

Room Entry and Search Policy

SCOPE OF POLICY:

This policy applies to room entry and search of student residences on the Goucher College Campus.

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

I. ROOM ENTRY

Trained college personnel may enter rooms in the event of an emergency, for health or safety reasons, or because of suspected violation of the law or school policy. Room inspections are conducted periodically and during each break period by Residential Life and/or Campus Safety personnel. In instances where work requests are made to Facilities Management Services (FMS), the residents should state in advance if they wish to be present when the room is entered, and an appointment will be arranged. If no statement is made to this effect, the work will be completed in the residents' absence at the earliest possible time.

II. ROOM SEARCHES

Trained College officials may enter and/or search a student's room or other college-owned or operated facility under any one of the following conditions, when specifically authorized by the Vice President and Dean of Students, or by their designee:

- A. If there is reason to believe that illegal activity, such as underage alcohol use, is occurring or has occurred in the room;
- B. If there is reason to believe that activity which violates a college or [Residential Life policy](#) is occurring or has occurred in the room;
- C. If, in the opinion of college public safety and Residential Life staff, there is reason to believe that activity causing a health or safety threat is occurring or has occurred in the room;
- D. With consent of a resident of that room or multiple room unit.

III. LAW ENFORCEMENT SEARCHES

Law enforcement officers possessing proper legal documents have the legal right to search rooms, and, whenever possible, a representative of the college will accompany the law enforcement officer conducting the search.

IV. COLLEGE SEARCH PROCEDURES

- A. The search shall be conducted by a Campus Safety officer or professional Residential Life staff member. Student staff members do not conduct room searches. Absent exigent circumstances, a professional staff member from the Office of Residential Life and Campus Safety officer will be present at all searches.
- B. Residents of the room will be notified of the authorization and reason for the search at the time of the search, if they are present.
- C. A reasonable effort will be made to ensure that a resident of the room or multiple rooms is present during a search. If a resident of the room or multiple room unit is not present or cannot be found within a reasonable time period, college officials will make reasonable efforts to ensure that at least one other student is present as a witness, preferably a student residence hall staff member.
- D. All areas of the room may be searched, including desks and closets. In addition, personal items of the resident, such as backpacks and suitcases, may be searched, at the discretion of the college officials conducting the search.
- E. Residents may be required to provide access to any locked spaces/containers, as requested by college officials. Failure to provide such access may result in a container being forcibly opened by the college, with the college assuming no liability for damages, and/or such a container being confiscated and/or destroyed.

V. SEIZURE OF PROPERTY

Any personal items violating college policies or creating a health or safety risk may be confiscated anywhere on college premises, including from residents' rooms. Depending on the nature of the item confiscated, the item may be turned over to the police, destroyed, or returned to the resident at the end of the academic year.

VI. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

Questions about this policy should be addressed to the [Office of Campus Safety](#) (410-337-6111).