

# **Urban Edge Property Management Resident Information Guide**

Welcome to your new apartment. This property is [co-] owned by [the Academy Homes I Tenants' Council *OR* Westminster Court Apartments Tenants' Association and] Urban Edge Housing Corporation and is managed by Urban Edge Property Management. The information contained in this guide will help you to understand your rights and obligations as well as the rights and obligations of the Owner and Urban Edge Property Management. Other important information is included in the lease you signed before moving in.

As part of your move in process, your Property Manager will review this guide with you. Please read this guide and your lease at your leisure, and keep both documents handy for future referral. If you have any questions on the information in this guide or your lease, please call your Property Manager or the Urban Edge Main Office at 617-989-9200.

Our goal of Urban Edge is to provide affordable housing, which is decent, safe and sanitary. By working together, you, your resident association and Urban Edge Property Management can ensure that high quality; low cost housing for families remains available in our community for many years to come.

## **The Lease**

The Lease you sign before moving in to your apartment governs the terms and conditions of your residency. It is a legal document and represents a contract between you and Urban

Edge, which spells out your obligations as well as that of Urban Edge. The lease is a detailed legal document, which you should review in its entirety. The main points include your obligation to pay rent on time, to live in a peaceful manner, and to make sure that you; your family and guests do not create a disturbance. The lease also requires Urban Edge to keep your apartment in compliance with the State Sanitary Code & Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

## **Your Management Staff**

Now that you are moving into your apartment, most of your housing needs can be handled through your local Management Office and the Maintenance Work Order Office. The Management Office is located 2010 Columbus Avenue in Roxbury, near Egleston Square, and the Maintenance Work Order Office is located nearby and can be reached by telephone at: 617-522-4095.

Information on your management office and management staff is included in the card located in the outside pocket of this guide. Please keep this card along with this guide and your lease for future reference. New cards will be issued periodically as information or staff change at your site. If you cannot locate this information card your manager can provide another one.

The Property Manager is responsibility for all lease enforcement at the site and can assist you with any number of housing and related issues.

## **Maintenance Requests**

Maintenance requests for all Urban Edge apartments are taken by phone at 617-522- 4095. The Work Order center is located off site, and Technicians are assigned out of this office to make repairs. The phone line can be reached Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. For emergencies on weekends, holidays or after hours, please call the same number, as a 24 hour answering service will coordinate immediate maintenance response to all emergency needs.

## **Resident Services**

Urban Edge offers a wide range of resident services to Urban Edge residents and other neighborhood residents. These services include crime prevention programs, a Food Pantry, individual advocacy assistance and problem solving help, and referral to many local service providers. Urban Edge's Community Services Department is located at 2010 Columbus Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and can be reached at 617-989-9200.

## **Rent Due**

Rent is due, in full, on or before the first day of each month. Payment is considered late on the second day of the month. No rent bill is sent (unless you are at Academy Homes I). Urban Edge is very aggressive in its rent collection this is necessary in order to pay the mortgage, utility bills, site improvements, etc., to maintain the property. Payment is required in the form of a check or money order. No cash is accepted at the office for security reasons.

Any checks returned unpaid by the bank will cause your rent account to be charged \$15. Additionally, Urban Edge may require you to make future payments by money order or bank check.

## **Rent Balances**

It is extremely important to keep up with rent payments. Urban Edge closely monitors rent collections and is required to take legal action when rent is not paid or is paid late. This legal action can include eviction and listing unpaid balances with credit services. Evicted residents have found that they are often unable to get other apartments or consumer credit due to unpaid rents at Urban Edge.

## **About Your Rent Payment**

Urban Edge operates a variety of subsidized housing. If you have moved in with a direct subsidy, the rent you pay is a percentage of your income. The balance of the cost is provided to Urban Edge by agencies such as HUD, DHCD or the Boston Housing Authority in the form of a rent subsidy.

Depending on the subsidy program you are participating in, your rent will usually be between 30% -35% of your adjusted gross income. Basically, this means that for every \$100 you receive from employment or public assistance, you will pay \$30 in rent (at 30% of income). These figures are adjusted somewhat for the number of children you have and other factors can influence your actual rent payment.

As you can see, having a subsidized apartment is a valuable commodity. Please guard it carefully for you and your family by paying your rent on time and following all the provisions of the lease.

## **Recertification**

Federal Law requires that your income be reviewed each year and that the rent be set based on this review. This process is called Recertification. Depending on your subsidy, this Recertification may be done by Urban Edge, the Boston Housing Authority or “the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership. Residents are notified by their manager or directly by their subsidy agency up to three months before their anniversary date (the date of move in) that a Recertification must be conducted.

You will be asked to bring certain information to the recertification meeting with the manager, who will verify income and family information. Subsidy rules require “third party” verification of all information in accordance with Federal law. You will be asked to sign certain releases allowing others (employers and other income sources) to provide information to the person completing the review. In addition, residents are asked to verify information, which may be used to calculate deductions from income for rent purposes.

Your rent is based on the information provided by these sources. Federal law requires that all income be included in this calculation. If your income changes through the course of the

year or if your family size changes, you are required to report this to the manager immediately.

## **Moving Out**

Residents are required to give the Urban Edge at least 30 days advance notice before vacating the apartment. This allows the Urban Edge staff to quickly turn over your apartment to another family on the waiting list.

This notice must be provided in writing to the Property Manager. The manager can provide a form for this notice, and you will receive a copy.

Giving the Property Manager at least 30 days advance notice of move out will allow us to schedule a move out inspection, which will be used to determine the condition of your apartment at move out and to calculate the return of your Security Deposit.

Additionally, you are responsible for any damages to your apartment at move out. You will be charged for damages beyond “reasonable wear and tear” For instance, if a resident has lived in an apartment for four years and on leaving, the apartment needs painting, this is “reasonable wear and tear” and the resident would not be not charged. However, if the bedroom doors are broken through, the cost of repairing or replacing these would be charged to the resident's account. Additionally, resident's apartments should be clean and free of debris when moving out, Appliances, stoves, cabinets, walls and floors/carpets should be clean and no personal items or furniture are to be left in the apartment. Furniture and personal items left in an apartment after move out will be considered to

be abandoned by departing residents, and discarded by Urban Edge. The cost of discarding these items as well as the cost of cleaning the apartment (beyond "reasonable wear and tear") will be charged to the resident's account.

The Property Manager, will deduct the cost of repairing these damages from the resident's Security Deposit account along with any lost rent from any failure to provide 30 days advance notice of move out. If the Security Deposit Account does not contain sufficient funds to cover both damages and lost rent, residents are, charged by the Property Manager with unpaid balances, and this is reported to a credit service bureau.

Please take care to protect your Security Deposit and your all-important credit rating by providing Urban Edge with at least 30 days advance notice of move out and by leaving your apartment in good condition.

#### Maintenance

Please direct all requests for maintenance to the Urban Edge Work Order Center. The Center can be reached at 617-522-4095 Monday through Friday, between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM.

#### EMERGENCY MAINTENANCE REQUESTS:

While most work requests are dealt with during regular working hours, Urban Edge responds to emergency requests around the clock. Emergency maintenance requests are those, which affect the life, health and safety of residents, including gas leaks, lack of water, no heat and toilet backups. To report emergency maintenance needs outside of regular work hours call 617-522-4095.

#### REPORTING PROBLEMS:

In addition to rent payment and living peacefully, the lease requires residents to promptly report any maintenance problems. This will help prevent small maintenance problems

from becoming major problems. For instance, leaks in a sink drain left unattended will eventually damage the cabinet and floors, and increase in utility cost. While all apartments are inspected at-least annually, it is important that residents report any maintenance problems as soon as possible.

#### DO-IT-YOURSELF MAINTANCE:

Near the end of this guide is a list of non-emergency items that often can be repaired by residents without a call to Urban Edge. Please review this list and follow the steps prior to calling maintenance. Your repairs will be done more quickly and the maintenance staff time can be directed to more serious emergency maintenance needs and preventive maintenance.

#### EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION:

All Urban Edge employees have photo identification cards that indicate their name and that they are employees of Urban Edge. Your Property Manager showed you an example of this card when you moved in and one is photocopied near the end of this guide. Please do not allow anyone into your apartment without such an identification card. If you have any questions, or if you are unsure of whether a person is an employee of Urban Edge, please call your Property Manager or the Urban Edge main phone; line at 617-989-9200 before allowing that person to enter your apartment.

#### WORK PROCEDURES:

Urban Edge staff is expected to act professionally at all times. Maintenance work is expected to be completed promptly by knowledgeable, professional and courteous employees, who are expected to leave the workplace clean and in an orderly manner. Please let your Manager know if this is not the case.

FOLLOW-UP:

If your requests for maintenance service bring no response, or if you are dissatisfied with the repairs, please notify your Property Manager, or maintenance supervisor immediately.

## **Inspections**

Urban Edge inspects all apartments at least annually. While residents are required by the lease to cooperate with this inspection, prior notification will be given of the date and approximate time of inspection.

Occasionally, Urban Edge Property Management staff may need to enter an apartment without prior notice, but these cases are limited to maintenance and other emergencies (such as a fire or serious leak). In any such case, staff will leave a note indicating that they have entered the apartment in the resident's absence and the reason for the entry.

During the annual inspection, the Inspector will check the condition of the apartment, systems (heating, electrical, etc.), appliances and the surrounding site.

The outcome of the inspection may generate work orders for repairs. Additionally, the Inspector or Property Manager may require the resident to take certain actions to improve housekeeping if it is determined that the current level of housekeeping is creating a sanitation or infestation problem.

## **Dumpsters/Trash Removal**

Taking proper care in the disposal and storage of trash is an important quality of life issue at any housing complex. Improper disposal and storage of trash can create several problems, including appearance of the site, fire hazards and increased rodent and vermin infestation. Trash must be disposed of by placing it inside dumpsters in a closed plastic bag. If residents send children to dispose of trash, they must ensure that the child is able to properly place the bag in the dumpster.

## **Pets**

Various Urban Edge properties have different pet roles as part of the site's "House Rules" or "Community Rules". In cases where pets are prohibited by these rules, residents cannot own pets or otherwise have pets in apartments (except as required to assist residents or visitors with disabilities).

At sites where residents are allowed pets, you are reminded that residents are responsible for all actions of their pets, as they would be members of their household. Additionally, all pet ordinances must be followed, including strict adherence to the City of Boston Leash Law, and residents must always clean up after their pet.

## **Interior Decoration**

PAINTING:

With permission of Management, residents may paint their apartment. Management may limit colors so that the apartment can be easily repainted should the resident move out. Generally, darker colors are not allowed in painting apartments, as they are difficult to paint over when repainting the apartment. Check with your Property Manager for further information.

PANELING/CONTACT PAPER/WALLPAPER:

Decorating apartments with paneling, stick-on contact paper and wallpaper is not allowed due to the difficulty and added cost of removing these items at apartment turnover.

HANGING PICTURES:

When hanging pictures, residents should use picture hangers rather than nails or adhesive stick-on hangers. Picture hangers afford the best support while minimizing damage to the walls in your apartment.

## Entering Apartments

NORMAL REQUEST FOR ENTRY:

Management and maintenance staff occasionally needs to enter apartments for maintenance or inspection purposes. In non-emergency situations, such entry is requested with 48-hour notice. The lease requires residents to allow such entry for maintenance or inspection purposes, or to work out a more convenient time if the time requested by management is inconvenient.

EMERGENCY ENTRY:

Occasionally, management must enter an apartment to deal with maintenance emergencies, such as floods, fire or unanticipated maintenance repairs. In such cases, advance notice may not be possible. These cases, however, are

infrequent and limited to emergencies. Should this occur, Urban Edge staff will knock loudly before entering, and leave a notice regarding the reason for the entry.

PERMISSION TO ENTER:

When requesting a repair from the work order center, it is recommended that residents provide the work order center with permission to enter your apartment if you are not at home. This will allow Urban Edge to more quickly complete repairs.

KEYS:

Residents should not be allowed to change locks; this must be done by management.

## Community Atmosphere

Residents are responsible for not only their own actions, but also the actions of their family and guests while on site. The lease holds the head of household responsible for lease violations of their children and guests. To prevent problems in this area, please follow the guidelines below:

INFORMING GUEST OF COMMUNITY RULES:

Guests should be made aware that the resident is responsible for their actions while they are on the site, including traffic and parking regulations.

VISITORS:

While Urban Edge does not expect residents to "register" all guests, your lease and Federal guidelines specify who can live in the apartment, and require all residents to be listed with the Property Manager. If residents expect a guest to stay for more

than a few days, the Site Property Manager must be notified to determine if that person can or should be placed on the lease.

**NOISE:**

Residents must maintain a considerate sound level on radios, televisions, home and car audio systems and musical instruments. To preserve a pleasant atmosphere throughout the community, residents should avoid making excessive noise in the apartments or in common areas, such as slamming doors and windows or talking in loud voices. This is particularly important between the hours of 9 P.M. and 9 A.M. Residents should also be aware that the City of Boston has noise ordinances that are enforced by the Boston Police and that violators may be subject to fines and confiscation of electronic equipment. Please report any infringements of this provision to the Property Manager.

## **Traffic and Parking**

All residents and guests are expected to abide by the following traffic and parking rules in addition to all local and state traffic and parking laws and regulations.

**VEHICLES:**

-All vehicles parked overnight in any off-street lots must be legally owned and registered by a resident of the site.

-All vehicles on the site must have valid Massachusetts license plates affixed, and in accordance with

Massachusetts's law be properly insured and display a valid Massachusetts Inspection Sticker.

-All vehicles owned by residents of the site must be registered with the Property Manager.

**TRAFFIC:**

-All drivers using the off-street parking lots must operate their vehicle in a safe manner at safe speeds, understanding that a large number of children and others are present.

-Under no circumstances are vehicles to be driven on or over sidewalks in or through yards or otherwise off the main streets of the site.

**PARKING:**

-Unless otherwise specified in site-specific parking plans, the site does not offer reserved parking nor is a parking space guaranteed for residents. Residents and guests park in Urban Edge off-street spaces at their own risk.

-Overnight visitor parking is not allowed without prior Management approval.

-Parking is not allowed outside of legal designated parking areas. Under no circumstances is parking allowed on sidewalks or in yards or on lawns.

-Parking must not block deliveries or dumpster pickup

**OTHER PARKING AND TRAFFIC RULES:**

-Your resident association board, in cooperation with the Property Manager, may develop specific parking regulations for your community. Any specific regulations will be distributed to all residents and be posted in the Management Office. However, unless otherwise indicated in such a policy, all parking provisions contained in this document apply.

-Vehicles must be operable. Vehicles cannot be stored on site unless they are safe and legal, meaning owned by a resident of the site, registered, insured and inspected. If a vehicle does not meet these criteria it must be stored elsewhere.

-Vehicle repair and the storing or discarding of vehicle and engine parts on site is not allowed.

Please report abandoned vehicles to the Property Manager.

## **Care of Your Apartment**

The instructions below will help ensure that residents are following the provisions of their lease:

*-Smoke Detectors:* NEVER disconnect smoke detectors. Disconnecting smoke detectors is a violation of your lease and places your family in serious danger. If you have any problems with your smoke detector, notify management and it will be fixed immediately.

**KITCHEN APPLIANCES:**

*Garbage Disposal:* Keeping the cover over the disposal drain when not in use will prevent items from accidentally dropping into the unit. It is important to have a strong flow of cold water running when operating the disposal, leaving the water on for a few seconds after the disposal motor is turned off. Bottle caps, glass, pins, crockery, foil, rags, cigarettes, string and paper as well as some fibrous material such as celery, artichokes and corn husks will harm the disposal and can cause a break down. Damages due to negligence may be charged to residents. See the attached Self-Maintenance sheet for instructions if the disposal does not operate.

*Stoves:* the resident, including ovens, range-tops, and the surface underneath the range top must clean Stoves regularly. Walls, surfaces and range hoods around the stove should be cleaned regularly to maintain the surfaces and prevent infestation. When cleaning ovens, residents should use oven cleaners and non-abrasive cleaners should be used on range tops and range hoods.

*Refrigerators:* Refrigerators must be cleaned regularly by residents with a non-abrasive cleaner. Additionally, dust should be carefully cleaned regularly from the back, sides and underneath of the refrigerator. Finally, refrigerators contain a pan at the bottom, which collects condensation. This must be emptied occasionally. The drip pan under the refrigerator also needs to be cleaned. Under the vegetable tray, the hose should also be cleaned.

COUNTERTOPS:

Countertop stains can be removed with a light application of cleaner. However, continual use of abrasives will harm the counter surfaces.

Do not cut food directly on the countertop. Instead, use a cutting board. This will cause damages and result in tenant charge.

Do not place hot pans on a countertop as they will burn the surface and can also loosen the glue holding some countertop surfaces in place. The cutting board is also a good surface for hot pots and pans.

KITCHEN FLOOR:

Residents should clean kitchen floors regularly with floor cleaners available at the supermarket. Do not clean the floor by dumping large amounts of water on it. This will loosen the glue and damage the surface and may cause water damage elsewhere in the building. Please check the insert card to determine if your floor has specific cleaning needs.

BATHROOMS:

Cleaning:

Residents should clean tubs, sinks and toilets, regularly by using a non-abrasive cleaner. Walls and floors should also be cleaned regularly, using cleaners available in stores. Store bought toilet cleaner that are dropped into the tank in the rear of the toilet help to make toilet cleaning easier, but are no substitute for regular cleaning of toilets with a brush and toilet bowl cleaner. If residents use a “drop in” cleaner for your toilet tank, be sure to follow the directions on the package, taking

care not to block the water passage. Ceramic wall tiles around shower should be cleaned regularly.

Be sure to keep the shower curtain with the bottom falling to the inside of the shower to prevent water from getting on the floor. Water should be quickly cleaned from the floors and walls to prevent dangerous slipping hazards as well as damage to the floors and ceilings below.

To prevent mildew buildup, wipe walls regularly and safely open the window a small amount to allow ventilation, particularly after running a shower. If bathroom is equipped with a fan, it should be used whenever taking a shower and should be run 10 minutes after use. This will remove moisture in the air. Adjusting the shower curtain so that it does not sit on the bottom of the tub and pulling the shower curtain closed when not in use to allow it to dry can prevent mildew on shower curtains.

TOILET/SINK STOPPAGES:

Most toilet stoppages are avoidable and many can be repaired by following the Do-It-Yourself instructions attached to this document. Make sure items are not in position to fall into the toilet or sink and tub drains.

Also, diapers and sanitary products should not be flushed -the sewage lines are not equipped to handle these items and flushing them is likely to cause the toilet to back up into the bathroom creating an unhealthy situation.

### CARPETS:

If your apartment has carpeting, following the steps below will maintain the carpeting in good condition for your family's use and prevent charges at move out.

- Vacuum your carpet regularly, at least weekly and more often in heavily traveled areas.
- Use a mat outside or directly inside exterior doors for wiping shoes when entering apartments.
- Shampoo carpets regularly-at least twice a year. Shampoo machines can be inexpensively rented at local shopping centers.
- Never place a hot iron or other hot item on the carpet, as the carpet material can burn or melt any damages that are not normal wear will result in tenant charge.

### WOOD FLOORING:

[Wash the hardwood floor with a wet mop, and then apply with Murphy's Oil with a dry cloth mop.](#)

### LIGHTING:

Each apartment is supplied with light bulbs at initial move in. Residents are responsible for replacing light bulbs that will burn out in their apartment. Bulbs should be replaced with bulbs of the same wattage, as exceeding the recommended wattage of bulbs can create a fire hazard.

## **Utilities**

In most family complexes, residents are responsible for payment of some or all of your utilities (except water service, which Urban Edge always pays). A list of which utilities residents are responsible for was reviewed at move in and is listed again on the insert card located in the cover pocket of this guide.

The lease requires residents to pay all applicable utility charges. Residents who do not pay utility charges will not only have utilities shut off by the utility company, but will be in violation of the lease with Urban Edge, which could lead to eviction.

## **Maintenance Charges**

Residents will be charged for maintenance service only when such service is required beyond normal wear and tear of apartments. This may include charges for responding to lockouts, broken doors, broken windows, toilet stoppages or clogged drains caused by items being dropped into toilets or drains, and other damage caused by neglect or misuse. A listing of resident charges is included in the outside pocket of this guide and may change from time to time.

Any maintenance charges will be clearly indicated on the resident's rent bill and may be appealed if the resident believes that these charges were made in error. In the event of an appeal, payment of the charge will not be expected until the appeal is decided on.

## **Your Community**

This section provides information, which should be helpful in getting you acquainted with your new housing complex and the community. Please contact your Property Manager if you have any questions about the site or community that are not answered here.

### **RESIDENT ASSOCIATION BOARD:**

Your development may have a resident association board. Additionally, the Urban Edge Board of Directors includes a number of residents as members. For more information on the resident association boards and Urban Edge Board of Directors activities, call 617-989-9200.

## **Transfers And Reasonable Accommodations**

### **TRANSFERS:**

You may request a transfer for a number of reasons, including if your family size is too small or too large for your current apartment, medical reasons, for security reasons. Urban Edge regularly updates its list of residents who need larger and smaller apartments (based on information from the Recertification Interview), but you should notify your Manager if we do not have recent family size changes.

Requests for medical and public safety transfers are reviewed to determine if the case meets the criteria for emergency transfer. Of course, emergency transfers are given priority over other transfer requests.

Occupancy guidelines vary slightly based on subsidy source, but as a general rule of thumb, guidelines state that two children of the same sex may share a bedroom. If your family has more than two persons of the same sex per bedroom, or children of opposite sex sharing a bedroom, you may be eligible for a transfer. Conversely, if you are “over housed” (In an apartment bigger than your family needs) Urban Edge will request that you move to a smaller apartment.

### **REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS FOR RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Urban Edge will make reasonable accommodations at the resident’s request when a need related to a disability is verified. Examples of reasonable accommodations include an emergency transfer or making an adjustment to the apartment, such as replacing a doorbell with a flashing light for a hearing impaired resident.

## **Eviction**

### **EVICCTIONS:**

It is the goal of the Urban Edge to avoid evictions. We are in the business of providing housing, not putting people out of housing. However, evictions occasionally are required, and when required, Urban Edge will move aggressively and swiftly to protect the rights of residents to live peacefully and to protect the property.

### **DRUG OR VIOLENT ACTIVITY:**

Drug activity and violent activity, whether by residents or guests will be met with immediate action by Urban Edge. In

many cases, Federal law allows swift eviction for drug activity and violent behavior.

*NUISANCE AND VIOLATION OF LEASE PROVISIONS:*

Urban Edge may also evict in cases of repeated nuisance activity, such as loud parties, disputes, vandalism and other actions, which disrupt the peacefulness of the complex. If Urban Edge is unsuccessful in attempts to resolve certain less immediate problems, such as poor housekeeping, an eviction may be sought.

*NONPAYMENT OF RENT, MAINTENANCE CHARGES AND UTILITIES:*

Finally, failure to pay rent, maintenance charges or applicable utilities will lead to eviction.

*FURTHER INFORMATION:*

The lease spells out in detail the provisions for which residents may be evicted. Residents should become familiar with the Lease.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Depending on the subsidy source, residents are allowed certain grievance rights should Urban Edge seek to terminate their tenancy through eviction. Urban Edge staff notifies residents of the specific grievance rules when eviction action becomes necessary.

Except in cases involving weapons, drugs or violence, Urban Edge affords residents an informal grievance procedure, through a meeting with the Director of Property Management to explain their side of the situation.