

CoHo Ecovillage Common House Usage Guidelines

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A printout of this document is in a white 3-ring binder
in the Common House living room.

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Overview

The Common House is an extension of our homes. We have chosen to have homes with a smaller footprint with the understanding that our guest room, laundry room, play room, family room, and party-sized rooms are in the Common House. With this in mind, we want to keep the Common House open for spontaneous use or for CoHo functions that are open to CoHo residents, most of the time (i.e. meetings, meals, social activities, hanging out). The Common House use for private functions (i.e. book or other clubs) that are open only to a host's guests will be limited to no more than one a week, on a monthly average. Public functions that are advertised to the larger community (i.e. classes, talks, concerts) will be limited to once or twice a month. We also wish to limit the impact on the neighborhood from traffic and parking and take this into consideration when evaluating criteria for hosting a public event.

To help meet our needs for predictability, clarity, and ease, the Common House is reserved on a first-come, first-served basis with some times set aside as not reservable due to community use (i.e. meetings, meals, holidays). Because the laundry/rec room and the kid's room are often needed on a spontaneous basis, they may not be reserved. Dates and rooms are reserved at www.cohoecovillage.org/tiki If you cancel a previously scheduled reservation, please edit from the tiki site AND send it out by email.

- In order to leave sufficient unscheduled time, each household is limited to 6 personal/private events per year (i.e.- book group meeting, cub scouts).
- In order to assure that our Common House is cared for by others as we care for it ourselves, all events must be hosted by a resident who will attend the function, supervise the set-up, clean-up and use of the Common House and help visitors understand the Common House norms and guidelines (i.e. no peanuts in the CH, no meat, chicken, or fish prepared in the kitchen). If you cannot be the host for the entire time, you could ask another resident to co-host. Hosts must announce the event by email and at a community meeting, if possible.
- Although residents will be respectful of your private function, privacy is not guaranteed in any of the reserved rooms other than the guest room. Other residents may enter your reserved space to have access to something. The exception to this is sharing circles.

- If you wish to reserve a room for more than 4 hours or for multiple days, an application can be filled out and submitted to the Common House Team (currently Ron). The “use” application will be evaluated against a list of criteria (see application form below).
- An exception may be made for events that exceed the individual’s personal/private limit of 6 times a year (i.e. classes). A host is still required at each session. A “use” application must be submitted to the Common House Team (currently Ron) and go through a criteria evaluation. The community will be notified of the intention to allow an exception via email and an announcement at a community meeting and have 10 days to respond with concerns. If classes are given an exception and charge a fee, the instructor should be willing to offer a discount to residents.

Common House Norms and Guidelines for Use

No peanuts or peanut products are allowed in the Common House.

Following Sustenance guidelines, no meat, chicken, or fish is to be prepared in the Common House kitchen.

We are an Ecovillage. We discourage the use of disposables such as paper plates and paper/plastic cups.

All dishes and kitchenware that are used must be run through the sterilizer.

The space should be left in as good or better shape than it was found.

Young children should not be in the Common House unsupervised.

Common House Use Time/Dates Reserved for Community Use

New Year's Day

Valentine's Day

First Saturday in March for Wellness Retreat

Equinox

Easter

Mother's Day

Memorial Day

Solstice

Father's Day

July 4th

Labor Day

Equinox

Halloween

Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday for dessert potluck)

1st Saturday of Hanukkah

Solstice

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

New Year's Eve

Meeting Times and 1 hour before and after

Community Meal Times and 1 hour before and 2 hours after. Check with head chef/clean-up crew for exceptions.

Regularly scheduled community functions (music night, craft night, puzzle night). It is possible to schedule the living room during these times, but there is potential for overly loud accordionists playing polkas.

CoHo Ecovillage Application for Exceptions for Common House Use

Return completed form to Common House Team

Criteria for Exceptions

- The function does not conflict with other scheduling or set-aside times/dates.
- The activity is in alignment with our values.
- The impact on traffic or street parking is acceptable.
- If the event is a class or workshop that charges a fee, the instructor is willing to offer a discount to CoHo residents.

Long-term exceptions may be given a trial period to allow us an opportunity to see how the situation works for us.

CoHo Owner Name

Event

Date and Time

Is your date/time flexible if there is a conflict? Yes ☐ No ☐

Room(s) to be reserved

Who is this event open to (CoHoots, CoHoots and their guests, just your guests, paid attendees?)

Will it bring additional traffic and/or parking to CoHo and the neighborhood?
Yes ☐ No ☐ How many vehicles do you anticipate?

Do you plan to be present for set-up and clean-up and during the event?
Yes ☐ No ☐ If not, then who will host the event?

What is the purpose of this event?

How is this event in alignment with CoHo values?

Guidelines for Use of the Common House Dining Room

How to Connect Computer to Sound System

These instructions are posted on the inside of the door of the sound system cabinet in the Common House dining room.

- On silver amplifier unit in cabinet (top unit in the cabinet), turn volume down as low as possible.
- Turn dial at far left of amplifier to the setting labeled "computer."
- A cable is connected to the amplifier. Plug the available jack from the cable into the headphone jack on the computer.
- Adjust volume on computer to maximum.
- Then start playing music/sound and adjust the volume knob on the amplifier.
- When done playing sound/music, turn volume knob on amplifier down as low as possible.
- Unplug jack from computer.
- Turn dial at far left of amplifier to other setting as needed.

Guidelines for Common House Piano Use

(Applies to piano in dining room and piano in guest room)

PLEASE

- Finish your food and drink before sitting down at the piano.
- Treat the piano gently (random banging on the keys doesn't qualify as gentle treatment).
- Supervise your child's use of the piano.
- Teach your child to carefully use our pianos. April & Craig would be happy to help with this, if you would like assistance.
- Close the lid when you are finished playing to keep dust off the keys (thus reducing the need for costly maintenance).
- Enjoy the time you spend playing!

Guidelines for Use of the Common House Guest Room

Reservations for use of the Common House Guest Room are on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations may be made at cohoecovillage.org/tiki. From the tiki home page, click on Guest Room calendar to check existing reservations. Click on “add event” to make a reservation. Please make sure to include your name and the names of your guests plus their arrival and departure times (this makes coordination with bookings before/after your guest much easier). Each household is allowed up to ten days use of the Common House guest room per year.

You are responsible for greeting your guests and orienting them to the Common House and our standards and norms, i.e., no meat, fish, or poultry in the kitchen, no peanuts in the Common House, no pets, and no smoking.

After the Common House is locked in the evening, your guests have access through the key pad on the laundry room door. For security reasons, the key pad number that we use for guests is different from the number that we all use and it is changed every 6 months. You will be notified of this change by email. The key for the Guest Room is hung on the hall bulletin board in the upper left-hand corner. It should be returned to this spot at the end of your guests’ stay.

You are responsible for changing your guest’s linens and remaking the bed and closing the wall bed. Fresh sheets and towels and extra blankets are in the cupboard or drawers to the left of the bed. You are also responsible for laundering your guests’ bathroom towels (please check the laundry bag in the main bath) and for vacuuming the carpet, if needed, and returning the room to its original condition (or better).

We do not charge for use of the Guest Room, but donations may be made to AHIC (\$20 per night suggested donation). The donation box and information about AHIC is in the atrium. Donations are tax deductible.

Guidelines for use of the Common House Living Room

The Library

If you want to take a book home, pull a blank note card and write the book title, date you're signing it out and your name and return the card to the little box on the library shelf. This helps us track down books if they are needed. When returning your book, please pull your card and replace the book in its category on the shelf.

If you want to donate a book or magazine to the library, either contact Karen about the book or magazine or leave it on the shelf next to the check out box.

If you remove a book from the shelf to use while you're in the living room, please return it to the shelf when you're done.

Living Room Use

The living room is the "quiet" room of the Common House (as decided at our early programming). Its intent is for visiting with others, small meetings, reading, and board games.

The furniture, including couches and chairs, is meant for sitting and not for climbing or jumping on.

If you use the blankets, please fold them up and return them to the pile.

When you are finished using the room, return it to the condition in which you found it (or better).

If young children are in the room, it is important to be in there with them, supervising them.

You are invited to start and enjoy a fire in the wood stove. Please see the instructions below.

It is ok to enjoy food and drink in the living room. Should you have a spill, please blot it up immediately and treat with the spray bottle of environmentally-appropriate carpet cleaner that is stored in the broom closet. Stains that aren't treated immediately usually become permanent so please help us keep our Common House in good condition.

Wood Stove Use

Safety

- Keep matches out of the reach of young hands. Put them back on the top shelf when you're done torching your fire.
- Keep the stove and tile area clear of combustible material.
- Monitor the fire closely whenever the door is open. Sparks can leap from the fire and burn stuff that you don't want burned.
- Use dry wood only. Wet or green wood will not burn easily, it will be smoky and it will deposit creosote in the chimney risking a chimney fire.
- You may leave the fire unattended if the door is closed and the stove area is clear of combustible materials.

Instructions

1. **Clear the stove.** Clear the top of the stove and the tile area of all coasters, toys, cushions, children and any other combustible items.
2. **Check airflow.** Check to see that the kitchen fan is off and/or windows are open to equalize the air pressure (see "troubleshooting").
3. **Clean out ashes.** Clean out the ashes from the previous fire. Shovel the ashes into the metal bucket provided. If the bucket is full, dump the ashes into a compost pile after ensuring that the ashes are cold.
4. **Stack the fire.** Fire needs three elements: Fuel, air and ...uh ...fire. Stack your fuel (wood) so that it can get plenty of air (air). Many people and lumberjacks use the "log cabin" method, starting with small kindling on the bottom and criss-crossing larger pieces on top.

You may want to start with a couple of small logs (2" diameter) on the bottom of the stove to create an airspace where you can lay your newspaper.

5. **Light the fire.** Open the damper (push the handle in) and light the newspaper at the bottom. Leave the door open about one inch to give the fire lots of air while it's getting started.
6. **Adjust the airflow.** Once the fire is going well (usually in a few minutes), close and latch the door. For a short, hot fire, leave the damper open (push it in). For a longer, mellower combustion experience, close the damper (pull it out).
7. **Enjoy!** You may want to turn on the blower to send more heat into the room.

Troubleshooting

- **Smoke.** Smoke is pouring out of the stove. You've closed the door and the damper but it's still pouring out of the bottom of the stove.
- **Cause:** The kitchen fan is probably on, pulling air down the chimney and not letting the smoke go up.
- **Solution:** Open a window to equalize the pressure. Turn off the kitchen fan and/or open a window in the kitchen and in the living room.

Laundry Room “Need to Know” Items

Baskets

- Please put your name on your basket.
- Leave your laundry basket on top of or in front of the machine that you are using. Use a Common House basket if you need a spare. Please return it promptly.

Communication

- Leave drying instructions on the washing machine that you're using.
- If there are no drying instructions, wet laundry should be moved to the basket on top of or in front of the machine.

Sharing

- If the dryer that you covet is full of dry clothes, empty the dryer into the basket on top of the machine and load yours in. Be sure the laundry you are removing is actually dry.
- If you need a washer and it is full of someone's washed clothes, feel free to move them to the basket on top of the washer (per line-drying instructions) or to a dryer (per machine-drying instructions).

Cleanliness

- The laundry/rec room is cleaned weekly by the Common House Team. We need your effort and consideration to keep it neat and clean in-between regular cleanings. Please clean up after yourself!
- Clean up spilled detergent or bleach on the machines or floor.
- Clean pet hair out of machines.
- Empty the dryer lint traps after each use.

Detergents

- Use only HE (high efficiency) detergent in the washers as non-HE detergents can damage the machines.
- Please do not use more than 1 TABLESPOON of HE detergent per load; more than this amount can clog the machine.
- Avoid scented detergents; these can leave a residue that the next user may be sensitive to.
- Please put your name on your detergent.

Help

- Manuals for the machines are in the top drawer by the sink.
- Let Jude know if you need help with a machine or if it needs repair.

Eco-Tips

- Wash only full (but not overfilled) loads of laundry.
- Lower the water temperature to save energy and money. Washing in cold water is also gentler to your clothes and helps prolong life.
- Do hot water washing on a sunny day when the water is heated by the solar panel on the roof.
- Consider whether you really need to use bleach, fabric softener, or scented detergent.
- Use the drying racks or outdoor lines instead of the electric dryers. When you line dry, enter your load on the line drying checksheet by the exterior door.
- To reduce drying time and save energy, clean the lint tray after every use.

Free Box and Shelves

- Please do not leave anything that is too large to fit on the shelves or in the bin. If you'd like to give away something that's too large to fit, put the item on your porch and notify the community that the item is available.
- Please do not leave food, broken or dirty items, or items that may be a hazard to young children such as sharp knives, poisons, liquids, lotions, cosmetics or toiletries.
- When the Free Box and shelves fill up, items will be donated to a charity.