



# Did you know...?

## *A Guide to General Information, Common Laws, and Regulations that Students Should Know*

### **Academe**

- University and immigration policies are different. For example, while your department may say that it is fine to be less than full time, in terms of immigration this is illegal except under certain circumstances.
- Many academic departments are unaware of immigration laws; therefore it is best to speak with an International Advisor when questions arise.

### **Alcohol Laws**

- Consumption of alcohol by *minors* (anyone under the age of 21) is illegal
- It is illegal to buy alcohol for minors
- It is illegal to drink and drive. The penalties for this are severe and can include fines, restrictions or revoking of your driver's license, or criminal charges. Here is a link to help you estimate the number of alcoholic drinks that it would take for a person to surpass the violate Michigan driving laws: <http://www.healthed.msu.edu/snc/bac.htm>
- Do not carry open bottles of alcohol in your car
- Open alcohol in any form is not allowed on MSU property. This includes parking lots, stadiums, and streets. It is allowed on private premises and in restaurants

### **Alcohol Safety**

- If a guest at your party becomes drunk, make sure that they get home safely. Do not allow them to drive home. Also, check on them frequently for alcohol poisoning.
- Signs of Alcohol poisoning include: clammy skin, blue lips, labored breathing, and disorientation. Call 911 immediately if a friend shows these signs.

### **Bicycles**

- Do not leave bicycles unlocked. Use a strong bicycle lock on campus and in town. If your bicycle is expensive, you may want to keep it in your home at night.

### **Domestic Violence**

- It is illegal to leave young children unattended at home or in communal housing areas.
- Since 1978, the police can arrest in Michigan if they have "probable cause" to believe that an assault has occurred. This can include overturned furniture, traumatized children who witnessed the assault, the presence of physical injury, etc.
- A personal protection order (PPO) is an order issued by the court. In situations where there is a domestic relationship, it can protect you from harassment, assault, beating, molesting, wounding, or stalking by another person. It prevents the other person from purchasing a firearm or interfering with your daily activities. The order can also prohibit him/her from entering your premises and removing minor children.

## **Driving Mistakes**

- Do not talk on your mobile phone, eat or drink, or attempt to put on makeup while driving your car. This can impair your driving and may lead to an accident
- It is illegal to drive over the speed limit in the U.S. If you do so, you may be pulled over by a police officer, given a ticket and fined. Fines for speeding can be very expensive.
- Make sure not to let your parking meter expire. You can be given a parking ticket and fined, and if your driving record shows six or more unpaid parking tickets, your driving license will not be renewed.
- Make sure not to park in a no parking zone. This can result in your car being towed. It often costs over \$100 to retrieve your car if it is towed.
- If a school bus stops (all school buses are yellow in Michigan), make sure to stop two bus lengths away from it no matter which side of the road you are driving on. You will see a flashing red light on the school bus, which means to stop. Also, do not pass a school bus. Police will give out tickets for these actions.
- Come to a complete stop at a stop sign. Otherwise, you may get a ticket.
- 4 way stops are unique to the United States. When you come to a 4 way stop, look to see if anyone is stopping on your right. If someone on your right stops at the same time you do-they cross the intersection first. If no one else is at the stop, stop then look both ways carefully and cross the intersection. Be careful.
- If there is no sign saying that you cannot turn right at a stop light, then it is legal to turn right even when a light is red. You must first stop. Then look to see if it is safe for you to turn right. If there is a person walking across the street, they have the right of way. Wait for them to cross, and then if it is still safe to turn, turn right.

## **Felonies**

- A felony is a major crime such as murder, arson, etc. for which a large punishment is usually given.
- If you commit a felony, you may be charged by Michigan State University AND the State of Michigan
- Major theft can result in a felony
- Gambling on the Internet is also Felony. Besides being illegal, this is also dangerous, as you don't know who you are giving your credit card information to.
- Felonies and criminal activity will be reported to the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service)

## **Fire Alarms**

- It is illegal to ring a fire alarm as a joke. There will be serious consequences for doing so, and could include expulsion from MSU.

## **Health Insurance**

- Health insurance is required for international students at MSU. The University offers a policy for students to purchase, but other policies can be purchased online or in your home country. However, make sure that they follow MSU's guidelines.

### **Identity Theft**

- Identity theft has become very common in the U.S. Be careful and thoughtful when giving out your name, address, and/or social security #. A great deal of information can be found out about you with this information.

### **Immigration**

- Don't fall out of legal immigration status
- Make a photocopy of important documents such as your I-20 and passport. This will save you a lot of time and worry if your original documents are lost or stolen.
- Learn the regulations for your visa status. Not knowing these regulations can be harmful to your legal status.

### **Littering**

- Throwing trash can result in a fine. Make sure to throw trash in trash cans.

### **Police (and/or Security) Issues**

- While it is ok to tell a police/security officer your opinion, it is not wise to argue with them
- Do not put your hands on an officer. It is a violation.
- Attempting to bribe a police officer is a serious offense and will result in arrest.
- If a police car follows you flashing red and blue lights:
  1. Pull over on the right hand side of the road immediately, stop your car. Be calm.
  2. Do not get out of the car.
  3. Immediately get out your drivers license, car registration, and car insurance.
  4. Roll down the driver's side window
  5. Place both hands on the steering wheel where the police officer could see them. Do not reach for anything or make any sudden moves.
  6. Be polite and do not argue with the police, but feel free to ask questions.
  7. Answer the police officers questions directly.
  8. Do not attempt to offer money to the officer; this will cause you more trouble.

### **Safety**

- Don't walk alone at night in East Lansing or on campus if possible
- Make sure to lock residence hall, apartment doors, and car doors. Keep locked at all times.
- When using ATM (cash) machines, try to use those located inside, they are safer. ATM machines are often not well lit or well protected and can be dangerous.

### **Seatbelts**

- Wear your seatbelt at all times when driving. It's the law. Also, make sure that any passengers are wearing their seatbelts at all times as well.

## Sexual Harassment

- “Sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature when: submission to such behavior is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or status in a course, program, or activity; or submission to or rejection of such behavior is used as a basis for a decision affecting an individual's employment or participation in a course, program, or activity; or such behavior is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that a reasonable person would find that it: alters the terms or conditions of a person’s employment or educational experience, or unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work or performance in a course, program, or activity, thus creating a hostile or abusive working or educational environment.
- Sexual harassment involves unwanted sexual attention. However, a person’s subjective belief that behavior is offensive does not make that behavior sexual harassment. The behavior must also be objectively unreasonable.
- Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful gender (sex) discrimination. It may involve harassment of women by men, harassment of men by women, and harassment between persons of the same sex.
- Members of the University community shall not engage in sexual harassment. Persons who do so are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge for employees and suspension for students.
- The University and the law also prohibit retaliation against persons who complain about alleged sexual harassment or who cooperate in an investigation of reported sexual harassment.
- This Policy applies to all of the University community — faculty, staff, and students.

## Smoking

- Do not smoke inside MSU buildings, or in stores.
- Restaurants and bars may have special areas for smokers.

## Stalking

- Stalking is defined as: "a willful course of conduct involving repeated or continuing harassment of another individual that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested, and that actually causes the victim to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested."
  - **Willful course of conduct**" refers to a pattern of behavior made up of a series of two or more separate and noncontinuous acts which share the same purpose.
  - To be "**harassed**" means that there is repeated contact without permission, which results in emotional distress.
- **Stalking is a misdemeanor**, with a penalty of one year and/or \$1,000 fine, and up to five years probation.
- **Aggravated stalking is a felony**, with a penalty of five years and/or \$10,000 fine and any term of years probation, including life, and not less than five years. Aggravated stalking is stalking that occurs with one or more of these conditions: (a) if the stalking is violating a personal protection order (PPO), or condition of bail or probation, (b) if the stalking is the second offense, (c) or the stalking involves a credible threat to kill or physically harm an individual or a member of that individual's household or family.