

# COMING TO MADISON – AUGUST 2016

## INFORMATION FOR NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS

Greetings and Welcome to the UW Madison! Madison is a wonderful city with lots to offer – Farmer's Markets, a variety of music venues, free concerts, organized sports, lakes, parks, coffee shops, ethnic restaurants, brew pubs, art fairs, film festivals, book festivals, museums, theaters, top name entertainment, and the longest running silent film series in the United States (Duck Soup Cinema).

Madison is unique in that the capitol is located on an isthmus between Lakes Mendota and Monona. The University is about a mile west of the capitol and the two are connected by State Street, a pedestrian zoned street lined with shops and restaurants. Lake Mendota borders the campus.

As the isthmus is considered the center of town, it is traditional to describe Madison locations primarily in terms of east side and west side, although the axis involved runs more northeast to southwest.

To make your transition easier we have compiled some basic information; however, you will find that the best source for information on living in Madison is the current graduate students.

### **BASICS:**

Telephone: The area code for all of Madison, and most of southwestern Wisconsin, is 608 – though not all calls within the 608 area code are considered local and may carry long distance charges. Please note that once you are in Madison, you should use the local number (263-0363) for the Chemistry Graduate Office to get in touch with us. Please do not use the toll-free number when in the Madison area.

An important thing to know about the phone service in Madison is that exchanges 262-, 263-, 265- and 890- are common University numbers. When you are calling between University phones you can just dial the last 5 digits. For instance, to reach the Chemistry Graduate office from somewhere else on campus you just dial 2-0363. To call a non-university number from a university phone, you first need to dial 9 to get an outside line.

Television/Internet: The primary cable service for television is Charter Cable (1-877-906-9121 [www.charter.com](http://www.charter.com)). There are two satellite providers – Dish Network (1-888-434-0112, [www.dishnetwork.com](http://www.dishnetwork.com)) and Direct TV (888-795-9488, [www.directv.com](http://www.directv.com)). All of these providers offer package deals for TV and internet services – some even combine with telephone service for one-stop shopping. (Some of the phone companies also offer package deals with internet and TV service – so shop around.) You should check with your landlord/property management company before you commit to a television/internet service to be sure what the apartment is already set up for and what can be accommodated. The satellite service providers can let you know what would have to be installed and how well you might receive their service based on whether your 'view of the southern sky' is obstructed.

Utilities: Utilities are sometimes covered in the rent, so you may not have to do anything. If not, gas and electric power in Madison are supplied by Madison Gas & Electric (MG&E <https://www.mge.com/>). You can call them at 252-7222 to set up service and inquire about getting it started in your name before you arrive. If you end up outside of Madison or on the outskirts your gas and electric may be supplied by either Alliant Energy (800-255-4268 <https://www.alliantenergy.com/>)

or WE Energies (800-242-9137). Water and sewer are billed monthly and are usually handled by the landlords/property management companies. However, you might want to verify this with your landlord/property management company just to be sure.

Newspapers: The main newspaper in Madison is the Wisconsin State Journal. This is a morning paper with weekend editions. You can have the paper delivered to your home or you can access it on line for no charge at <http://host.madison.com/wsj> . Student discounts are available on home delivery subscriptions which can be ordered on line from the main web site.

Additionally, Madison has a free weekly paper, The Isthmus, which comes out on Thursday. It is available around town in various stores, casual restaurants and a number of sites on campus. This paper specializes in local news, events, and current issues. The Isthmus also contains a comprehensive entertainment section.

Madison is the original home of The Onion. This is a free, satirical paper that is online. Please be advised that this publication can be very cutting and may have articles in it that could be offensive to some individuals. It does have a good entertainment section with reviews of music, movies, and a listing of events around town focused toward the college aged crowd. On line editions can be found at [www.theonion.com](http://www.theonion.com).

There is also a free entertainment news magazine, 77 Square, published by Madison Newspapers (the same company as the State Journal). This is on line at <http://host.madison.com/entertainment>.

Zip Codes: Madison has a number of zip codes though all of them begin with 537. You will need to be sure you have the right zip code for your address. All of the University addresses are in the 53706 zip code.

## **HOUSING**

The University-operated apartments, known as Eagle Heights, are located west of campus and are on the campus bus line. These are available to all married students, those with domestic partners, and/or students with dependent children. For single graduate students, there are one-bedroom apartments available. There are also graduate student dorms on campus, though these have not been as popular with the Chemistry students. If you are interested in either of these options, you can get more information from the University Apartments Office, 608-262-2522, or from the UW Housing web site at [www.housing.wisc.edu](http://www.housing.wisc.edu) under the University Apartments section.

Madison has a variety of living arrangements to offer students. There are large apartment buildings/complexes, small buildings/complexes, houses, converted single family homes, and rooms for rent. Apartments range in size from efficiencies/one bedroom to 4 or 5 bedrooms. Rooms for rent may be in a multiple bedroom apartment or a large house.

Large apartment buildings may have 25 plus apartments in them, and the larger complexes may have 5 or 6 buildings. The smaller buildings generally have 4 to 8 units with only 1-4 buildings in the grouping. These smaller building complexes tend to look more like a neighborhood and to have more windows than the standard apartment.

Madison also has apartments that are referred to as 2-flats, 3-flats etc. These are single family homes

that have been converted into individual apartments to accommodate the student population. Some of them are quite nice, others are very creative conversions and can have interesting floor plans, especially kitchen arrangement.

With the wide variety of apartments and neighborhoods available, it might be to your advantage to schedule a trip to Madison specifically to go apartment hunting. Spend a day wandering around the town and get a feel for the different areas. Check out campus and the surrounding neighborhoods in more detail. See what the buildings look like and what is available where (most rentals have signs posted on the building indicating available apartments). Then you can focus your search to the areas most appealing to you.

Things you should know about / check into for each apartment you look at:

**Parking:** If you plan on bringing a car or other vehicle to Madison with you, keep in mind that parking is often at a premium in the city. Check to see if your prospective place has off-street parking available and at what price per month. On-street parking can be difficult to find; most streets in the downtown and campus areas have limited parking, both in the number of spaces and the length of time you can stay parked there. Some areas have a two hour limit, some are metered with the maximum stay varying with the area. Additionally, if you stay parked on some city streets for more than 48 hours you may get a ticket. During the snow season (legally it's from November 15 to April 15; meteorologically it's anybody's guess), if you go more than 48 hours without moving your car, not only will your car be likely to be 'bermed in' by the snow plows, you may not be in compliance with the snow emergency rules and you may get a ticket.

There are permits available that allow you to park on the streets in your neighborhood without worrying about the two hour limit. The permits can be purchased downtown at the Madison Municipal Building (Rm 100, 215 Martin Luther King Blvd.) for \$21. You have to purchase the first year's permit in person as you have to present your lease to prove residency, show your valid driver's license and your current vehicle registration (it needs to be registered to you at that address), then you can sign up for renewals through the mail or on line. More information on the Residential Parking program can be found on line at [www.cityofmadison.com/parkingutility/permits/residential.cfm](http://www.cityofmadison.com/parkingutility/permits/residential.cfm). Auto registration information can be found by calling Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Vehicle Registration ([www.dot.state.wi.us](http://www.dot.state.wi.us) under Drivers & Vehicles/Vehicles/Getting title & license plates/New residents).

**Heat & Utilities:** Sometimes one or the other or both of these are included in the rent and sometimes not. This is important to know before winter sets in. If you are not responsible for heat, make sure you know when the heat will be turned on in the winter and turned off in the spring. If you are responsible, make sure you know what type of heat it is – electric, gas or oil. Most of Madison's older residences have radiated heat which is generally either gas or oil. The newer buildings tend to have forced air which will be either electric or gas. If you are in a 2-flat or similar set-up and heat is not included, you will want to know if there is a single thermostat and where it is (in your unit or one of the other ones), who is responsible for calling for refills if it is oil heat and how the billing is handled. Heating bills in Madison can run over \$150 per month for the colder months; and an average over 12 months of \$100 or more is possible. If you have oil heat a single tank refill can run a couple of hundred dollars depending on how big the tank is - though you may not have to fill it more than once a year.

**Snow Removal:** You will want to inquire about snow removal on city sidewalks, private walkways and drive ways. Who is responsible, what do they clear, are there any special provisions, and who do you call if the snow doesn't get removed promptly. If you choose a place that is a former house, you may be responsible for the snow removal. Keep in mind the city will issue fines if snow is not

removed from the public walkways by noon of the day after the snow stops. Corner lots are responsible for all of the sidewalks bordering the yard area.

Yard Maintenance: Again, if you choose a former house arrangement, you may have some responsibility for the upkeep of the yard. Be sure you are clear on who is responsible for what in this area. Most rentals have some sort of landscaping service that at least mows the lawns and may trim the trees, bushes etc.

Pets: If you have a pet and plan to bring it with you, be sure to ask about the pet policy up front with the rental company. Small, adult, fixed animals, and cats over dogs seem to be preferred. However, a number of places do not allow pets. So check before you view, just to save time. Also, some places that accept pets require an additional deposit and/or a fee per month per animal.

Location: The downtown area, the near east and west sides, the Jenifer/Spaight and Willie (Williamson) Street neighborhoods and the region south of campus to Vilas Park and the Zoo are popular graduate student areas. Graduate students tend to live a little farther away from campus than the undergrads, so these areas are quieter and the apartments are often better kept up.

Rent: As might be expected, the farther you are from campus the more apartment you will get for your money. You can expect to pay from \$500 or more per month for a small efficiency to \$950 or more for a two-bedroom unit in the central Madison area. Remember to balance the difference in rent with cost of getting to campus and parking on campus if needed (see the section on Transportation for options on getting to and parking on campus).

Leases: Madison rentals are usually done on an annual lease basis running from August 15 to August 14. There are often sublets available during the summer months from recent graduates or those participating in a summer internship program. When you rent an apartment, you will probably have to pay the first month's rent plus a security deposit (approximately one month's rent), so be sure to figure that expense in when deciding how much money to bring with you.

Property Management Companies: Most of the rentals in Madison are handled by property management companies, so business is normally done during the week. There is a 24 hour notice requirement to show an occupied apartment. The company may show you an unoccupied apartment right away or as a 'model'. If you see a 'model' be sure to see the actual apartment you will be renting before you sign a lease as the differences (in orientation, paint, finish work) etc. may be significant to you and your situation.

Finding a Place: We have included a separate list of helpful web sites for finding a place to live. Many of our single students share apartments or houses. The current students will also be your best source for information on the preferred places to live and which areas have a less desirable reputation.

Information on available rentals can be found in several places. You can find information on apartments through the Campus Information Center (263-2400). They have two locations - in the Red Gym at 716 Langdon, and in the Visitor Center at 21 N. Park St. The Campus Info Center maintains a Campus Area Housing Listing database with an awesome search function. This listing can be found at [www.campusareahousing.wisc.edu](http://www.campusareahousing.wisc.edu). The Campus Visitor & Information Center's home page is [www.vip.wisc.edu](http://www.vip.wisc.edu).

If you have questions about the property management company, the location, the lease provisions or

your rights as tenant, you can contact the Tenant Resource Center at 257-0006 (877-238-RENT (7368)) or visit their web site at [www.tenantresourcecenter.org](http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org).

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Cars in Madison are handy to have, however they are difficult to park especially around the downtown and campus areas. There are numerous public parking ramps in the downtown area if you are coming in from the outlying areas or the edges of town; however, these cannot be used for overnight parking on a regular basis. Graduate students holding appointments (TA, RA, etc.) are eligible to apply for parking in a University parking lot, though spaces are limited and you are likely to be assigned to a lot on the far west end of campus. Plus the permit fees are expensive. There are two main criteria used to determine which students will get the spaces available - students with a commute who have few other options available and working students who use their own vehicle at least three (3) times a week for employment purposes where there is a proven need (employment will be verified). There are day permits available for fee for those rare occasions when you just have to drive in.

Fortunately, Madison has a good bus system. City buses run about every 30 minutes on primary routes, usually 6 am to midnight. Secondary routes have service approximately once an hour until about 10 pm but do not run on the weekends. There are also additional routes (Express, commuter and shuttles) providing extra service during morning and afternoon rush hours (6-9 am and 3-6 pm). These routes have buses about every 30 minutes. Weekends and Holidays have a reduced schedule of service. There is also a special shuttle service for main events to reduce traffic at the event site – for instance home football games. These run from the downtown area to Camp Randall Stadium for football games. There is a nominal fee for the round trip. Schedules, bus passes, and route information are available from various places in and around Madison (such as Memorial Union, the UW Bookstore and many grocery stores), and via Madison Metro's web site at [www.cityofmadison.com/metro](http://www.cityofmadison.com/metro).

Through a special arrangement with Madison Metro and the Associated Students of Madison (ASM), UW Madison students are eligible for a pass which allows unlimited rides on the city buses and the Metro paratransit system. Passes are issued each fall and spring at the beginning of the term and can be picked up at the Student Activity Center (333 East Campus Mall) with a valid campus ID. For the most up-to-date information on this special benefit see the ASM web site at [www.asm.wisc.edu/buspass.html](http://www.asm.wisc.edu/buspass.html).

There are also free campus bus routes (daytime Rts 80 & 84 and nighttime Rts 80, 81, & 82) that run about every 7-10 minutes and between them cover most of campus. These are available free of charge to the general public as well.

Madison has an extensive system of bike trails/paths and most city streets have a bike lane. Bicycling is very popular in Madison – some people even cycle year round. For short trips, the door-to-door time is about the same as driving, especially if you factor in finding a parking space. It is recommended that you register your bike and always lock it up. There are bike racks all around town especially around public buildings. You can find out more about biking in Madison, maps, regulations, programs, resources and organizations at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/transportation/bicycling>.

To further encourage Madisonians to ride bikes, the city now participates in the B-Cycle bike sharing

program. Bikes are located in special racks throughout the city, and are available for use for a nominal charge. Annual membership for UW students, faculty and staff is only \$20 and includes unlimited rides of 30 minutes or less. To learn more about this program visit the Madison B-Cycle website at <https://madison.bcycle.com/>

## **SAFETY**

Madison has largely escaped the crime problems facing most big cities; however caution and common safety sense are required in some areas. Like most places, it is not a good idea for women to walk alone at night. The University has a program called SafeWalk in which carefully screened and trained volunteers are available to walk with you from one campus destination to another. These buses travel from Campus out into the main student housing areas including Eagle Heights. For those destinations outside of the areas served by SafeWalk and SafeRide there is taxi cab service called SafeCab. For more information on these and other safety programs available please see [http://transportation.wisc.edu/transportation/safeservices\\_walk.aspx](http://transportation.wisc.edu/transportation/safeservices_walk.aspx)

Like most large campuses, theft can be an issue especially in areas where students congregate. A little common sense goes a long way – always lock your bike, don't leave your personal items unattended (especially electronics), when moving in or out of an apartment or building lock your car or apartment if they will be unattended.

## **SHOPPING or WHERE TO FIND THINGS**

Madison has several shopping malls – East Towne, West Towne, Hilldale to name a few. These have the standard major department stores and a variety of small specialty shops – both independently owned and chain stores. Because of the unique geological formation of Madison with the isthmus in the middle of town, we tend to have two of everything -- one on the east side and one on the west.

Grocery stores are somewhat limited in the immediate campus and downtown areas though there now is a Fresh Madison Market at the eastern edge of campus about 3 blocks from Chemistry. Additionally, there are some small neighborhood stores and convenience stores scattered throughout the downtown area. There are several conventional grocery stores (Copps, Cubs, Sentry, Woodman's, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's) a little farther out; and on the edge of town are discount-warehouse type grocery stores (Super-Target, Walmart/Sam's Club, Costco).

In the summer months attractive alternative sources of fresh produce, cheese and meats are at the farmers' markets. The Dane County Farmers' Market is held every Saturday morning on the Capitol Square and on Wednesday mornings on Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd. Additionally, there are a number of other farmers' markets scattered around the Madison area throughout the week. More information on these markets can be found at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/residents/farmersMarket.cfm>.

The main names for home improvement / hardware stores in the area are Menard's, Home Depot, Ace and TrueValue. Some of the neighborhood hardware stores (Ace and TrueValue) offer discounts to local residents so be sure to ask if you shop at one.

There is a variety of banks, savings & loans and credit unions downtown and in the outlying areas. Shop around as services and fees will vary. Most of the credit unions in the area do not require you belong to a special group or work in a particular place to join. Every year in August the Isthmus publishes a very helpful guide to Madison, The Annual Manual, and one of the things they include is a comparison chart of the various financial institutions. We will try to have these available for you when you arrive in August.

**Note that for most appointments the first paycheck in the fall is not available until October 1, so you should plan on bringing some money with you to open your accounts.**

### **WHAT TYPES OF CLOTHES TO BRING**

Madison's climate is subject to great temperature variations. During the summer, June into September, temperatures are often above 80 Fahrenheit (27 Celsius) and occasionally above 90 F (32 C). In the winter months, December into March, you can expect to have some days with the highs below 0 F (-18 C) with wind chills dropping the temperature even lower. The summer months generally have a couple of weeks of high humidity making it seem hotter and in the winter the air is very dry.

In Madison, casual attire is often the norm and is considered acceptable most places you might go to or events you might attend. It is nice though, to have the ability to dress a little more formally on occasion.

You will want to have a mix of clothes from very light to very heavy - a 'tee-shirts to parkas' type of wardrobe. Having clothes that layer is a definite advantage.

We hope that you find this information to be of use to you in your move to Madison. If you have any questions about anything covered above or anything that we might have left out, please contact Arrietta Clauss in the Chemistry Graduate Office at [awclauss@chem.wisc.edu](mailto:awclauss@chem.wisc.edu) or give her a call at 608-262-0363; toll free 888-997-2436.

## *Helpful Websites*

### *UW, Madison, Rentals, Moving and other Information*

#### **UW Info websites:**

[WWW.WISC.EDU](http://WWW.WISC.EDU) -- the UW Madison home page

Links to all kinds of information on the UW, programs, events, services, visiting and moving to Madison.

[WWW.VIP.WISC.EDU](http://WWW.VIP.WISC.EDU) -- Visitor & Information Programs website

Information for visitors and students about UW–Madison and the surrounding community.

#### **Madison Info websites:**

[WWW.GREATERMADISONCHAMBER.COM](http://WWW.GREATERMADISONCHAMBER.COM) -- Madison Chamber of Commerce web site.

Information on the Madison area and its businesses. Under the “Living Here” tab there are a number of useful links for information on relocating, recreation, neighborhoods, schools etc.

[HTTP://HOST.MADISON.COM](http://HTTP://HOST.MADISON.COM) -- Information on Madison, sponsored by Madison Newspapers

Local news and weather with links to entertainment, community pages, real estate listings, and more.

[WWW.CITYOFMADISON.COM](http://WWW.CITYOFMADISON.COM) -- City of Madison’s official web site

This web site features information about the city including information about Madison’s parks, transportation, recreation, city projects, as well as information about Madison neighborhoods that might be of interest.

#### **Rentals and other Moving related website:**

[WWW.CAMPUSAREAHOUSING.WISC.EDU](http://WWW.CAMPUSAREAHOUSING.WISC.EDU) -- Campus Information Center website

Provides info on off-campus housing database with detailed search capabilities – you can search by type, location, size, price, amenities, availability.

[WWW.CDLIVING.COM](http://WWW.CDLIVING.COM) – Madison Campus and Downtown Living website

Covers rentals in a 6 mile around campus, divided into 5 geographic sections for ease of searching.

[MADISONPROPERTY.COM](http://MADISONPROPERTY.COM) and [STEEVBROWNAPTS.COM](http://STEEVBROWNAPTS.COM) - Property Management Companies

Two of the various property management companies favored by students. Note: I’m not endorsing these two over any others.

[WWW.STARTRENTING.COM](http://WWW.STARTRENTING.COM) -- the website for the publication Start Renting Inc.

Information on apartments/rentals in the Greater Madison area, the Milwaukee Area and the Fox Valley. Apartments can be searched by location, size and price.

[WWW.MOVE.COM](http://WWW.MOVE.COM) -- A multi-purpose moving web site

Information on houses, apartments, buying, renting, selecting a place and a room mate, planning, financing, and the like. You can specify an area by zip code (use 53706 and then you can open up your search with the 'distance from' options 1 mile out, 5 miles out, etc.) and what you are looking for – type, size, un/furnished, rent, pets etc.

[WWW.RENTSEARCH.COM](http://WWW.RENTSEARCH.COM) -- A nationwide rental web site.

Information on rentals throughout Wisconsin sorted by city. Site has listings of various apartment buildings or management companies and provides links to the company's web site and / or phone numbers for direct contact. There are also several links to other rental site (in the Ads by Google box). The 'wallpaper' and fonts make it a little hard to read, but it is worth checking out. Some of the listings even have photos of the units they offer – though it isn't clear which ones are actually available.

[WWW.TENANTRESOURCECENTER.ORG](http://WWW.TENANTRESOURCECENTER.ORG)

Information on tenant/landlord rights & responsibilities; complaints, lease provisions etc.