

## Smart Neighboring Tips

- **Introduce yourself; meet your neighbors.** A simple “hello” goes a long way. This is the first step in building a good relationship. If your neighbor knows your name, major, and hometown, for example, they will start to see you as the unique individual you are ... and not just as “another student.”
- **Keep neighbors informed.** Contact your neighbors before undertaking something that might affect them such as hosting a big party, building a fence, or getting a dog.
- **Be aware of neighborhood expectations and City ordinances.** Know the local laws and general expectations of the neighborhood to make your stay more pleasant. You can find the City ordinances online at [www.Morgantown.com](http://www.Morgantown.com).
- **Be aware of differences.** Age, faith, ethnic background, and family status can drastically affect how one goes about his or her daily life. Be aware of the differences between you and your neighbors.
- **Ask how you can help.** Neighborly gestures contribute to a positive and welcoming neighborhood for all!
- **Be candid.** If your neighbors do something that bothers you, let them know as soon as possible. If you cannot work out a fair compromise to your dispute, take advantage of the free and confidential mediation services offered by WVU Student Legal Services, (304) 293-4897.
- **Occupancy limit.** In Morgantown, there is an occupancy limit stating that no more than 3 unrelated individuals, owning or renting, may reside in a dwelling unit. Some landlords may have been granted an exception to this rule or you may be outside the city limits, but you need to check before you sign a lease, because you might be faced with one person having to leave if this ordinance is violated.

## Contact Us

**WVU Student Legal Services**  
(304) 293-4897

**Code Enforcement**  
(304) 284-7401

**Morgantown Parking Authority**  
(304) 284-7435

**WVU Parking Office**  
(304) 293-5504

**Emergency**  
911

**City of Morgantown**  
(304) 284-7405

**Morgantown Police Department**  
(304) 284-7522

**West Virginia Department of Public Safety**  
(304) 293-3136

**Morgantown Fire Department**  
(304) 284-7480

**Student HelpLine**  
(304) 293-5555



## Dear Resident,

Welcome to our city! This is a wonderful place to live and we look forward to you becoming one of the newest members of our thriving community.

Morgantown strives to create a neighborhood environment that is respectful of everyone. Whether you are starting your family here, attending school, getting ready to retire, or seeking new job prospects, we want Morgantown to be the place for you.

The City of Morgantown, West Virginia University, and the community are working together to develop good relations between traditional residents and students. Everyone can help in this effort by getting to know your neighbors and respecting local laws. Thank you for being a great addition to our community. Have a great year!

## Sponsors

- WVU Office of Student Life
- WVU Student Legal Services
- Morgantown Housing Advisory Committee
- Morgantown Fire Department
- Morgantown Police
- Neighborhood Council
- Morgantown Code Enforcement

# Being a Good Neighbor

*In 2000, Morgantown was named the "Best Small City in America" by Demographics Daily. Take pride in where you live! Get to know your neighbors and the City ordinances and help us keep Morgantown one of the best places in the country!*

## Parties

Read the enclosed "Party Pitfalls" manual for more information regarding the consequences of parties and hosting responsibilities.

## Noise

How much noise is too much? If a neighbor can stand on the edge of his or her property line and hear noise from your house, it is too loud. The responding police officer has the discretion to decide if the noise coming from your property is unreasonable. Under City Ordinance 527.03, loud and unnecessary noises are prohibited. If you violate this ordinance, you will receive a verbal order to cease or stop the noise. If you do not comply with the verbal order or violate the order again within 60 days, then you will be charged with a violation and fined up to \$500 (City Ordinances 527.08; 501.99(a)).

## Parking

It is neighborly to leave places for residents to park in front of their own home. You must be no more than 18 inches from the curb and you cannot park facing the opposite direction of traffic flow on the side of the street you parked (City Ordinance 361.05). You also cannot park in a number of places, including on a sidewalk, in front of a public or private driveway, or within 15 feet of a fire hydrant (City Ordinance 361.03). Furthermore, you cannot park in the same place on the street for more than 48 consecutive hours (City Ordinance 361.12). Violating any of these ordinances can lead to a Traffic Code penalty under City Ordinance 303.99 with a fine up to \$500.

## Pets—Leash Law and Licensing

If you own a dog, you are required to keep your animal on a leash no longer than six feet, whether in a public place or on your property (Ordinance 505.01). You must have a tag attached to your dog's collar at all times stating your name and address. Cats may only run at large if they wear identification by some recognizable means (City Ordinance 505.15). You are also responsible for picking up animal waste. If you have a dog six months or older, you must pay a dog tax fee to Monongalia County through the Assessor's Office. Currently, the tax is \$3/dog unless you live in Morgantown, Star City, Westover, or Granville, which makes the tax an additional \$3. Animal control will issue citations for animals off leash and failure to pick up after pets. If you do not pay your dog tax, you will have to pay the required tax plus any additional impound fees.

## Stay off of the Roof

Under City Ordinance 1751.04(h), only the owner, the owner's licensed contractor, or maintenance personnel may be on the roof of any structure for any reason. A tenant may not be on the roof. A violation of this ordinance is a misdemeanor and carries a \$100-\$500 fine.

## Weeds

It is your duty as a property owner to keep the property free from "dirt, rubbish, debris, weeds, brush, poison ivy, trees, plant growth, filth or any other deleterious material which may endanger or injure neighboring property or the health, safety or welfare of the residents of the City" (Ordinance 1145.01). As a tenant, this is also your duty if your lease holds you responsible for such activities.

## Snow Removal

Whether you own or rent, you are responsible for clearing snow, ice, dirt, and refuse off the sidewalks adjacent to your property (Ordinance 913.11). If you do not, notice can be given by the City Manager to do so within 24 hours (excluding Sunday). Failure to comply may result in the City Manager having someone else perform the task at your cost.

## Sofas

Do you have a couch or some other form of inside furniture on your porch? Under W.V. Code §29-3-12, you can be charged with "Failure to Abate a Fire Hazard," which is a misdemeanor, and be fined \$100-\$1,000 and/or imprisoned for up to 90 days.

## ***If the Police Come to Your Party...***

Be polite. Being aggressive with the police will make matters worse for you. Identify yourself as the host, and if you are requested to do so, show some sort of identification. The police must have either a search warrant or consent to enter your house. If you are arrested, don't resist or try to avoid the police, as you could be liable for resisting arrest. Most importantly, DON'T SAY ANYTHING: you have the right to remain silent. Don't answer any questions the police ask unless you have an attorney present, and anything that you say can and will be used against you.

## ***Trash***

Trash, sofas, appliances, car parts, and other junked items are considered health and safety hazards. Failing to keep your property solid waste and litter-free could result in a fine between \$50 and \$500 (City Ordinance 1139.08). If your trash is not in a trash can, the City may issue you a citation for \$250-\$500 (Ordinance 1139.061). Your trash container can be out no earlier than 6:00 PM the day before your collection day and cannot be left out later than 9:00 PM on the day of collection (City Ordinance 1139.12). Anyone found guilty of violating this ordinance can be fined \$25-\$500. Also, be aware that the City has Ordinance 1139.16 requiring either the property owner or tenant to have trash services placed in his/her name. Landlords, under appropriate circumstances, may give your name to Allied Waste so that trash services will be billed to you. If you are responsible for paying for trash services, you are also responsible for providing appropriate containers. For more information on trash collection, please visit <http://www.morgantown.com/trash-collection.htm> or call Allied Waste at (304) 366-8900.

## ***Recycling***

Allied Waste will provide a recycling container to those under their service. Under City Ordinance 1139.17, you are supposed to separate steel cans, aluminum cans, clear glass, and newspapers from your other trash and place them in your recycling container to be picked up on the dates designated by Allied Waste.

More information about the recycling guidelines for Allied Waste can be found at <http://www.morgantown.com/recycling-info.htm>.

Additionally, various areas around the WVU campus have recycling bins for paper, plastic and aluminum. WVU through its WECAN Recycling Program works to promote recycling and other environmentally friendly acts. You can learn more at <http://wecan.wvu.edu/>.

Finally, if you would like more information on where you can recycle various types of items, including electronics, computers, cell phones, tires, paint, clothing, appliances, and more, please visit: <http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/safety/Where%20to%20Recycle.html>.

## ***Minimizing Your Risks***

The following is a brief guideline which should help you minimize the risks of either civil or criminal liability due to a party.

### ***Things to do:***

- Be considerate of neighbors.
- Monitor how much you are drinking, and provide food for your guests.
- Control the noise level.
- Be polite to the police.
- Leave your drinks behind when you leave a party.
- Use bathrooms, not bushes.
- Use trash containers.
- Make sure those under 21 are NOT drinking.

### ***Things not to do:***

- Don't walk in the streets with open alcohol containers.
- Don't allow drunk people to drive.
- Don't blast the stereo or make loud noises between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM.

### ***Potential Consequences***

The consequences of the violations described in this pamphlet involve a wide range of penalties, depending on the severity of the crime. These penalties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Fines and court costs
- Probation
- Community service
- Driver's license restrictions, suspensions, or revocation
- Criminal conviction and/or imprisonment
- Sanctions from WVU Judicial Affairs
- Expulsion from WVU

Responsibility and moderation are the keys to enjoying a party without the result of police intervention. Keeping in mind the risks of irresponsible alcohol or drug use, as well as the responsibilities guests and hosts must accept, allows the enjoyment of the party without disruptions from violent behavior or police intervention.

## **Some Specific Criminal Offenses**

Criminal offenses often result from irresponsible party behavior. There are more than just legal consequences to your actions. WVU students can be expelled for unlawful behavior. Additionally, if you get arrested and transported to the Doddridge County Regional Jail, WVU does NOT provide a pick-up service from the jail, which is 75 miles from Morgantown. A taxi ride home, if available, could cost you at least \$200.

### ***Operating a Business without a License***

Charging entry into a party is considered operating a business without a license. You can be fined more than \$500 for charging admission or selling cups.

### ***Serving Alcohol to a Minor***

If underage students are found drinking alcohol at a house party, the party host(s) will be fined \$500. Additionally, if you are caught providing alcohol to a person under the age of 21, you will be fined \$500.

### ***Fraudulent Identification***

Using a fake driver's license to get into a bar could cost you your real license, a \$500 fine, or not more than six months in prison. This citation will remain on your record for seven years.

### ***Lending a Driver's License to an Underage Person***

Lending your driver's license to an underage person so that he or she can purchase alcohol or gain admission into a bar could cost you a \$500 fine and a 90-day suspension of your license.

### ***Open Container/ Underage Possession***

Having an open container of alcohol within city limits is a violation and carries a fine from \$100 to \$500 regardless of age. Underage possession of alcohol carries a mandatory six hours of community service, attending alcohol awareness classes, and a fine up to \$500.

### ***Fire-Related Violations***

Maintaining outdoor fires, burning furniture, and other dangerous activities may result in criminal charges. In addition to possible criminal penalties, students may face University sanctions including expulsion. Furthermore, due to the increase in dumpster fires over the past year, students may face harsher penalties in connection with this violation.

### ***Driving While Intoxicated***

Driving under the influence of alcohol will result in jail time, revocation of your driver's license, and carries a fine of \$100 to \$500. If an accident occurs, further criminal charges and civil actions may be added.

### ***Urinating In Public***

You are prohibited from urinating or defecating anywhere someone else can see you, or on any public property, including alleys. It carries a fine of up to \$500.

### ***Assault, Battery, and Criminal Sexual Misconduct***

Irresponsible use of alcohol often results in violent or aggressive behavior. Offensive or hurtful conduct may result in a misdemeanor or even felony charge of assault and battery or rape.

### ***Littering Violations***

Under city code, a person in control of residential property may be fined if the property is not kept free from litter. Under West Virginia state law, it is a misdemeanor to litter on either public or private property. Individuals frequently receive citations for littering when they throw or place an alcoholic beverage on the ground in an attempt to avoid an alcohol citation. This offense carries a fine of not less than \$100.

### ***Noise Violations***

The City of Morgantown has very strict and pervasive noise regulations. Generally, any noises out of the ordinary, bothering or annoying anyone outside your leased space including those in another apartment in the building, that are made between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM may expose you to criminal penalties.

### ***Non-Criminal Hazards***

Criminal liabilities are not the only concern one should be aware of regarding parties. Parties can and often do give rise to civil liabilities.

### ***Lease Violations***

Your lease may have clauses which allow the landlord to begin eviction proceedings for certain criminal violations. These include use and/or sale of unlawful drugs, serving alcohol to a minor, and consumption of alcohol by a minor.