling						
Doors						
Lighting Fixtures						
Windows & Screens						
Window Coverings						

Counters & Surfaces						
Sink & Plumbing						
Hot Water						
Bathtub/Shower						
Toilet						
Inside Drawers						
<b>Bedrooms</b>						
Floor & Floor Covering						
Walls & Ceiling						
Doors						
Lighting Fixtures						
Windows & Screens						
Window Coverings						
Closets, including Doors						
Smoke Alarm						
Beds						
<b>Other</b>						
Heating System						
Air Conditioning System						
Stairs						
Hallway						
Lawn & Garden						
Patio, Terrace, Deck, etc.						
Parking Area						
Front/Back Porch						
Trash Area						

Additionally, each inspection should confirm that there are enough beds for all occupants. Beds should be at least 3 feet apart and 1 foot off the floor. Bunk beds should be 4 feet apart.

Housing Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspected By: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development.*

## House Rules

Owners and managers can tailor the following House Rules to fit their needs.

### HOUSE RULES

All occupants of farm-provided housing must follow these rules.

- ✓ *Keep the house clean and in good working order. Avoid causing any damage.*
- ✓ *Report any maintenance or repair needs to management as soon as possible. The sooner management knows about it, the faster it can be fixed.*
- ✓ *Quiet hours are between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Avoid making too much noise during quiet hours.*
- ✓ *Do not paint without permission from management.*
- ✓ *Do not remove furniture or appliances without permission from management.*
- ✓ *Do not remove or tamper with smoke alarms. They are there for your safety.*
- ✓ *Smoking indoors is prohibited.*
- ✓ *The use of illegal drugs is prohibited on the farm property, including farm-provided housing.*
- ✓ *Pets and other animals are not allowed without written permission from management. All pets must have up-to-date rabies shots.*
- ✓ *Long-term, overnight visitors are not allowed without permission from management. If you plan to have a visitor stay more than one week, please discuss it with management.*
- ✓ *Family and visitors are not allowed to enter the worksite, including the milking parlor, any barns, feed storage or anywhere near equipment or the manure lagoon. This is for the safety of family and visitors because they have not gone through safety training.*

## Emergency Poster

All workers should know exactly what to do and who to call in case of an emergency. Consider displaying a poster, like the following example, to remind everyone what to do.

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Posting the names and telephone numbers of emergency contacts in a prominent place in farm-provided housing in employees' native languages speeds up communications in an emergency.

**Farm Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Housing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Owner / Manager:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

### FOR GENERAL EMERGENCIES, CALL 9-1-1

**A First Aid Kit is Located:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Daytime Urgent Maintenance:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nighttime Urgent Maintenance:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Closest Medical Facility:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Poison Control Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Local Police Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Repair Ticket

This form can be used by workers to request repairs or housing information.

### MAINTENANCE REQUEST

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Housing Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Problem or Question:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Ticket Picked Up By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Expected Date for Follow-Up / Repairs:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Completion Date for Follow-Up / Repairs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Repair Journal System

The following can be printed or placed in a binder accessible to all workers. Workers can fill out the first three columns to request housing repairs or information. A manager who checks the binder will fill out the last three columns.

OCCUPANT			MANAGEMENT		
Repair Needed	Occupant Name, Date Reported	Housing Location	Manager Name, Date Checked, Note	Date Repair Expected	Date Repair Completed
Stove burner not working	Juan 5/4/2018	House #3	Greg, 5/5/2018, burner just loose, cleaned and fixed.		5/5/2018

Adapted from Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development.

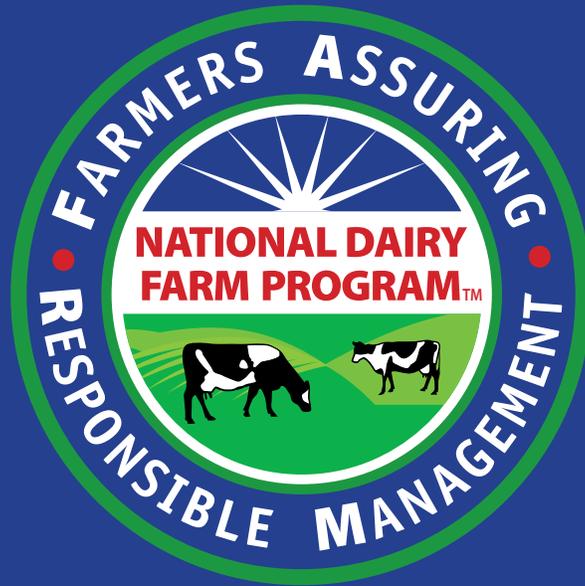
## Cleaning Schedule

Employers can provide the following suggested cleaning schedule to help occupants plan.

DAILY TASKS	WEEKLY TASKS	OCCASIONAL CHORES	SEASONAL CHORES
<b>Kitchen</b>			
Wash dishes Wipe countertops Wipe out sink Empty garbage Sweep floor	Dispose of leftover food Damp mop floor Clean garbage pail Wipe out microwave	Clean drip pans on range Clean oven Defrost and clean refrigerator Wash walls and woodwork	Clean cupboards Scrub floors
<b>Bathroom</b>			
Wipe our sink and tub Replace soiled towels Empty waste baskets Put away grooming aids and products	Wash floor Launder towels Clean toilet bowl Wipe tile surfaces Clean toothbrush holder Clean mirrors Clean sink, shower and tub	Wash throw rug Wash walls and woodwork	Clean closets
<b>Living Room</b>			
Clean ash trays Dispose of papers Straighten magazines, DVDs, CDs and throw pillows	Vacuum rugs and furniture Vacuum or dust floors Dust furniture, lamps and accessories	Shampoo rugs and furniture Wipe light bulbs Moved and clean under furniture Wash windows and curtains Dust books and pictures	Clean closets Clean screens or storm windows Wax floors Wash walls and woodwork Scrub floors
<b>Bedrooms</b>			
Make beds Put away clothes	Launder bed linens Vacuum and dust	Turn mattresses Wash mattress covers and pad Wash pillows Wash walls and woodwork	Wash or dry clean blankets and spread Organize closets

*Adapted from Kansas State University Cooperative Extension.*





Learn more about the National Dairy FARM Program

**NATIONALDAIRYFARM.COM**

Contact the National Milk Producers Federation

**(703) 243-6111**

**DAIRYFARM@NMPF.ORG**



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